

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Notice of Meeting

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 20 July 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 H J Collins, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor M E McKenzie, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade

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

9.7.04

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 29 June 2004 (Pages 1 - 4)**

Business Items

Public Items 3 to 6 and Private Items 17 and 18 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. **Social Services Inspectorate Inspection of Older People's Services - Improving Services for Older People (Pages 5 - 18)**
4. **Beacon Council Status - Final Outcomes (Pages 19 - 22)**

5. **Attendance at the Institute of Revenues, Ratings and Valuation Annual Conference (Pages 23 - 24)**
6. **Attendance at the Society of Information Technology Management Autumn Conference (Pages 25 - 26)**

Discussion Items

7. **Adoption of a Policy for Determining Rate Relief and Recommendation for Amendment to the Constitution (Pages 27 - 57)**

Appendix B to this report is private and confidential and is attached as Item 18.

8. **ICT Infrastructure Renewal and Enhancements (Pages 59 - 65)**
9. **Council Land and Asset Disposals - Funding New Affordable Housing and Regeneration Initiatives (Pages 67 - 73)**
10. **Gascoigne Estate - Regeneration Programme (Pages 75 - 82)**
11. **Service Charges for Council Tenants - Mobile Security Patrol (Pages 83 - 85)**
12. **Rylands Home Improvement Zone Interim Report (Pages 87 - 98)**
13. **Council's Revenue and Capital Outturn 2003 / 2004 (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. **Tenancy Audit Update (Pages 99 - 102)**

Concerns a Legal Matter (paragraph 14)

Business Items

17. **Technical Analysis Work - Budget Process (Pages 103 - 105)**

Concerns a Contractual Matter (paragraphs 7 and 9)

18. Adoption of a Policy for Determining Rate Relief and Recommendation for Amendment to the Constitution Report - Appendix B (Pages 107 - 110)

Concerns Named Individuals / Organisations (paragraph 5)

19. Any other confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent

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THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 29 June 2004
(7:00 - 8:55 pm)

Present: Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair), Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair), Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor H J Collins, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor M E McKenzie, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade

Also Present: Councillor Mrs V M Rush

35. Minutes (22 June 2004)

Agreed.

36. Member and Officer Attendance at Conferences 2004 - 2005

Received a report seeking approval for Member and / or Officer attendance at known conferences taking place during 2004 / 2005.

Agreed, to approve attendance at conferences as set out in the schedule attached as Appendix A to the report.

37. Housing Management Best Value Review

Received a report setting out the conclusions of the Best Value Review of Housing Management functions.

Agreed to implement the actions detailed in the Improvement Plan in order to continue to improve the service over the next 2 years.

38. Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Received a report introducing the following Human Resources policies and procedures which have been reviewed and updated to bring them in line with recent employment legislation and best practice.

- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Family Friendly Provisions
- Annual and Special Leave Provisions
- Market Supplements
- Cycle Allowance

Agreed, in order to ensure up-to-date and consistent procedures are operational across the Council and to support the People Matter element of the Council's Balanced Scorecard, to:

1. The procedures set out above, including the following recommendations contained in the Review of the Bicycle Allowance:

- a) Raise the Bicycle Allowance to £200 per annum (£3.84 per week) with effect from 1 July 2003, for staff who are required to use their bicycle on official business;
 - b) Apply to become a Corporate Affiliate of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC). The fee for a non-commercial organisation is £1200 + VAT per annum;
 - c) Offer interest free loans of up to £500 repayable over 3 years to staff to cover the cost of their bicycle and any safety equipment, (instead of claiming casual, essential or pool user allowances);
 - d) The Bicycle Allowance to be reviewed on an annual basis at the same time as car user allowances; and
2. The precise implementation date(s) to be agreed by the Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations following the implementation of training programmes.

Further reports will be brought to the Executive as work is completed on other Human Resources policies and procedures.

39. Front Garden Parking

Received a report suggesting an alteration to current policies in respect of front garden parking, increasing the number of private motor vehicles that can be parked in a front garden to more than one vehicle.

Agreed, in order to ease on street parking problems in the Borough, to:

1. Amend the existing policies so that tenants and owner occupiers of houses, tenants and leaseholders of certain ground floor flats that have gardens with direct access to the highway, may with prior permission of the Council park more than one private motor vehicle in their front garden.

This is subject to the garden being of a size able to accommodate more than one vehicle and where there is a carriage crossing in place and it is feasible, to extend or strengthen the footpath or if necessary to provide a second crossing. In the case of ground floor flats, permission would only be granted following consultation and the agreement of other residents in the block;
2. Amend the restrictive covenant in future Right To Buy sales to allow with the prior permission of the Council the parking of more than one private motor vehicle where the garden is of a size to accommodate this. The carriage crossing requirement will still apply; and
3. Delegate decisions regarding front garden parking and appeals to the Director of Housing and Health in conjunction with the Director of Leisure and Environmental Services.

40. Private Business

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

41. The Linton's Security Works - Tender Acceptance and Budget Approval

Received a report seeking to award a contract for proposed security works at The Lintons, Barking.

Deferred a decision on this matter pending:

1. Further consultation between the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Adult Care and the relevant Ward Members; and
2. A Tenancy Audit to be carried out at The Lintons.

42. Award of Supply of Copier Paper Contract

Received a report seeking to award a contract for the supply of copier paper for a period of two years, with an option to extend for a further twelve months.

Agreed, in order to provide an efficient and cost effective supply of copier paper, to authorise the award of the supply of copier paper contract, by Harrow Council on behalf of the London Contracts & Supplies Group, to Guilbert UK Ltd, for the period 30 June 2004 to 29 June 2006, with the option of a further twelve months' extension.

43. Award of Weed Control Service Contract

Received a report seeking to award a contract for the Supply of Weed Control Services for a period of three years to a supplier not providing the lowest priced bid.

Agreed to award the Contract for the Supply of Weed Control Services to Complete Weed Control London North Central, for the period June 2004 to May 2007, for the spraying of weeds on public highways and housing, open spaces and paths, for the reasons set out in the report.

44. Major Adaptations / Disabled Facilities Grant Application

Received a report setting out an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant, which exceeds the £25,000 ceiling for officer approval.

Agreed the application, as it represents value for money and optimises care arrangements by providing facilities in the home for a person who would otherwise require residential care.

45. * Education of Looked After Children

Received a report outlining current services and activities being undertaken in order to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).

Agreed, in order to strengthen the joint LAC Health and Education (LACHES) Team, to:

1. The expansion of the LACHES Team / Service for 2004 / 2005 as proposed in paragraph 5.2 of the report for the medium to long term;
2. Explore proposals for a voluntary sector service provider, as set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report, in order to boost current performance within the same cost parameters;
3. The funding source for the additional resources required (estimated at £255,000) as detailed in section 8 of the report. Should this not achieve the desired results, a further report to the Executive will revisit the provision of bursaries and extra tuition at an additional cost of £126,000; and
4. The integration of services for children through the transfer of the LACHES team to the Head of Children's Services in the Social Services Department as a matter of urgency.

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

THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE (SSI) INSPECTION OF OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES: IMPROVING SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE	FOR INFORMATION	
<p><i>This report presents an update on the implementation of recommendations made by the Social Services Inspectorate following the inspection of social care services for older people.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The Social Services Inspectorate (now incorporated within the new Commission for Social Care Inspection - CSCI) inspected social care services for older people in the Borough in September - October 2003. The Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) reported its main findings to the Joint Health and Social Care Board in January 2004 and published a full public report.</p> <p>The SSI concluded that capacity for improvement was promising and made key recommendations highlighting areas for change and development. The attached action plan lists all of the key recommendations, cross-references these to the Service Scorecard and describes progress up to May 2004. These recommendations and the progress made will be monitored by the CSCI.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>Progress is being made in relation to all of the SSI recommendations. The Action Plan (in the appendix) is linked to the Service Scorecard and existing residential and home care reprovision and modernisation strategies, which together with the National Service Framework for Older People service developments are driving improvement in health and social care for older people.</p> <p>This inspection highlights continuing improvement in older people's services and helps to identify areas for further development. The impact of the inspection on the Social Services star rating will be positive. However the result does not set or guarantee how many stars will be awarded, as the rating is derived from a complex mixture of performance information, inspection reports and judgements made on our progress against national and local priorities for children and adults. This report is made to the Executive as part of an SSI action plan reporting regime that will include the Joint Health and Social Care Management Team.</p>		
Contact Officer: Jim Wilson	Head of Older People's Services.	Tel: 020 8227 2332 Fax: 020 8227 2241 E-mail: jim.wilson@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

1.1 The SSI report concluded:

“The council and partner agencies had made substantial improvements to the planning and delivery of services for older people. These achievements required re-examination of the role of directly provided services and a preparedness to target resources on those in greatest need. While councillors and managers recognised that there was considerable need for further change and sustained improvement, this progress has strengthened the Council’s ability to achieve further change. We therefore judged that Barking and Dagenham was serving some people well and that capacity for improvement was promising”.

1.2 The SSI inspection report helps us to recognise our achievements and to see what remains to be done. Achievements to date include:

- Steadily improving performance and clear targets for further improvements
- Most service users satisfied with the quality and timeliness of the help they received
- An improved range of services, providing better support for older people and carers in their own homes and offering more choice
- A substantial investment in intermediate care
- Systems to protect vulnerable older people are operating effectively
- Staff committed to improving services and recruitment, which has shifted the profile of the workforce to reflect the local population more accurately

1.3 The full report provides more detail on both achievements and areas for development

2. Key Recommendations

2.1 There are 21 key recommendations set out under the six national standards. The Action Plan in the appendix shows that we are making progress in all areas. Some of the recommendations are fairly precise and can be achieved when set actions are completed; for example, “The Older People’s Service should develop a case file audit tool ...”. This has been done and introduced, although we will need to continue to monitor its use and respond to what it is telling us about recording

2.2 The majority of the recommendations refer to broader service functions; for example: “The Council should continue to work with partner agencies to develop a joint approach to commissioning and involve older people, carers and provider agencies in developing commissioning actions”. The Action Plan shows that significant steps have been taken in this area. However partnership work will never be fully “completed” in the sense that we will need to review, refresh or renew our policies and procedures on a fairly regular basis.

3. Recent achievements and new services

3.1 Performance indicators suggest that the Older Peoples Service modernisation programme is tackling delayed discharge and at the same time providing more of the home based services that older people want. This is a significant change for

the local health and social care system that has in the past been over-reliant on institutional and long-term care.

- Intensive home care as a proportion of intensive home care and residential care is 35% - 5 blobs.
- Households receiving intensive home care is 17 (per 1000 older people) – 5 blob performance.
- Availability of single rooms – 5 blobs
- Items of Equipment delivered within 7 days – 5 blobs
- Admissions of supported residents aged 65 or over to residential / nursing care is 101 (per 10,000 older people) – 4 blob performance.
- Delayed transfer of care weekly average of 10 (including NHS and joint responsibility). The average weekly total since April 2004 is 9. The number for which the Council is responsible ranges from 30-60%. Current performance is 3 blobs.
- Older people helped to live at home 81.3 (per 1000) – 3 blob performance.

3.2 The adult / older people Key Threshold indicators which we must improve before the Department can attain two star status (no matter how good performance in all other areas) are:

Acceptable waiting times for assessments	2 blobs
Direct payments	2 blobs
Waiting time for care packages	3 blobs
Admissions of older people to res/nursing care	4 blobs
Items of equipment delivered in 7 days	5 blobs
Intensive home care	5 blobs

3.3 Performance funds are being used to focus on the waiting time and direct payment indicators.

3.4 Other recent achievements and new services include:

Fred Tibble Extra Care Housing for people with dementia will be completed in June 2004. The scheme will provide 31 tenancies and a home for up to 60 people with dementia and their carers. With Colin Pond Court and Harp House, Fred Tibble Court will provide older people with substantial care needs with independence and security in their own homes.

A new Intermediate Care Centre is being built on the Grays Court site and will open in the summer of 2005. The centre is a partnership development with the PCT and Lift Co. The centre will provide 45 short-term beds, but the focus will be to work in a therapeutic and rehabilitative way to help older people regain and maintain the life skills and mobility they need to stay independent.

Over 300 older people have been involved in National Service Framework for Older People events and a new group self named - Age Direct - of older people interested in health and social care has been formed. The plan for 2004/5 at this stage includes mental health; assessment and further development work with the Age Direct group.

The introduction of integrated locality teams – care management will operate within 3 areas aligned to community forums and health centres. The local teams will include modern matrons and link with GPs through patch care networks. The 3 areas will each include two smaller patch teams. Specialist teams will continue to operate on a borough wide or hospital liaison basis.

- 3.5 The residential re-provision programme agreed by the Executive in September 2002 will be completed this June with the opening of Fred Tibble Court Extra Care Accommodation in Weston Road. The programme has also produced high quality extra care accommodation schemes at Colin Pond Court and Harp House. The Grays Court 45 bed Intermediate Care Centre will open in June 2005 and provide a centre of excellence in rehabilitation in the heart of Dagenham. In addition to new build the reprovision programme has supported an increase in care packages at home (see 5 blob performance in 3.1 and 3.2) and a transfer of funds to Children and Families Services as agreed within the Three Year Finance and Investment Strategy.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Older People's Service Scorecard, together with the SSI Action Plan and range of associated detailed strategies (Intermediate Care, Falls Prevention, National Service Framework, Extra Care Accommodation, Locality Teams, etc) set out an agreed programme of major improvements to health and social care services for older people.
- 4.2 All performance indicators including Key Thresholds are included within Team performance action plans (new visible storyboards being introduced for all teams) and are being closely monitored.

Inspection of Social Care Services for Older People 2003 – Barking and Dagenham Summary Action Plan 2004/5

The full Action Plan address each "area for development" identified by the SSI. This Summary Action Plan focuses on the key recommendations made by the SSI in relation to each of the six national inspection standards. The full Action Plan will be monitored within OPS by the Operational Management Team (OMT). This higher level Summary will also be monitored bi-monthly by the Council's Corporate Management Group (CMG), by the Joint Health and Social Care Board (JHSCB) and monthly managerially via the Joint Health and Social Care Management Team. As this is an integrated service and the post of Head of Older People's Service is joint all implementation and further work is undertaken on a multi-agency integrated team approach.

Standard 1. National Priorities and Strategic Objectives

Linked Scorecard Objectives 1, 3, 12, 17

Recommendation					
The council and partner agencies should clarify the relationships between planning groups and ensure the planning process is open and inclusive.					
Obj. 1					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
Produce map and directory of OPS (health and social care) planning and decision making groups. Consult all stakeholders.	RT KA	Draft map completed – directory started	2-4 days + consultation / amendment	Present to DMT / JHSCB by March 2004.	First draft complete. Need to produce staff friendly version.
Maintain Home Support Forum, Establish OPS Vol. Sector Forum and Residential / Nursing Provider Forum. Users & Carers (see final recommendation in this section). Include Housing and Health partners.	CP SW RT	HS Forum est. VS Forum started 12/2003.	Up to 15 person days per Q.	All three forums running by June 2004.	Home Support and VS Forums established. N/RC Forum to start in 9/04 (invites have been sent).
Recommendation					
The Older People's Service should develop project planning and management skills.					
Obj. 17					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
To implement training following needs analysis with the Joint Director of HR with a view to improving project management and management skills.	D.OPS	March 2005	Days and £ to be decided.	Relevant training completed or underway.	Under discussion within OMT and linked to Locality Team Project. 4 Team Managers undertaking management development programme.

Recommendation		The joint health and social care board should monitor the progress of work to achieve agreed priorities.					Obj. 1
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004		
Regular progress reports will be made to the JHSCB and Corporate Monitoring Group.	D.OPS	JHSCB March 2004. CMG monthly.	< 1 day per month.	Reports made and any amendments / new directions incorporated in action plan.	Monitoring process and timetable prepared (see timetable).		
Recommendation	The Older People's Service should ensure that responsibility for performance improvement is clearly allocated.					Obj. 12	
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004		
Individual PI improvement plan drawn up with leads identified (pi performance monitored by OMT / DMT / Corporate and Joint management groups).	JH RT	Completed but subject to continuous revision.	Not separable from other activity.	Improved performance in all areas (3 blobs +). New locality management structure with deletion of less effective Case Support Posts and new Team Managers / Senior Prac. posts	Presentation made to SSD Performance Improvement Team. Team storyboards to be implemented in July.		
Introduce care management guide incorporating quality checks. Maintain and update to reflect Single Assessment Process developments with partner agencies.	JH RT KA	January 2004	Produced and introduced by OPS managers – will need further briefings / updates etc.	Greater awareness and consistency in following correct procedures.	First draft issued to staff. This is also a continuing action (rather than one that has a set completion date). We will need to update for Single Assessment, Locality Teams, E Records etc.		

