

# London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

## Notice of Meeting

### THE EXECUTIVE

**Tuesday, 8 February 2005 - 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

25.01.05

Rob Whiteman  
Chief Executive

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### AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2005 (circulated separately)**

#### **Business Items**

*Public Items 3 to 12 and Private Items 19 to 22 are business items. The Chair will move that these be agreed without discussion, unless any Member asks to raise a specific point.*

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

3. **Fees and Charges 2005/06 - Careline Service (Pages 1 - 2)**
4. **Cemeteries Service - Completion of Best Value Review (Pages 3 - 14)**
5. **Code of Corporate Governance (Pages 15 - 24)**

6. **Borough Spending Plan 2005 / 2006 - Transport and Highways Projects (Pages 25 - 30)**
7. **Barking and Dagenham's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Pages 31 - 32)**  
  
Appendix A is circulated separately for Members of the Executive, and is available on the Internet, in the Members' Rooms and at public libraries.
8. **Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley Extension), Mayesbrook Park Lake (South) and Parsloes Park 'Squatts' - Declaration of Local Nature Reserves (Pages 33 - 41)**
9. **Feedback on Social Services Management Training and Development Session September 2004 (Pages 43 - 45)**
10. **Feedback on Annual Social Services Conference 2004 and Attendance at 2005 Event (Pages 47 - 48)**
11. **Feedback on Planning and Urban Design Conference May 2004 (Pages 49 - 52)**
12. **Feedback on the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation Annual Conference 2004 (Pages 53 - 56)**

#### **Discussion Items**

13. **Housing Revenue Account Estimates and Review of Rents and Other Charges 2005/06 (Pages 57 - 70)**
14. **Emergency Planning - Working Across London (Pages 71 - 76)**
15. **Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent**
16. **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**

17. **Axe Street Area Redevelopment (Pages 77 - 99)**

*Concerns the Proposed Acquisition of Property (paragraph 9)*

**18. Corporate Accommodation Strategy Interim Measures: Maritime House (Pages 101 - 105)**

*Concerns the Proposed Terms of a Lease (paragraph 9)*

**Business Items**

**19. Replacement of Air Conditioning Unit in the Computer Suite, Civic Centre (Pages 107 - 109)**

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

**20. Tender for Castle Green Wheel Park (Pages 111 - 113)**

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

**21. Term Contract for Maintenance of Fire Protection, Detection and Emergency Lighting Systems 2005/09 (Pages 115 - 118)**

*Concerns a Contractual Matter (paragraph 8)*

**22. Term Contract for Maintenance of Security and Protection Systems 2005/09 (to follow)**

*Concerns a Contractual Matter (paragraph 8)*

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

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**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>FEES AND CHARGES 2005/06 – CARELINE SERVICE</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p><i>The Constitution reserves the setting of charges to the Executive.</i></p> <p><b>Summary</b>            The Careline service provides vulnerable residents with speedy telephonic assistance for emergency situations and aids independent living. The service is provided to all clients judged eligible under Fair Access to Care criteria.</p> <p>The recommended charges are in line with the Council's policy on charging and providing care services. The full cost of the service will continue to be recovered by means of Supporting People grant, recharges to Housing and Social Services and a charge to those clients whose income is broadly in line with Fairer Charging statutory guidance.</p> <p>The proposed new charge to clients, where it is applicable is £180.81 per annum, which is £3.48 a week, an increase of 7%.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b>            The Executive is recommended to agree a charge of £180.81 for 20005/06 for the Careline service.</p> <p><b>Reason</b>            To enable the required annual increase to be made and to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priority of <i>"Improving, Health, Housing and Social Care"</i>.</p>		
<b>Contact</b>		
Valerie Harding	Business Continuity Manager	Telephone: 020 - 8227 3222 Fax: 020 – 8227 3288 Minicom: 020 – 8227 3040 E-mail: val.harding@lbbd.gov.uk

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Careline service provides a 24 hour alarm monitoring and response service to vulnerable borough residents. The system is a fixed installation in Council sheltered housing and is provided by way of dispersed alarms to residents of Council and privately owned property.
- 1.2 The service is viewed as one element of a care package and potential clients are assessed against Fair Access to Care criteria.

- 1.3 The service is funded by a mixture of Supporting People grant, recharges to the Housing Revenue Account and Social Services, and charges, based on the full cost of the service, to those clients whose income is broadly in line with Fairer Charging mandatory statutory guidance. In this way full cost recovery is achieved.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The estimated full cost of providing the Careline service in 2005/2006 is £526,160. Based on the current 2,910 users receiving the service, this produces a unit cost of £180.81 a year (£3.48 a week) against the current charge of £169 a year (£3.25 a week).
- 2.2 A breakdown of these costs is as follows.

<b>User</b>	<b>Estimate 2005/2006</b>				<b>Funding</b>	
	<u>Gross Exp'd</u> £	<u>Gross Income</u> £	<u>SP Grant</u> £	<u>Net Exp'd</u> £	<u>HRA</u> £	<u>Social Services</u> £
Sheltered Housing Council	193,220	0	167,580	25,640	25,640	0
Tenants	180,080	15,380	148,120	16,580	16,580	0
Private Residents	152,860	35,900	0	116,960	0	116,960
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>526,160</b>	<b>51,280</b>	<b>315,700</b>	<b>159,180</b>	<b>42,220</b>	<b>116,960</b>

- 2.3 The recharges identified above have been incorporated in the 2005/06 base budgets for the Social Services and Housing and Health departments.

## **3. Consultation**

### **3.1 Lead Members**

The following lead Members have been advised of the proposals:  
 Developing Rights and Responsibilities with the Local Community and Providing Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity (Income and Charging) Councillor H Collins

Housing, Health and Adult Care, Councillor Smith

- 3.2 The following people have seen this report and are happy with it as it stands.

### **Finance**

Laura Williams, Management Accountant (DRE)  
 Colin Rigby, Head of Finance (H&H)  
 Steve Whitelock, Head of Finance (DSS)

**Background Papers** - Executive Report and Minute No 67, 29 July 2003 – Fees and Charges – Careline Service

**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>CEMETERIES SERVICE – COMPLETION OF BEST VALUE REVIEW</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p><i>To report back in accordance with Council's Best Value Review Process on the completion of a Cemeteries Service Best Value Review Action Plan.</i></p> <p><b>Summary</b>            The Cemeteries Service Best Value review was completed and reported to the Executive on 20 February 2001.</p> <p>The report outlines the challenges facing the Cemeteries Service at the commencement of the Review, the Action Plan which was prepared to improve the Service and the achievements of the Service as a result of the Review.</p> <p>This report seeks approval to formally class the Cemeteries Service Best Value Review and Action Plan as being completed.</p> <p>A completed Action Plan summarising the work undertaken to improve the Service is attached as <b>Appendix A</b>.</p> <p><b>Wards Affected</b>            The Cemeteries Service provides a service to all constituents of the Borough.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b>            The Executive is asked to note the achievements of the Service since the Review started and officially class the Cemeteries Service Best Value Review and Action Plan as being completed.</p> <p><b>Reasons</b>  <i>To assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of "Making the Borough Cleaner, Greener and Safer", "Raising General Pride in the Borough" and "Promoting Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity".</i></p>		
<p><b>Contact:</b>            Damien Parker</p>	<p>Acting Group Manager Parks,            Cemeteries &amp; Security</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 3238            Fax: 020 8227 3129            Minicom: 020 8227 3034            E-mail: <a href="mailto:damien.parker@lbbd.gov.uk">damien.parker@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>

## 1. Background

As part of the Best Value Review process, services have to report back on the progress against their Executive approved Action Plans and advise of actions completed, delayed etc. The original Cemeteries Service action plan was presented to the Executive on the 20 February 2001 (Minute 470, 20 February 2001 refers).

## 2. Community Priorities

The three Council Community Priorities which the Cemeteries service links into and focus upon are:

- *Making the Borough Cleaner, Greener and Safer.*
- *Raising General Pride in the Borough.*
- *Promoting Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity.*

### (a) Making The Borough Cleaner, Greener and Safer

To meet the Community's expectations it is important that the Cemeteries:

- Have good access
- Are well maintained
- Provide facilities of a good standard, in keeping with the requirements of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Charter for the Bereaved.

When considering the acquisition of additional burial space more imaginative styles of interment, such as woodland or green burial, should be considered.

### (b) Raising General Pride In The Borough

The cemetery sites provide an opportunity to advertise the Borough's ability to supply and maintain a dignified final resting place for its residents.

The Cemeteries are also a significant historical resource of the Borough.

### (c) Promoting Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity

To meet this Community Priority, the provision of burial space in the Borough should cater for the requirements of all sections of the community. Therefore, when determining the future needs of burial provision in the Borough, the cultural and



religious considerations of all sections of the community shall be taken into consideration.

The dignified disposal of the dead ought to be an affordable activity, thus enabling all social classes to commemorate and grieve with dignity.

### **3. Issues for the Cemeteries Service Prior to the Commencement of the Best Value Review**

Just prior to the commencement of the Best Value Review the functions of the cemeteries service were split between three Council departments, these being:

- The client department for on-site activities and budget holder for the service was the then Development & Technical Service Department, via its recreation & Parks Group.
- The administrative aspects of the service, including the cemetery registrars' role were within the Chief Executive's Department.
- The provision and supervision of on-site activities were dealt with via the grounds-maintenance DSO, which was a part of Contract Services Department.

Both the public and funeral directors had raised the issue of disjointed management of the service and how this was causing a lack of ownership of problems by the various departments.

There was teething problems associated with introducing a sense of commonality to the employees of the newly formed section when the management of the services was transferred to one Department.

There were problems associated with the management of burials at Eastbrookend Cemetery; which had previously provoked a great deal of public complaint about the service.

The service was very insular and was not in the habit of comparing it's standards to that of other similar service providers.

There were no service standards in place for the burial element of the service or ways of gauging levels of customer satisfaction.

### **4. The Scope of the Review**

The scope of the Review scrutinised the five main elements of the service these being:

- The administrative functions associated with the burial process & memorial installation.

- The Burial process (i.e. the excavation and subsequent backfilling of graves, Chapel duties, grave dressing etc).
- The grounds maintenance of the sites.
- The management of memorials (i.e. their installation, inspection and remedial works).
- The overall management of the service as a business unit.

## **5. Key Outcomes Expected from the Review**

The key outcomes identified in the Best Value Action Plan were:

- That the service should reach the required standard for membership of the “Charter for the Bereaved”.
- To convey the Cemetery Regulations in a way which is easy to understand, fair and in the spirit of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Charter for the Bereaved and meet’s the criteria of the” Plain English” standard.
- All burial sites should reach full economical burial capacity.
- The need for new cemetery site(s) and or extension(s) of existing site(s) should be explored.
- To provide an effective Cemeteries Service that meets the requirements of stakeholders and visitors needs.
- Improve / move the reception facility for those visiting the Cemeteries Registrars’ Office.
- Increase fees and charges in line with market rates and the Council’s Charges Policy Commission
- To enable data to be accessed more efficiently, to reduce the duplicity in the recording of data, and to provide a means of retaining important data in a secure manner.
- Correct level of directly employed or “bought in” resources.
- A skilled work force who work in a safe manner.

## **6. Outcomes achieved from the implementation of the Improvement Plan.**

All the tasks set under the Action Plan have been achieved. In addition, in most areas the achievements have exceeded the original expectations.

Key areas / examples in which the BV Review has added value, improved services or made a difference are:

- (i.) The service achieved ICCM Charter for the Bereaved status just over 18 months ago.
- (ii.) The Cemetery Registrars are now located in a revamped office in Rippleside Cemetery.
- (iii.) The Cemetery Registrars now utilise a computerised cemeteries management system (*Gowers system*). The cemeteries archive data is now being input onto the computerised data-base and it is hoped to be able to offer an automated remote booking service for funeral directors in the near future along with web links to our archive data.
- (iv.) Having consulted widely on the issue of additional burial needs, a Cemeteries Strategy has been prepared and additional burial land has been identified which hopefully will be ready for burials by the end of financial year 2005/06.
- (v.) The income of the service has increased way above inflation for the past four financial years as a result of providing additional services and increasing Cemeteries fees and charges.
- (vi.) Complaints about the service have decreased since the Best Value Review was undertaken.
- (vii.) Users of the service are now consulted on a regular basis via:
  - Cemeteries Service Liaison meetings, to which Funeral Directors, local religious leaders, stone masons and bereavement councillors.
  - Customer satisfaction surveys of those recently bereaved who use the service

## **7. The Cemeteries Service Commitment to “Continuous Improvement”**

- 7.1 The Cemeteries Service is committed to continuous improvement this is evident from its commitment to comply with the ICCM’s “Charter for the Bereaved” which monitors performance, compares performance against other burial authorities and requires it’s candidates to identify year on year improvement targets.
- 7.2 The Cemeteries Service Liaison meetings are held twice a year and stakeholders regularly comment upon the improvements in the service. In addition, this meeting provides an open forum for stakeholders to discuss issues with each other and the Council and enables any problems to be jointly resolved. The forum also acts as a suggestion base for further enhancements.

7.3 Customer satisfaction continues to be monitored via monthly surveys. The quarterly survey results are presented to Stakeholders at the Cemeteries Service Liaison Meeting.

## **8. Consultation**

### **Councillors**

The Lead Member Raising General Pride in the Borough, Councillor Wade, and Councillors Wainwright, Alexander and Parkin, who were appointed to the Best Value Review have been consulted and have raised no objections to the report as it stands.

### **Officers**

Allan Aubrey, Head of Leisure and Community Services  
Nick Kingham, Head of Strategy and Support  
David Waller, Interim Head of Finance DRE

### **External**

Cemeteries Service Liaison Group

## **Background Papers**

Executive Report and Minute 470, 20 February 2001  
Re: Best Value Review of Cemeteries Service

**CEMETERIES SERVICE BEST VALUE REVIEW**  
**ACTION PLAN UPDATE NOVEMBER 2004**

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Outcome Required</b>	<b>Original Time-scale</b>	<b>Revised Time-scale</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Explanation for lack of progress/ implementation</b>	<b>Action taken/required</b>	<b>Revised time-scale</b>
To work towards achieving the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration's Charter for the Bereaved.	Reach the required standard for membership of the Charter.	Oct 2002	Aug 2002	Achieved Charter status 31/08/2002	N/A	Have maintained the required standards since and aim to do so in the future.	Completed
Review the current Cemetery Regulations.	To produce regulations which are easy to understand, fair and in the spirit of the IBCA Charter for the Bereaved	March 2002	N/A	Regulations have been redrafted. But not introduced to the service as yet.	Central Government are currently proposing to update the legislation governing the management of cemeteries. A decision has been made to not update the current regulations until the changes in legislation are confirmed.	We have reviewed the way in which we administer are current regulations and have produced more customer friendly literature explaining the rationale behind are current processes & regulations.	Pending changes in legislation.

