

THE ASSEMBLY

7 SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY FORUMS

Title: Report of the Community Forums	For Information
<p>Summary:</p> <p>This is the regular report on the work of the Community Forums and summarises their activities during June and July 2005. The main points covered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Community Forums• Details of meeting dates and attendance figures• Presentations from<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ the Council,○ Other agencies• Neighbourhood Management feedback• Barking & Dagenham Local Strategic Partnership - Community feedback• Question and Answer summaries• Details of the informal performance indicator around the number of questions which received an adequate response at each Forum• Forum budget expenditures• Deputy Chair of Community Forum meetings, including sharing best practice• Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Community Forums and other Forums meeting discussions, which included:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Promoting Community Forums to harder to reach groups○ Holding Question and Answer sessions at the start of Forum meetings○ Keeping Members informed about any big/important issues in Wards in their Forum area. <p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>None.</p> <p>Legal:</p> <p>None.</p> <p>Risk Management:</p> <p>None.</p>	

Social Inclusion and Diversity:

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a requirement on local authorities to make an assessment of the impact of new and revised policies in terms of race equality. Existing policies have already been subjected to impact assessments. This Authority has adopted an approach of extending the impact to cover gender, disability, sexuality, faith, age and community cohesion.

As this report does not concern a new or revised policy there are no specific adverse impacts insofar as this report is concerned.

Crime and Disorder:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of any proposals.

There are no specific implications insofar as this report is concerned.

Contacts: Councillor C Geddes	Title: Lead Member for Community Forums	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8924 3590 E-mail: cameron.geddes@lbbd.gov.uk
Julie Willing	Democratic and Electoral Services Officer	Tel: 020 8227 2119 Fax: 020 8227 2171 E-mail: julie.willing@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Introduction / Current Position

- 1.1 The review of Community Forums to consider their effectiveness and appropriateness as a vehicle for engaging and consulting with the community, as reported to the Annual Assembly, has begun. The terms of reference have been drawn up and all groups, including Members, community representatives, other agencies and officers will be engaged in the process.

2. Report Detail

2.1 Elections

As a result of the by elections in the Goresbrook and the Becontree Wards the River, Village and Goresbrook and the Parsloes, Becontree and Valence Forum meetings were postponed. These meetings were subsequently held on 4 July and 18 July 2005 respectively.

2.2 Attendance

The attendance figures for the meeting of each of the Forums are as follows:

Community Forum	Date of Meeting	Attendance
Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames	27 June 2005	54
Eastbrook, Heath and Alibon	6 June 2005 (daytime)	26
ELM	14 June 2005	46
Parsloes, Becontree and Valence	18 July 2005 (daytime)	30
River, Village and Goresbrook	4 July 2005 (daytime)	26
Wellgate	20 June 2005	23

2.3 Presentations from the Council

Community Forum	Council Presentations
Eastbrook, Heath and Alibon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barking and Dagenham Direct • Improvements in Dagenham – details of expenditure in the Eastbrook, Heath & Alibon wards for 2005/06.
Eastbrook, Heath and Alibon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Annual Report 2003/04 (B&D Primary Care Trust)
ELM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Action Plan
Parsloes, Becontree and Valence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barking and Dagenham Direct • Community Action Plan
River, Village and Goresbrook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits Advice (<u>Council and other agencies</u>) • Barking & Dagenham Direct • Community Action Plan
Wellgate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Local Implementation Plan

2.4 Presentations from other Agencies

Community Forum	Presentations from other agencies/volunteers
Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Annual Report 2003/04 (B&D Primary Care Trust) • Age Concern Barking and Dagenham • Safer Neighbourhood Scheme – Metropolitan Police
ELM	Tour of Eastbury Manor House by three local Volunteers
Parsloes, Becontree and Valence	Fair Share Trust Fund - update on the £818,000 funding that will come to the Fanshawe area over 10 years

2.5 Neighbourhood Management Updates

2.5.1 Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames

The report of the Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator highlighted the following issues:

Issue 10 of the community newsletter, Focus Three, has been delivered and work has begun on issue 11

The partnerships between Ripple Hall Community Association and the Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames Community Development Trust are ongoing. Requests for bookings and use of the hall have increased since the Trust took over bookings. Awaiting a report to go to the Executive regarding the waiving of rent charges to all Community Associations.

Early Years and Childcare Development Partnerships – Daycare Trust has been commissioned to carry out a feasibility study on lone parenting and employment.

2.5.2 Wellgate

The report of the Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator provided information on the various environmental, health and youth and community projects, together with information on the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Sub Group and Partnership working.

2.6 Community Feedback

The following Forums received regular feedback/updates from their community representatives on the work of the Barking and Dagenham Local Strategic Partnership:

Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames
ELM
Parsloes, Becontree and Valence
Wellgate

The Community Empowerment Network (CEN) is providing training for community representatives about feeding back to the Forums in a timely and meaningful fashion.

2.7 Community Forum Question and Answer Summaries

Issues raised at each Forum included:

Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames

- Standards of cleansing, grounds maintenance and housing estate management on the Thames View Estate
- Rubbish accumulation/collection behind the Spotted Dog Public House, in London Road and Crouch Avenue

- Litter sweeping generally
- Maintenance of community greens and collection of garden rubbish
- Provision of litter bins
- Level of cleaning in Castle Green praised but concerns raised about rubbish from shops and flats in people's gardens
- Environmental health, including
 - Rats and mosquitoes at the ditch running at the back of Westminster Gardens
 - Foul smells from the sewage plant at Beckton.