Together with partner agencies, the Older People's Service should develop a framework to coordinate consultation activity. Obj. 3					
Recommendation	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
Action Build on positive start made by NSF OP Participation Co-ordinator with consultation plan for 2004/5. Agree plan in NSF Local Implementation Team. Steering Group includes NHS Public Patient Participation lead.	RT chairs multi-agency steering group.	Events started in 2003 – next event Feb 2004 and continuing through year.	£30k for Co-ordinator (NRF funds for 04/05) and substantial additional management time.	NSF participation programme completed covering all 8 Standards and standing NSFOP conference formed. The Healthy Aging event in Feb involved 150+ people. Better Hospital Care in April 60+. "Age Direct" formed.	Now implementing workplan for 2004/05 to link to Elderly Persons Forum and new assembly for older people.

Standard 2. Effectiveness of Service Delivery and Outcomes **Linked Scorecard Objectives 9, 11, 13**

The Older People's Service should continue to work with partner agencies to develop multi-disciplinary working in the provision of intermediate care services. Obj. 9					
Recommendation	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
Action The multi-agency Intermediate Care Group will continue to implement the IC Strategy and revise / improve the Strategy in response to new best practice research and guidance.	D.OPS (for PCT and SSD – BHRT also key partner)	Key dates inc. Day IC – Spring 04 and Grays Ct IC Centre spring 05.	Age Concern Contract. Grays Ct - £4.93m cap development. Rev. costs.	Maintain or better new DTOC target of 9. Complete IC developments – more detail in ICS and full action plan.	IC including Grays Court IC Centre developing according to plan. Delayed transfer of care on target (9).

Recommendation		The social services department should explore the potential of joint commissioning of occupational therapy services with partner agencies.			Obj. 11
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
Intermediate Care Strategy Group to review current mode of provision and agree with OP Joint Commissioning Manager the most effective OT commissioning process.	D.OPS CP.	April 2004.	Not specified at present.	TBA following review.	SLA with Havering PCT under discussion within IC Strategy Group – also links to Grays Ct model of care.
Recommendation		The Older People's Service should ensure that changes of home care provider are only made when there is a change in identified need and as part of a revised care plan. Obj. 13			Progress June 2004
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
The modernisation programme for Home Support has achieved substantial improvements in efficiency and effectiveness. We are working towards the direct HS Service being self reliant (e.g. not spot purchasing cover – the main cause of provider inconsistency) by April 2004.	Service Manger for HS.	April 2004	This will make more efficient use of direct provision (and external agencies).	Transfers now reduced to a minimum between services - subject to occasional need to take rapid action in the interest or safety of service users.	Transfers now at very low level – further improvements being implemented through PWC review action plan.

Standard 3. Quality of Services for Users and Carers – Information and Care Management Linked Scorecard Objectives 12, 14.

Recommendation					
The Older People's Service should provide performance information for teams to encourage managers and staff to evaluate and improve their performance. Obj.14					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
All teams will receive monthly management reports including hot spots and exception reports (which require action to address concerns). See also PI Improvement Plans in Standard 1.	D.OPS	Immediate	Key role for OPS Management Information Officer	Improved performance in all areas (3 blobs +).	Up to date performance on all PI provided to teams (and some new wall charts).
Recommendation					
The Older People's Service should develop a case file audit tool and introduce a programme of file reading, involving managers at all levels in the organisation. Obj.14					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
This recommendation is currently being implemented.	JH RT	Immediate	Time commitment to be evaluated during launch.	All files comply with Recording with Care standards and SWIFT is used fully and effectively.	The process has been initiated and will become established over the next few months.
Recommendation					
The Older People's Service should continue to promote the use of direct payments for older people and their carers. Obj. 12					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
A Direct Payments Strategy Dec 03 – March 04 (covering OP and Adults) is currently being implemented with assistance of the Independent Living Agency and other organisations.	Pete McDonnell (Adults) JH / RT	March 2004	Road shows, briefings, literature etc.	For OPS 15 new DP users by March 2004. Also explore potential for peer support with ILA.	We will work with the new DP lead and ensure local team targets for DP users. We have also ring fenced 30k of the Carers Grant for carers DPs.

Standard 4. Fair Access

Linked to Scorecard Objectives 4, 15

Recommendation		The Older People's Service should ensure that public information is updated and provided for older people and their carers in a timely way. Obj. 4			
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
"Providing Information" section included within file quality check process currently being launched.	JH RT	Immediate	Not applicable.	Improved D39 (statement of need / care plans).	Done and SON PI improving (now at 3 blob).
Fair Access to Care, BCHS Charter (multi agency) and Health and Social Care for adults and elderly people from black and minority ethnic communities published. New A-Z of Services being printed. Web site updated.	RT	Immediate	Production, publication and distribution costs.	Up to date information available.	Done.
Recommendation		The Older People's Service should ensure that black and minority ethnic service users and representatives are consulted and involved in the development of new services. Obj.15			
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
To be actioned by the NSF Local Implementation Team and NSF participation steering group (which reports to the NSF Local Implementation Team – previously known as the JCB).	D.OPS RT	April 2004	Not specified at this stage.	OPS able to identify bme user input at user casework and service planning levels.	Relevant PI are good – 3b - but further work taking place through NSF participation, Carers consultation, and formation of older people's assembly. NRF funded (p.t.) South Asian officer in place.

Recommendation				The Older People's Service should consider commissioning new services for black and minority older people and contracting services based in neighbouring councils. Obj. 15			
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004		
Develop the existing OP BME Strategy across OPS health and social care in the light of Impact Assessment including consultation.	D.OPS	June 2004	Potential need to identify / realign resources.	Evaluate through PAF E47 and E48, and PCT BME monitoring data (see PCT action plan).	Impact Assessment completed. First draft of action plan prepared. OMT to consider commissioning and practice implications.		

Standard 5. Cost and Efficiency

Linked to Scorecard Objectives 9,10,11

Recommendation				The council should continue work with partner agencies to develop a joint approach to commissioning and involve older people, carers and provider agencies in developing its commissioning intentions. Obj. 11			
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004		
This work is continuing and led by NSF LIT and the Joint Commissioning Manager for Older Peoples Services (now based at the Clock House). The full Action Plan and Service Commissioning Plan contains details of further participative approaches.	D.OPS	This is continuous activity.	Not applicable.	Demonstrable input into CI through involvement & forums representing VS, Independent Providers, Users and Carers.	Vol Sec and Home Support Forums and NSFOP events are all contributing towards this aim. New Res / NH forum to start in autumn.		

The Older People's Service should work with providers to promote quality assurance and develop shared ownership of person-centred care. Obj. 11					
Recommendation	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
Action There is an established forum for Home Support Agencies (inc Meals) and a new forum OP Vol. Sec. has recently started. A new residential / nursing forum will be established. The recommendation will be taken forward via contractual arrangements and forums, and new cross sector-training partnership.	CP JH RT TM	This work is underway – the new residential forum to be established by June 2004.	Substantial management time to organise and manage external relations	All forums established and making effective contribution to person centred care. A recent HS forum addressed the serious problem of distraction burglary, whilst the last VS Forum discussed hospital discharge.	This topic – in various guises will reappear on the agenda of all of the forums and in NSF consultation. New Home Support Structure Team Leaders will focus on quality person centred care.
The council should ensure that its policies and priorities for older people's services are not compromised by the planned reduction in budget. Obj. 10					
Recommendation	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
Action The FSS for OPS increases from £22.17m to £24.02m in 2004/05 and that actual funding for OPS will be approx 8% or £1.5-2m over FSS. The priorities are set out in the joint balanced scorecard, which is subject to corporate and joint monitoring.	D.OPS	Continuous activity with monthly management financial and activity reports.	As noted.	To be evaluated on the basis of performance.	Evaluated through Scorecard and PI performance. Anticipate overall PI improvement for 2003/4.

Standard 6. Management and Resources

Linked to Scorecard Objectives 17,18

Recommendation		The Older People's Service should develop a system of tracking and co-ordinating progress on major projects, which involves all managers. Obj. 17		
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date
To be developed with new D.OPS (see also Standard 1 Recommendation 2).	D.OPS	June 2004	Training time and costs.	Improved capacity to manage major projects. Formation of SAP / Locality Management group.
				Progress June 2004 We are doing this through OMT, Scorecard and SSI Plan monitoring. This report being an example of SSI monitoring.
Recommendation		The Older People's Service should improve the arrangements for involving staff in service developments. Obj. 18		
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date
Maintain quarterly newsletter, improve attendance / effectiveness of team managers meeting / evaluate team briefing system. Involve staff in specific development activities (e.g. OP Processes, Impact Assessments, Single Assessment...). All points inc of health staff. Training Manager involved in OMT and Team Manager meetings.	D.OPS RT JH SD KA	June 2004	Staff time.	Staff report engagement in service development.
				Progress June 2004 This is now being addressed through OMT and Team Manager meetings. The next newsletter will focus on performance. We also have a fortnightly "process group" to ensure that we set and maintain agreed ways of working and recording.

Recommendation					
The Older People's Service should carefully plan the introduction of new assessment and care management procedures and ensure staff are properly trained and supported.					
Obj. 14					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
A consultation launch of the new care management guide starts on 12/1/04 (this will include SWIFT – see next recommendation). A training programme has been devised to support improved assessment and care management practice. Further work is continuing on the development and roll out of the Single Assessment Process (SAP).	JH RT SD TM / KP	Immediate Training throughout 2004/5	Training programme agreed with Dept HR.	CM procedures fully understood and practiced by all staff. SAP tool and process operating for SSD / Housing and PCT staff.	The CM Guide has been launched. The next roll out of stage of SAP will focus on a locality team area. Electronic notebooks are also being used.
Recommendation					
The Older People's Service should identify the priorities for implementing the new client data system and ensure there is management commitment and adequate staffing to undertake the work.					
Obj. 17					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Resources	Outcome 31/03/05 or completion date	Progress June 2004
SWIFT implementation continues to improve with advances made since inspection. A staff support programme has been implemented to ensure that all recording backlogs are cleared (and not replicated).	JH RT MF	Immediate	Temporary staff used to assist with some backlog work.	SWIFT fully and effectively used both as data system and casework tool.	Swift records are now almost complete. Further developments linked to SAP and use of notebooks.

Summary act plan - May. Revised 14/6/04

THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION ARTS AND LIBRARIES**

BEACON COUNCIL STATUS – FINAL OUTCOMES REPORT	FOR INFORMATION	
<i>Beacon Council status is current from April 2003 to June 2004 and this report serves as a summary of the past 14 months.</i>		
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>Barking and Dagenham was awarded Beacon Council status in April 2003 for the theme 'Transforming Secondary Education' (TSE), one of six authorities nationally awarded for this theme. As a result of our successful bid, the council was awarded £50k to aid dissemination of good practice. The activities focused on the four key messages of our bid that we identified as central to improving secondary education:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reforming pedagogy 2. Vocational opportunities 3. Supporting vulnerable children 4. Using technology <p>We were required to attend a Learning Exchange with the other TSE Beacon authorities in central London in June 2003 and to host an initial open day during the autumn. These were then followed by other dissemination activities of our choice as outlined in a plan submitted to the Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) who run the Beacon Council scheme.</p> <p>The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) provide support for all Beacon councils and monitor the scheme for ODPM. All Beacon councils are encouraged to display at relevant conferences and participate in one-to-one peer support activities.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The activities carried out during the past 14 months; 2. The outcomes from Beacon Council activities; and 3. The Council is entitled to continue to use the Beacon logo with the theme and date. 		
<p>Contact Officer: Vanessa Orekan</p>	<p>Performance and Planning Manager</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 3048 Fax: 020 8227 3101 Minicom: 020 8227 3180 E-mail: vanessa.orekan@lbbd.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 In September 2002 the Council submitted a bid for Beacon Council status under the theme of 'Transforming Secondary Education'. The bid focused on the achievements of Barking and Dagenham over the previous decade, raising attainment at GCSE level from just 1 in 10 children achieving 5 good (grades A* to C) GCSEs in the early 1990's to over 42% in 2002.
- 1.2 Having been notified that we were shortlisted, the Beacon panel visited the authority in December 2002 meeting with senior officers, Members as well as head teachers, governors and students. Senior officers and members also gave presentations to a selection panel in London.
- 1.3 We were informed of our success at the end of March 2003 and a Beacon Project Team was established.

2. Dissemination activities

- 2.1 **June 2003 Learning Exchange** hosted by IDeA - The exchange began with a key note speech from David Miliband MP and concluded with an open forum discussion. Each authority held a workshop, repeated throughout the day; Roger Luxton, Director of Education, Arts and Libraries presented our borough's Beacon Council messages. With limited free spaces allocated to the borough, most of the project team was able to attend at some point during the day to give support and network with other authorities. There were around 100 delegates from across the country and Barking and Dagenham received some very positive feedback both verbally on the day and from the evaluation forms submitted by delegates at the end of the day.
- 2.2 **November 2003 Open Day** - The initial open day was planned for 14 November 2003 and the venue was Barking Town Hall. There was some vigorous advertising with e-mails and postal invitations to all LEAs and London secondary schools and advertisements in national educational press. The number of delegates was 32 above average for Beacon open days, across the Round 4 themes. Following an introduction from the Director, the four senior officers each held workshops on the respective key messages and a question and answer session closed the day. Feedback from the delegates through the evaluation was again very positive.
- 2.3 **March 2004 Two-day Learning Event** - The project team decided to focus its energies with a two-day learning event held 17-18 March 2004. This was aimed at practitioners, rather than strategic leadership, and was designed to give them the opportunity to spend a couple of days in the borough visiting schools and establishments to see our work in practice. Workshops were planned to cover the four themes – reforming pedagogy and using technology were combined, as in the classroom they are inter-related and inseparable. Due to similar activities in London at the same period, the supporting vulnerable children workshops were postponed to 1 July. Between 10 and 20 attended the various workshops held across the two days and there was some positive feedback though delegates would have like more interaction with students.

2.4 **Publications** - A Beacon brochure pack was available for the first event in June 2003, the Learning Exchange. A portable exhibition display was designed at the same time. Web pages on the council's web site were also added and these were updated throughout the 14 months with information on upcoming events. A generic e-mail (beacon@lbbd.gov.uk) was also set up for enquiries. Following the initial press release, we were invited to write for a number of published articles including: the IDeA Learning Activities handbook and Beacon website, distributed to all authorities and members, The Education Network (TEN) newsletter, and for an EMIE (Education Management Information Exchange) report.

2.5 Funding – the table below summarises the areas in which the funding was used (including VAT). Salary costs are largely those of the policy officer (grade PO1) leading co-ordination of the project (approx. 40% of workload was Beacon related during the September 2003 to April 2004 period). The salary costs also reflect the amount of salaried time spent on the project by senior officers within DEAL, including the Director.

Publications (design & print, includes the delegate packs & display for June 2003 Learning Exchange)	£12,193
November 2003 Open Day (includes advertising, catering, hall hire etc.)	£4,342
March 2004 Learning Event (includes funding for the vulnerable children workshop held 1 July 2004)	£4,471
Management of project (includes equipment and salary costs)	£28,994
Total	£50,000

2.6 During the 14 months of Beacon Council status, the authority received over 100 telephone calls, approx. 300 e-mails and (to May 2004) nearly 18,000 website hits.

2.7 The authority was involved in a couple of successful one-to-one support visits, namely a visit to Peterborough and visitors from Doncaster. In September 2003 the team bid successfully for a peer support project, to be brokered by ODPM for other authorities entitled 'Pedagogical leadership from the LEA'. The details of this project have yet to be finalised and agreed with ODPM.

3. **Conclusion**

3.1 There is no doubt that Beacon Council status enhanced the reputation of the authority and formally recognises the achievements of the Council to raise educational standards for children. However, several lessons can be learned for the management of any similar high profile award in the future.

3.2 Though we did have some focused marketing, there could have been more use of established networks. When discussing with other Beacon authorities, networking was the main method to increase interest and attendance.

3.3 Corporate Communications were very supportive throughout with regards to the events management and arranging the design and publishing of written information. They were invaluable.

- 3.4 The project team was limited in its response to attendance at other conferences and events because of the continuing day-to-day responsibilities of the team. The amount of time and effort involved in carrying out activities concerned with Beacon Council status should not be underestimated.