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Outcome Required</b>	<b>Original Time-scale</b>	<b>Revised Time-scale</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Explanation for lack of progress/ implementation</b>	<b>Action taken/required</b>	<b>Revised time-scale</b>
To maximise burial provision within existing burial sites.	All burial sites reach full economical burial capacity.	Sept 2001.	N/A	completed	N/A	Completed underground investigative works identified additional 130 graves. Ahead of schedule	completed
To have find out whether the community want the authority to provide additional burial space and if so to identify possible suitable sites.	To identified additional future burial space if this is what the community wants.	Nov 2002	N/A	An extensive public consultation exercise confirmed that the community want the authority to find future burial space within the Borough. Feasibility studies have now taken place at six potential sites around the Borough	N/A	The findings of the feasibility studies were presented to the Executive in 2003.	completed

Improvement	Outcome Required	Original Time-scale	Revised Time-scale	Progress	Explanation for lack of progress/implementation	Action taken/required	Revised time-scale
To continue to consult with our service users and stakeholders.	To provide an effective cemetery service that meets the requirements of stakeholders and visitors needs.	Ongoing	N/A	Customer satisfaction surveys are now monitored on a quarterly basis and continue to indicate high levels of satisfaction amongst those recently bereaved	N/A	Customer satisfaction surveys are forwarded to new grave owners. Regular cemetery Liaison meetings are now held with Funeral Directors, & other key stakeholders.	On going
Improve / move the reception facility for those visiting the Cemeteries Registrars office.	New reception area.	Jan 02	Aug 2002	New office in Rippleside Cemetery is now in use. Fully DDA compliant.	Funding initially delayed the project.	Cemetery Registrars moved into the revamped office in August 2002.	completed
Implement a five-year programme of cemetery roadway & pathway repairs	To bring our roads and footways up to an acceptable standard.	5yr rolling programme commences 02/03	N/A	Works have been carried out in Rippleside Cemetery & Chadwell Heath cemetery	N/A	Ditto - progress	On target

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Outcome Required</b>	<b>Original Time-scale</b>	<b>Revised Time-scale</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Explanation for lack of progress/implemententation</b>	<b>Action taken/required</b>	<b>Revised time-scale</b>
Prepare Business Plans for each of the Borough's existing cemetery sites	Production of business plans	Oct 2001.	N/A	Is now superseded by annual asset management plans for sites.	N/A	AMP's completed on time and in accordance with corporate templates.	Completed
Explore long-term management provision	Preferred management strategy identified	September 2002	Report to Executive October 2002	The service has achieved all the short-term goals set in the eighteen month action plan. Having now achieved the "Charter for the Bereaved" annual improvement targets will be identified using the enhanced Charter targets.	A decision has been taken to identify the long term managements for the Cemeteries Service as part of the procurement process of additional future burial space.	The Executive considered the options as part of the Cemeteries Site strategy report 2003.	Completed



<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Outcome Required</b>	<b>Original Time-scale</b>	<b>Revised Time-scale</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Explanation for lack of progress/implementation</b>	<b>Action taken/required</b>	<b>Revised time-scale</b>
Reduce the annual deficit of the service	Increase charges in line with market rates & charges policy commission	Annually (April)	N/A	The predicted annual deficit of the service for 2001/02 was achieved. The revised deficit target for 02/03 is currently on target.	N/A	Ongoing review of cost's and charges	On-going
Improve staff efficiency and effectiveness and improve productivity	Ensure correct rate of remuneration in order to retain skilled work force  Correct level of employed/ "Bought in" resources.  A skilled work force and safe working practises.	Ongoing	N/A	Facilities on site have been improved which has increased the productivity of the staff on site E.g. installation of properly laid out work compounds at Eastbrook & Rippleside Cemetery	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work practises have been reviewed new COP's were issued to staff in April 2002.</li> <li>SLA's are reviewed annually.</li> </ul>	Completed           Ongoing
<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Outcome Required</b>	<b>Original Time-scale</b>	<b>Revised Time-scale</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Explanation for lack of progress/implementation</b>	<b>Action taken/required</b>	<b>Revised time-scale</b>

Appendix A

<p>Improved Management Information</p>	<p>To enable data to be accessed more efficiently, to reduce the duplicity in the recording of data, and to provide a means of retaining important data in a secure manner.</p>	<p>August 2002.</p>	<p>February 2003</p>	<p>The Gowers cemetery software system is now up and running. Gowers are inputting the data contained in our old registers onto the new system and this work additional work should be completed by April 2005.</p>	<p>There was a delay of some months due to BT pontificating over the installation of the ISDN link from the cemeteries office into the Civic Centre.</p>	<p>We are now further enhancing the system by: Digitising our burial plans and providing an out of hour's booking system for funeral directors.</p>	<p>Original targets achieved further works are ongoing.</p>
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**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY**

<b>CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p><i>This report is submitted to the Executive as it deals with an important issue concerning the corporate management of the Council.</i></p> <p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>In line with a framework produced by CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance &amp; Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers), the Council agreed a Code of Corporate Governance towards the end of 2003. It is included in the Council Constitution.</p> <p>The Code is an expression of the Council's commitment to good corporate governance and it provides an explanation of what the Council does to achieve this.</p> <p>The Council put in place an annual review process to make sure that the Code is kept up to date. Accordingly, just over one year on, this report suggests a few changes to achieve this. The changes are shown in bold type on the appended Code (Appendix A).</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the suggested revisions on the appended code; and</li> <li>2. Recommend the Assembly to agree the suggested revisions and the associated changes necessary to the Council Constitution.</li> </ol> <p><b>Reasons</b></p> <p>To comply with the Corporate Governance Framework set by CIPFA and SOLACE and meet the expectations of the Council's external auditors.</p>	
<p><b>Contact:</b> Nina Clark</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Support</p> <p>Tel: 020 8227 2114 Fax: 020 8227 2171 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail: <a href="mailto:nina.clark@lbbd.gov.uk">nina.clark@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>

**Background Papers:** The Code of Corporate Governance agreed in 2003, and a working schedule of Corporate Governance activity

**Consultees:** Councillor Geddes (Lead Member), The Management Team and relevant Heads of Service.

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**LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM**  
**CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

**Introduction**

Corporate governance is the system by which we (the Council) direct and control our functions, and relate to our community. Good corporate governance is essential to making sure there is credibility and confidence in the public services we provide.

This Code sets out our commitments and how we make sure that our corporate governance arrangements are sound and effective, and that relevant systems and processes are regularly monitored.

It has been developed in line with four general principles of good corporate governance. The principles are:

- **Openness** in decision-making and management processes, and in the approach of individuals within the Council.
- **Inclusivity** to make sure that the community and others who have an interest in the Council, have the opportunity to engage effectively with decision-making processes and Council actions.
- **Integrity** based on honesty, selflessness and objectivity, together with high standards of conduct, propriety and probity in running the Council's affairs and managing public monies.
- **Accountability** to make sure that the Council, Members (elected councillors) and staff are responsible for decisions and actions, and submit themselves to appropriate external scrutiny.

The Code follows a Framework recommended to local authorities jointly by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE).

**Commitments**

We are committed to:

- working for and with local communities, and exercising leadership where appropriate
- acting as an ambassador to promote the well-being of the Borough
- making sure there is continuous improvement in service delivery
- making sure that agreed policies are implemented and decisions carried out

- making sure that political and management structures and processes are effective in governing decision-making
- establishing a systematic strategy, framework and process for managing risk
- making sure there are high standards of conduct by Members, staff and agents employed to work for us, and encouraging others who work with us to respect certain standards of behaviour.

### Meeting these commitments

To achieve the principles of good corporate governance and to show our commitment, we have an extensive range of systems, procedures, processes and actions. We also have plans to do other work which will strengthen this further.

Details are summarised under five dimensions:

- Community Focus
- Service Delivery Arrangements
- Structures and Processes
- Risk Management and Internal Control
- Standards of Conduct

#### (1) Community Focus

We undertake to:

- publish an annual Best Value Performance Plan, including a Summary, to inform the community of our key activities and achievements, how we have performed over the previous year in terms of service delivery, and what our future plans are to improve service quality
- publish an Annual Accounts report telling the community about our financial position
- implement, monitor and periodically revise a Community Strategy, in consultation with the Barking and Dagenham Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership), and in doing so work with our partners and the community to achieve our vision for the Borough. ~~(The Strategy is currently being revised to give a clearer focus on outcomes and enhanced community leadership)~~
- promise, through a Consultation Strategy, that consultation will be planned well in advance and targeted to secure the views of the whole community, including hard to reach groups. Also that consultation will be used to improve policies and service delivery
- promise, through a Communications, Reputation and Branding Strategy and Manual, that we will be as open as possible in our dealings
- **respond positively to the Freedom of Information Act 2000**

- create a vision for community engagement and empowerment in the Borough **and follow up on related actions** (~~A Community Engagement and Empowerment Policy Commission is looking specifically at how well the Council is promoting community participation at present and will identify any gaps. It is also looking at best practice in other areas and looking for views from various organisations, the voluntary sector and so on. The Commission is due to report later in 2003.~~)
- support and encourage the active involvement of **residents** ~~citizens~~ in the process of local authority decision making
- specifically involve **residents** ~~citizens~~ in local democracy and listen to their views through Community Forums and Community Housing Partnerships enabling them to have a real say in how the Council operates and delivers services
- promote equality for everyone and reflect the full diversity of the community in all our activities and functions through an Equalities and Diversity Policy. This means, amongst other things, that we undertake to do all we can to provide equality of access to our services for all **residents** ~~citizens~~ based on individual and community need. (~~In 2004/05, as part of work connected with Race Equality, we will be looking at targets in relation to equality policies generally~~)
- ~~meet the requirements of the new Freedom of Information Act by planning briefings for Members and staff, and working towards implementation by January 2005.~~

### Service Delivery Arrangements

We undertake to:

- manage and measure the performance of the Council through a business and performance planning system - the Balanced Scorecard. This provides appropriate links between corporate and service aims, makes sure that strategies and objectives are directed towards priorities, and sets and monitors standards and performance targets for service delivery. All Service Scorecards are required to include an equalities and diversity objective, and sustainability is taken into account in relevant areas
- measure performance through a rigorous and sound process, including regular monitoring and reporting to Members and senior management. The Executive, for example, receives quarterly reports on performance monitoring, **and the Scrutiny Management Board monitors performance indicators which fall into the bottom quartile of National indicators.**
- link finances to priorities through our budget process (although we need to better streamline the process and we are working on this). This includes consulting the community for their views on the Council's budget strategy
- foster effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies, and the private and voluntary sectors. (The Barking and Dagenham Partnership mentioned earlier is a good example of this)

- deliver services to meet the needs of the local community, and in a way which is effective and appropriate. This includes comparing and considering outsourcing where it is efficient and effective to do so. As a result, some services have been put out externally
- fully consider the findings and recommendations of external auditors and inspectors, and put in place arrangements to implement and monitor agreed actions. The Corporate Monitoring Group is responsible for this. ~~and, for example, is currently monitoring the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan to make sure that actions are delivered on time~~
- target the poorer performing services through regular reports to the Scrutiny Management Board. This way we undertake to identify any barriers to improvement and make sure there is progress in tackling problems and improving services
- publish service standards ~~early in 2004~~ so that our **residents** ~~citizens~~ are clear about the standards they should expect and the time frame in which they should be provided.

### Structures and Processes

We undertake to:

- set out clearly in our Constitution the political management arrangements, financial, contracts and other rules and protocols within which the Council must operate
- clearly define in our Scheme of Delegation, in the Constitution, the responsibilities of the various meetings of the political structure and the authority which is delegated to Chief Officers. Compliance with the Scheme is checked quarterly by the Council's Monitoring Officer
- provide for our Assembly (our monthly meeting of all Members) to formally set the strategic direction of the authority. The Assembly gives the Executive power to make decisions on all major issues affecting the Council, particularly strategic, financial, policy related and corporate management matters, within the overall framework set by it. Policy Commissions are set up when appropriate to examine and develop particular policies
- provide for discretionary, regulatory functions (such as development control **and licensing**) to be dealt with through quasi-judicial boards
- provide job profiles for our Executive Members. Amongst other things, these look to the Executive Members to shape and develop priorities and vision
- identify a strategy for all service areas through Service Balanced Scorecards, together with an indication of how they will be delivered
- encourage good working relationships between Members and staff. This is governed through a Member/Employee Relations Protocol which clearly sets out the differences between the respective roles



- provide a comprehensive training package for all Members to make sure that they are properly trained for their roles. This includes special briefings when they first join the Council and a series of learning and training opportunities (internal and external) during their period of office. Personal Development Planning is offered to those Members who would like it
- provide Members with access to all relevant information, advice and resources needed to help them carry out their roles effectively. This includes general support which is provided through a team of staff dedicated to supporting them, and strategic policy advice / research which is available through departmental policy officers and a corporate policy team. For those Members who represent the Council on external organisations, we provide a link with a relevant contact senior officer for briefing purposes. There is also a monthly magazine for Members (Member Matters) to keep them up to date with matters of interest
- pay Members an allowance for their work. This includes special responsibility payments for those Members who undertake key roles. The level of payments is clearly defined in the Members' Allowances Scheme within the Constitution, and is reviewed annually by an independent panel
- give responsibility to the Chief Executive for all aspects of operational management
- give responsibility to the Director of Finance for giving appropriate advice on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control
- give responsibility to the Monitoring Officer, to make sure that agreed procedures are followed and that all statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with
- define, in the Constitution, the general roles of our most senior officers. These officers are required to meet certain management competencies. Their pay is reviewed every four years.