Background Papers

- Original Beacon bid papers
- Beacon Brochure pack
- Final progress report to IDeA

THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

ATTENDANCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF REVENUES, RATINGS AND VALUATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2004	FOR DECISION	
<i>This report seeks approval for attendance at the Institute of Revenues, Ratings and Valuation Annual Conference 2004 in accordance with the Council's Conferences, Visits and Hospitality Rules, which states that the Executive must approve such attendance</i>		
<u>Summary</u>		
The Executive is asked to agree representation of the Council by 2 persons at the Institute of Revenues, Ratings and Valuation (IRRV) Annual Conference and Exhibition which is to be held over a 4 –day period.		
<u>Recommendation</u>		
The Executive is asked to approve attendance of the Head of Revenue Services and one other officer to attend the IRRV Annual Conference 2004.		
<u>Reason</u>		
This report is being brought to the Executive for approval as the total cost of attending the conference will exceed £1,000.		
Contact: Bola Odunsi	Head of Revenue Services	Tel: 020 8227 2505 Fax: 020 8227 2574 Minicom: 020 8227 2413 Email: abimbola.odunsi@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The Institute of Revenues Ratings & Valuation is the professional body of Revenues & Benefits practitioners. The IRRV holds an annual conference & exhibition in different locations every year. This year it is being held in Brighton from 12th – 15th October 2004.
- 1.2 The annual conference and exhibition is regarded as a valuable conference promoting the Institute's purpose to maximise the contributions that Revenues & Benefits practitioners can make to the well being of communities.
- 1.3 Attendance at the IRRV annual conference is an opportunity to learn about forthcoming changes and share good practice operating within the Revenues & Benefits industry. It is also an opportunity to network with Revenues & Benefits practitioners from other local authorities and central government departments. This is very much in line with the community priority of "raising general pride in the Borough"

2. Detail

- 2.1 The Institute's mission is expressed through its policy work and research; the advice it gives to governmental and other agencies; its educational initiatives and promotion of standards of lifelong learning and teaching; and its national and international conferences, seminars and training programmes
- 2.2 This year's conference is based around the changes facing Revenues & Benefits practitioners in the near future. It will cover topics that include:
- ◆ The revaluations for both Council Tax & Business Rates
 - ◆ Progress on the Balance of Funding Review and the impact on Local taxation
 - ◆ Comprehensive Performance Assessment
 - ◆ Performance Improvement, Benchmarking & Use of new technology in Revenues & Benefits.
- 2.3 The conference will bring together a distinguished set of speakers and presenters with diverse expertise and backgrounds relevant to Revenues & Benefits. The programme has been put together by the IRRV with a range of partners to ensure it remains at the cutting edge of policy, practice and implementation on issues pertaining to the collection and enforcement of Local Taxation & effective and efficient Benefits Administration

3. Cost

- 3.1 The conference cost is £955 plus VAT per delegate (for IRRV members) and £1,014 plus VAT per delegate (non members). This includes accommodation, but does not include travel costs or expenses relating to subsistence.
- 3.2 The Head of Revenue Services is a member of the IRRV, but it is not yet clear who the 2nd delegate will be. The higher fee will therefore be assumed for the 2nd delegate. This brings the total expenditure on delegate fees to £1,969 plus VAT.

THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

ATTENDANCE AT THE SOCIETY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AUTUMN CONFERENCE	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>This report seeks approval for attendance at conferences in accordance with the Council's Conference, Visits and Hospitality Rules, which states that the Executive must approve such attendance.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree representation of the Council by 3 persons at the Society of IT Managers Autumn Conference 2004, which is to be held over a 3 day period.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to approve attendance of the Head of Information Management & Technology (IM&T), The Production Services Manager and The Technology Services Manager to attend the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) Autumn Conference.</p> <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>This report is being brought to the executive for approval as the total cost of attending the conference will exceed £1,000.</p>		
Contact Officer: Peter Millett	Production Services Manager	Telephone: 020 8227 2055 Fax: 020 8227 2060 E-mail: peter.millett@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) is the recognised body of Public Sector IT managers, SOCITM supports members in modernisation, best value and e-government programmes, the organisation works closely with national and local government to share best practice and achieve excellence in the delivery of public services.
- 1.2 The organisation hold two conferences one in the spring and one in the autumn, these conferences are held at various venues around the United Kingdom, the Spring one being a one day event and the Autumn one three days starting with a welcome on the Sunday evening.

- 1.3 The event combines Keynote speakers with workshops and an exhibition of relevant Information Technology software and hardware suppliers. At this time the full programme has not been established, however speakers already include Sir Michael Bichard, chair of the inquiry into the intelligence handling of the Soham murders, David Taylor author of *The Naked Leader* and Peter Hetherington regional affairs editor of *The Guardian*. Workshops include 'achieving a transactional status website, connecting to the NHS, achieving BS7799 the most widely recognised security standard in the world. The event also provides excellent opportunities to network with peers and colleagues.
- 1.4 Members' approval is therefore sought to approve the attendance of the Head of IM&T, The Production Services Manager and The Technology Services Manager at the SOCITM Autumn Conference.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 This years Autumn conference is being held in Edinburgh from 10th–12th October. The cost is £525 for the first delegate and £475 for further delegates from the same organisation this includes meals and accommodation. For three delegated the cost would be £1475 plus travel costs. he cost of this can be met from IM&T's existing training and seminar budget.

Background Papers

www.socitm.gov.uk/public/events/socitm+2004/default.htm

THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

Appendix B of this report is contained in the private and confidential part of this agenda. It is not for publication because it contains information regarding Discretionary Relief Awards to specific ratepayers which is not for public consumption - Relevant legislation: paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

ADOPTION OF A POLICY FOR DETERMINING RATE RELIEF AND RECOMMENDATION FOR AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>This report requires the Executive to make a decision regarding formal adoption of a policy for the award of discretionary non-domestic rate relief and to make a recommendation to the Assembly for an amendment to the Council's Constitution.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report provides a policy framework for the evaluation of requests for discretionary rate relief. The report also asks the Executive to make a recommendation to the Assembly for a change in the Council's Constitution in order for the policy to be effected.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree that the policy for the award of discretionary non-domestic rates relief (attached as Appendix A to this report) is formally adopted by the Council; 2. Recommend the Assembly to amend the Council's Constitution to delegate to the Director of Finance all initial decisions on the award of discretionary relief, and also decisions on appeals up to an annual cost to the Council of £2,000; 3. Recommend the Assembly that the Council's Constitution be amended to delegate to the Executive all decisions on appeals where the annual cost to the Council will exceed £2,000. <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>The policy will ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations, adopts recognised good practice, and that awards of relief are focussed on providing assistance to organisations which help the Council to achieve its Community Priorities.</p>		
<p>Contact Officer: Bola Odunsi</p>	<p>Head of Revenues Services</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 2505 E-mail: abimbola.odunsi@lbbd.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives the Council discretionary power to award relief from non-domestic rate relief in the following circumstances:
- To charities
 - To other not-for-profit organisations similar to charities
 - Where a property is only partly occupied for a temporary period
 - To relieve hardship
- 1.2 The Council's Constitution specifies that all applications for discretionary rate relief in excess of £2,000 must be approved by the Executive; decisions for smaller amounts are delegated to the Director of Finance.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The Council has no formal policies regarding awards of rate relief and consequently decisions are made based on custom and practice. There is no statutory appeal process and the absence of a policy establishing a local appeals process means ratepayers are denied any opportunity to challenge a decision.

Charities and similar not-for-profit organisations

- 2.2 There are currently 92 properties occupied by charities and 5 occupied by not-for-profit organisations receiving rate relief (as detailed in Appendix B). In the past relief has been awarded for an indefinite period and consequently many applications have not been reviewed since non-domestic rates were introduced in 1990.
- 2.3 The Finance Department commenced a review of these awards in March 2004. All recipients have been advised that their current entitlement will end on 31st March 2005, and that they will be invited to make a new application during the current financial year.
- 2.4 The review will enable applications to be checked to ensure they still comply with legal requirements and also enable the new awards to be made within the framework of this policy.

Properties only partly occupied for a temporary period

- 2.5 There is limited discretion in these cases. The Council can make a decision on whether to grant relief, but once allowed the calculation is based on a statutory formula. It is the current custom and practice to allow all valid applications since there is no cost to the Council in awarding this relief.

To relieve hardship

- 2.6 This power has been used exceedingly sparingly with only one award since 1990.

3. Reasons for the introduction of a formal policy

- 3.1 It is widely recognised good practice for an Authority to have a policy on the use of this discretionary power.
- 3.2 In December 2002 the Government issued revised guidance on discretionary reliefs and recommended that Authorities adopt formal policies which incorporated an appeals process. The guidance makes it clear that each case must be considered on merit, preventing a blanket policy on the award or level of relief, but recommends that Authorities have a policy framework within which decisions are made to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency in decisions.
- 3.3 Recent audit reports have highlighted the current process of awarding relief as an area of concern and the adoption of the policy, and associated procedures, will address these concerns.
- 3.4 The policy establishes criteria which should be considered when evaluating applications. These criteria will ensure that awards of relief are focussed on providing assistance to organisations which help the Council to achieve its Community Priorities and in particular that recipient organisations provide services which directly benefit the local community.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There is a cost to the Council in awarding reliefs as set out in the following table:

Type of rate relief	Cost to the Council (as % of relief awarded)
Charities *	75%
Not-for-profit organisations similar to charities	25%
Property only partly occupied for a temporary period	0%
Relief of hardship	25%

* Charities normally qualify for mandatory rate relief of 80% of the rates bill which is fully funded by the Government. The discretion applies to the remaining 20% of the bill.

- 4.2 The current annual budget for discretionary rate relief is £85K. It is anticipated the adoption of the new policy will be cost neutral.
- 4.3 The Policy will ensure that the overall cost to the Council is a factor that is considered in making a decision.

5. **Other implications**

- 5.1 Some organisations which have traditionally benefited from rate relief may fail to qualify under the new policy. It is recognised that the abrupt withdrawal of relief may adversely affect the financial viability of such organisations and a phased approach will be adopted for the withdrawal of relief in these cases. For 2005/06 the level of relief will be reduced by one third and then for 2006/07 by a further third, and all entitlement will cease from 2007/08.
- 5.2 Where it is established as part of the current review that an organisation no longer meets the legal requirements for entitlement, the award of relief must end on 31st March 2005. In these cases the Council may wish to consider whether it can provide financial assistance under other powers. These cases will be examined.

6. **Summary of the Policy**

- 6.1 The Policy establishes a hierarchy for decisions and appeals as follows:

Annual Cost to the Council	Initial Decision	Appeal Decision
Up to £2,000	Head of Revenue Services	Director of Finance
£2,000 and above	Director of Finance	The Executive

- 6.2 The Policy establishes the following principles:

6.2.1 Charities and not-for-profit organisations

- a) All awards will be for one year.
- b) All awards will be judged against set criteria including:
 - The extent to which the organisation directly benefits the local community.
 - The extent to which the organisation contributes towards achieving the Council's Community Priorities.
 - The cost in proportion to the benefits.
- c) A right of appeal and an appeals process.
- d) A standard format for application.

6.2.2 Partly occupied properties

Relief will be given in all cases where applications meet the legal requirements.

6.2.3 Relief of hardship

Relief will be given only in exceptional circumstances and where the ratepayer can demonstrate that payment of the rates bill will cause them serious hardship (financial or otherwise) and that it is solely this bill that is creating the hardship.

Awards of relief will not be used to assist a failing business, except where it can be demonstrated that it is in the interests of the local community for the business to survive, and that the rates charge is a significant factor in the solvency of the company.

In considering an award, due regard will be given to the legal requirement to take into consideration the effect on the local community of awarding relief.

Appendices

- A. Policy for the award of discretionary rate reliefs
- B. List of current recipients of discretionary rate reliefs

Background Papers

- ODPM guidance
- Audit report

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Policy for The Award of Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief to Charities and other Not-for-Profit Organisations

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Appendix A

Factors to be considered in making decisions

Introduction

1.0 Scope of this Policy

1.0 This policy relates to the rate relief that the Council has a discretionary power to award under Section 44a, Section 47 and Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988

2.0 The Reasons for this Policy

2.1 This policy has been agreed by the Council to ensure all ratepayers making applications for this relief are treated in a fair, consistent and equal manner.

2.2 This policy;

1. Sets guidelines for the factors that should be considered when making a decision to award or refuse relief
2. Establishes a framework to ensure applications are dealt with in an efficient manner
3. Sets out the delegated authority to award relief in appropriate circumstances
4. Establishes an appeals procedure for organisations that are dissatisfied with the Council decision.
5. Seeks to safeguard the interest of local taxpayers by ensuring that funds allocated for the award of discretionary rate relief are used in the most effective and economic way.

Part 1 – Relief for Charities and Similar Not-for-profit organisations

3.0 Legal Background

3.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Act 1998 gives billing authorities the discretion to award relief in two circumstances:

- a) Where the ratepayer is a registered charity or certain other charitable organisation
- b) Where the ratepayer is an organisation which is not established or conducted for profit and whose main objects are as set out below at 3.3

3.2 Registered charities are entitled to a mandatory rate relief of 80% for properties which are occupied for charitable purposes. The Council's has discretionary powers to award further rate relief of up to 20% (this is commonly referred to as 'top up' relief).

3.3 The Council has the discretion to award relief of up to 100% to organisations which are not established for profit and which meet the following criteria:

Either, the organisation's main objects are;

- charitable,
- philanthropic,
- religious

Or are concerned with either;

- education,
- social welfare,
- science,
- literature
- fine arts

Or, the organisation is a club, society or other organisation not established or conducted for profit and the rateable property is used mainly used for purposes of recreation.

3.4 The Council cannot award relief to itself or any other organisation which has the powers to raise, or precept on a Council Tax.

3.5 The amount of relief awarded is entirely at the discretion of the Council.

4.0 Legal Requirements – State Aid

4.1 There are European Union regulations which restrict the award of state aid and under certain circumstances the award of discretionary relief could be considered to be state aid.

4.2 These circumstances in which the EU regulations need to be considered will be where the organisation engages in commercial activities or competes with commercial bodies because of an activity it carries out. For example a not for profit training organisation that also provides training services to businesses.

4.3 If the organisation undertakes any commercial activity it must be commercially insignificant and localised so that there is no potential impact on intra-community trade, otherwise the regulations governing state aid will apply.

5.0 Cost to the Council

5.1 Relief is funded partly from the Council's general fund and partly by the Government through the Non-Domestic Rates Pool. The percentage of the relief that must be funded by the Councils is:

For 'top up' relief to charities	75%
For other discretionary relief	25%

6.0 The Application Process

6.1 Information to be provided to support applications

6.2 Before an application can be considered the Council must be satisfied that it has all the information necessary to enable it to make a fair consideration. For the purposes of efficiency all applications must be made on the standard application form set out at Appendix A.

6.3 In addition to the standard application form ratepayers will be required to supply supporting information such as audited accounts and articles of association. In some circumstances the Council may decide that it is necessary for one or more officers to visit the rated premises to establish further facts.

6.4 In some instances the Council may require the applicant to visit the Council's offices to provide verbal information in support of the application. Where a visit is required the Council will give a minimum of fourteen days notice of the date the visit is required.

6.5 The Council will not consider applications where the ratepayer has failed to provide information that has been requested, or where the ratepayer does not cooperate with the Council's request to visit a property.

6.6 It is recognised that some organisations may not currently keep records of sufficient detail to provide the information that is normally required to support an application. Where the Council is satisfied that the information is genuinely not available, and that the organisation has co-operated to provide all information that is available, the Council will consider the application based on the information provided. Only one application will be considered in this way, and future applications must provide all information that is required.

6.7 If the process of keeping record to the standard required will incur additional expense for the organisation it will be up to the organisation to decide whether the additional expense is worthwhile in order to apply for relief.

6.8 Persons who can make application

6.9 Applications must be made by the ratepayer.

6.10 Where the ratepayer is an organisation the application must be made by a person with the authority to act on behalf of the organisation. The Council may ask for evidence that the person making the application is entitled to act in that capacity.

6.11 Reapplications

6.12 Where an application has been refused either initially or following an appeal, further applications will not be considered within the same financial year except where:

- a) The use of the property changes, or
- b) The objectives of the organisation change, or
- c) There have been other changes that may affect the Council's decision (for example where an organisation has taken action to address an issue which had previously precluded an award of relief).

6.13 The decision on whether to consider a reapplication shall be made by the Head of Revenue Services for awards with an annual cost to the Council of up to £2,000 and by the Director of Finance in all other cases.

7.0 Applications Not Meeting Legal Requirements

7.1 Where an application does not meet the legal requirement (for example if an organisation is established for profit) the application cannot be considered.

7.2 On receipt of each application the Non-Domestic Rates Manager (or a suitable experienced officer of similar seniority) will assess whether it meets the essential legal requirements. Where the application does not meet those requirements it cannot be considered. The applicant will be advised in writing within two weeks of receipt of the application, giving the reason that the application does not meet the legal requirements.

7.3 Where the applicant disputes the decision of the Non-Domestic Rates Manager they should make a written submission to the Head of Revenue Services setting out their reasons for believing the legal requirements are met. The decision will be reviewed by the Head of Revenue Services whose decision will be final.

7.4 This process does not affect an applicant's right to challenge a decision by way of Judicial Review.

8.0 The Decision Making Process

8.1 All application will be considered on an individual basis.

8.2 Normally relief will be awarded where it is clear that the activities of the applicant are of direct benefit to the local community and assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities.

8.3 Relief will not be awarded to organisations whose activities are contrary to the principles established by the Council's Community Priorities.

8.4 Consideration will be given to the financial impact on the Council and the local community in making awards. Relief may be refused or capped if it is considered that the financial cost to the Council or the local community outweighs the benefits generated through the award of relief.

- 8.5 In order to ensure there is a fair and consistent approach to the award of relief, all applications will be considered within the guidelines of this policy. Details of the considerations to be made with regard to each application are contained in Appendix A.
- 8.6 A written record will be kept of the decision and of the factors considered in the process. This record will be available to the applicant free of charge on request.
- 8.7 The decision will be notified to the applicant in writing and where less than the maximum amount of relief is granted an explanation of the reasons why full relief was not granted will be given.

8.8 Authority to Award Relief

- 8.9 In the interests of efficiency, the authority to consider applications is delegated as set out below:
- **Awards with an annual cost to the Council up to £2,000: Head of Revenue Services**
 - **All other awards: Director of Finance.**

- 8.10 Details of the recipients and the amount of awards will be reported to the Executive annually.

8.11 Interest of Officer and Members

- 8.12 Officer and Members who have an interest in any aspect of an application for relief must not participate in the decision making process and must declare their interest.
- 8.13 Examples of interests include those in the following list. However, the list is not intended to be exhaustive.

- Membership of the organisation making an application
- A close relative who is a member of the organisation making an application
- An interest in the property for which the relief is being sought
- Membership of a similar organisation (e.g. a rival sporting club)

Where an officer is unsure whether they have an interest they should seek advice from the Head of Audit. Where a Councillor is unsure whether they have an interest they should seek advice from the Head of Democratic Support, or the Head of Legal Services as the Council's Monitoring Officer. These 3 Heads of Service (i.e. Audit, Democratic Support & Legal) may in turn need to liaise with the Head of Revenue Services on any case referred to them (e.g. where cases of conflict of interest will need to be monitored by Revenue Services on an on-going basis).

9.0 Calculation of relief

- 9.1 Relief will be calculated as a percentage of the rates bill.
- 9.2 If the rate bill reduces, for any reason, the relief will be reduced proportionately.
- 9.3 If the rates bill increases during the course of a year, for example due to an increase in rateable value, the amount awarded will not automatically be increased. However in all such cases the Council will reconsider the ratepayer's application and may award additional relief.

10.0 Right of Appeal

- 10.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision regarding discretionary rate relief made by the Council. However, the Council recognises that ratepayers should be entitled to have a decision reviewed objectively if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.
- 10.2 The Council agrees to abide by the following appeals process and aggrieved ratepayers should make an appeal in accordance with the process.
- 10.3 Ratepayers will be notified of the appeals process in writing at the time that they are notified of the outcome of their request for rates relief.
- 10.4 This appeals process does not affect a ratepayer's legal rights.

11.0 Appeals Process

- 11.1 Appeals may only be made by the original applicant. An appellant may appoint an agent act on their behalf and in such cases the Council will require written authorisation from the appellant before dealing with their agent.
- 11.2 Appeals against decisions made by the Head of Revenue Services will be considered by the Director of Finance. Decisions on appeals made by the Director will be final.
- 11.3 Appeals against decisions made by the Director of Finance will be considered by the Executive. Decisions on appeals made by the Executive will be final.
- 11.4 Applicants must make an appeal within four weeks of the issue of the letter notifying them of the Council's decision.
- 11.5 Applicants will be notified of the date on which the appeal will be considered, which will be within eight weeks of receipt of the appeal, or where the appeal is to be considered by the Executive, within twelve weeks. Or in both circumstances as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter.

- 11.6 Applicants may appeal against the decision to award or not award relief, or against the level of relief awarded.
- 11.7 Appeals must be made in writing and must giving the reasons why it is believed the decision should be amended. New or additional information may be included, but only if it is relevant to the decision making process.
- 11.8 The appellant does not have a right to appear in person but may make a request to present evidence in person. Such requests will be considered at the discretion of the Director of Finance or the Executive as appropriate.
- 11.9 The Director or Executive can request a meeting with either the applicant and/or the appropriate Revenues Service officer to hear evidence in person. The Executive may nominate a representative or representative to attend such meetings on its behalf.
- 11.10 Each application will be considered individually on its merit.
- 11.11 The appeal decision may be adjourned if further information is required from either party.
- 11.12 The applicant will be informed of the final decision, and the reasons for the decision within four weeks of the hearing.
- 11.13 Submitting an appeal does not affect the appellant's legal rights to challenge a decision made by the Council through the Judicial Review process.

12.0 Discontinuation of Applications or Appeals

- 12.1 If the Council has requested further evidence from the ratepayer and this has not been received within four week the application or appeal will be deemed to have been discontinued.
- 12.2 Ratepayers will be notified in writing in these circumstances.

13.0 Period of Rate Relief

- 13.1 Rate relief awarded under this policy will be awarded for one financial year except where it is considered between 1st April and 30th September where consideration may be given to awarding relief for the previous financial year.
- 13.2 Ratepayers receiving relief will be contacted and invited to reapply for relief for the following year.

14.0 Backdating of claims

14.1 The law allows claims received between 1st April and 30th September in any year to be backdated to 1st April of the previous year.

14.2 Requests for a backdated award of relief (i.e. for the previous year) will be dealt with in the same way as applications for the current year.

14.3 Relief cannot otherwise be backdated beyond 1st April of the year in which it is awarded.

15.0 Cancellation of relief

15.1 Relief will be cancelled if:

1. The applicant ceases to be the ratepayer
2. The property becomes empty or becomes occupied
3. The use of the property changes
4. The aims or objectives of the ratepayer change
5. There is an increase in the amount of rates payable

15.2 Where relief is cancelled for any of the reasons from (2) to (4) above, a new application may be made straight away.

15.3 Where relief is cancelled for reason (5) above the decision will immediately be reconsidered and a new decision made, based on the new amount of rates payable.

16.0 Notification of awards

16.1 The Council will consider applications within six weeks of the application and all supporting information being received, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

16.2 Notification of the outcome of the decision will be made in writing within fourteen days of the decision being considered.

17.0 Action to recover unpaid rates whilst a decision is pending

17.1 Once an application, or an appeal, is received no action will be taken to recover unpaid rates until fourteen days after the decision has been notified to the ratepayer.

17.2 In the event of an application or appeal being discontinued recovery action may be commenced seven days after the ratepayer has been notified of the discontinuation.

18.0 Promotion of the availability of relief

18.1 The Council will proactively promote the availability of discretionary relief, and this policy, in the following ways.

- All rate demands will have accompanying information explaining the availability of relief.
- Employees who deal with enquiries from ratepayers will be trained in all aspects of this policy and will actively promote the availability of relief when responding to customers enquiries
- Targeted take up campaigns will be run on an annual basis
- The Council will work in partnership with other organisations that may have a stake in this area.
- The policy will be published on the Council's web site and printed copies will be made available to ratepayers and other stakeholders on request.

19.0 Budget for Rate Relief

19.1 The Council will set an annual budget for awards of discretionary rate relief. The balance of funds within this budget will be considered when making decisions for the award of relief.

Part 2

Rate Relief for Properties that are Partially Unoccupied for a Temporary Period

20.0 Legal Background

20.1 Under section 44a of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the Council has a discretionary power to allow rate relief where a property is partly occupied for a temporary period.

21.0 Calculation of Rate Relief

21.1 The amount of relief is calculated on a statutory basis based on the rateable value of the empty portion of the property. The appropriate rateable value is provided by the Valuation Office Agency.

22.0 Cost to the Council

22.1 There is no cost to the Council since the relief is fully funded by central Government.

22.2 The Council recognises that awarding this relief is beneficial to local businesses and can contribute to the Community Priority of *Regenerating the Local Economy*. Partially occupied rate relief (also referred to as Section 44a Relief) will therefore be awarded in all cases that meet the statutory requirements.

23.0 Policy

23.1 The Council recognises the important part this relief can play in the economic regeneration of the Borough and it is the policy to award relief in all cases where the legal requirements apply and an application has been made by a ratepayer.

23.2 Relief can only be awarded where the partial occupation is of a temporary nature. Where the same area, or part of the same area, is, or is expected to be, unoccupied for a period in excess of one year the Council will not consider this to be of a temporary nature.

24.0 Applications

24.1 To qualify for relief the ratepayer is required to make a written application and must supply a plan of the property with the unoccupied portions clear identified.

25.0 Verification of Claim

25.1 The Council will require access to the property during normal working hours within two weeks of receiving the application, to verify the claim.

25.2 Further access will be required on at least one occasion each month, during normal office hours, during the period for which relief is being awarded.

25.3 Relief will not be awarded under any circumstance where it is not possible to verify the claim. Where a backdated application is received the ratepayer will be required to produce evidence to prove that the area was unoccupied for the duration of the claim. Acceptance of the evidence is at the discretion of the Head of Revenue Services.

26.0 Authority to Award Relief

26.1 Authority to award relief is delegated as laid out in items 8.10 and 8.11 of this document.

27.0 Appeals

27.1 The ratepayer may appeal against a decision to refuse relief within four weeks of being notified of the refusal.

27.2 Any appeal must be in writing and should set out the reasons for the appeal.

27.3 Appeals will be considered by the Director of Finance whose decision will be final.

28.0 Duration of Relief

28.1 Relief will end under the following circumstances:

- a) At the end of a financial year
- b) All or part of the unoccupied area becoming occupied
- c) A change of liable person
- d) Where all or part of the unoccupied area has remained unoccupied for one year

28.2 A new application may be submitted immediately if relief ends for any of the reasons numbered from (a) to (c) above.

Part 3

Rate Relief on the Grounds of Hardship

29.0 Legal Background

- 29.1 Under section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council has a discretionary power to allow rate relief to relieve hardship. The hardship does not necessarily need to be financial in nature.
- 29.2 In considering applications for rate relief the Council must have regard for the interest of the community as a whole. This includes the cost to the community and the benefits, or disadvantages of awarding hardship relief.

30.0 Calculation of Rate Relief

- 30.1 The amount of relief is calculated on a statutory basis based on the rateable value of the empty portion of the property. The appropriate rateable value is provided by the Valuation Office agency.

31.0 Cost to the Council

- 31.1 There is a cost to the Council of 25% of the total amount awarded which must be met from the Council's general fund. The remaining cost is borne by central Government.
- 31.2 Under some circumstances the Secretary of State may vary the percentage that is met by the Council.

32.0 Policy

- 32.1 The Council recognises that there may be occasional circumstances in which the use of this power is beneficial to either an individual ratepayers or the community. However, in accordance with Government guidelines it accepts that this power should be used sparingly and only in the most exceptional circumstances.
- 32.2 All requests for hardship relief will be considered on an individual basis and decisions will be made in accordance with this policy and where the Council is satisfied that:
- a) The ratepayer will suffer hardship if the relief is not granted
 - b) There is a direct benefit to the ratepayer, or the community, and there are no adverse impact to other ratepayers or the community as a result of awarding relief
 - c) The cost to local taxpayers is proportional to the benefits to the community

33.0 Applications

- 33.1 Applications must be made in writing by the ratepayer or their agent.

33.2 Applications must provide the following information:

1. A set of the most recent accounts
2. A set of the last audited accounts
3. An up to date trading statement showing the current financial situation of the business
4. Details of the amount of relief requested
5. An explanation of the benefits to the community arising from and award of relief.

34.0 Additional Items

34.1 The following items contained in the policy for the award of relief for charities and not-for-profit organisations will also apply in respect of applications for rate relief on the grounds of hardship.

35.0 State Aid Regulations	Items 4.0 to 4.3
36.0 Information to Support Applications	Items 6.3 to 6.6
37.0 Authority to award relief	Items 8.8 to 8.12
38.0 Interests of Officers and Members	Items 8.13
39.0 Appeals	Items 10.0 to 10.4
40.0 Appeals Process	Items 11.03 to 11.13
41.0 Discontinuation of Applications or Appeals	Items 12.0 to 12.2
42.0 Notifications of award	Items 16.0 to 16.2
43.0 Action to recover unpaid rates	Items 17.0 to 17.2
44.0 Promotion of Rate Relief	Item 18.1

45.0 Amount of Relief

45.1 Relief may be awarded as a fixed sum or as a percentage of the rates bill.

46.0 Duration of Relief

46.1 Relief will normally only be awarded retrospectively. However, where the applicant can show that the circumstances will remain the same for a period up to the end of the current financial year relief may be award for the remainder of the year.

In all cases relief will end in the following circumstances:

1. At the end of a financial year
2. All or part of the unoccupied area becoming occupied
3. A change of liable person
4. The property becomes empty, or become occupied
5. The ratepayer enters any form of formal insolvency
6. The ratepayers financial circumstances change (the ratepayer must inform the Council if their circumstance change)

47.0 Examples of appropriate circumstances

47.1 The following examples indicate circumstances where it may be appropriate to award relief. They are included in this policy in the form of broad general guidelines and are not intended to be prescriptive.

- a) The ratepayer is severely or terminally ill
- b) Without rate relief the business will close and deprive local residents of an essential service.
- c) The ratepayer's business has been detrimentally affected by circumstances beyond the ratepayers control and that do not constitute part of the normal risks in running a business (e.g. a natural disaster, an unusual or uncontrollable event in the neighbourhood of the business such as a fire making the immediate area of the business unsafe).

APPENDIX A

RELIEF UNDER SECTION 47 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1998

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR EACH APPLICATION

The following forms specify the consideration that should be made for each application.

An evaluation form must be completed for each application and retained as evidence to support the decision.