### Risk Management and Internal Control

We undertake to:

- make sure there is a robust system for identifying and evaluating all significant risks through a strategic Risk Management Policy. A **strategic** risk register ~~for strategic and operational risk is being developed ???~~ **has been agreed and a register for operational risk is being developed**
- make sure we have strong controls in our major financial systems and that audit work is of a high quality. Our external auditors review these annually and we have "managed audit" status reflecting our strengths. **Systems for the management of non-financial / uninsurable risk will be developed**
- have an objective and professional relationship with our external auditors and statutory inspectors. Our external auditors carry out an annual review of our activities and look in depth at selected topics

- self assess ourselves annually against a Code of Audit Practice which measures our financial standing, our systems of internal financial control, our standards of financial conduct and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, our financial statements, the legality of our financial transactions, and related aspects of performance management. Our self assessment is then judged and scored by our external auditors
- make an annual report on internal controls and financial risk to our Corporate Monitoring Group which, amongst other things, acts as the Council's "audit committee". A 'Statement of Assurance' will features in our annual reports to give further confidence in our controls
- make sure financial and contracts rules are clear to all by including a Financial Regulatory Framework in our Constitution. This includes the following four documents:
  - Contracts Rules - mandatory rules setting out the minimum requirements for letting, managing and awarding contracts
  - Contracts Guidance Notes - explaining the principles underpinning the rules
  - Contracts Code of Practice - outlining detailed procedures
  - Financial Rules - mandatory rules setting out the minimum requirements for financial administration and covering the financial stewardship of all the Council's assets and resources. The rules cover both capital and revenue expenditure
- make sure that staff are appropriate and competent for the job through a Recruitment and Selection Policy
- make sure that all staff have every opportunity to be well trained to meet the requirements of their job and further their careers through a comprehensive Staff Development Programme, annual staff appraisals, and Personal Development Plans.

## Standards of Conduct

We undertake to:

- require all our Members and statutory co-opted Members to sign up to a Members' Code of Conduct within two months of their election/appointment. All Members are regularly briefed on related issues so that there is a clear understanding of the high standards of conduct expected from them
- also require all staff to abide by high standards of conduct in an Employees' Code of Conduct. (We are currently waiting for the new national model Employee's Code from central Government at which time we will consider a revised Code and an associated relaunch with relevant briefings and training for staff)

- **adopt a special Planning Code for Members to make sure that Members and Development Control Boards act reasonably and openly in dealing with planning matters**
- make certain through the Standards Committee and its key officers, that relevant and regular briefings, information and training is provided for Members and staff specifically about standards and ethical issues to reduce any risk of them inadvertently acting inappropriately
- make sure that all non-elected volunteers who assist with work on Council meetings, groups and related activities act appropriately by asking them to respect certain standards of behaviour which we have set
- make sure that Members declare any relevant interests by reminding Members personally at least annually of their obligations and drawing to their attention on every agenda the need to declare any direct / indirect financial or other interests they may have in any matter to be considered at the meeting in question
- make sure that rules dealing with Conferences, Visits and Hospitality, clearly set out appropriate requirements in these areas and are applied to Members and staff. Periodic checks of any necessary reports, registers and records are carried out
- make sure Members are clear about their use of Council resources, facilities and equipment through a ~~recently agreed~~ **special** Guide
- provide a confidential, safe route for staff and members of the public to report serious malpractice through a Whistle-blowing Policy. ~~This was introduced in 2000, and has recently been revised to make it easier to understand. The new version will be published during the autumn/winter of 2003.~~

### Reviews and Monitoring

- The Constitution is generally regularly checked every quarter for any minor operational or administrative changes that might be necessary. ~~The Council intends to review the Constitution in 2005, three years after it was originally adopted~~
- The Standards Committee reviews the following ~~related~~ documents annually:
  - Employees Code of Conduct
  - Member/Employee Relations Protocol
  - Members' Code of Conduct
  - Members' Guide to the Use of Resources, Facilities and Equipment
  - Rules for Conferences, Hospitality and Visits
  - Standards of Behaviour for Volunteers undertaking Council activities
  - Whistle-blowing Policy

This includes appropriate monitoring of compliance where appropriate.

- Led by the Head of Audit, the Financial and Contracts Rules, and the overall framework, will be reviewed comprehensively every three years. There will also be annual operational reviews, and reminders to senior officers of the existence and

importance of the rules and framework. Any changes necessary will be reported to the Executive and put to the Assembly for adoption

- Led by the Head of Democratic Support, this Code of Corporate Governance will be reviewed annually and reported to the Executive and subsequently put to the Assembly for ~~adoption~~ **revision as necessary**.

**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>BOROUGH SPENDING PLAN 2005/2006: TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS PROJECTS</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<i>This report seeks approval to fund Capital expenditure on Transport and Highway Projects in the financial year 2005/06.</i>		
<b>Summary</b>		
<p>Each year the Council is required to prepare and submit a Borough Spending Plan (BSP), via Transport for London (TfL), to the Mayor of London. This document sets the Council's proposed programme of traffic, transportation, road safety and highway projects for the 2005/06. These projects must be in line with the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy and the Council's Interim Local Transport Plan (ILTP), both of which were published in July 2001.</p> <p>The BSP was last submitted to TfL on 16 July 2004.</p>		
<b>Recommendation</b>		
The Executive is recommended to note the allocation received through the BSP to date for 2005/2006 projects.		
<b>Reason</b>		
To assist in achieving the Community Priorities of " <i>Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer</i> ", " <i>Promoting Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity</i> ", and " <i>Regenerating the Local Economy</i> ".		
<b>Contact</b> Mike Livesey	Group Manager Traffic, Highways, Road Safety and Parking	Tel: 020 - 8227 3110 Fax: 020 - 8227 3166 Minicom: 020 - 8227 3034 Email: <a href="mailto:mike.livesey@lbbd.gov.uk">mike.livesey@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Mayor of London recently announced the Borough Spending Plan (BSP) programme for 2005/06 of £155m for the London authorities. This is the largest allocation ever given to the boroughs. It forms an important part of the major programme of investment in London's transport system made possible by the groundbreaking funding agreement reached between TfL and the Government. This report sets out the details of the financial assistance grant being made available for 2005/06 with funding allocations for ongoing schemes into 2006/07 and 2007/8 where relevant.

- 1.2 Continuing the approach employed in the previous two years, the business managers within TfL for the respective BSP programmes have analysed the bids based on the criteria set out within BSP guidance. In 2005/6 there is a slight reduction in the allocation to infrastructure (road renewal and bridge strengthening) compared to the record allocation in 2004/5. However, the three programmes of Infrastructure, Road Safety and Bus Priority continue to be strongly influenced by the application of needs-based considerations in the placement of funding. These three programme areas together account for 60% of the funds being allocated. The total level of funding allocated to a borough is strongly influenced by the need for the works in these areas.
- 1.3 The BSP allocation specific to this Authority for Borough-specific works is £3,597,000. The funding for the Borough under each BSP Programme / Topic is set out in **Table 1** below. Supporting details of the agreed schemes within each programme are set out within **Table 2** which is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 In addition, Thames Gateway London Partnership, for which LBBB is lead authority for transport, has been awarded £3,255,000.

## 2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 For 2005/06 TfL are allocating approximately £155million to the boroughs, via the BSP submission process. Barking and Dagenham has, to date, been allocated £3.597million for 2005/06:

**Summary of Allocations 2005/2006 - Table 1**

Description	Previous Allocation 2004/05 £	Current Allocation 2005/06 £
Principal Road Maintenance	898,000	885,000
Bridge Assessment and Strengthening	10,000	34,000
Local Safety Schemes	370,000	365,000
20mph Zones	131,000	210,000
Education, Training & Publicity	5,000	18,000
Walking	0	0
Cycling LCN+	100,000	128,000
Cycling Non LCN+	0	30,000
Bus Stop Accessibility	150,000	110,000
Bus Priority	990,000	1,050,000
Interchanges – Dagenham Dock Station	250,000	500,000
Safer Routes to School	175,000	107,000
Green Travel	80,000	80,000
Controlled Parking Zones	40,000	10,000
Local Area Accessibility	70,000	70,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,269,000</b>	<b>3,597,000</b>

- 2.2 **Table 2** gives a breakdown of the allocation by scheme name and location.

- 2.3 TfL has also become considerably more prescriptive in the allocation of funds and the flexibility has decreased, making it more difficult for the Council to locally manage the budgets throughout the year as schemes are developed, consulted on and designs are adjusted. Much more detailed justification is also required from TfL for funding schemes and for ongoing monitoring of expenditure throughout the year than has previously been the case. It is, however, understood that annual allocations of budgets will be removed and funding of schemes, which stretch over a number of years, will be more certain. It is hoped that this will make planning and project management of schemes easier, with the removal of the need for the annual race to report, design, consult and implement schemes in less than a twelve month period.

### **3. Staffing**

- 3.1 Staff employed on these capital projects charge their time to these budgets and are consequently partly self-financing. It should be noted that there is acknowledged to be a nation-wide shortage of qualified and experienced engineering and transportation staff. In order to deliver some of these projects, it is necessary for consultants or agency staff to be employed to fill the gaps in resources. Training programmes are being funded by TfL to try to encourage young people into this area of work or to assist in retraining and development of staff.

### **4. Equalities**

- 4.1 Many of the projects funded via the BSP are aimed at improving access for people, including those with mobility problems, as well as improving the safety of vulnerable road users.

### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The following people were consulted during the preparation of the bid and are happy with the bid and report as it stands.

#### **DRE**

David Higham, Group Manager, Strategic Transportation.  
Ivor Sheehan, Manager, Technical and Operation Services.

#### **Finance**

David Waller, Interim Head of Finance, DRE.  
Lee Russell, Head of Central Finance.

#### **Lead Members**

The following Lead Members have been advised of the results of the bid.  
Deputy Leader's Portfolio (Budgets and Financial Planning), Councillor Geddes.  
Regeneration (Transport Strategy), Councillor Kallar.  
Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener, Safer, Councillor McKenzie

### **Background Papers**

- Executive Minute 44, 8 July 2003.

Re: Borough Spending Plan 2004/2005 and Funding Allocation for 2003/2004:  
Transport and Highways Projects

- Mayor of London's Transport Strategy July 2001.  
[http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/transport/trans\\_strat.jsp](http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/transport/trans_strat.jsp)
- Executive Report and Minute 70, 17 July 2001  
Re: LBBD Interim Local Implementation Plan (ILIP) and Borough Spending Plan  
guidance for 2005/06
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Unitary Development Plan (UDP),  
1996 and modifications.



TABLE 2

London Borough of Barking &amp; Dagenham

Priority Order / Ref no.	Scheme Name / Location.	Allocation (£k) 2005/06
RO	<b>Principal Road Renewal</b>	
	Wood Lane A124 / Whalebone Lane South A1112, Heathway to High	
	1 Road	425
	2 Wood Lane A124. Portes Av - Heathway	305
	3 London Road A124, Northen Relief Road to A406	155
	<b>Principal Road Renewal - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	885
BR	Bridge Assessment & Strengthening	
	Local Authority Bridges	
	1 Thames Road Culvert	22
	2 Loxford Road Culvert	12
	<b>Bridge Assessment &amp; Strengthening - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	34
LSS	Local Safety Schemes	
	1 High Road, Chadwell Heath	95
	2 Coombes Road Area	45
	3 Ripple Road junction with Upney Lane	60
	4 Whalebone Lane North	95
	6 Lodge Avenue	70
	<b>Local Safety Schemes - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	365
ZO	<b>20mph Zones</b>	
	Rugby Road area - bounded by Lodge Avenue, Porters Avenue, Gale	
	1 Street and Rugby Road (Rugby Road is included)	65
	Marston Road area - bounded by Frizlands Lane, Wood Lane and	
	2 Oxlow Lane	75
	Gorseway area - bounded by Rush Green Road, D+B22agenham	
	3 Road and Gorseway (Gorseway is included)	70
	<b>20mph Zones - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	210
ETP	<b>Education, Training &amp; Publicity Schemes</b>	
	Theatre in Education	10
	Smart Brothers Road Safety Show	8
	<b>Education, Training &amp; Publicity Schemes - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	18
W	<b>Walking</b>	
	<b>Walking - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	0
LCN+	<b>Cycling LCN+</b>	
	Route 15 Link 55 - Barking Town Centre to Ilford in Redbridge	
	Salisbury Avenue to Longbridge Road (CRISP AR 26)	14
	Heathway/A1306/Marsh Green Road/Whitebarn Lane & Oval Road	
	North/Ballards Road (CRISP D1, D2, D3 & D4)	80
	Gurney Close (Northwest End) River Roding Pedestrian and cycle	
	track to Newham (CRISP AR17 & AR18)	34
	<b>Cycling LCN+ - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	128
CS	<b>Cycling Non LCN+</b>	
	Cyclist training	30

	<b>Cycling Non LCN+ - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	30
BSA	<b>Bus Stop Accessibility</b>	
	Rainham Road North and Rainham Road South - including relocation of bus stops.	110
	<b>Bus Stop Accessibility - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	110
BP	<b>Bus Priority</b>	
	Whalebone Lane North / South	500
	Route 103 Improvement Strategy	550
	<b>Bus Priority - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	1,050.00
TC	<b>Town Centres</b>	
	<b>Town Centres - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	0
SfP	<b>Streets-for-People</b>	
	<b>Streets-for-People - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	0
SA	<b>Station Access (formerly Interchanges)</b>	
	Dagenham Dock Station	500
	<b>Station Access - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	500
SRtS	<b>Safer Routes to School</b>	
	Safer Routes to School - Ripple Junior School	18
	Safer Routes to School - Ripple Primary Junior School	20
	Safer Routes to School - Marsh Green Primary School	30
	Safer Routes to School - School Travel Plan Preparation	39
	Safer Routes to School - Future Years	
	<b>Safer Routes to School - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	107
TA	<b>Travel Awareness</b>	
	Good Going Campaign	30
	Travel Plan Promotion	15
	Travel Plan Coordinator	35
	<b>Travel Awareness - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	80
FS	<b>Freight Schemes</b>	
	<b>Freight Schemes - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	0
RP	<b>Regeneration &amp; Access Corridors</b>	
	<b>Regeneration &amp; Access Corridors - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	0
AQ	<b>Environment (formerly Air Quality)</b>	
	<b>Environment - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	0
PC	<b>Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ)</b>	
	Station Parking schemes (pre-allocation)	10
	<b>Controlled Parking Zones - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	10
AS	<b>Local Area Accessibility</b>	
	Accessibility	70
	<b>Local Area Accessibility - Amount of Funding Committed £k</b>	70
	<b>AMOUNT OF FUNDING COMMITTED -BOROUGH TOTAL £k (ALL SCHEMES)</b>	<b>3,597.00</b>

**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>BARKING AND DAGENHAM'S DRAFT LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<i>This report contains policy issues of a strategic nature, on which decision is reserved to the Executive.</i>		
<b>Summary</b>		
<p>Barking and Dagenham's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) has been completed through partnership working with internal departments and the community. The LBAP was produced as a daughter document to the Community Strategy 'Building Communities and Transforming Lives' 2004 and the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy 2003. It sets out a structure to protect and enhance the borough's flora and fauna. The LBAP, which is attached at Appendix A, sets out the Council's objectives for the creation and protection of nature conservation in the urban and natural environment.</p>		
<b>Wards Affected</b> : The Action Plan sets out to improve biodiversity across all wards.		
<b>Recommendations</b>		
The Executive is asked to formally adopt the LBAP for the Borough, as attached at Appendix A.		
<b>Reasons</b>		
To help achieve the Council's Community Priorities of "Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer" and "Better Education and Learning for all", and to support and promote the incorporation of greening initiatives for the protection and enhancement of local biodiversity in the urban and natural environment.		
Contact Officer: Gordon Glenday	Group Manager Sustainable Development Team	Tel: 020 8227 3929 Fax: 0208 227 Email: <a href="mailto:gordon.glenday@lbbd.gov.uk">gordon.glenday@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

**1 Background**

Biodiversity can be defined as variety of life. It is the myriad of species, plants and animals on earth and the range of habitats they live in. The production of the LBAP document is an objective within the Boroughs Community Strategy and Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.

**2 Proposal**

The purpose of Barking and Dagenham's LBAP is to outline a five-year programme of protection and enhancement of the Borough's natural assets. The LBAP maps out a

co-ordinated approach between the Council and the local community whereby they work together to create a better environment.

The LBAP sets out to achieve a greener, visually impressive and ecologically rich borough. The LBAP aims to achieve high quality management of our parks and green spaces and to support and promote the integration of greening initiatives into current and future regeneration programmes as well as the planning process.

The document will also support and assist the Borough's Local Biodiversity Partnership and work towards working with the community and local schools to increase people's knowledge and involvement in nature conservation.

### **3 Financial Implications**

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan will have financial implications. These will be identified within existing budgets such as the neighbourhood renewal fund. External funding to support projects to support local Biodiversity may also be sought.

### **4 Consultation**

The following were consulted in the development of the LBAP document.

<b><u>External</u></b>	<b><u>Internal</u></b>
The Local Biodiversity Partnership London Development Agency The Environment Agency The London Borough Biodiversity Forum The London Biodiversity Partnership The Greater London Authority The Thames Gateway London Partnership The London Wildlife Trust The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds The Association of London Governments Froglife Charity The Bat Conservation Trust The Thames Chase Community Forest The Countryside Agency The Woodland Trust The British Trust of Ornithology	Planning and Transportation Parks and Countryside Parks and Leisure Regeneration and Implementation

**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>EASTBROOKEND COUNTRY PARK (BEAM VALLEY EXTENSION), MAYESBROOK PARK LAKE (SOUTH) AND PARSLOES PARK (SQUATTS) - DECLARATION OF LOCAL NATURE RESERVES</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p><i>This report concerns a strategic matter and is therefore reserved to the Executive by the Scheme of Delegation.</i></p> <p><b>Summary</b>  The designation of Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley extension), Mayesbrook Park Lake (South) and Parsloes Park 'Squatts' are the second targets to be achieved under the Borough's Local Public Service Agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Following consultation with English Nature, it is proposed to designate these sites as the Borough's latest Local Nature Reserves. This follows the designation of The Chase as a Local Nature Reserve (2001) and Eastbrookend Country Park (2003)</p> <p>Plans showing the proposed areas to be designated are attached (<b>Appendices A-C</b>)</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Executive is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) approve the declaration of Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley extension), Mayesbrook Park Lake (South) and Parsloes Park 'Squatts', as marked on the attached plans, as Local Nature Reserves (LNR's); and</li> <li>(ii) authorise Officers to issue the necessary Notices and enter into the necessary legal arrangements to enable the Declarations to take place.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reason</b></p> <p>The designation of these sites as Local Nature Reserves will assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of <i>'Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer'</i> and <i>'Raising General Pride in the Borough'</i>.</p> <p><b>Wards Affected</b>  Village Ward; - Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley extension);  Mayesbrook Ward; - Mayesbrook Park Lake (South) and Parsloes Park 'Squatts'</p>	
<b>Contact:</b> Mike Levett	Senior Park Development Officer Tel: 020 - 8227 3387 Fax: 020 - 8227 3129 Minicom: 020 - 8227 3042 E-mail: mike.levett@lbbd.gov.uk

## 1. Background

- 1.1 On 16 May 2001 the Executive gave approval to declare part of The Chase Nature Reserve within the Council's ownership as a Local Nature Reserve (Executive Minute 641, 16 May 2001 refers). This implemented Unitary Development Plan Policy G56 which showed a clear commitment to declare Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Status for The Chase Nature Reserve.
- 1.2 The Executive also gave approval on 17 February 2004 to declare Eastbrookend Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve (Executive Minute 283, 17 February 2004 refers). This was the first target to be achieved under the Borough's Local Public Service Agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- 1.2 LNR status can only be declared by a Local Authority (or Parish / Town Council with delegated powers) on land in its ownership or where there is a legal interest in the land.
- 1.3 The Council has signed a Local Public Service Agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. One of the targets to be achieved over the period of the agreement (2003-2006) is the designation of further areas of land under the Council's ownership as Local Nature Reserves. In 2005 it is proposed to designate the Ripple Nature Reserve and Scrattons Ecopark as LNR's.
- 1.4 The target for 2004/05 is for Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley extension) to be designated as a Local Nature Reserve (**Appendix A**). This was to include declaring all of the land within Council ownership and that owned by the Environment Agency (which the Council would lease). However, part of the Agency land (10 hectares) consists of the Washlands Reservoir, which will be the subject of major engineering and environmental improvements, therefore this area will be excluded from the LNR designation process.
- 1.5 The areas within the Borough which are of sufficient wildlife value have been substituted to achieve the target of 78 hectares to be designated in 2004/05. These are:
- Mayesbrook Park Lake (South) (**Appendix B**). This area is part of the Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (Grade 2) designated in October 2003 under the Habitat survey undertaken for the Borough by the Greater London Authority. The LNR designation will include the surrounding areas of woodland, but will not include the Boating Lake.
  - Parsloes Park 'Squatts' (**Appendix C**) This area is part of the Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (Grade 2) designated in October 2003 under the Habitat survey undertaken for the Borough by the Greater London Authority. The area is thought to have got its name- the 'Squatts' as the MOD housing on site was used as temporary accommodation after the War for local people.
- 1.6 Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley extension) has been designated as a Site of Borough Importance (Grade 1) and has been the subject of major environmental improvements, such as Phase 1 (Dagenham East), and Phase 3 (Dagenham Hospital site). It also contains Priority habitats and species as

identified under the Borough's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) which is due to be approved by the Executive on 8 February 2005. Designation of the site as a Local Nature Reserve will assist in recognising the Beam Valley's nature conservation value.

- 1.7 A Management Plan for Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley extension) was prepared and approved by the Environment Agency in September 2001. This document included proposals to declare their land as a Local Nature Reserve. LNR declaration can only be declared where the Council has a legal interest in the land - this is currently being secured by the Borough leasing Environment Agency within the Beam Valley, for which Executive approval was received (Minute 279, 11 December 2001 refers).

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 There would be no additional costs to the Council as a result of declaring Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley extension), Mayesbrook Park Lake (South) and Parsloes Park 'Squatts' as Local Nature Reserves.
- 2.2 The declaration of these sites as Local Nature Reserves would enable the Council to bid for funding from English Nature. Acting as a Green Spaces Award Partner, English Nature with the New Opportunities Fund distributes grants specifically for Local Nature Reserves. This funding would enable the Council to undertake further improvement works, which may otherwise not be possible. It should be noted, however, that funding applications to the New Opportunities Fund will generally require London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBD) to provide some matched funding towards capital costs and place the Council under on-going maintenance obligations once awarded

## **3. Consultation**

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

Environment Agency  
Countryside Agency  
Thames Chase Community Forest

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

Jeremy Grint, Head of Regeneration Implementation  
Jane Bufton, Head of Corporate Communications  
Linda Parker, Corporate Legal Manager, CS  
David Waller, Interim Head of Finance, DRE

The following Councillors have also been advised of the proposal.

Lead Members

Portfolio; Raising General Pride in the Borough. Councillor Wade  
Portfolio, Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener, Safer,  
Councillor McKenzie

Village Ward; Councillors L. Waker, P. Waker, Dale  
Mayesbrook Ward; Councillors Blake, Conyard, Hunt

## **Background Papers**

Executive Minute 279, 11 December 2001

Re: Eastbrookend Country Park: Beam Valley Extension And Environment Agency lease.

Executive Minute 641, 16 May 2001.

Re: The Chase Nature Reserve Declaration

Executive Minute 283, 17 February 2004.

Re: Eastbrookend Country Park Declaration of Local Nature Reserve

Local Nature Reserves in England, A Guide to their Selection and

Declaration. Issued by English Nature 1991 (revised 1999).

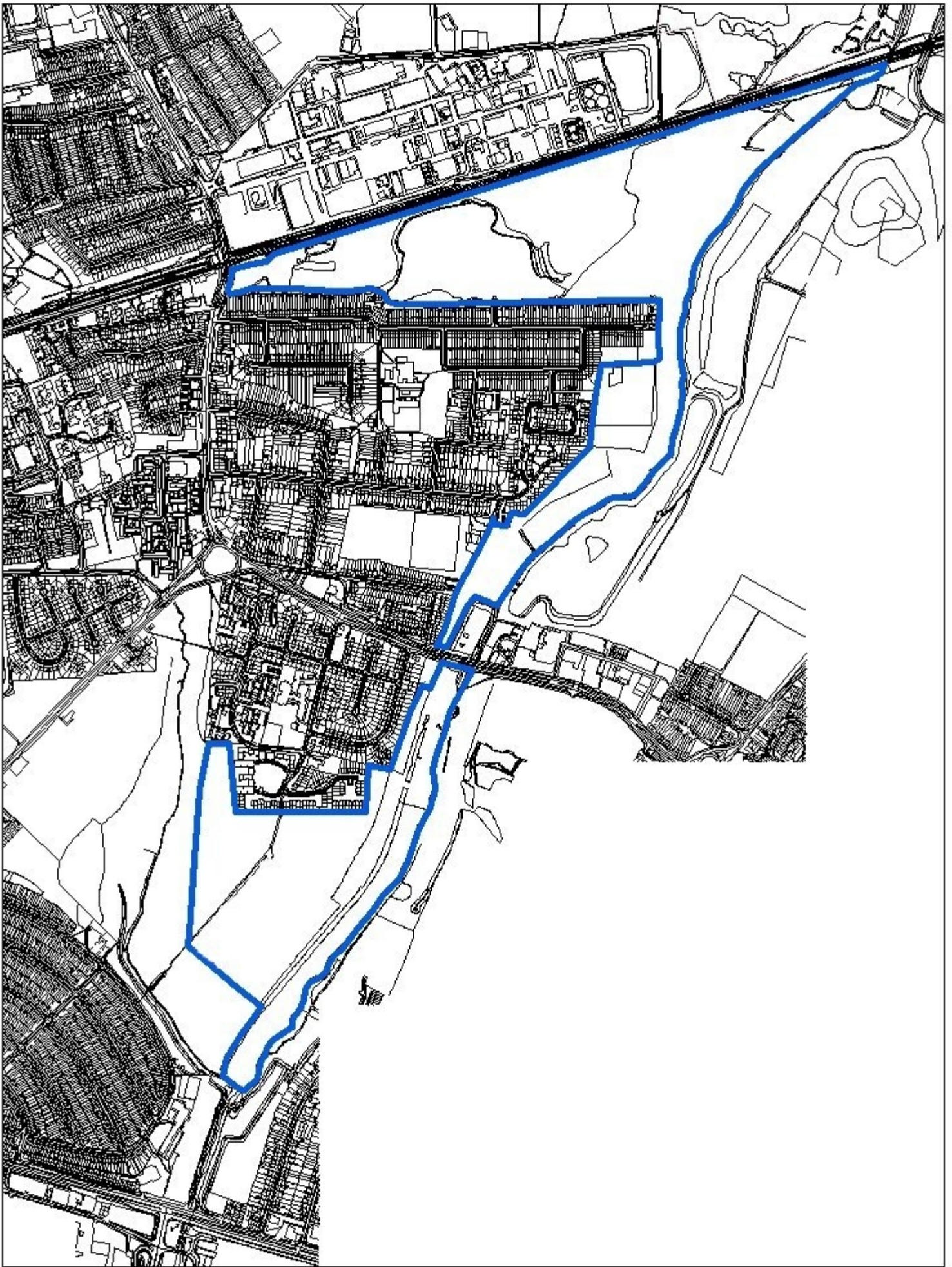
The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Unitary Development Plan 1995