APPLICATION FOR 'TOP UP' RATE RELIEF – EVALUATION FORM

Name of applicant:

Address of applicant:

Rates Account Number:

Consideration	Conclusion
<p>1. Do local people benefit directly from the organisation? Guideline: An element of relief should only be awarded where the local community directly benefits.</p>	
<p>2. How do local people benefit financially in proportion to the cost of awarding relief? Guideline: Relief should only be awarded where the benefits are considered to outweigh the financial cost to the local community.</p>	
<p>3. Do the local activities of the charity contribute towards the Council's community priorities? Guideline: Applications for relief should be viewed favourably if the local activities of the charity contribute towards the Council's community priorities.</p>	
<p>4. Does the charity provide a facility that is of direct benefit to the local community? Guideline: Applications for relief should be viewed favourably if the charity provides a beneficial facility (for example a meeting venue for non-profit making groups).</p>	
<p>5. Does the facility provided by the charity replace or enhance a service or</p>	

Barking and Dagenham Revenue Services

facility that would otherwise have to be provided by the Council?	
Guideline: Applications for relief should be viewed favourably where the service provided by the Council	

Decision Details	
Percentage of relief awarded:	
Reason for decision	
Period of relief:	
Total amount of relief:	
Cost to the Council:	
Name of person making decision	
Job title	
Date	
Signature	

APPLICATION FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF FOR RECREATIONAL CLUBS, SOCIETIES OR OTHER ORGANISATION – EVALUATION FORM

Barking and Dagenham Revenue Services

Name of applicant:

Address of applicant:

Rates Account Number:

Consideration	Conclusion
<p>General Guidelines</p> <p>To qualify for relief an organisation should be open to all members of the community and should actively promote membership from minority groups. Any fees or charges should be structured in such a way that they will not exclude low income groups from participation.</p>	
<p>1. Is the membership open to all members of the community?</p> <p>Guideline: Relief should only be allowed where membership is available to all members of the community. It is not sufficient for the organisation to say that membership is open to all it must demonstrate that this is the case.</p>	
<p>2. Is positive action taken to encourage participation from minority groups?</p> <p>Guideline: A membership that appears to consist of only one category of people will not necessarily exclude an organisation from relief, but the organisation must be able to show that it actively encourages membership from all sectors of the community.</p>	
<p>3. Do membership fees exclude anyone? Can fees be paid on a weekly or monthly basis? Is there a scale of fees to encourage membership from low income groups?</p> <p>Guideline: Generally combined membership and participation fees and charges in excess of £5.00 per week should be considered to exclude low income groups.</p>	

	<p>4. Is specialist equipment needed? Is this hired? Do higher charges assist those on low incomes?</p> <p>Guideline: Organisations should ensure that the need for specialist equipment is not an impediment to membership and participation.</p>
	<p>5. What is the ratio of active (e.g. playing) members to inactive (social) members?</p> <p>Guideline: Applications should be viewed less favourably from organisations that have a high proportion of non-playing members, particularly where the organisation has a commercially successful bar, since this is may be an indication that the major activity of the organisation is as a social club rather than a sporting or recreational organisation.</p>
	<p>6. How would the funds that were freed up by the award of relief be used?</p> <p>Guideline: The organisation should have a proactive plan to use funds released through the award of relief to the benefit of members or the local community.</p>
	<p>7. Does relief provide a cost effective alternative to a grant?</p> <p>Guideline: If the organisation receives a grant from the Council the cost of this grant should be considered against the cost of discretionary relief. It may be appropriate to withdraw or reduce the grant if rate relief is awarded.</p>
	<p>8. Does it provide a service that the Council would otherwise have to provide?</p> <p>Guideline: Organisations that replace or supplement services that would otherwise need to be provided by the Council should be encouraged by the award of relief</p>

<p>9. What other sources of income does the organisation have and what is the rates demand as a the proportion of turnover?</p> <p>Guideline: Consideration should be given to the organisation's ability to fund itself rather than rely on local tax payers to provide a subsidy. Where the rates bill is a very small proportion of the organisations turnover applications should be viewed less favourably.</p>	
<p>10. Is the organisation affiliated to a national sporting organisation?</p> <p>Guideline: Affiliation to a national governing body will general indicate that the organisation is bona fide and applications should be viewed favourably.</p>	
<p>11. If the organisation relies on donations, what proportion of donations is used to the direct benefit of local people?</p> <p>Guideline: Consideration should be given to the proportion of income that is spent to the direct benefit of the local community.</p>	
<p>12. What is the composition of membership?</p> <p>Guideline: For the maximum amount of relief to be awarded the organisation's membership should ideally include people from all aspects of the local community and should be comprised mainly of residents of the borough.</p>	
<p>13. How much will the relief cost local taxpayers? Is this in proportion to the benefits?</p> <p>Guideline: The cost of relief to local tax payers should be considered in relation to the benefits to the local community.</p>	
<p>14. What would be the impact if relief were refused?</p> <p>Guideline: The impact of a refuse to award relief should be evaluated. If the impact is significant (e.g. the organisation would close) the</p>	

Barking and Dagenham Revenue Services

<p>award of relief should be considered as a means of ensuring the organisations viability.</p>	
<p>15. If relief were granted how would the funds that were freed up be used? Guideline: The organisation should be able to show that funds released as a result of the award of relief will be used to the benefit of the local community.</p>	
<p>16. Is there any information to indicate that the organisation is not bona fide, or that the proprietors are not fit and proper persons to receive relief (e.g. a history of failed charities etc)? Guideline: Relief should not be awarded in cases where there are substantiated doubts about the respectability of the organisation or the proprietors. When considering this factor it should be borne in mind that the ratepayer will be entitled to written information on why an application was refused.</p>	

Decision Details	
Percentage of relief awarded:	
Reason for decision	
Period of relief:	
Total amount of relief:	

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Cost to the Council:	
Name of person making decision	
Job title	
Date	
Signature	

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THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND ENHANCEMENTS	FOR DECISION	
This report seeks approval to actions to address ICT infrastructure issues.		
<u>Summary</u>		
This report advises the Executive of pressures on the Council's Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure which have come to light in recent months. Given the business-critical nature of these it is appropriate to consider use of corporate underspends from 2003 / 2004 to address them.		
<u>Recommendations</u>		
The Executive is asked to agree that:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional expenditure of £1,100,000 in 2004 / 2005 be approved on areas of ICT infrastructure (as set out in tables 1 and 2 of this report) which provide support for all council services; 2. Use be made of corporate 2003 / 2004 underspends to fund these actions; 3. The ICT infrastructure implications of new projects be evaluated so as to ensure funding of renewal and growth on a sustainable budgeting basis from 2005 / 2006 onwards; and 4. An additional staff resource of 1 full time employee in Information Management and Technology (IM&T) be approved to ensure that the operating software on the council's 3000+ computers are properly updated (as set out in paragraph 2.7 of this report) 		
<u>Reason</u>		
The council relies on the smooth running of ICT to sustain day-to-day activities and to support the delivery of all services. Without action to address the issues set out in this report there is a high risk of serious disruption to services.		
Contact Officer Alan Huff	Interim Head of IM&T	Tel: 020 8227 2015 Fax: 020 8227 2060 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 Email: alan.huff@lbbd.gov.uk

1. **Background**

- 1.1 It has come to light in recent months that there are a number of critical ICT growth pressures. Given the critical nature of these it is appropriate to consider the use of corporate 2003/04 underspends to address them.

2. **The Report**

ICT Infrastructure renewal and enhancements

- 2.1 There are several areas of pressure on the ICT infrastructure of LBB. This pressure arises from a variety of causes, namely:
- to replace software that will shortly become unsupported by the supplier (and hence putting services at high risk through not being able to recover from failures)
 - to provide capacity for growth in service demands that are already causing problems and/or are planned to happen within the next two years (enabling improvements in council service delivery e.g. for Customer First, and streamlining administration through roll-out of Oracle Financials/HR)
 - to address security weaknesses exposed by software virus attacks (better 'belt' and more 'braces')
 - to improve service delivery and quality in line with best practice (better management of desktops, servers and file storage to minimise staffing pressures to cope with increased demand)
 - to facilitate the adoption of technology that is new to LBB but is in growing use elsewhere (the range of hardware, software and networking products that LBB uses 'churns' constantly as innovations are adopted and outmoded technologies are dropped. When a new technology is adopted, it has to be tested for stable and secure inter-working with existing ICT infrastructure, new skills have to be absorbed and new policies and procedures have to be developed.)
- 2.2 There are some resources in the base budget of IM&T division for infrastructure refresh, but these are insufficient for the scale of the projects presented here. Wherever possible, use of existing resources is suggested below as the preferred source of funding.
- 2.3 The proposed renewals/enhancements of the council's ICT infrastructure to address the pressures outlined above are set out in tables 1 and 2 below.
- 2.4 Table 3 identifies, for information, further infrastructure renewal/growth pressures for 2005 / 2006 which will be submitted in due course to the due process. Further work is ongoing, notably in assessing ICT business continuity requirements, which will probably add to this list.

3. Sustainable Budgets

- 3.1 Executive is also asked to approve the principle of sustainable budgeting for ICT infrastructure: that is, that in future the estimates and charging mechanisms in respect of ICT should be volume-related so that growth is funded. For example, the growth in data back-up should be costed (profiled over time if appropriate) into all relevant corporate and departmental projects and budget provision made.
- 3.2 The application of best practice in respect of desktop management and server management has already suffered through unsustainable growth over the last few years. In particular, there is no resource available to assess and apply as appropriate the large number of operating system software changes issued (principally by Microsoft) in respect of PCs and servers.

4. Management of desktop PCs and servers

- 4.1 It is recommended that the equivalent of 1 full time member of staff be added to the IM&T division to improve and sustain management of desktop PCs and servers (in particular, to support the identification, testing and deployment of new software releases and patches). Cost £45,000 p.a. (to be funded in 2004/05 from savings within IM&T that have arisen due to delays in implementing the restructure). The workloads will need to be taken into account in the proposed IM&T staff restructure for 2005 / 2006.

5 Summary of attached tables

	Capital £000	Revenue £000	Total £000	Funded £000	Unfunded £000
Table 1					
Immediate priorities	245	34	279	49	230
Table 2					
Second priorities	870	20	890	20	870
Table 3					
to be considered for 2005 / 2006	340	0	340	30	310
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	1454	54	1509	99	1410

Notes:

- (i) total unfunded in 2004/05 (tables 1 and 2) is £1,100,000, which is the subject of recommendations 1 and 2.
- (ii) Another report to the executive on this agenda gives details of the 2003/04 outturn position.

Table 1. Immediate priorities

Ref	Project	Background	Justification	Initial Cost	Capital / Revenue	Comment
1.1	Air-conditioning Upgrade	The air-conditioning at the Civic Centre is in urgent need of upgrade to cope with this summer.	The computer room overheated last summer and there is even more kit installed now. Overheating leads to shut-down and can cause widespread damage to computer circuitry.	£30,000	Capital	This project has already started - tenders being sought.
1.2	Data Backup	The Tivoli equipment which collects and stores off-line copies of data from around 100 servers is struggling to cope with data volumes growing at a compound rate of around 50% per annum.	Containment of growth is planned as well – see projects at 2.3 and 3.1 below. However, significant growth in data volumes will arise from Customer First and from expanded use of the Oracle Financials/HR system	£100,000	Capital	
1.3	Antivirus	Current products and procedures in place have proved inadequate, causing substantial disruption to services while the virus intrusions are eradicated.	Each day that the ICT services are not available to the 3,000 or so council staff who use ICT substantially as part of their daily routine costs the council around £500,000 in salaries: if loss of ICT reduces productivity by an average of (say) 30% then the opportunity cost is £150,000 per day. The council lost about three days during May as a result of the Sasser virus.	£125,000 of which £25,000 can be met from existing budgets	Capital Capital Capital	Made up of five elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replace Sophos with better product £60,000 • software patch management software £15,000 (from existing budgets) • intrusion detection/protection £40,000 • Firewall rules review £5,000 (from existing budgets) • Network penetration test £5,000 (from existing budgets)
1.4	Network upgrades	As the council changes its occupancy and use of buildings (there are currently over 100 buildings attached to the main network), and as ICT usage across the network grows inexorably, changes and additions to the network infrastructure are required.	Wherever appropriate, costs are borne directly by the relevant service (eg occupying a new building). In other cases costs cannot be directly attributed when incurred.	£24,000 met from existing budgets	Revenue Revenue	As a general rule, current ICT budget mechanisms do not provide for growth in usage.

Table 1 total unfunded £230,000

Table 2. Second priorities

Ref	Project	Background	Justification	Cost	Capital/ Revenue	Comment
2.1	Desktop management	When a problem is reported on a PC, support staff usually have to attend in order to investigate the problem. If the problem prevents use of the PC, then disruption to service delivery is at best hours and at worst several days.	To improve the management of the desktop and proactively manage without having to visit machines. This will also help any rollout of new software. There will be improvements in productivity both for the users and for the desktop support staff.	£80,000	Capital	The cost includes implementation on existing PCs. New PCs will be purchased with the appropriate software already installed. Some (old) existing PCs will not be capable of remote management, and will be recommended for replacement by the relevant service department..
2.2	Windows server software upgrade to Windows 2003	The council has some 50 servers that run the operating software Windows NT, supporting many council service applications and all electronic file storage. Microsoft are withdrawing support for NT from December 2004,	There is a risk of 'showstopper' problems for which no new patches are issued – eg new viruses. This would immediately stop the council from using affected applications until replacement software could be installed (i.e. cost is not avoidable, but disruption is avoidable).	a) server upgrade £110,000 b) roll-out up to £50,000 (this allows for it to be done in two months – longer time but lower cost if some or all done in-house)	Capital	Includes the introduction of Active Directory (not available in Windows NT but bundled into Windows 2003) to improve management of users (including hot-desking, sign-on and authentication) and of all ICT assets. b) the cost would be marginally reduced if desktop management project at 2.1 were done first (less travel time/costs but more project management)
2.3	Email upgrade to Exchange 2003	a) Current software is Exchange 5.5. Microsoft are withdrawing support for 5.5 from December 2004, which means that thereafter software	a) There is a risk of 'showstopper' problems for which no new patches are issued – eg new viruses. This would immediately cut the council off from the outside world for a major (and	a) upgrade £230,000	Capital	a) Includes cost of server replacement and some consultancy. The range of costs covers differing

2003	means that thereafter software fault(s) could stop service delivery until replacement software was installed, tested and working – which would be a minimum of several weeks. b) E-mail files are growing at around 50% per annum compound. c) Email search facilities are currently inadequate to support the demands of the Freedom of Information Act from 1 st January 2005.	off from the outside world for a major (and growing) communication channel. b) E-mail storage and recovery times can be reduced, and growth managed properly, by the introduction of archiving software as part of the configuring of Exchange 2003. c) Requests under the FoI Act will include disclosure of emails. Existing methods could be used, in a relatively labour-intensive process, but not with any certainty of finding all the right information.	b, c) e-mail management (archiving and search) £100,000	Capital	costs covers differing requirements (to be investigated) in respect of the degree of resilience required for business continuity/ disaster planning purposes. b, c) e-mail management products include both archiving and search facilities
2.4	The Oracle infrastructure runs under NT which is de-supported from December 2004. There is also the need to increase the capacity for the growth in usage and the introduction of Self Service. There are a number of options that are possible and these are under investigation.	Oracle will not be providing support for NT once Microsoft ceases support. The current servers were installed in 2000 and are due for renewal. They are in any case inadequate to cope with the increased usage planned (roll out of 'self-service' facilities to more staff).	£300,000	Capital	It is recommended that the replacement equipment and software is installed in August to enable time for migration and testing by December 2004 (the software is horrendously complex, data volumes are massive, and financial probity has to be guaranteed.)
2.5	Proactively manage servers to minimise downtime and improve service availability.	Handle better the management of the council's large number of servers. Enable better remote management of servers where called for (eg where deliberately dispersed for business continuity/ disaster planning)	£10,000 from existing budgets	Capital	New servers will have management software specified as part of initial build.
2.6	Look for opportunities to reduce the number of servers, to manage staff utilisation better, and speed up the introduction of new software releases/patches.	Improve service availability and quality in line with best practice.	£10,000 from existing budgets	Revenue	Needs to be sensitive to apparently contradictory requirements to disperse servers for business continuity/disaster planning purposes.