Appendix A: Beam Valley Local Nature Reserve designation

Appendix B: Mayesbrook Park Lake (South) Local Nature Reserve designation

Appendix C: Parsloes Park 'Squatts' Local Nature Reserve Designation





<b>Key</b>
— (all other values)
<b>Ownership</b>
EA
LBBB
<b>OUTLINE</b>

**Appendix A:**  
**Beam Valley**  
**Local Nature Reserve Designation**

1:10,000



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**Key**

**Boundaries** — <all other values>

**Owners hip**

EA

LBDD

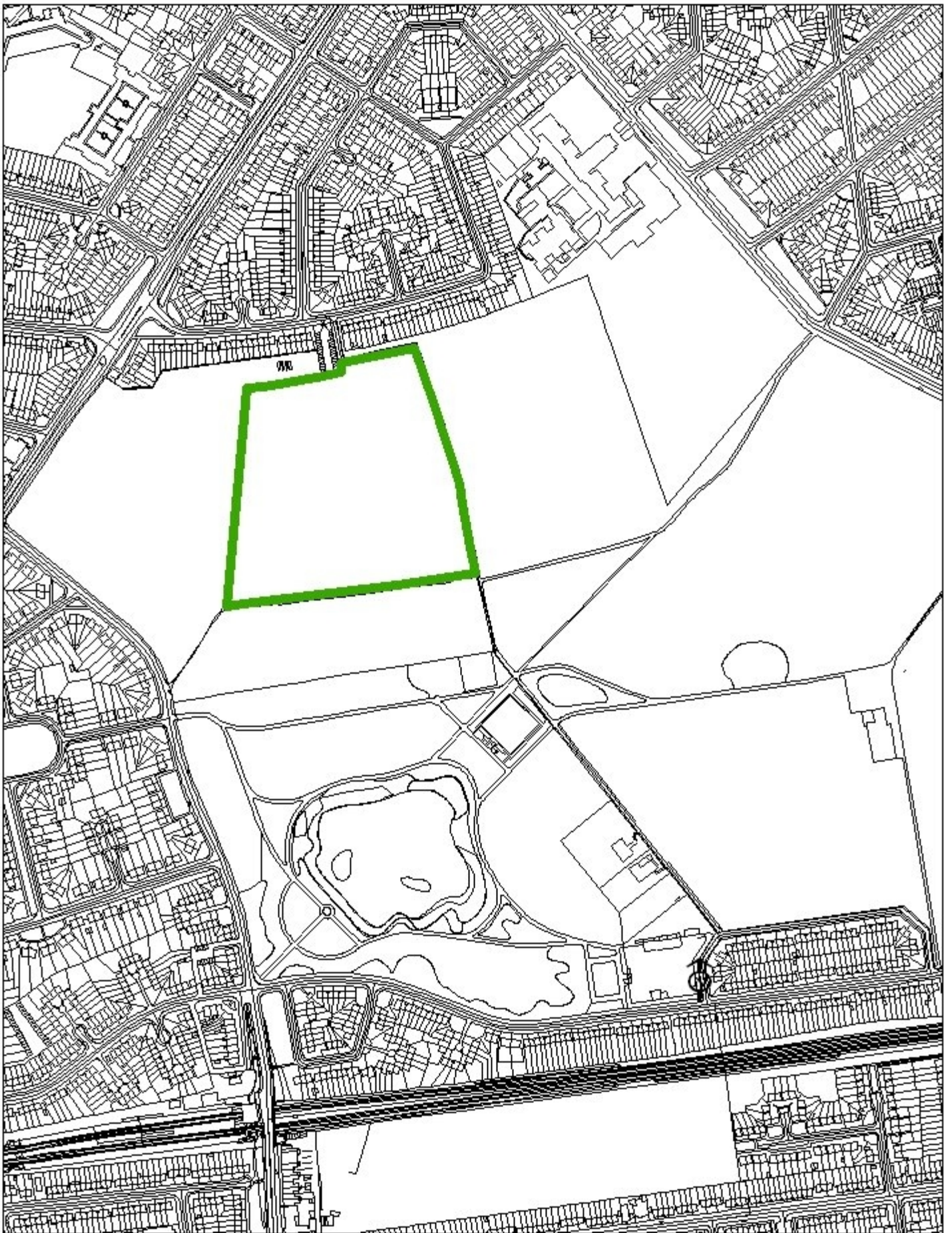
**—** OUTLINE OF LNR AREA

**Appendix B:  
Mayesbrook Park Lake (South)  
Local Nature Reserve Designation**

1:2,500

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**Key**

**Boundaries**

— <all other value>

**Ownership**

EA

LB 80

**BOUNDARY OF LOCAL NATURE RESERVE**

— <all other value>

1:5,000

**Appendix C:**

**Parsloes Park 'Squatts' area**

**Parsloes Park Local Nature Reserve**

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**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

<b>FEEDBACK ON SOCIAL SERVICES MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SESSION SEPTEMBER 2004</b>	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	
<p><i>This report provides feedback on attendance at a conference in accordance with the Conference, Visits and Hospitality Rules.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>The Social Services Management Team planned a training/development session which took place on 16-17<sup>th</sup> September 2004. The recent appointment of a number of a new Senior Management Teams means that it was timely for the team to consider the political vision offered by Members, be clear about strategic direction and management, establish a consistency of management, and new ways of working. This report was submitted to the Executive (Minute 100, 7 September 2004 refers) as it cost in excess of £1,000 as stipulated in the Conferences, Visits and Hospitality Rules.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to note the success of the training/development for the Social Services Management Team, and the overall costs funded from the training budget.</p>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b> Julia Ross	Director of Social Services	Tel: 020 8227 2300 Fax:020 8227 2241 E-mail: <a href="mailto:julia.ross@lbbd.gov.uk">julia.ross@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Social Services Management Team held a training/development session, for which there was an extensive agenda. The recent appointment of a number of new Senior Managers meant that it was timely for the team to consider the political vision offered by Members, be clear about strategic direction and management, establish a consistency of management, and new ways of working. It was also necessary for the Department Management Team (DMT) to define its priorities for next year as part of the planning and budgetary process for 2005-06, as the overall performance of the Department continues to improve.
- 1.2 The programme ran from 16 – 17 September and whilst there was no external facilitation, it benefited from contributions from the former Chief Executive and the Leadership programme which is now taking place for all middle managers in Social Services.

**2. Aims of Training/Development meeting**

The aims and outline programme are attached at Appendix A.

### 3. Venue and Cost

The venue for the event was the Moat House, near Grays, Essex. The costs were estimated at £180 per person for the two days, including room hire and facilities, overnight accommodation and meals. The total cost was £1475, and was funded from the training budget in Social Services. This was within the original estimate previously advised.

### 4. Feedback

The senior management team worked hard together to:

- Agree the future direction of travel
- Review the three year Financial and Commissioning Framework
- Develop a strong change management programme and culture
- Improve customer first and consultation
- Consider challenges and agree priorities for action to achieve two stars.



**OUTLINE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING PROGRAMME**

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2004-09-02  
Venue: Moat House, Grays, Essex  
Attendance: Social Services Departmental Management Team \*

**Aims of the Days**

1. To enable the new DMT\* to benefit from political and operational leadership by brining the new team together to agree future direction.
2. To develop further the change programme in Social Services by agreeing the content of a new leadership programme for senior managers and how we can ensure improved management at all levels.
3. To review progress against finance and commissioning strategy and agree ways of ensuring we can continue to improve performance, and reach 2 stars.
4. To consider external/internal challenges that will impact on our work over the next 18-24 months and in the light of these, agree priorities for action over the next two years.

\* We have been fortunate that our new Head of Strategy and Performance will be able to attend even though she does not start until November.

**OUTLINE PROGRAMME**

**16<sup>th</sup> September**

09:00 – 10:30	Political vision for Social Services
11:00 – 12:30	Developing our Managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensuring they have the skills required to deliver improved performance</li><li>• Reviewing work on liP</li></ul>
1:30 – 3:30	Developing our Managers (continued)
4:00 – 6:00	Shaping the new Management team – working together
6:00 – 7:30	Dinner
7:30 – 9:30	Group exercise on setting and agreeing leadership style and direction

**17<sup>th</sup> September**

08:30 – 10:00	Reviewing our performance for CPA and 2 Stars, progress defining future challenges
10:30 – 12:00	Agreeing high level priorities for the next 18-24 months
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch and finalise

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**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

<b>FEEDBACK ON ANNUAL SOCIAL SERVICES CONFERENCE 2004 AND ATTENDANCE AT 2005 EVENT</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>The Annual Social Services Conference 'Communities that Care, Services that Deliver' took place in Newcastle on October 20-22<sup>nd</sup> 2004. This conference is a joint event run by the Association of Directors of Social Services.</p> <p>The Conference was attended by Councillor Bramley as Children's Champion and Councillor Rush as support Member for disability, mental health, drug and alcohol services and accompanied by the Director of Social Services. This report summarises the main messages from the conference and implications for policy development in Barking &amp; Dagenham.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendations</u></b></p> <p>That Executive is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the main messages from this conference and agree the benefits of attendance.</li> <li>2. Agree representation by one officer and two elected Members at this year's conference, to take place on 19-21<sup>st</sup> October 2005 in Birmingham at a cost of £1600, which will be met from the Social Services training budget.</li> </ol>	
Contact Officer:	<p>Julia Ross, Director of Social Services</p> <p>Tel: 020 8227 2332            Fax: 020 8227 2241            E-mail: <a href="mailto:julia.ross@lbbd.gov.uk">julia.ross@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>

**1. Benefits of Attendance**

- 1.1 The Conference was three full days packed with plenary, policy sessions and fringe events attended by circa.1,000 elected Members and senior offices nationally. These were some of the main messages arising from the plenary speakers;
- 1.2 The Rt. Hon Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education announced a greater separation of commissioning and providing services and more emphasis on commissioning for local authorities and a greater clarity in the relationship between central and local Government.
- 1.3 Joined up Inspection

From next year all inspections of social care services will be undertaken jointly. In Children's Services, Ofsted will be the lead inspection agency. The focus will be more on improvement than monitoring and a greater focus on people who use

services. It is planned that the Star Ratings will be undertaken separately for Children's and Adult Services.

#### 1.4 Social Work Registration

The new General Council for Social Care was established this year. The Council was actively promoting the need for all social workers to register with the Council by 1<sup>st</sup> December. It will be illegal for anyone to call themselves a social worker after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005. This is a fundamental shift in the 'professionalising' of social work and in the protection of vulnerable people who use social work services.

#### 1.5 Bichard Inquiry

Sir Michael Bichard, Chair of the Bichard Inquiry reiterated the messages for safer services following the Soham Inquiry. He announced that he will be conducting a national review on his recommended actions with all authorities. In this plenary, Councillor Rush raised an interesting question on the issue of NHS and CRB checks and scrutiny which he said he would look into.

#### 1.6 ALG Health and Social Care Committee

This Committee was attended by Councillors Bramley and Rush. A number of significant matters for London and Barking & Dagenham were discussed including Gershon Review and Children's Trusts.

#### 1.7 Health & Social Care Agenda

The Secretary of State for Health, the Rt. Hon John Reid stressed the importance of service delivery at the front line and promoting choice and independence for all older people and adults using social services.

### 2. Financial Consideration

2.1 The financial costs for the 2004 conference in total amounted to approximately £1,800 and were funded via the Social Services training budget.

#### 2.2 Costings for 2005 – 19-21<sup>st</sup> October Conference

The total costs for the October conference will be in the region of £1,185 + VAT for 3 people attending and £405 + VAT for 3 people's accommodation + travel expenses.

### **Background Papers**

Executive Committee Report dated 16 December 2003

**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>FEEDBACK ON PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN CONFERENCE MAY 2004</b>	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>												
<i>This report includes feedback regarding a Planning and Urban Design Conference attended by the Lead Member for Regeneration and the Group Manager Urban Design.</i>													
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>A comprehensive two day conference on Planning and Urban Design was attended by Lead Member for Regeneration and the Group Manager Urban Design on the 19 and 20 of May 2004. Urban design is a new area for the Council. The Lead Member for Regeneration holds the remit for Urban Design and is the Borough's designated Urban Design Champion. It was considered that attendance at this comprehensive Conference would provide an excellent opportunity to learn about design issues, which would assist the Lead Member for Regeneration and the new Urban Design Group in promoting Urban design in the planning and regeneration of the Borough.</p> <p>The costs associated with this exceeded the limits set down in the Council's standing orders. The Executive approved the cost for the Conference in April 2004. This report gives a brief summary of the event and main points of learning, the benefits and value of attendance, the full costs (including a comparison with the original estimates), and the value of attending similar events in the future.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Executive is recommended to note the content of this report.</p> <p><b>Reason</b></p> <p>This report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 11, Conferences, Visits and Hospitality Rules of the Council's Constitution, which states that where events require the authorisation of the Executive, a further report providing feedback should be made to the Executive</p>													
<p><b>Contact</b></p> <table> <tr> <td data-bbox="150 1554 443 1621">Bernadette McGuigan</td> <td data-bbox="443 1554 804 1621">Group Manager Urban Design, DRE</td> <td data-bbox="804 1554 1161 1588">Tel: 020 8227 3881</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td data-bbox="804 1588 1161 1621">Fax: 020 8227 3896</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td data-bbox="804 1621 1161 1655">Minicom:020 8227 3034</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td data-bbox="804 1655 1481 1688">E-mail: <a href="mailto:Bernadette.mcquigan@lbbd.gov.uk">Bernadette.mcquigan@lbbd.gov.uk</a>;</td> </tr> </table>		Bernadette McGuigan	Group Manager Urban Design, DRE	Tel: 020 8227 3881			Fax: 020 8227 3896			Minicom:020 8227 3034			E-mail: <a href="mailto:Bernadette.mcquigan@lbbd.gov.uk">Bernadette.mcquigan@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ;
Bernadette McGuigan	Group Manager Urban Design, DRE	Tel: 020 8227 3881											
		Fax: 020 8227 3896											
		Minicom:020 8227 3034											
		E-mail: <a href="mailto:Bernadette.mcquigan@lbbd.gov.uk">Bernadette.mcquigan@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ;											

1. **Background**

Urban Design is a new area for the Council, but is becoming increasingly important in the sustainable planning and regeneration agenda. The importance of and the need to strengthen Urban Design in the Borough was recognised in the Regeneration Best Value Review. A new Urban Design Group was established through the re-organisation of planning and regeneration at the beginning of 2004 to provide this function.

At the Executive meeting of the 23 March 2004, approval was given for the attendance of the Lead Member for Regeneration and the Group Manager Urban Design at a comprehensive two day conference on Planning and Urban Design on the 19 and 20 of May 2004. The conference was considered to cover all key aspects of Urban Design that are important to the sustainable planning and regeneration of the Borough, to raising quality and to influencing the design agenda.

Immediately prior to the event the Council was offered two free places for the half day Executive briefing on the afternoon of the 18 May 2004 and an additional place for a colleague at the Conference itself. The Lead Member for Regeneration and the Group Manager Urban Design attended the free Executive briefing on the 18 and one of the Managers from the DRE Regeneration Implementation Division took the free place for the Conference.

## **2 Summary of the Conference**

The two day Urban Planning and Design Conference was an opportunity to learn from leading experts in the field of planning and design. Subjects were very comprehensively covered and included:-

- The value of good architecture.
- Best value rather than lowest cost.
- The issue of skills and learning.
- London's design led Urban Renaissance.
- Campaigning for effective Urban Design.
- Raising Urban Design Quality.
- Creativity and Diversity.
- The deliverability of major infrastructure projects.
- Urban transport planning.
- Strategic regional development.
- Energy efficiency in buildings.
- Securing schools in the future.
- Environmental performance.

As well as separate seminar sessions, the Conference also included four best practice examples from the UK to illustrate the application of design to the issues raised. All of these issues have an impact on the planning and regeneration work in one way or another and a number of aspects are already part of our normal working approach. A compact disk (CD) of the Conference, received in September, which includes transcripts of all of the sessions, is currently being circulated amongst Officers. This will form the bases of future discussions on design requirements and additional skills and training needs, with Officers over the next quarter.

By far the most useful session was the Executive seminar on the 18 May. This was effectively a small, focussed workshop with a firm of urban design consultants on formulating design briefs, which has direct relevance to the work undertaken by the Council. These briefing tips and notes are being used in development and design briefing, to improve the impact of these documents and will be circulated to all who are engaged in drafting design briefs.

### **3 Benefit and Value of attendance**

The benefit in attending the conference was primarily in the exposure to the full range of design application that we may be engaged in within the Urban Design function of the Council. It offered a very comprehensive 'fast track' refresher for attendees. In this respect it was valuable.

The Executive summary and seminar sessions in particular were very useful, providing practical examples of good design practice focusing on practical problem solving. All of the sessions were relevant to the operation of a new Urban Design Group based within the Council. The sessions included practical pointers that have and will continue to be incorporated into the Urban Design Group work. This will also be incorporated into a programme of design training and awareness raising with Officers and Members over the coming year.