Table 2 total unfunded £870,000

Table 3. Third priorities for information only (to be considered as part of the bidding process for 2005 / 2006)

Ref	Project	Background	Justification	Cost	Capital/ Revenue	Comment
3.1	File management	A recent file server failure has shown that recovery of the data was delayed partially due to the amount of non-active data that had to be restored	A simple file archiving solution that can separate out active and non-active data will speed up the time to recover the active data in the event of a failure. Better archiving will also reduce the time taken to back-up data each evening/week-end (and hence increase system availability to users)	£50,000	Capital	Is expected to more than pay for itself in reduced demands for back-up/restore capacity as data volumes continue to grow.
3.2	wireless networking pilot	DRE are to occupy part of Crown House, where there is no current council network infrastructure, and hence is suitable for a pilot. There is also interest in providing Wireless for the Committee rooms at the Civic Centre and Town Hall	Wireless networking using Internet protocols ('WiFi') is relatively new. Use is growing rapidly in all sectors, as it is flexible to deploy and suits the growth area of mobile working.	£30,000 from DRE budgets	Capital	There are some security concerns and the data transmission speeds are slower than for fixed LANs
3.3	Stand-by power supplies	Increasing numbers of servers sited at Civic centre means that utilisation of the standby-generator and uninterruptable power supplies (UPS) is currently 90% and growing.	Loss of power at the Civic Centre means loss of service, not just to ICT users in the building but throughout the council. The current facilities allow for continued running on batteries (UPS) for enough time to allow a diesel generator (standby power) to kick in and take over the load. When mains power is restored, the load automatically reverts.	Civic Centre upgrade £60,000	Capital	As part of disaster planning we are considering recommending more resilience for Barking to problems in Dagenham: this would probably remove the need to upgrade, but instead require the provision of standby power at one of the Barking sites.
3.4	Telephone switchboard capacity	Telephone traffic patterns will change as the Customer First call centre grows. In particular the use of any remote call centre agents (in offices away from Roycraft House – eg in a future One Stop Shop or working from home) will require additional provision.	Even if there is an overall reduction in internal traffic, it is likely that there will be increases on specific links, and in specific buildings, which will require additional line capacity and equipment upgrades.	£200,000	Capital	

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THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH AND
THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT**

COUNCIL LAND AND ASSET DISPOSALS : FUNDING NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND REGENERATION INITIATIVES	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report deals with optimising values from the disposal of Council assets to progress regeneration initiatives, estate renewal and achieve the decent homes target</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report outlines the basis to be established locally for the disposal of Council land and other assets. The report indicates the changes that have recently taken place and the challenges facing the Council in terms of regeneration, achieving the decent homes target and the aim of providing sustainable communities. Reference is also made to the issue of sub regional sharing of nominations for new social rented homes funded from external grant sources. The report refers to the new arrangements for pooling housing capital receipts and indicates that the proposals in this report would optimise the position for Barking & Dagenham.</p> <p>In view of these factors, the report proposes that in future if the circumstances are appropriate, options other than taking capital receipts for disposals are progressed. This would occur where the benefits for the community and Council can be demonstrated to exceed the monetary value of the receipt satisfying our legal obligation to achieve best consideration from our assets.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In principle to forego capital receipts for Council housing land / asset disposals where projects meet corporate objectives in terms of regeneration, the achievement of the decent homes target and the aim of providing sustainable communities. This would apply to Barking Town Centre and Thames View Estate. This would also apply where a clear case can be demonstrated to ensure value for money is achieved from the disposal of the asset. 2. To receive a detailed report on each proposal for a reduced capital receipt before commencement of that proposal (para 5.6) <p><u>Reasons</u></p> <p>The proposals will facilitate physical and social regeneration, estate renewal programmes and aid the Council meet the decent homes target.</p>	

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1. Background

1.1 To date the Council has generally sought to extract the maximum value from the disposal of land and other assets it owns in the form of capital receipts. These have then been used to support the Council's capital programme. Occasionally, subject to specific approval by the Executive, capital receipts generated have been ring fenced to a project associated with that area, recent examples have been

- Ibscott Close – sale of car park area and the receipt used on environmental improvements to that estate.
- Bevan Avenue and Ravensfield Close – sale of sites for new sheltered housing and development of hostel – receipt used to finance PCT health centre and community housing office building.

The Council's debt free status and the Government's arrangements for funding capital expenditure until April 2004 have made this a logical and prudent course for the Council to take.

1.2 This position has been underpinned by the requirement to obtain best consideration for disposals. Guidance from ODPM contained in Circular 6/03 allows local authorities to agree up to £2m reduction without recourse to the Secretary of State for approval provided that the LA is satisfied that the benefits from the scheme justify the reduced monetary sum. This means that specific consent is not required for the disposal of any interest, within the limit of £2m, in land which the LA considers helps secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of its area.

1.3 The provision of new affordable housing in Barking and Dagenham has until now been overwhelmingly funded via the Local Authority Social Housing Grant mechanism. Again the Council's debt free status made this an attractive route. In 2002/03, the last full year of LASHG, approximately £36 million investment for new and trickle transfer affordable homes has been achieved. Under LASHG all nominations to the affordable homes produced came to LBBD. For affordable housing projects soon to be in development where public subsidy was to have come via the Housing Corporation, considerable concern has been raised on the issue of sharing nominations to new rented homes with other boroughs. The resultant loss of nominations for the Council reduces the ability to meet local housing needs and delivery of the Housing Strategy. It is also likely to result in extra costs for Social Services, health services and Education.

2. Current Situation

- 2.1 The Government legislated to introduce new national pooling arrangements for capital receipts generated by local authorities from April 2004. This means that 50% HRA capital receipts realised from the sale of land and other assets are remitted to the Treasury for national redistribution (75% for RTB). Transitional arrangements for debt free authorities have been put in place for 3 years. An exception has been permitted where the local authority can demonstrate that the receipt will be recycled as part of a programme to either build new affordable homes or refurbish existing council housing to reach decent homes targets as, for example, part of an estate renewal scheme.
- 2.2 With LASHG having ended the principal source of Housing Corporation grant to finance new affordable homes is via the Approved Development Programme. Bids are made by RSLs to the Housing Corporation to fund projects (preferably with the support of the Local Authority).

A condition of ADP grant is that nominations to the new affordable homes are shared on a sub-regional basis. The calculation is that the host borough receives 25% of the nominations, the RSL is allotted 25% and the remainder is shared with other boroughs in the sub-region in line with their Housing Needs Index (HNI) scores. Our HNI would provide an additional share of just under 5%. There are significant exemptions from sharing nominations, for example estate regeneration schemes and the provision needed to meet decant requirements.

3. Future Challenges

- 3.1 The Council is required to reach decent homes standard for all its properties by the end of 2010. It has been made clear in the Housing Futures programme that this should be an integral part of regeneration plans for the borough.
- 3.2 Following resident, Member and other stakeholder involvement, schemes to achieve regeneration objectives, sustainable balanced communities and decent homes target may include, decant, demolition and disposal of some HRA properties / estates / land to facilitate redevelopment. This is especially likely in and around Barking Town Centre where the Executive has agreed the Barking Town Centre Strategy which includes plans for a net 4,000 new homes.
- 3.3 The Council's Housing Strategy 2003/06 identifies the need for 390 new affordable homes per year, with 30% of this number to be larger family size accommodation and 50% for single persons. These levels were determined to meet local needs; however, sharing nominations on the basis set out in 2.2 would make addressing local needs extremely difficult. This situation would be made even more challenging with the need to decant households as part of major estate renewal schemes.

4. Options for estate renewal and achieving decent homes

- 4.1 The choice in delivering these improvements for the community, which will also aid the Council in terms of the costs of meeting the decent homes target, will be that the Council can either:

- 4.1.1 Look to maximise capital receipts from developers and / or RSLs and secure the new affordable homes created through Housing Corporation grant. However, to do so will mean that nominations will be shared (as shown in 2.2). Sharing of nominations will reduce the Council's ability to be able to progress the decanting necessary to take forward the reconfiguration and improvement of estates and in terms of Barking Town Centre would have a significant adverse impact on delivering the agreed strategy.
- 4.1.2 Consider not taking a capital receipt from the developer so that the Council can better gain its broader objectives for physical and social regeneration of areas. There would be greater scope in this scenario for new market price homes cross subsidising new affordable homes, refurbishment of existing Council properties with either no or greatly restricted need for grant and the provision of social infrastructure. This would result in more sustainable communities and potentially less demand on essential services, particularly education, social services and health.

This approach would particularly support the regeneration of Barking Town Centre, and each of the sites would be subject to a separate report to the Executive outlining potential benefits. A list of probable sites is attached as an appendix.

5. Proposal and justifications

- 5.1 The approach indicated in 4.1.1 might lend itself to relatively small scale and piecemeal redevelopments in authorities which have low demand for affordable housing. This does not match up to the challenge facing nor ambition of Barking & Dagenham.
- 5.2 The proposal in 4.1.2 would be more relevant for Barking Town Centre regeneration and developments associated with London Riverside – for example estate renewal for all or part of Thames View Estate. This is so because for such large scale schemes long term partnerships will need to be formed with developers and possibly English Partnerships and RSLs. These might take the form of joint venture companies – with the Council's stake being the land and other assets contributed. To deliver the outcomes for the community and Council there will be a need to realise the optimum value of the land which is likely to mean raising the density levels of homes. In doing so it will be of critical importance to ensure the highest quality of new building and public realm.
- 5.3 A potential advantage to this kind of arrangement would be that the Council will be full partners in these projects, with Members represented on the decision making bodies. Community involvement would be secured in the ownership and management of the affordable homes which are created – either by the developing RSLs being required to establish local housing companies or via co-operative developments.
- 5.4 A further advantage to the Council and local community would be that by pursuing the approach in 4.1.2 either no or a much reduced incidence of sharing of nominations to the new affordable homes would arise.

- 5.5 There is an additional financial justification for taking this course. Under the new national pooling of HRA capital receipts, the percentages shown in para 2.1 will be lost to the Council unless the sums realised are specifically ring fenced to other affordable housing projects within a programme. It is important to confirm that the land disposals which have been agreed by the Executive and help underpin the Council's current capital programme are unaffected by the proposal in this report.
- 5.6 It is therefore proposed that no capital receipts will be sought where disposals of Council land or other assets are required to bring forward major regeneration, estate renewal and achievement of the decent homes target. This would be particularly relevant in Barking Town Centre, London Riverside and Marks Gate. It would be subject to consideration of the balance between the potential monetary receipt and the value to the Council and community of the project. In order to pursue the proposal it is essential that such an option does not expose the council legally and that value for money can be demonstrated in relation to the asset forming a contribution to the proposed developments.

No demands will be placed on the capital programme for social or environmental infrastructure within these areas. In terms of Barking Town Centre this may mean that all Council owned land is included because there are a number of other sites outside the housing estates which will generate housing development and a demand for social infrastructure. An appraisal process involving Finance, Property Services, Regeneration and Housing & Health will be established to ensure that benefits would be optimised and that the balance between the potential monetary receipt and the value to the Council and the community of the project is properly appraised in addition to ensuring that the council's legal obligation is fully met. As indicated in 4.1.2, for every future scheme a report will be brought to the Executive for approval before any decision is made on a reduction in the level of capital receipt.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The 2004/05 Revenue and Capital budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the Council commit to:
- the use of existing and forecast capital receipts to fund the Capital Programme
 - the policy of remaining debt free until at least 2006/07
 - an investment strategy based on the budget and MTFS
 - revenue consequences of the capital programme and the investment strategy.

As stated in para 5.5, the proposals in this report do not impact upon current identified capital receipts. The current HRA disposal programme (excluding RTB) forecast is that only £4.3m of capital receipts will be generated over the next 3 years. It should prove possible to achieve this level from disposals outside Barking Town Centre, Thames View Estate and Marks Gate estate.

- 6.2 Under the new capital finance regulations a proportion of future Housing capital receipts are required to be paid into a national pool for redistribution. There are no pooling arrangements for receipts generated by non housing asset disposals.

The regulations provide transitional arrangements for debt free authorities for the next 3 years (75% of the figure to be paid into the national pool can be retained in 2004/05, reducing to 25% in the third year).

- 6.3 The regulations permit the pooling to be reduced to the extent that the Council invests in affordable housing and regeneration initiatives. This could mean that foregoing or using the capital receipt in this way may benefit Barking & Dagenham by not paying capital receipts into the national pool. However, this dispensation only applies to HRA asset disposals excluding sales of Council dwellings (RTBs). Therefore, the estimated saving to the Council on the projected £4.3 million of capital receipts from HRA disposals will be £600,000.
- 6.4 If future capital receipts are to be potentially redirected to affordable housing and regeneration initiatives, then the full financial implications will need to be thoroughly addressed in each case particularly concerning:
- Impact on delivery of the capital programme and impact on other services
 - The ability to remain debt free/returning to date earlier than anticipated
 - Revenue consequences of both the capital programme and investment strategy.
- 6.5 In agreeing the proposals in this report the following needs to be considered as this approach may help match funding and leverage for attracting both external capital and revenue funding
- the creation of arrangements such as joint ventures may require resources for up front costs. These are not quantifiable now but the Council will need to consider all the relevant revenue and capital resource implications as part of the Council's annual budget process.

7. Consultation

The following were consulted in the preparation of this report:

LDA
Finance
Property Services

There were no Background papers used in the preparation of this report.

LONDON ROAD/NORTH STREET

This project is to redevelop the existing residential, community and retail units. It is anticipated that the redevelopment will consist of high density and high quality homes, community, retail units and public realm area. Residential will consist of shared ownership, intermediate rent, key worker and socially rented homes and properties for sale.

THE GASCOIGNE ESTATE

This is the Council's largest flatted estate consisting of approximately 2,400 high rise and low rise flats. It is anticipated that the future development on the estate will provide high quality residential design, increase the level of density, deliver sustainable development and provide a more balanced mix of tenure.

AXE STREET CAR PARK

This development will provide the community with new socially rented, private sale and key worker residential homes. It is envisaged that the development will be eco-friendly, sustainable, and maintain the high quality design and build now being pursued for any new development within the Borough.

LAND at CAMBRIDGE ROAD

Cambridge Road is a prominent site given its proximity to the station, and redevelopment of this area will further enhance the proposed station quarter. . It will also provide housing that will be innovative in design and build as well as provide further housing for key workers, shared ownership and for private sale.

In addition to these Council HRA sites in Barking Town Centre, further redevelopment proposals are likely to arise in relation to the Lintons and Harts Lane estate.

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THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH AND
THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

GASCOIGNE ESTATE – REGENERATION PROGRAMME	FOR DECISION
<i>This report deals with proposal for the regeneration of a major Council Estate.</i>	
<u>Summary</u>	
This report presents to the Executive a proposed programme and method to deliver the effective regeneration of the Gascoigne, it details;	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background and an overview of past regeneration projects • Current and emerging local, regional and national policy influences. • Contextual information for the Town Centre wider regeneration, Housing Futures and the Ann Power Draft Development Framework for the London Thames Gateway. • The proposal for a Joint Venture or Public Private Partnership (JV/PPP) to deliver regeneration. • Basic Development Principles on which to base all future work 	
<u>Wards Affected</u> – Gascoigne.	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
The Executive is asked to agree:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Development Principles for consultation and further development; 2. In principle to the proposal for the regeneration of the Gascoigne to be delivered by a JV/PPP in conjunction with the Housing Futures Project; 3. To waive the Council's Contract Rules to allow the immediate appointment of Beha Williams Norman to assist with the development of a model for the delivery partnership and a brief to tender for a partner at an estimated fee of £16,000 plus VAT; and 4. The proposed programme. 	
<u>Reason</u>	
To bring forward the most effective method of delivery for the comprehensive regeneration of the Gascoigne Estate and meet agreed project plan timescales, necessary to meet ODPM sign off deadlines.	

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1. **Background**

- 1.1 An overview of the background to the Gascoigne Estate and past Regeneration projects is contained in appendix 1. The last major published plan for Gascoigne regeneration was the Estate Action plan in 2000.
- 1.2 The Estate Action Plan did not have a robust financial feasibility or options study to enable delivery and also proposed a reduction in density which is not now viable due to changes in grant criteria and cross subsidy arrangements. It is also not compliant with the Sustainable Communities Plan, the London Plan or the Barking Town Centre Framework Plan (see appendix 2).

2. **Current situation**

- 2.1 The Barking Town Centre Framework and Action Plan presents a bold vision of Barking town centre as a lively, urban mixed-use town centre, incorporating housing, leisure, employment and retail uses with a quality transport hub at its heart.
- 2.2 The Gascoigne estate, currently 98% social rented housing, is seen as key to the regeneration of the town centre, enabling a step change in the housing market within Barking and affect positively the viability of Barking Town Centre. This is in line with Anne Power's Draft Development Framework for the London Thames Gateway, whose essential starting point for development is to increase the density of existing neighbourhoods by building out from established Town centres.
- 2.3 To move forward with any programme to regenerate or renew the Gascoigne Estate a number of tenants will have to be decanted. To ensure that those who want to return can do so and that temporary moves are kept to a minimum a development phasing plan will need to be developed. The table in Appendix 3 shows proposed developments across the Town Centre and the rest of the Borough which depending on timing will assist in providing decant accommodation.
- 2.4 More detailed work is necessary to identify likely numbers of decants, a detailed strategy will be needed to ensure that this is planned and managed so as to create as little disruption as possible to the existing community.

- 2.5 A new Stock Condition Survey is currently being carried out for the Housing Futures Project which will give much clearer indications of the likely cost and viability of refurbishment across the Estate. Previous estimates have been in the region of £70m, this high cost is one of the main drivers for looking for a localised solution for the area.