The most disappointing aspect of the Conference however, was that it was not well attended – with an average of 16 people at the Conference on each day, which included speakers. This did impact on the opportunities to network with others and also on the general atmosphere. As a result some of the speakers understandably 'lacked lustre'.

The organisers did ask for feedback regarding the low response and it was generally considered that although the conference covered an important topic area and this was well covered by their programme, it was a programme designed for the public sector, but too expensive for the public sector to take advantage of. In addition, it was considered that as the subject area was quite specific, a web based advertising campaign, which the SMi conference organisers specialise in, possibly did not reach enough people in their target audience.

### **4 Costs**

The cost of attending the conference for Public Sector delegates was £1,129.00 +VAT per delegate. As the Council can offset VAT, the costs for two delegates amounted to £2,258.00 for the two days of the Conference. This amount was the same as originally estimated.

The Conference and travel costs for the Lead Member for Regeneration were funded through the Members Training Budget. The Member's Development Working Party had agreed this expenditure for May 2004, but stressed that it should not be taken as a precedent.

The Conference costs for the Group Manager Urban Design were taken from the DRE Planning and Transportation training budget and travel costs claimed through petty cash.

The Executive briefing was advertised at £586.33 per person. Therefore, the total costs that would have been associated with the free places, if we had booked them, amounted to £1,172.66.

In addition, as a result of feedback from delegates at the conference regarding the poor attendance and networking opportunities and more detailed feedback given to the Conference organisers by the Group Manager Urban Design, the Council was given a free place at a further conference in the series. This was taken up by

the Regeneration Implementation Division to attend a Regeneration Conference in October. This conference was advertised as costing £1,795.40 per delegate.

In conclusion therefore, the Council was offered an additional £2,968.06 worth of training for free, from the Conference organisers, which was taken up by the Lead Member for Regeneration and three officers, but the Council only paid £2,258.00 in total ( $\div 4 = \text{£}564.50$  each.) In this respect, the training received offered value for money, although this was by chance.

## **5 Attendance at future conferences**

Attendance at future conferences on urban design aspects will be essential to keep abreast with new initiatives and trends and to enable the Council to strive for better design.

However, it may be advisable to seriously consider expenditure on conferences offered by this particular organisation in the future, if they continue to be advertised at these prices.

### **Consultation** –

The following people have seen this report and have either raised no objection or have confirmed that they are happy with this report as it stands.

#### **Lead Member**

Regeneration; Councillor Kallar

#### **Officers**

David Waller, Interim Head of Finance, DRE

Su Jolly, Training Advisor, Human Resources, DRE

Rossana Kendall, Head of Corporate Human Resources – Development & Training, DCS

## **Background Papers**

None



**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

<b>ATTENDANCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF REVENUES RATING AND VALUATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2004</b>	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	
<p><i>This report informs the Executive of the attendance of two officers from Revenue Services at the above conference and of the benefits to the Council of their attendance.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b>  The Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) is the professional body for revenue &amp; benefits practitioners and holds an annual conference each year. The Executive previously approved the attendance of two officers from Revenue Services and this report is submitted as requested outlining the benefits to the Council.</p> <p>The event was attended by the Head of Revenue Services and the Income and Collections Manager. It consisted of a wide range of lectures on topical issues, workshop sessions, specialist lectures, as well as exhibitions and demonstrations from commercial organisations supplying goods and services to the Revenues arena.</p> <p>Attendance contributes to the continued professional development of officers and ensures that the Council is well informed of current and future trends in this service area. Attendance also helps to raise the profile of the Authority and effective contributions to the events were made by both attendees.</p> <p>Information was also available from exhibits by various central government representatives, such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Department for Works and Pensions. There was also an Awards village where authorities that had been short-listed for the performance Awards displayed their successful entries as part of the IRRV's commitment to the dissemination of good practice.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendations</u></b>  The Executive is asked to note the report.</p> <p><b><u>Reason</u></b>  In accordance with agreed procedures governing the attendance of officers at conferences with a total cost in excess of £1,000, a feedback report to the Executive is required.</p>		
<b>Contact Officer</b> Abimbola Odunsi	Head of Revenue Services	<b>Tel: 020 8227 2505</b> Fax: 020 8227 2574 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail <a href="mailto:abimbola.odunsi@lbbd.gov.uk">abimbola.odunsi@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

## **1.0 The Role of the Institute and the Conference**

- 1.1 The Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation is the only specialist professional organisation for officers engaged in Revenue Collection or Benefits Administration. The Institute is held in high regard in Local Government Finance circles and provides both technical and professional qualifications for officers. Both attendees at the conference are fully qualified corporate members of the Institute.
- 1.2 The institute holds a number of specialist conferences throughout the year on such issues as collection enforcement, benefits administration and fraud prevention. However, the main annual conference, with an emphasis on both strategic and operational issues across all Revenues and Benefits service areas, is recognised as being an important forum for senior managers in Revenue Services.

## **2.0 Lecture and Workshop Sessions**

### **2.1 Subjects included the following**

- The Lyons Inquiry into Council Tax
- The Balance of Funding Review
- The Impact of the Gershon Review of Public Sector Efficiency
- The Future of Housing Benefits
- Political Alternatives to Council Tax
- The Progress of the Council Tax Revaluation
- The Role of the Local Government Ombudsman
- The Introduction of Business Improvement Districts, Small Business Rate Relief and Local Authority Business Growth Initiatives

### **2.1 Speakers included:**

- Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP - Minister for Local and Regional Government
- Mr Chris Pond MP – Parliamentary Under Secretary for Work and Pensions
- Mr Tony Redmond – the Local Government Ombudsman
- Mr David Magor – Director of the Institute of Revenues Rating & Valuation (IRRV)
- Mr Steve Freer – Chief Executive of Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA)

## **3.0 Exhibitions and demonstrations**

### **3.1 Examples of the exhibitions and demonstrations throughout the conference include:**

- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- Department for Works and Pensions
- Benefit Fraud Inspectorate
- Valuation Office Agency
- Software suppliers
- Bailiffs and enforcement agencies
- Consultancy companies
- Specialist staffing agencies
- Mailing services

## **4.0 Best Practice and Performance Awards**

- 4.1 The Conference also features a series of performance awards made to authorities that have achieved excellence in Revenue Services. This event is an important method of highlighting best practice and facilitating its dissemination to other authorities. In the past Revenues Services has invited winners of the awards to visit the Council and talk to staff about the way in which they achieved excellence. The Head of Revenues for East Riding of Yorkshire (Winners of the IRRV Revenues Team of the Year 2002 and IRRV Benefits Team of the Year 2003), gave a presentation to LBBD Revenue Managers at Stour Road in July 2004 on their experience and the transition they made from a failing service to award winners over a 3 – 4 year period.
- 4.2 The winner of the IRRV Benefits Team of the Year for 2004 award was Salford BC. Salford is one of the 2 Beacon authorities for Benefits administration (Blackpool being the other). Four of our managers from Revenue Services attended Salford BC's Beacon Open day in September. We also had a manager attend the Beacon Open day at Blackpool in October.
- 4.3 Attendees at both events have since produced briefing notes and carried out presentations to management teams sharing the learning points. This has improved overall understanding of the way in which the Council wishes to develop its services and of what/how it can be achieved.
- 4.4 A short article feeding back on both events was published in January 2005's edition of Members Matters.

## **5.0 Benefits to the Council**

- 5.1 Attendance at the Institute's annual conference is viewed as an important aspect of the continued professional development of senior officers in Revenues Services. The Benefits Service is widely recognised as an area of regular and significant change and in recent years both Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates have seen major changes as the government continues with its agenda to modernise local government.
- 5.2 The conference provides a valuable opportunity for officers to keep up to date with current issues and also learn about forthcoming changes. There is also an opportunity to share experiences and good practices with peers from other authorities across the country.
- 5.3 Ensuring officers maintain their professional development and are abreast of developments in their field is an important aspect of providing a professional and modern service to Members and the public. In addition officers from the authority strive to make a positive contribution to the conference, for example by asking questions at lectures, and this helps to promote a positive image of the authority in the Revenues arena.
- 5.4 The learning gained from attendance is cascaded through the Revenues Division through management and team meetings. In addition a briefing note for all staff is currently in production and will be circulated in the near future.

## 6.0 Cost to the Council

6.1 The full cost to the Council is as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Conference attendance fee for two officers	£1,220
Accommodation (3 nights) for two officers	£670
Car parking	£81
Total	<u>£1,971</u>

6.2 In addition to the above there is the cost of mileage claims at essential user rate for travel to Brighton.

### Background Papers

- IRRV Annual Conference 2004 Programme
- Executive Report – Attendance at the Institute of Revenues, Ratings & Valuation Annual Conference (Minute 49, 20 July 2004)

**THE EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & HEALTH**

<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ESTIMATES AND REVIEW OF RENTS AND OTHER CHARGES 2005 - 06</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<i>This report requires a decision in respect of rent levels for 2005-06</i>		
<b>Summary</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To review the Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2005-06.</li> <li>b) To review the level of rents for council tenants for 2005-06.</li> <li>c) To review heating and garage charges for 2005-06.</li> <li>d) To consider the unpooling of rents in line with ODPM guidelines.</li> </ul>		
<b>Recommendations</b>		
Members are asked to:-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Approve the estimates for 2005-06 as set out on Appendix A;</li> <li>b) Subject to (a) above, recommend rent increases calculated in accordance with the rent restructuring formula. This will mean an average weekly rent increase of £2.25 per dwelling (3.7%);</li> <li>c) Approve the unpooling of rents in respect of the caretaking service, the upkeep of amenity greens and the provision of door security systems on a phased basis as set out in para 3.3;</li> <li>d) Consider increasing heating charges and garage rents in line with inflation;</li> <li>e) Recommend that any changes take effect from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005.</li> </ul>		
<b>Reason</b>		
There is a statutory duty to review rents and other charges annually, to ensure rent levels conform with rent restructuring proposals, and to produce a balanced Housing Revenue Account.		
Contact: Colin Rigby	Head of Finance (Housing & Health)	Tel: 020 8227 5710 Fax: 020 8227 5705 Minicom: 020 8227 5755 Email: <a href="mailto:colinrigby@lbbd.com.uk">colinrigby@lbbd.com.uk</a>

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a landlord account that records all expenditure and income arising from the provision of housing accommodation by local authorities. It is a ring fenced account which means any costs incurred must be funded from income it receives.

Section 74 in Part V1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 specifies the major items that must be included. There is an entitlement to HRA subsidy that is calculated on the basis of a notional HRA.

Authorities are required to keep the HRA in accordance with proper practices as defined in section 66(4) of the Act

- 1.2 The Government have introduced significant changes to the HRA and the subsidy over the last few years with a view to:-
- Keep social rents affordable and below the private sector.
  - Limit RSL rents to RPI + ½% with Local Authority rents slightly higher to help achieve convergence and to reflect the anticipated investment in improving the local authority stock.
  - Implement a rent system which reflects property size, value and local earnings.
  - Achieve a coherent structure for social rents within 10 years.
  - Fully compensate the majority of tenants through housing benefits and limit increases to RPI + ½% + £2 per week.
- 1.3 Local Authorities used to have to ensure that rents were reasonable, reviewed from time to time and have regard to rents in the private sector. This has now been repealed by Section 92 of the Local Government Act 2003. They now have to be calculated in accordance with the formula set by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).
- 1.4 This removes any flexibility local authorities and tenants may have had in determining rent levels, and therefore the level of service provision. Tenants will be protected from potentially large increases, especially in authorities where rents are well below RSL levels and its target (formula) rent, by a capping system.
- 1.5 The Government have established a target to ensure that by 2010 all social housing properties meet the Decent Homes Standard. In order to achieve this in Barking and Dagenham, the Housing Futures Project has been set up to identify the level of non decent dwellings, develop an investment strategy and to measure progress towards its elimination. As part of this, a balanced HRA financial model needs to be established. All proposals within this report link in with the assumptions made in the model.

## **2. RENT RESTRUCTURING**

- 2.1 Rent restructuring was introduced in 2002-03 and will be phased in until 2011-12 when rents of similar properties in similar locations, irrespective of the landlord, should have similar rents. The intention also being to ensure rents more accurately reflect the difference in property types. Therefore the rent of a one bedroom flat in a high rise block should have a significantly lower rent than a four bedroom house. This has been one of the main flaws of the previous points system where the differentials were narrow and unrealistic.

The general increase in formula rents under rent restructuring as set out in ODPM's subsidy determinations for 2005-06 is 4.03%

2.2 The table below shows a comparison of the current, formula and subsidy rent levels, together with projected increases in line with ODPM assumptions, for the rent restructuring period.

Year	Rents					
	Formula		Actual		Subsidy	
	Increase	Rent	Increase	Rent	Increase	Rent
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
2004-05	2.23	58.61	2.22	60.70	3.07	52.31
2005-06	2.38	60.99	2.25	62.95	2.81	55.12
2006-07	2.88	63.87	2.65	65.60	3.62	58.74
2007-08	3.02	66.89	2.74	68.34	3.85	62.59
2008-09	3.16	70.05	2.85	71.19	4.09	66.68
2009-10	3.31	73.36	2.98	74.17	4.33	71.01
2010-11	3.47	76.83	3.10	77.27	4.59	75.60
2011-12	3.63	80.46	3.19	80.46	4.86	80.46

This shows that rents will converge in 2011-12 at £80.46 per week

2.3 As the current rents are slightly above the proposed formula rent, actual rent increases will need to be just below ODPM's deemed increase in formula rents. As subsidy rents are well below the actual and formula rent, this will increase at a higher rate. We lose subsidy £ for £ for any increase in the subsidy rent, therefore there will be a net loss to the HRA. This will be offset to some extent by the clawback of the Housing Benefit Limitation which has reduced the subsidy over the last few years due to previous rent increases being above government guidelines.

2.4 The inflation factor to be used for setting the cap on formula rents and determining actual rents has been set by ODPM at 3.1%. Under rent restructuring, the likelihood is that tenants in flats will generally have a lower increase than those in houses, however all increases will be limited to 3.1%+1/2% + £2 in accordance with government caps.

2.5 The general increase under rent restructuring for an individual rent under the subsidy determinations would be applied as follows (subject to caps)

- Existing rent + 3.6% + 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the difference between actual rent and formula rent

2.6 ODPM recently published a consultation paper on the three year review of Rent Restructuring. There were three main recommendations in the paper:-

- Higher bedroom weightings for properties with more than 2 bedrooms
- Local Authorities to use RSL formula for calculating rents
- Ignore downward cap for potential rent reductions

The impact of the above would be to force rents up. The ALG estimate this could be as much as £8 per week in London by 2011-12. (Barking and Dagenham would be between £3 to £4 per week), however, due to pressure, the Government have deferred any changes for the time being.