3. The Way Forward – Delivering a Vision

Development Principles

- 3.1 A lot of the work completed for the Estate Action plan is still valid and along with the principles emerging for all Town Centre Regeneration projects can be used to form the basis of the brief to appoint a partner. They are;
- Community Involvement at all stages.
 - Strong visual and pedestrian linkages between the River Roding and Town Centre, via the High Street Network.
 - Street patterns to be restored removing the ‘the estate feel’.
 - High quality urban design standards to provide an interesting "entry point" to Barking and high quality accommodation standards.
 - The correct level of social infrastructure, particularly schools and health facilities.
 - Innovative and leading sustainable development outcomes.
 - Demonstration of the appropriate level of density taking into consideration policy objectives up to 50% increase in number of homes.
 - Delivering sustainable communities through a housing mix of 70% affordable and 30% private sale
 - Continue with addressing community safety and Estate Management issues as a priority whilst regeneration plans are made.
 - Introduction of some mixed use including compatible employment uses.
 - Creation of smaller neighbourhoods.
 - Development of a buffer zone between the employment land and the Estate at the southern end near the A13.
 - Flexible allocations policy's, local lettings and use of phasing to minimise decants and ensure those who want to remain can do so.
 - True pepper potting of all tenures throughout the new development areas
 - Any refurbished homes to fully meet Decent Homes Standard Plus

These will be subject to wider consultation and development.

Delivery vehicles

- 3.2 To deliver a regenerated Gascoigne and fulfil the requirements of the ODPM stock option appraisal (Housing Futures) a number of options need to be examined. A variety of options may need to be combined to deliver regeneration in an area as large and complex as this, Housing Futures has already identified Gascoigne as an area suitable for a local solution this is most likely to have private sector involvement. Developers wanting involvement in the regeneration of the Gascoigne have approached the Borough.

- 3.3 An investigation of similar approaches by a Private Sector developer in Salford found that whilst the basic premise of the model worked the local housing market, and needs for affordable housing mix were very different from this borough. Legal and professional advice taken during this investigation also indicated that a far more robust procurement strategy was needed, including the requirement for a project of this size and value to go through an OJEU (European procurement) process.
- 3.4 This advice also indicated that the Borough should have a clear view of it's vision for the area and ensure that this is reflected in the brief for Tender, this will ensure that the developer does not have control of Master Planning, The development principles stated above will be the basis for this vision.
- 3.5 It is therefore proposed that we use our existing Housing Futures Consultant Beha Williams Norman to assist us in developing a model for a Joint Venture with the private sector taking into account the following issues;
- Procurement issues – OJEU.
 - Legal agreements required.
 - Financial feasibility.
 - Links with the Housing Futures Project and use of the work being completed by Beha Williams to inform our brief for a partner.
 - The Council and the community having a clear vision and principles agreed for the estate.
 - Involvement of existing partners (LDA/EP/Housing Corporation/GLA) in the process for selection and the development of the brief.
 - The impact of the forthcoming UDC and that planning powers will rest with the UDC

This work needs to be undertaken urgently to allow for completion within the agreed project plan timescales, necessary to meet ODPM sign off deadlines.

- 3.6 Beha Williams Norman estimate that the fee for this work would not exceed £16,000 plus VAT, which added to their existing £80,000 contract for Housing Futures totals under the EU procurement threshold for services of £150,000.
- 3.7 All options for the regeneration of the Gascoigne Estate must ensure that Member, resident and staff involvement and consultation is robust and reaches the widest possible audience. The Housing Futures project gives us the opportunity in the early stages to work with the appointed Independent Tenant Representative to make the obvious links between Housing Futures and Regeneration.

4. Conclusion – Next Steps

- 4.1 The proposed programme below sets the next steps to take the option of a partnership forward. Delays in this project in the past have led to a lack of trust from the community. The next steps need to be quick but should still consider all the legal and financial options fully and link with Housing Futures. Localised and mixed approaches to major Estate Regeneration schemes will need to be signed off by the ODPM.

- 4.2 This proposal should it receive approval can be resourced by the existing Housing Regeneration Team for the first stages with the support of the Regeneration Implementation Team, Property and Landlord Services. It is envisaged that when the model is developed a full resource plan will be needed to identify a project team to take the future stages forward.
- 4.3 Project Management arrangements would be funded by the partner and the brief would clearly state the links to be made with the forthcoming Barking Town Centre Business Plan
- 4.4 The following is a suggested programme to address the issues in this document and move the project forward with the full support of the Members, community, and partners.

Date	Action
July 2004	Present to the Lead and Ward Members
July 2004	Report to The Executive
July 2004	Undertake risk analysis and validation work on proposed approach and programme
July 2004	Appoint a consultant to develop a model and brief for the proposed JV/PPP to ensure links with Housing Futures Behr Williams will be approached to complete this work. The work to develop the model will take into consideration the legal, procurement, development and financial viability.
Aug 2004	Contract initiation.
Aug 2004	Brief resident and community groups including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gascoigne Regeneration group • Wider community and Tenants groups, making links with the Housing Futures ITA
Oct 2004	Model and brief for Partner competition completed.
Oct/Nov 2004	Report to Regeneration Board and Executive for final agreement of brief.
Oct 2004	Set up Panel including Members, Partners etc to evaluate and appoint JV/PPP Partner.
Oct/Nov 2004	Advertise for expressions of interest including OJEU
Dec 2004	Shortlist potential partners.
Jan 2005	Short listed Partners to submit full submissions
Feb 2005	Interview and make decision
March 2005	Legal and financial feasibility testing and agreements in place
April 2005	Formal appointment of Partner.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The contents of this report have been fully discussed with the Lead Members for Health Housing and Social Care and Regeneration along with the Ward Members for Gascoigne Ward. In addition the development principles have been developed to this stage for further consultation from meetings held with the residents and community at the time of the original action plan and since that time by the Gascoigne Regeneration Group.

Background information Gascoigne Estate

Background

The Gascoigne Estate, is the authority's largest recognised "Estate". It was constructed between 1966 and 1971 following a slum clearance programme to demolish Victorian terraced housing in a traditional street grid. It comprises 22 high rise blocks and low rise flats with a very small number (12) of houses along Gascoigne Road. The total number of homes within the Estate footprint is approximately 2400, around 1000 of these are within the high rise blocks, in addition the estate encompasses;

- A Primary School
- Two Community Centres
- A small parade of shops
- Advice Centre
- Health Centre and a Doctors' Surgery
- A sheltered housing complex
- Social Services Family and Adult Centres.

The early Regeneration projects were developed following full consultation with local residents and were funded from the Councils Capital works programme and concentrated primarily on environmental improvements.

In 1997/8 an Estate Action Plan was completed, this document was a profile of the Estate with an analysis of the needs and opportunities and current (at the time) local regional and national strategies and policies. It states objectives for the Estate in line with the Boroughs 1997/2000 Housing Strategy: -

1	To overcome major structural defects which require substantial capital resources in maintenance terms
2	To provide more appropriate accommodation reflecting the needs of the estate
3	To redevelop parts of the Estate to help reduce densities
4	To diversify tenure on the estate to help create more socially and economically balanced communities
5	To promote employment and training schemes with the local community
6	To promote social care with the local community
7	To promote crime prevention initiatives and community safety with the local community

Following the agreement of the Estate Action Plan, national, regional and local policy was reviewed. In addition the Borough undertook a Housing Policy Commission Study to specifically consider the Council's longer term strategic approach towards housing within the Borough, and set a more coherent vision for the future.

These reviews have shifted policy towards a more sustainable development agenda, with a focus on delivery of quality affordable homes. There has also been a move towards promoting greater choice in the housing market with a shift to a range of types of affordable homes, with Council not being direct providers of new affordable rented housing. Influences include:

- Local Government Finance Act
- The Mayors London Plan 2004
- The Decent Homes Standard
- Housing Corporation new funding regime

Allied to these changes have been the governments Sustainable Communities Plan and the need to look at the intensification of the use of brownfield land within existing accessible locations. Barking has been identified as one of the key areas of growth for the London Thames Gateway, which is Europe's largest and most ambitious regeneration initiative.

A team at the London School of Economics, headed by Professor Anne Power have been working on a Draft Development Framework for the Thames Gateway on behalf of 11 London boroughs. The findings from this report advocate that an essential starting point for development in the Thames Gateway is to densify existing neighbourhoods, by building out from established Town Centres and maximising on the opportunities of infill and windfall sites. By working out from Town Centres, delivery can happen more quickly and cheaply as the bulk of necessary infrastructure is already in place. However, it is recommended that densities must be intensified in order to sustain both the physical and social infrastructure of a Town Centre.

The Council has restructured the Corporate Regeneration Team to enable delivery of the regeneration agenda and has set up a dedicated team to work on the Barking Town Centre Strategy. In addition Barking Town Centre Partnership and Strategy group have been formed to ensure implementation of this vision, this has brought in greater involvement from external partners, including:

- The London Development Agency
- The GLA - Architecture and Urbanism Unit
- Transport for London
- The Housing Corporation
- English Partnerships
- Thames Gateway London Partnership

Housing Development projected completions

Development	Total units	Affordable units (inc general needs rent, intermediate rent and shared ownership)	Year of completion
Barking Town Centre			
St Anns*	125	88	2004/5
Lindsell Road	12	12	2004
Abbey Road	196	46	2005/6
Freshwharf	900	315	2006-8
Tanner Street (CBW)*	160	110	2005/6
Tanner Street *	48	12	2004
Harts Lane	400	140	2007-9
Station Quarter	600	210	2006-10
Town Square	350	124	2006/7
Axe Street	100	100	2005/6
Foyer	118	118	2006/7
Triangle	70	28	2005/6
Sub Total	3079	1303	
Barking Riverside			
Barking Reach	200	70	2007/8
Sub Total	200	70	
Rest of the Borough			
Lymington Fields	700	350	2006-10
Blackbourne Road	82	36	2006
Reede Road	247	70	2006
Digby Gardens	37	27	2005/6
High Road C/Hth	30	6	2005
Bromhall Road	168	38	2004
Highview House	20	12	2005
Hedgemans Road	178	57	2006
Rugby Road	15	15	2005
Thaxted House	12	12	2005
Sub Total	1489	623	
Total	4768	1996	

* Currently on site

THE EXECUTIVE**20 JULY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH**

SERVICE CHARGES FOR COUNCIL TENANTS – MOBILE SECURITY PATROL	FOR DECISION	
<i>This report includes recommendations, which are the Executives' Decision.</i>		
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>On 17 September 2002 a report was tabled before the Executive that included proposals on the use of service charges to provide added value to the service received by Tenants. Members agreed that a mobile security service was one such additional service that could be made available.</p>		
<p>Following consultation with residents, the Gascoigne Estate was used as a pilot to assess the impact and benefits of such a service. The funding for the pilot was found from existing H & H budget allowances, in addition a contribution from the NRF enabled the pilot to be extended a further three months. The success of the scheme has been demonstrated by the drop in reported incidences of anti social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti. A random survey of residents on the estate confirmed that 80% of those surveyed were aware of the patrols and would wish the service to continue.</p>		
<u>Recommendation</u>		
<p>The Executive is asked to agree to the introduction of a service charge to cover the costs of providing an enhanced mobile security patrol subject to consultation with tenants and leaseholders, at a weekly cost of £2.00.</p>		
<u>Reason</u>		
<p>To enable rents to better reflect tenants choice of services and their housing type.</p>		
Contact : Joan Prior	Community Housing Manager	Tel: 020 8227 3820 Fax: 020 8227 3899 Minicom: 020 8227 3775 Email : joan.prior@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 In December 2002, following consultation with residents and Ward Members of the Gascoigne Estate, a Mobile Security Patrol was employed to patrol the estate between 5 p.m. and 1 a.m. 365 days a year. This was one of many measures used to address residents concerns of increased acts of anti social behaviour by groups of young people gathering on the estate.

- 1.2 The cost of this service was met from existing budgets and was also supported by a donation of £24,000 from NRF.
- 1.3 Residents of 130-159 St Marys voted for the provision of a Concierge Unit to service the 30 properties located above the shops in St Marys. The Community Housing Partnership Board agreed to fund construction via their devolved Security Budget. Construction is due to start July 2004 and completion is expected October 2004. Residents will be charged £13.00 per week for a 24 hour, 365 days Concierge service.

2. Review of the Mobile Security Patrol Service

- 2.1 The current service provides a mobile patrol of the estate by 2 Security Officers with dogs. The patrol is deployed between 5 p.m. and 1 a.m., 365 days a year and covers the whole of the Gascoigne Estate. Each of the thirteen high rise blocks is visited and the patrol walks the stairway from the top floor to the ground floor checking chute rooms and electrical intake cupboards.
- 2.2 In addition to the current provision, it is proposed to provide an enhanced service including:
- 1) Provision at the Concierge Facility at 130-159 St Marys of a permanent base for the mobile security patrol. The room designated will provide basic mess facilities for the security staff as well as point of contact for residents.
 - 2) Residents on the Estate will be able to make contact with the patrol via the Concierge Officer. This will enable the patrol to target areas of anti social activity as it occurs.
 - 3) The provision of additional external cameras that can be monitored directly by the Concierge Staff based in 130-159 St Marys to be added.

3. Cost of the Service

- 3.1 It is proposed to charge a fixed sum of £2.00 per week per household. There are 2,100 households on the Gascoigne Estate that will benefit from this enhanced service. This charge has been arrived at by:
- Reviewing the current charges incurred for the provision of the Mobile Security Patrol.
 - Reviewing the cost of providing a 24 hour Concierge Service at 130-159 St Marys that will provide an additional service to all residents of the Gascoigne Estate, as detailed in 2.2 of this report.
- 3.2 The revenue generated will fund the provision of the Mobile Patrol and contribute towards the costs of the base located in the St Marys Concierge Unit as well as the service of the Concierge Officer.

4. Additional Considerations

- 4.1 New services that attract a service charge will only be introduced after a consultation process with tenants. This will culminate with a ballot of all tenants and leaseholders of the Gascoigne Estate. A simple majority of those who have voted will be deemed to sanction the introduction of the new service and service charge. It is planned that consultation will begin in July. The potential implementation date for enhanced service is September 2004.
- 4.2 Currently 60% of tenants on the Gascoigne Estate claim Housing Benefit. The proposed service charge will be eligible for Housing Benefit.

5. Consultation

- Residents of the Gascoigne Estate
- Gascoigne Ward Members

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Report to the Executive - Minute 131 (17 September 2002) Service Charges for Council Services.

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THE EXECUTIVE**27 JULY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH**

RYLANDS HOME IMPROVEMENT ZONE	FOR DISCUSSION
<p><i>This report has been produced to inform Members of the progress of the Rylands Home Improvement Zone.</i></p>	
<p><u>Summary</u></p>	
<p>This report highlights the current progress of the Rylands Home Improvement Zone. It looks at the positive outcomes that have been achieved on the estate and the lessons that have been learned for future schemes. It also highlights the involvement of other council services in helping improve the Rylands Estate as a whole. Finally it highlights some of the further initiatives that are being planned on the estate in the near future. The list below sets out the positive outcomes that have occurred on the estate due to the Home Improvement Zone.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of properties offered advice (1578) • 102 properties (6.5%) fully inspected and provided with survey • 93 energy efficiency surveys passed to Warmzones for analysis • Insulation levels, age of wiring, defective porch roofs and kitchens in lean-to's are the main areas of non-decency on the estate • £5000 grant from Private Sector Housing Team towards Alley-gator scheme for the estate • £10,000 grant towards tree planting scheme from PSHT • Main graffiti hot-spot dealt with • Youth Offending Team taking on garden clearance works • Reduction in dumped cars in area • Increase in take up of dropped kerbs in the area • Increased awareness of security issues in the area 	
<p><u>Recommendation</u></p>	
<p>The Executive is asked to note this report and allow officers to publish the Rylands Home Improvement Zone Interim Report, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.</p>	
<p><u>Reason</u></p>	
<p>The Executive should allow the report to be available to the general public because it highlights the continued commitment of the Private Sector Housing Team, and the Council as a whole, to Improve Health, Housing and Social Care and to make Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer. In particular it highlights the council's commitment to all residents in the Borough and its continued support to vulnerable home-owners living within the Borough.</p>	

Contact: Dan Read	Team Leader Area Improvement	Tel: 020 8227 5739 Fax: 020 8227 5799 Email: dan.read@lbbd.gov.uk
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1. **Background**

- 1.1 As part of the Private Sector Housing Strategy produced in 2003 the Private Sector Housing Team introduced a Home Improvement Zone on the Rylands Estate Dagenham. The aim of the zone was to offer private home owners free home surveys to give them the opportunity to bring their homes up to the decent standard. This report has been produced to highlight the progress of the zone so far and to set out recommendations for future Private Sector Housing regeneration projects.

2. **Conclusions**

- 2.1 The Private Sector Housing Team set out to give residents on the estate the opportunity to have a decent home. By contacting every home in the estate and giving every resident the option of having a home survey and subsequent help with the results of that survey then the team have achieved what they set out to do.
- 2.2 Our presence has also seen other environmental issues on the estate highlighted and new schemes are now going on site to make the estate a better place to live. We therefore believe that so far the scheme has been a success.

3. **Consultation**

River Ward Councillors.

The following Background Papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Private Sector Housing Strategy - April 2003

Rylands Home Improvement Zone Report in Full

Home Improvement Zone 1 Interim Report

Introduction

The Home Improvement Zone (HIZ) was set up as part of the Private Sector Housing Strategy in August 2003. The basis for the work was to give owner occupiers the opportunity to bring their property up to the decent standard.

The scheme also represented an ideal way for the Private Sector Housing Team to work towards three of the Community Priorities. The project helps to “improve Health, Housing and Social Care”, “Make Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer” and “Raises General Pride in the Borough.”

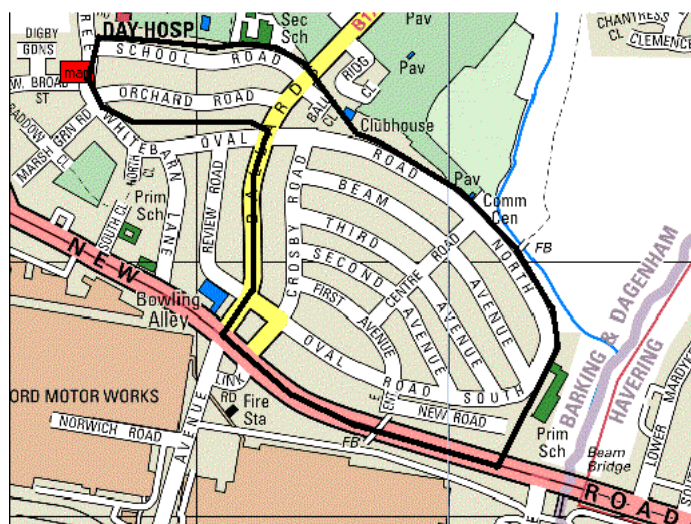


Image 1

The Rylands Estate (see image 1) was chosen as the first home improvement zone for a number of reasons.

- 1) The estate is made up almost completely of private sector housing. This simplified the task of identifying which properties to approach. (There is one Council owned property)
- 2) The estate is adjacent to a number of current regeneration projects that would be complemented by the Home Improvement Zone.
- 3) The estate had been identified as having a large proportion of properties that were below the decent standard
- 4) The residents of the estate feel that they have been ignored by the council in the past and there is a feeling of isolation from the rest of the borough.

The zone was first publicised in September 2003 and staff began to carry out decent homes surveys at the same time.

This interim report has been produced to evaluate the impact of the Zone so far. It will look at the successes that have been achieved and also look at how we can ensure we do not repeat the mistakes we have made on future schemes.

Home Surveys

The basis of the zone was to inspect resident's homes. The Home Improvement Officer looked at three areas within the home; Home Improvement, Energy Efficiency and Security.

Home Improvement

The Home Improvement aspect of the inspection looked at what works would be required to bring the property up to the decent standard. (See Appendix 2 for a definition of the decent standard)

A basic description of the work required was set out on a survey letter and residents were then requested to contact the Home Improvement Officer if they would like to receive further help with the work and also if they would like to see if they were eligible for some form of financial assistance. (See Appendix 3 for example of a home survey)

Within the properties on the Rylands the main failure to meet the decent standard was in the insulation levels within the roof space. Other areas of concern within the zone were the flat porch roofs which were prone to water penetration, kitchens built in "lean-to" constructions on the backs of properties and the age of the electrical wiring within the property.

Energy Efficiency

Whilst carrying out the survey the Home Improvement Officer also fills in a Warmzones form. This form is sent off to the Warmzones team who are based with Newham Council. (The LBBD has a contract with Warmzones Newham to provide an energy efficiency grants service). The forms are processed by Warmzones who contact any clients who may be eligible for energy efficiency grants or benefits advice. The most common forms of assistance are increased loft insulation and cavity wall filling where applicable. As well as filling in the form the Home Improvement Officer also gives basic advice on everyday energy saving ideas.

Security

The Home Improvement Officers also offered basic advice on the security of the home. In particular they highlighted the importance of complying with any insurance cover that residents might have. Fire safety was also discussed at this point to emphasis that any security measures should not supersede fire safety.

Outputs

Properties	Number	% of zone
Offered Advice	1578	100
surveyed	102	6.5
Energy Efficiency survey's completed	93	5.9
Offered Garden Clearance	62	3.9
Accepted Garden Clearance	7	0.4

ODPM Guidance

There have been a number of publications from the ODPM which sets out the governments views on how Local Authorities should be tackling the problem of non decent homes within the private stock. The most recent publication “A Decent Home, The definition and guidance for implementation” sets out a number of objectives that the council needed to comply with. This next section sets out briefly where the Home Improvement Zone has helped the council comply with the ODPM guidance.

- “The Spending Review 2002 extended the decent homes target to the private sector with the focus on reducing the proportion of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes.”¹

The Home Improvement Zone has helped the council comply with this point by targeting a specific area with a high proportion of vulnerable households.

- “Local authorities should bear in mind the importance of the decency standard and in all cases provide advice and support to owners to encourage them to achieve it”²

The Home Improvement Zone helped the council comply with this requirement by targeting the estate as a whole for advice and support and not targeting specific people within the area.

Financial Assistance

The financial assistance available is from equity release or renovation grants as set out in the Private Sector Housing strategy. There was also a further grant available, specific to the Home Improvement Zone, for £500 to cover financial advice or repair work. This grant was means tested and so far no one has taken up this type of grant.

Our equity release scheme is run by Houseproud and is a risk free way for people over 60 to borrow against the equity they have in their property.

Renovation grants are available for residents who are unable to release equity in their property and are also means tested. For further details of the financial assistance available contact the Private Sector team who can send you a copy of the “how to improve your home booklet”. This sets out in full detail the financial assistance available.

Customer feedback received

Although no formal customer satisfaction survey has been carried out as yet general customer feed-back has been good on the scheme. There has been a feeling in the past that the Rylands Estate has been mainly ignored by the council and a number of residents spoken to referred to it as “the forgotten estate.” They felt that the scheme was a good idea. Although a number of the residents who had a home inspection were ineligible for financial help they still found the scheme worthwhile. They felt that it gave them useful information on the state of their property and an idea what areas they needed to prioritise around their home. The information on security and energy efficiency were also well received.

There was some negative feedback on “Houseproud“ the equity release scheme that the borough has put in place. Residents felt that the Council should be putting grant money forward as they have in the past. There was a feeling that equity release was a punishment for residents that have saved all their lives to save something for their children when other residents have never saved or worked and therefore get everything for free.

¹ A Decent Home, The definition and guidance for implementation Feb 2004, ODPM

² A Decent Home, The definition and guidance for implementation Feb 2004, ODPM

The Houseproud scheme is taking time to become established because of these types of feelings; however when it becomes clear that the scheme is the only option take up should hopefully increase.

Overall however the views of residents were positive and they appreciated the opportunity to discuss their housing maintenance issues with a Technical Officer free of charge. There was a definite mistrust of “cowboy builders” on the estate and so free, clear technical advice was very much appreciated.

Involving others

Other departments were involved in the project at different points. This helped to offer a broad spectrum of resources to the area.

Highways were carrying out planned maintenance within the north east area of the zone and offered 50% discount on a drop kerb. The Home Improvement Officers pro-actively encouraged residents to use this scheme. This helped ensure that a number of residents who use their front gardens for off street parking benefited from the discount. The community as a whole also benefited from an environmental perspective.

The Home Improvement Officers also pro-actively reported dumped or untaxed cars in the area. This led to a number of dumped cars being removed from the area and untaxed cars being taken off road.

The Street Warden Service is also involved on the estate. The two teams have worked together to deal with one particular graffiti hot spot.

The parks service and the regeneration section were also involved in providing information for the open day to help increase residents awareness of the current regeneration projects happening in the area.

Extra Activities

There were a number of activities and projects that have come about because of the scheme these are set out below.

Open Day

An open day was held in February which was well attended by residents of the Rylands Estate. This helped to increase awareness of the scheme and also provided residents with information on the Beam Valley Parks regeneration and the South Dagenham regeneration scheme.

The event was catered for by Triangle Community Association which operates from the local community hall. Many residents used the event as an opportunity to discuss other issues that were affecting the local area and these issues were directed to the relevant departments the next day.

Alley-gator Scheme

The Rylands Estate has a network of back alleys. These are mostly unused and are often the site of dumped rubbish. They also constitute a security risk as the alleys provide easy unobserved access into peoples back-gardens. The Private Sector Team have put forward £4800 to kick start the alley-gator scheme in the area. This will provide eight gates for the alleys to stop intruders. The street warden service, who are managing the scheme, will also be organising a clean up of the alleys before the gates are put in place. Any residents who wish to continue using the alleys will be provided with an access key.

Youth Repatriation Scheme

The youth repatriation scheme is due to get underway at the end of March. This is a scheme aimed at tidying up some of the front gardens in the area. The PSH team is paying for the Youth Offending Team to supply one youth worker for one day a week. This youth worker will be taking a group of Youth Offenders on to the estate to work on the front gardens. This will be a free service to the residents that agree to the work. The youths carrying out the work will have connections to the Rylands wherever possible. If this scheme is a success the PSH team will look to continue their work with the YOT on any new projects that are instigated.

Tree planting scheme

The Private Sector Housing Team has recently put in place £10,000 +VAT funding for a tree planting scheme on the estate to help with the environmental outlook. This scheme will be managed by 'Groundworks' who may also be able to generate funds from Thames Gateway and other bodies.

There is the potential for this scheme to be converted to look at other environmental improvements if the tree planting scheme is met by local opposition. One of the possibilities will be to create a visual identity for the Rylands, possibly including an emblem or crest. This could then be used on signage to give the estate a feeling of community and belonging.

Exit Strategy

The zone will need to be wound down in the near future so that staff and resources can be committed to new areas for renewal works. It is important that this is done in a controlled manner and that everyone who has applied within the correct time table is supported throughout the procedure.

Officer time will need to be allocated to cover this work once the zone has been completed. Those grants that do eventually go on site will require officer input throughout their life. This work will be covered as part of the routine grants workload.

The Youth Offending Teams start date has also been delayed so it will be a good idea to factor in some additional time for them to carry on working on the gardens. This will require minimal officer input from Private Sector Housing.

The tree planting scheme will also take time to implement as it will require a consultation period and is subject to a seasonal timeframe.

There will therefore need to be overall time set aside for the Team Leader Area Improvements to continue managing certain aspects of the scheme once it is formally closed down.

Lessons Learned

The lack of consultation with residents of the estate before the zone was declared proved a hindrance to the works. The Consultant that introduced the idea of Home improvement Zones referred to consultation before the zone was declared but when the leaflets went out it became apparent that the residents had not been consulted. At this point it had become too late to delay the start of the scheme. One effect of the lack of consultation was that a number of residents ignored the leaflet drop as a Council project that they thought had nothing to do with them as they were owner occupiers.

The importance of consultation was further demonstrated by the effect the open day had upon the take up of surveys etc. The second leaflet was designed to appear more relevant to the occupant. The leaflet helped to attract around 50 people to the open day who were able to look at what was happening on and around the estate and give their opinions on what needed to be changed. The involvement of the community association also helped to advertise the day and inform more local people about the zone. The leaflet and the open day also encouraged more people to have the free surveys carried out.

The scheme as a whole has been a proactive attempt to help the residents of the Rylands estate. Where residents have wanted our help and advice we have achieved a number of good outcomes. Unfortunately there are still a number of properties on the estate that are eyesores and in need of large scale high costing works. Although two of these properties are currently being considered for enforcement there has been no overall enforcement agenda on this scheme. In future projects the role of enforcement will have to be considered so that a more robust scheme can be produced. However if enforcement is to be used it also follows on that schemes will need to be smaller in nature to take account of the extra work involved.

It has become apparent whilst working on the estate that there has been a general increase in the amount of work carried out on properties on the estate. It was also apparent that there was an increase in property being put up for sale and a slight decrease in property being advertised to let. It is obvious that the estate has begun to turn round for the positive and the private market, with a little help from the council, is ensuring that the estate is regenerating.

Conclusion

We set out to give everybody on the estate the opportunity to have a decent home. By contacting every home in the estate and giving them the option of having a home survey and subsequent help with the results of the survey then we have achieved what we set out to do.

Those that asked for our advice and help have received it and will continue to do so. The team's hard work on the estate has meant that we have been able to bring forward the agenda of decent homes into a very large section of Private Sector Housing. This is an agenda that has previously been restricted to social housing and that fact that the idea is now in the minds of a number of home owners should be applauded. This is despite the fact that the decent homes standard is not enforceable legislation within the private sector.

Although there has been a negligible take up of financial help within the zone this can be accounted for and is not necessarily a negative. Equity release is a new idea for Barking and Dagenham and will take a while to be accepted. Previously residents have been used to a grant regime where they are given money to carry out works. Equity release is a way of ensuring residents are investing in their own properties and this culture change will take a while to settle in. It is also worth considering that having had a survey some residents who may not qualify for financial assistance may finance works to bring their property up to a decent standard. (An exit survey will hopefully be able to establish where this has happened) Even some residents who do qualify for equity release via Houseproud will look elsewhere in the market as more favourable rates are available elsewhere. The fact that we have introduced the idea of equity release to them is in itself a positive move.

This positive move has to be backed up with a sustained investment in advertising for the scheme and a united message from the council that this is the form of assistance that the council endorses above any other. This message will be further highlighted by Houseproud who will begin a London based advertising campaign in the autumn and the introduction of equity release schemes for home-owners under the age of 60 in the near future.

Finally once the zone has been wound down an exit survey will be conducted to establish what effect the zone has had on the area and how future area based, private sector based, regeneration projects should be established and managed.

Our presence has also seen other environmental issues on the estate highlighted and new schemes are now going on site to make the estate a better place to live. We therefore believe that so far the scheme has been a success.

(ODPM decent home definition)

A decent home is one which is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities.

A decent home meets the following four criteria:

a - It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

Dwellings below this standard are those defined as unfit under section 604 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act).

b - It is in a reasonable state of repair

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- one or more of the key building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
- two or more of the other building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

c - It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:

- a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- an appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem);
- adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

d - It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

Home Improvement Survey

Reference: H60/123495/PJN
Phone: 020 8227 5632
Fax: 020 8227 5799
Minicom: 020 8227 5755
E-mail: paul.j.noble@lbbd.gov.uk

16th January 2004

Dear

The Rylands Home Improvement Zone

Re: *****, Dagenham

Further to my visit to your home today various issues were discussed and I advise the following:

Survey & Report:

- 'Decent Homes' Standard

The overall condition of the property was good. However it would not currently reach the Governments 'decent homes' standard unless the following repairs/replacements were done:

1. Renew the defective asphalt roof and fascia above front entrance.
2. Rake out and repoint the main chimney stack.
3. Prepare and repaint all previously painted surfaces to the front elevation.
4. Renew defective and insecure windows to various locations.
5. Recover the flat roof to the rear addition. Identify the condition of the decking.
6. Incorporate insulation when recovering the flat roof.
7. Upgrade insulation to the loft void to 200 mm

If these above items were remedied then the property would achieve the 'decent' standard.

- Security

1. Ensure a locking mechanism is incorporated within the new windows.

Continued...

- Energy Efficiency

1. Upgrade insulation to the loft void as in decent standard.
2. Incorporate insulation when renewing coverings to front and rear flat roofs.

Your form has been sent to "warm zones" they will contact you in the near future if you are eligible for assistance with energy efficient measures.

- General maintenance, future improvements and repair comments:
 1. Renew the defective rear entrance door and frame
 2. Clear hall cupboard of household effects to prevent fire hazards.
 3. As a smoker and living alone install a smoke alarm to the ground floor.
 4. Renew the spent battery to the first floor one.
 5. Check your security measures comply with the conditions of your household contents insurance policy.

Grant Availability:

You may be eligible for a Home Improvement Grant, please contact an officer for further information.

Please note that even if you are not eligible for a grant the Home Improvement Officers will be able to assist you with other areas of your work if you wish.

If you are considering having any building work done that is not mentioned within this report please remember that we can provide:

- A list of builders that have signed up to the Councils' Standard.
- A building Contract

Thank you for allowing us to survey your home. If you would like any further assistance on the points raised please contact one of the Home Improvement Officers.

Yours sincerely

Paul J Noble
Home Improvement Officer
Private Sector Housing Team

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