### **3 UNPOOLING OF RENT FOR SPECIFIC SERVICES**

- 3.1 In ODPMs paper entitled “A new framework for Local Authority Housing: Resource Accounting in the HRA” which was a follow up to their earlier paper “HRA Subsidy and Rent Restructuring”, they proposed that Local Authorities should consider unpooling their rents to provide a core rent which should cover all the basic services provided to all tenants, and separate charges to reflect specific services that may be provided for certain groups of tenants. The purpose of this being to make the charges more transparent so that tenants can see the true costs of the services provided. It would also ensure the closest possible convergence between Local Authority and RSL rents.
- 3.2 Given the current pressures on the HRA and the need to achieve a balanced account, it is proposed to depool charges relating to the caretaking service, the upkeep of the amenity greens and the provision of door security systems.
- 3.3 These charges will also be subject to the capping rules, with no combined core rent plus service charge being more than RPI (3.1% for 2005-06) +1/2% + £2. It is therefore proposed to phase in these charges over a five year period with the inclusive additional charge for 2005-06 being set at £1 per week.
- 3.4 Any separate charge for specific services will be eligible for Housing Benefit.
- 3.5 A leaflet has been prepared setting out in detail the full proposals, together with a series of questions likely to be raised concerning the depooling of rents, with comprehensive answers. It is planned to send a copy to every tenant likely to be affected before the new financial year. It will also be on the agendas of the forthcoming CHP meetings. A copy is attached to this report at Appendix B.

### **4 PROPOSED RENT LEVELS**

- 4.1 As part of Resource Accounting and Housing Futures, there is a requirement for local authorities to produce meaningful Business Plans. A 30 year plan was produced in 2000 with members and tenants fully involved in the consultation process. Arising from the consultation, it was agreed to limit rent increases, to an average of RPI + 1% for the next few years, plus or minus a factor to meet rent convergence with RSLs.
- 4.2 As can be seen from the table in para 2.2 average rents in Barking and Dagenham are slightly above the formula rent. This will mean that to be at the formula rent by 2012, the rents will need to increase just below the year on year increases set by ODPM. The determinations for 2005-06 have increased the formula rent by 4.03%
- 4.3 Inflation set by ODPM for subsidy purposes is 3.1%, therefore an average increase of RPI + 1% (4.1%) will be in line with the agreement previously reached with tenants and would mean an average increase for 2005-06 of £2.49 per week. However, in order to meet the rent restructuring targets, an average increase of only £2.25 (3.7%) would be required.
- 4.4 If a lower increase is adopted, then cuts in the levels of service outlined later in the report, will need to be considered, and higher than average rent increases will be required in later years. If a higher increase is proposed, then additional growth



could be considered in the short term, however, as the 2012 target will still need to be adhered to, lower than average increases will be required in the future.

- 4.5 Any increase significantly different from the rent restructuring proposals is likely to be challenged by the External Auditor.
- 4.6 The Government are also proposing converging Local Authority and RSL rents by 2012. As RSL rents are currently higher than Local Authority rents, their annual increases are being capped to RPI + ½%. Based on the proposed rent levels for 2005-06 and projecting forward in line with the ODPM proposals, our rents will still be slightly below RSL rents in the borough by 2012. However, as ODPM cannot influence RSL rents in the same way as local authority rents, there is no guarantee the RSLs will keep to the restricted increases which could mean that if ODPM still want to achieve convergence, local authority rents may need to be increased over and above the current proposals.
- 4.7 Barking and Dagenham have always had the lowest or second lowest rents in Outer London. Under the new rent restructuring proposals, this is unlikely to change as the only variable in the new rent setting formula is the property value. Although Barking and Dagenham currently have the lowest values in Outer London by some margin, property prices in the borough have increased by 47% over the last year and have outstripped all other London Boroughs, except Newham.
- 4.8 Comments received from tenants following the on going consultation will be reported to Members.
- 4.9 If rents increase in line with the rent restructuring proposals, then the following table sets out a summary of the recommended increases for the various dwelling types for 2005-06, together with the proposed formula and actual rents.

Dwelling type	Rent increase	Unpooled charge	Total increase	Formula rent	Proposed rent
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
House	2.85		2.85	69.36	66.53
Bungalow	1.51		1.51	57.50	58.67
Low rise flat	1.38	1.00	2.38	55.98	59.37
Med rise flat	2.16	1.00	3.16	60.82	60.46
High rise flat	1.15	1.00	2.15	53.17	57.29
Maisonette	2.51	1.00	3.51	63.68	61.67
Sheltered flat	0.93		0.93	54.67	60.67

## 5 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUBSIDY

- 5.1 The following table shows the implications of the changes that have been made to the Subsidy for next year.

	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Notional Gross Rent	56,348	58,040	58,986
Net interest receivable	1,241	1,043	1,134
Notional Income	57,589	59,083	60,120
Notional Management / Maintenance	37,582	37,274	38,149
Rent Rebates	30,809		
Major Repairs Allowance	15,513	14,403	13,734
Notional expenditure	83,904	51,677	51,883
Subsidy due from / to(-) ODPM	26,315	-7,406	-8,237

5.2 The allowances per dwelling for guideline rents and management and maintenance allowances have both increased by 5.3%. However, this is a reduction for Barking and Dagenham as Management and Maintenance allowances nationally have increased by 11%. The reason M&M allowances have been increased significantly above inflation is to compensate for the impact of Rent Restructuring and “to allow local authorities to tackle day to day repairs and to make a real improvement to tenants quality of life” as stated by Keith Hill, the Housing Minister.

5.3 Barking and Dagenham, like most other London Boroughs, have not seen the full increase, as the majority of the additional funding has been redistributed to northern authorities. This in effect means a cut in subsidy in real terms.

## **6 THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - 2005-2006**

6.1 The provisional estimates for 2005-06 have been prepared in accordance with established procedures and have been inflated where appropriate, by the agreed inflation factors set by the Executive. The following paragraphs sets out the assumptions that have been made as far as pressures and savings are concerned.

6.2 Salaries have been increased by 2.75% in line with the agreed three year pay settlement. Also, pension contributions have increased by 3% following the tri-annual review.

6.3 Payment to ODPM has increased by 13% as a result of the changes made to the subsidy. However most of this is as a result of the reduction in the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA). See para 6.14

6.4 Provision has been made for the HRAs share of setting up Customer First, however, savings should be generated in later years

6.5 This is the second year of the three year minor improvements to estates programme agreed by the Executive last January and £500,000 has been included in 2005-06

- 6.6 Following the recent comprehensive stock condition survey, the need for a cyclical painting programme has been identified as a high priority and an initial budget of £3m has been established. In order to fund this, the £2m revenue contribution to capital has been deleted and redirected into this programme.
- 6.7 Corporate and Democratic Core costs are to be charged to the HRA for the first time from 2005-06. £225,000 has been included initially in the estimates and provision has been made for this to rise to £1m by 2008-09, this will however be subject to a full review of the costs over the coming months. The intention is to increase the corporate capacity within the authority to enable better support for council wide service provision, which will include benefits for council tenants.
- 6.8 Direct management costs have been reduced by 1% to reflect the reducing stock numbers and proposed efficiency savings. It is planned to continue reducing these costs by 1% per annum for the foreseeable future.
- 6.9 A comprehensive review of the Landlord Services has been undertaken and reported to Members on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2004. This will result in savings to the HRA of £200,000 in 2005-06 with a further £250,000 in 2006-07. Initial project costs of £100,000 have been included in the estimates to ensure the savings and the new structure can be delivered.
- 6.10 Central support costs have reduced by 3% following a comprehensive review by the central departments of their recharges
- 6.11 A detailed report on the allocation of costs for the upkeep of the amenity greens on Housing land was agreed by the Executive on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2004. The outcome is that the recharge to the HRA will be reduced by £571,000, however £71,000 of this is subject to agreement by the Executive when considering the Council Tax budget on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February.
- 6.12 The proposals for unpooling of the rents for the caretaking service, the upkeep of amenity greens and the provision of door security systems will generate additional income of £500,000 in 2005-06. This should rise to £3m over a six year period.
- 6.13 The Housing Futures Project will come to an end in July 2005, when it needs to be signed off by ODPM. The budget has been amended to reflect the winding down of the project work and the setting up of a programme to deliver the recommended outcomes.
- 6.14 The MRA paid by ODPM will reduce by approx £0.7m in 2005-06 (following a fall of £1m in 2004-05) due to further changes in the methodology used in its distribution. Although this will not impact on the HRA as a corresponding charge is made to the HRA to reflect the depreciation of the stock, it will impact on the Housing Capital Programme.
- 6.15 The proposed Housing Revenue Account for 2005-06 is attached at Appendix A and takes account of all the above assumptions. The appendix also shows the projected outturn for 2004-05 as compared with the latest revised estimate. The current position is that the original working balance at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 of £2.6m

is projected to increase by approximately £300,000. This has been taken into account in producing the 2005-06 estimates.

- 6.16 Service provision will continue to be evaluated on an ongoing basis to identify further savings, however this will need to be balanced against the need to improve our overall Housing CPA rating for management and maintenance.
- 6.17 The repairs and maintenance contract run in partnership with Thames Accord has been reviewed recently and it has become apparent that the budget is insufficient to meet the full scope of works as set out in the contract. At this stage, the budget for 2005-06 has been increased in line with inflation with an allowance made for the reduction in stock numbers. If the full scope of works is to be met, then additional resources will need to be made available which will need to be funded from savings elsewhere within the HRA. Alternatively the scope will need to be reduced to fit the budget available. Discussions are ongoing and members will be kept informed of any proposals.

## **7 GARAGE RENTS**

- 7.1 A report was submitted to the Executive on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2004 setting out the current policy for garage lettings. This also recommended the level of charges for 2004-05.

Current rents for traditional garages are £7.03 and £1.46 for multi storey garages

Council policy, in accordance with the Charging Policy Commission is that all charges should be increased in line with inflation (3.1%), alternatively, Members could consider increasing the charges in line with council rents ( proposal is 3.7%)

The increased charges for the two options would be as follows

	3.1% Increase. New charge.		3.7% Increase. New charge.	
Traditional	0.22	7.25	0.26	7.29
Multi storey	0.04	1.50	0.05	1.51

It has been assumed in the detailed base estimates that charges have been increased in line with inflation as per Council policy. This equates to £38,970. If option 2 is agreed, an additional £7,540 will be generated.

## **8 HEATING CHARGES**

- 8.1 The heating charges for those tenants currently on the landlords heating systems, have remained unchanged for a number a years due to competitive rates being negotiated with the various boards.
- 8.2 As energy costs are beginning to rise sharply, it is not possible to contain them within the existing income received. It is proposed to increase the charges from next year by the rate of inflation (3.1%)

## 9. SUMMARY

- 9.1 This report has tried to bring together all the current factors that are likely to influence the HRA for 2005-06, especially the significant effect rent restructuring will have in the future.
- 9.2 It will be necessary to constantly monitor the HRA to ensure that as far as practical, it remains in balance. Should any deficit arise at the end of the year, then that deficit will need to be recouped in the following year unless it can be met from the working balance. It is normal practice to maintain a working balance in the region of £2m to meet any unforeseen circumstances. However, as the effect of the government proposals will be phased in due to the transitional arrangements, it is suggested a higher working balance be maintained in the next couple of years to offset the full effect in later years. If circumstances change, then this policy can be reviewed. The estimated working balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 is estimated to be £3.0m
- 9.3 The full affect of Resource Accounting and Rent Restructuring has been reflected in the estimates for 2005-06, based on information received to date.
- 9.4 The Housing Futures Project which needs to be signed off by ODPM by July of this year, is coming to a conclusion following comprehensive consultation with tenants and active involvement of Members. Part of this exercise is to produce a 30 year Business Plan model which shows the HRA in balance for the whole period. The proposals set out in this report for 2005-06 are an integral part of the model and, together with further savings planned for later years, shows a 30 year balanced HRA.

A comprehensive report on Housing Futures looking at the medium and long term proposals for the housing stock will be presented to the Executive on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

- 9.5 Regular consultation has taken place, and will continue to take place, with tenants in respect of the Business Plan, future rent levels and spending options. They currently support the proposals set out in the report and the Business Plan. The Portfolio Member and the Deputy Leader have also been consulted.

### **The following Background Papers were used or referred to in the preparation of this report: -**

Business Plan for the Future Housing Service  
ODPM Consultation Papers on Resource Accounting and Rent  
ODPM Consultation paper on the three year review of Rent Restructuring  
Local Government Act 2003.  
ODPM Subsidy Determinations

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## Appendix A

<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</b>			
	<b>2004-05 Estimates</b>	<b>2004-05 Projected Outturn</b>	<b>2005-06 Proposed Estimates</b>
	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>			
Rents of Dwellings	63,294,000	63,136,360	63,502,000
Non Dwelling Rents	2,307,220	2,150,560	2,321,000
Other Charges	2,156,000	2,685,280	3,267,000
Government Subsidy	-	-	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>67,757,220</b>	<b>67,972,200</b>	<b>69,090,000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
General Management	15,204,680	15,226,020	15,824,000
Special Management	6,196,190	6,460,230	6,357,000
Repairs and Maintenance	18,664,630	18,214,920	21,227,000
Depreciation - M.R.A.	14,412,000	14,412,000	13,889,000
Depreciation - Other HRA Assets	765,000	765,000	765,000
Rent Rates & Other Charges	1,028,120	980,580	770,000
Capital Charge	38,000,000	16,000,000	16,000,000
Payment to ODPM	7,548,000	7,406,000	8,366,000
Increase in Bad Debt Provision			
Housing Benefits	4,864,000	4,890,670	4,070,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>106,682,620</b>	<b>84,355,420</b>	<b>87,268,000</b>
<b>Net cost of Services</b>	<b>38,925,400</b>	<b>16,383,220</b>	<b>18,178,000</b>
Capital charges	38,000,000	16,000,000	16,000,000
Interest receivable	1,721,260	1,721,000	1,470,000
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>- 795,860</b>	<b>- 1,337,780</b>	<b>708,000</b>
<b>Appropriations</b>			
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1,000,000	1,250,000	-
Depreciation non dwellings	- 765,000	- 765,000	- 765,000
Working Balance B/F	2,060,000	2,060,000	2,912,780
Working Balance C/F	2,620,860	2,912,780	2,969,780
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

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## Rent restructure – bringing all social landlords in line with each other

Until recently, landlords in different areas have all used slightly different ways to set their rents. This means it has not always been possible to compare the rents of different landlords.

For example, some council tenants are paying a third or more rent than tenants of similar properties in neighbouring council areas. And in some areas, housing association tenants pay half as much rent again when compared to a council tenant for a similar size home.

**Table 1: Average rents in London**

	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>
<b>Average council rent from all London Boroughs</b>	£65.36	£66.45
<b>Average Barking and Dagenham rent</b>	<b>£58.43</b>	<b>£60.65*</b>

**\* We have the third lowest council rent in London**

This situation is confusing and unfair. It can restrict a tenant's choice in the size, condition and location of their home.

To solve this problem, the Government has produced a formula, which must be applied to all rents so that everyone's rent is calculated the same way. This process, known as 'rent restructuring', and will take 10 years to bring all landlords in line with each other.

To make sure that tenants do not face a large increase, the Government has limited the amount that a rent can be raised in any one-year to the **rate of inflation plus ½% plus or minus £2**.

So, for example, if your rent is £60 per week, and inflation is 2% the most your rent would go up is £3.50 a week.

If your rent is above the level it needs to be, it won't drop to the new level immediately. It will either fall slowly or go up by less than the rate of inflation, so that you can continue to receive a good level of service.

## Service charges – separating them from your rent

The Government has also issued guidance to all councils on separating service charges from rent.

Service charges are usually for extra services which may not be provided to every tenant, or are for communal areas rather than a particular home.

At present, some charges, such as caretaking are included in your rent, however under the new guidelines these (and other services) will be separated.

Different tenants may receive different services, depending on their property. Therefore, this separation of charges will allow tenants to see exactly what they are getting for their money. Their 'total rent' will consist of a 'core rent'\* (the basic cost for that property) and 'service charges' which will consist of any services that they receive and outline an individual cost for each service. This means that every tenants 'total rent' will be based on services that they are actually receiving.

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\* Your 'core' rent is the charge you pay for your home. On your statements and any correspondence from us this may appear as your 'net rent'.

We will be introducing this 'separation of charges' from April 2005. Again any increases which we apply to tenants charges will be in line with the Government formula. To begin with the charges which will be separated include **door entry systems, caretaking and grounds maintenance.**

<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Date of separation</b>
Concierge	April 2003
CCTV schemes	May be considered in the future
TV Aerial / Cable Service	August 2004
Dog Patrol (as applicable)	Dec 2004
Door entry system	April 2005
Caretaker Service	April 2005
Grounds maintenance (Amenity Greens)	April 2005
Window cleaning	May be considered in the future
Bulk rubbish collection	May be considered in the future

**Will I be charged for services that I do not receive?**

NO. You will only be charged for services that you do receive.

**If I already receive extra services will I have to pay more?**

NO. In showing service charges separately the total you pay will not increase. It will only allow you to see each cost separately.

**When will these new charges begin?**

The separation of charges will start from April 2005. Before this date you will receive a **Notice of rent** letter which will outline which services you receive and their cost.

**Do I have to pay for the service charges separately?**

NO. The service charges are only being shown separately to make clear exactly what services you are receiving, and help show where your money is going. **You will continue to make only one rent payment.**

**Will this affect my Housing Benefit?**

NO. Your Housing Benefit will be automatically reassessed taking into account any changes to your rent. Housing Benefit will continue to cover both your 'core rent' and any service charges.\*\*

**If you have any more questions please contact your local area housing office or the Housing Benefit department:**

Becontree area office 020 8227 5040

Barking area office 020 8227 3889

Dagenham area office 020 8227 2738

Housing Benefit 020 8227 2970

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\*\* Charges which are currently separate from your rent such as heating and hot water will continue to be excluded from housing benefit payments.

**EXECUTIVE****8 FEBRUARY 2005****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>EMERGENCY PLANNING – WORKING ACROSS LONDON</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<p><i>This report refers to the work that has already been undertaken in the area of Emergency Planning and highlights the need for further interaction with Emergency Planning agencies across London</i></p>			
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>The events of the 11 September 2001 in New York and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 have placed an increasing requirement on local authorities in regards to Emergency Planning. This applies particularly to the thirty-three London local authorities which are prime targets.</p> <p>The London Resilience Forum (LRF) has started this interlinking process. The pressure for more joint working will become greater when the Civil Contingencies Act comes into force on the 1 April 2005.</p> <p>A large amount of work has been carried out already but this needs to continue if we are to meet the deadlines and requirements being set for us by the Act and the London Resilience Forum.</p>			
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Executive are asked to note the actions currently being taken on Emergency Planning across London and agree the continued involvement of the Council Emergency Planning Team and the Chief Executive.</p>			
<p><b>Wards Affected – All Wards</b></p>			
<p><b>Reason</b></p> <p>To help achieve one of the Council's Community Priorities of 'Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer'</p>			
<p><b>Contact</b> Roger Brett</p>		<p>Emergency Planning and Communications Centre Manager</p>	
		<p>Tel: 020 – 8227 3119 (voice recorded)</p>	
		<p>Fax: 020 – 8227 3470</p>	
		<p>Minicom: 020 – 8594 8356</p>	
		<p>E-mail: roger.brett@lbbd.gov.uk</p>	

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Civil Contingencies Act 2004**

1.1.1 In 2001 the Government instituted a review of Emergency Planning. The result was the Civil Contingencies Act which received Royal Assent on the 18 November 2004. The key objectives of the Act are:

- To create a modern framework for co-ordinating contingency planning and response at the local level
- To enhance co-operation and understanding in support of regional level capability
- To modernise the legislation under which the Government can respond to extreme emergency conditions.

The Act sets out a relationship between core responders in both public and private sectors.

1.1.2 The Act places duties on organisations (known as Category 1 responders) to undertake various measures. Category 1 responders include the emergency services, local authorities, certain National Health Service bodies, the Environment Agency and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Category 2 responders include Utilities, Telecommunications, Railways and have a limited range of duties.

Each Category 1 responder is;

- placed under a duty to assess the risk of an emergency occurring and to assess whether the Emergency Plan needs to exercise one of its functions to deal with the emergency.
- required to develop business continuity plans to ensure the continuity of its ability to discharge its functions in the face of an emergency
- required to maintain plans for performing its functions. As well as preventing the occurrence of emergencies, these include plans for responding to and recovering from an emergency.
- to warn and inform the public about the risks and the plans in place to deal with the risks. To maintain arrangements for warning the public if an emergency is likely to occur or has occurred and for providing them with advice about the response to an emergency.
- to work closely with other Category 1 organisations sharing information, agreeing risk assessments and agreeing plans.
- to undergo regular auditing by the Audit Commission
- however, local authorities have the additional responsibility of promoting Business Continuity Planning among the local business community working with them to develop their own plans if necessary.

- 1.1.3 The Regulations and Guidance information will be available for public consultation in the near future and we will then have a clearer idea as to the specific requirements and the resources that will be needed to fulfil them.
- 1.1.4 One of the clearer aspects of the new regime is that of working with other organizations. Currently it is expected that London will have its own London Regional Resilience Forum and the Local Authority Representatives will be the Chair of the Local Authorities Emergency Planning sub-Committee, currently this is the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Croydon and the Chief Executive of the Association of London Government. The London Regional Resilience Forum will meet twice a year.
- 1.1.5 On a more local level there will be Local Resilience Forums. There will be five across the whole of London and the current view is that each of them will require one Local Authority Chief Executive and possibly one Emergency Planning Manager. This Chief Executive might also sit on the London Regional Resilience Forum.
- 1.1.6 There will be Borough Forums on which the Local Authority will be represented by the Borough Emergency Planning Manager.
- 1.1.7 As a result of these various meetings working groups will need to be developed to deal with the regulations and guidance. Emergency Planners and other local authority officers will be involved in these work groups. These will be in addition to the sub-groups and work streams already being undertaken by members of the London Local Authority Emergency Planning Group in the areas such as Mortuary Planning, Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Human Aspects of Mass Transport Disasters and, if the bid is successful, the Olympic Games
- 1.1.8 One final implication of the Act may be that there may be a requirement for local authorities to have officers on a formal standby system ready to respond to a Major or Catastrophic Incident. The wording used in the First Draft Guidance notes implies that this might be the case.

## **2. London Resilience Forum**

- 2.1 In October 2001, Rt. Hon. Nick Raynsford MP, as Minister for London, established the inter-agency London Resilience Team (LRT), as part of the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat, to review emergency planning preparedness in the Capital. The LRT was made up of representatives of central and local government, the police and other emergency services, transport providers, health service, the utilities and the Greater London Authority. The LRT's remit was to examine not only the preparedness of key individual organisations, but also their interdependencies, interaction command control and communication for London as a whole.
- 2.2 Following the LRT's review, a new structure has been established. At its head is the London Resilience Forum, chaired by Rt.Hon. Nick Raynsford MP (with the Mayor as deputy), top-level representation of London's key organisations, as well as the Government's top emergency planners. This is supported by a number of sub-committees which take responsibility for driving emergency planning in the key sectors – the blue light services, transport, utilities, local authorities, health and business community.

- 2.3 The Minister for London holds a six-monthly briefing meeting for all London Local Authority Chief Executives at which they are advised of ongoing work, major events and the current security situation.
- 2.4 As a result of the work of LRT the London Local Authority Emergency Planning Forum, whose members are all local authority emergency planners, has been recognised as representing Local Authorities Emergency Planning views. The Forum is now formally a Group with a constitution and a business plan. Representatives from the Group sit on all of the LRT sub-groups to provide the local authority input. Local authority emergency planners are also being seconded to work as part of LRT.
- 2.5 The Emergency Planning and Communications Centre Manager (EPCCM) is the deputy representative on the Critical Infrastructure Group and the Assistant Emergency Planning Officer (AEPO), is the lead representative on the Site Clearance Group and the deputy representative on the Consequence/Recovery Management Group
- 2.6 One example of the major work streams to come out from the London Resilience Team is that every London local authority has had to produce a framework document detailing the actions that it would take in the event of a mass evacuation of part of London. The framework needed to show how the Borough would cope with an influx of up to 10,000 displaced people, where and how they would be accommodated, fed and possibly clothed for at least 48 hours. A deadline was set for the production of this document which the Emergency Planning Team successfully met.

### **3. London Local Authority Gold (LLAG)**

- 3.1 In 2003 LRT developed the concept of a London Local Authority Gold (LLAG). In Emergency Planning terms 'Gold' is one or more individuals who give the strategic input to a Major Incident. The term is used by all of the emergency services as well as local authorities. The concept of a LLAG evolved into a group of Chief Executives who were trained and who volunteered to go on a rota to provide the co-ordinating function for all London local authorities in the event of a Catastrophic Incident on the same lines as New York. Our Chief Executive has agreed to participate in this rota.
- 3.2 The Executive will recall that at their meeting of the 27 April 2003 they agreed that the Association of Local Government (ALG) resolution vested the 'London Local Authority Gold Chief Executive' with the necessary powers to act on behalf of all London local authorities, which would include the power to incur expenditure in the event of a Catastrophic Incident.
- 3.3 Until recently whenever Chief Executives were on a two week call-out period they were supported by their administrative officers, the Emergency Planning Manager and their own Communications Centre which would act as the London Local Authority Control Centre (LLACC). All staff would also be on call for the two week period. Some boroughs do not have the same 24 hour facilities as provided by this Borough in the Communications Centre and so representation was made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to identify funding to enable a LLACC to be set

up ready to be activated if required. The Control Centre is in Clapham and will, on a day to day basis, be used as the Headquarters for the Emergency Planning Team of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority now that they have moved out of their site on the Albert Embankment.

- 3.4. A new protocol is being developed on command and control functions that will operate across London local authorities in the event of a Catastrophic Incident. It is expected that in future, Chief Executives on the rota will be supported by up to four staff to assist them and that the LLACC will be staffed from local authority officers from across the whole of London. The number of people required in the LLACC is expected to be around 15 to 20 on each shift.
- 3.5. In addition to the LLAG rota, the LRT will soon institute a Recovery rota on a similar basis. The role of the Chief Executive on this rota will be to look ahead to when the Catastrophic Incident itself has been dealt with and to start the preparations for the return to normality.
- 3.6. If every Chief Executive in London volunteers to join both rotas, the time on call should be one fortnight in every 33 weeks. However, all selected officers could be called upon at any time to assist a LLAG or to staff the LLACC for the duration of any Catastrophic Incident.

#### **4. Training**

- 4.1 Since last summer the EPCCM and the AEPO have run several in-house Emergency Planning Training courses. These courses are aimed at all volunteer managers who are named in the Emergency Plan. One of the most important groups to attend this training has been the volunteer Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALO). These people will be the first to respond to any Major Incident in the Borough and to act as the liaison point between the Local Authority and the Emergency Services.
- 4.2 The Women's Royal Volunteer Service provide Rest Centre training which is accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management and one of these courses has been booked with another one proposed for later in the year.
- 4.3 The Emergency Planning College at Easingwold provides training in specific areas and The Head of Strategy and Support Services for the Department of Regeneration and Environment, recently attended the Chief Executives' training course.
- 4.4 The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority have an obligation to provide emergency planning training for local authorities and this is currently being concentrated on Chief Executives who are part of the rota - either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis.
- 4.5 A cross-London training group has been set up comprising Emergency Planning Managers from the five Local Authority Mutual Aid groups as well as a representative from the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. The aim of the group is to agree pan-London training for all who will be required to attend a Catastrophic Incident.

## **5. Council's Emergency Plan**

- 5.1 Work has been ongoing to keep the plan updated in line with current thinking. The main body of the Plan itself has been reduced and replaced by Action Cards detailing the specific actions to be taken by specific roles during a Major Incident.
- 5.2 The content of the Plan with the exception of contact information has been placed on the Council's Intranet and also on the website. Comments have been received from other Local Authority Emergency Planners on how good it is and how they have used parts of it.
- 5.3 The website will also form a major part of our new remit to 'Warn and Inform' the Public.

## **6. Equalities Impact**

- 6.1 During the construction and development of the Emergency Plan, equalities issues have been identified and work is ongoing with the faith forum to ensure all cultural issues are addressed.

## **7. Consultation:**

- 7.1 The following were consulted

Lead Member:

Access and Inclusion, Councillor McCarthy

David Waller, Interim Head of Finance, DRE  
London Emergency Planning and Fire Authority

## **8. Background Information**

- Chief Executives' Circular from Association of London Government, 19 December 2003
- Minute 376; Executive meeting 27 April 2004; Emergency Planning – Local Government Gold Resolution
- Civil Contingencies Act in full - <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040036.htm>
- Civil contingencies Act – Short guide – [www.ukresilience.info/ccact/1decshortguide.pdf](http://www.ukresilience.info/ccact/1decshortguide.pdf)
- London resilience Team - <http://www.ukresilience.info/londonprepared/resilienceteam/index.htm>



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