Eastbrook, Heath and Alibon

- Where children from the new Reede Road housing development would be educated
- Secure fencing where newly built access areas abut properties in Reede Road
- Breakdown of how the Forum allocated its 04/05 Budget
- Installation of a bottle bank in Oxlow Lane
- Provision of public toilets at Dagenham Heathway
- Availability of a definitive walking map of the borough
- Hazards caused by the poor state of pavements

ELM

- Changing corporate colours
- Maintaining the shrubbery next to Barking Park
- Condition of Sissley Road and surrounding streets caused by people:
 - mixing cement on the road
 - skips parked on pavements
 - broken tarmac
 - pavement parking
- Lack of information from the Council, including not receiving the Citizen
- Not receiving black/orange bags and the distribution/availability of orange bags
- Road markings at the junction of Meadow Road/Upney Lane
- Congestion caused by the bus lane on Ripple Road (adjacent to Rippleside Burial Ground)
- Delays to the repair and maintenance work and removal of crash barriers at the A13 roundabout/Ripple Road junction
- Streetlights on day and night along the A13 from Lodge Avenue to Asda
- (Unfounded) rumours of a new 'super prison' in Barking
- Problems experienced since raising a housing benefit related issue at a previous meeting
- Future development of the Eastbury School and University of East London sites
- Police patrols in Mayesbrook Park
- "No-Go" areas at night in places such as the Essex Road bridges
- Getting through to King George's Hospital being more difficult with their new 'phone system.

Parsloes, Becontree and Valence

- Traffic calming measures in Lymington Road and Kemp Road, including:
 - the outcome of a traffic survey in Lymington Road
 - consulting residents in Kemp Road
 - health implications (noise and air pollution) and structural effects on houses caused by continuous heavy traffic traversing pavements and road humps
 - concerns that a taxi company now operating in the area has increased/added to the existing problems of congestion and pollution (letter)
- Rubbish accumulation/collection and a request for a 'No fly tipping' sign at Wood Lane allotments
- Dangers caused by reckless riding of mini scooters
- Availability of a definitive walking map of the borough
- Anti social behaviour in Parsloes Park
- Working schedules of the Parks Police
- Community policing in the Forum area
- What the Council's budget allocation to address anti-social behaviour is and how this expenditure is monitored in terms of performance and value for money?/cost effectiveness

River, Village and Goresbrook

- Condition of the fence at the rear of Corals
- Pavement parking and parking in residents' driveways
- Legality of running a car repair business from a residential property
- Progress of the regeneration of the Heathway area and other retail related issues
- Fencing around the children's play area next to Hedgemans Road
- Installing CCTV and children playing football in the new Heathway Gardens
- Motorised bikes causing danger and noise late at night

Wellgate

- Public transport provision to the new clinic in Mill Lane
- Installation of new security doors to flats at Marks Gate
- Anti-social behaviour
- Communal aerial service in Nash Road
- Condition of the Padnall Lake area, including problems being caused by rats
- Opening hours of Marks Gate Police Station
- Post office vehicles using Morley Road as a rat-run
- Community Forum budget cuts

2.8 Questions – Performance Indicator

An informal performance indicator to reflect the number of questions actually answered satisfactorily on the night, with a performance target of 50 % plus, was introduced so as to assess the level of officer support provided at Forums.

The table below sets out the number of questions answered/not answered on the night, Forum by Forum, in the last cycle.

Forum	Questions answered on the night	Questions not answered on the night
Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames	7	2
Eastbrook, Heath and Alibon	7	1
ELM	4	11
Parsloes, Becontree & Valence	4	4
River, Village & Goresbrook	9	2
Wellgate	4	6
Total	35	26

Of 35 questions asked, 26 were not answered on the night. The percentage of questions that received an adequate response on the night during the last cycle is 74.29%. (This figure corresponds to 61.9% in the April/May cycle).

4. Budgets

4.1 Individual Forum Budget Steering Groups have met and agreed to the following items of expenditure for this year's budget allocation of £7,500, with others due to meet during the next round of Forums. Due to roll forwards some Forums have additional funding to spend in the current year.

Forum	Projects
Parsloes, Becontree and Valence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small grant awards to voluntary organisations* • Anti-litter poster campaign linked to a competition in local primary schools and purchase of litter bins to be placed inside the schools • Replacing three benches at Andrews Corner, one with a commemorative plaque dedicated to the late Councillor Wainwright • Printing costs of flyers designed by the Road Safety Team for volunteers for walking buses
Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small grant awards to voluntary organisations* • Funding towards Focus Three community newsletter • Christmas tree lights <p>Expenditure of remaining 2005/06 budget to be determined</p>

*The deadline for applications for small grants to voluntary organisations is November 2005.

5. Deputy Chairs meeting

5.1 At their request, Deputy Chairs now meet separately on a quarterly basis to provide them with an opportunity to discuss common issues and draw upon each others' experiences. The main points discussed at their meeting held on 18 May 2005 included:

- The need for Forums to become more representative of the local community
- Attending each other's Forum meetings
- Reviewing the minutes of each other's Forum meetings to share ideas develop more ways to solve problems

6. Chair and Deputy Chair of Community Forums and other Forums meeting

6.1 These meetings were set up to review the progress of the Forums generally to discuss issues of good practice. The main items of discussions and outcomes of meeting held on 7 June 2005 were:

- The Deputy Chair of Eastbrook, Heath and Alibon Community Forum volunteered to visit different groups/organisations to promote the Forums to harder to reach groups. This will support the work of the Council in encouraging different groups/organisations to become more involved in their local communities through the Forums.
- The Access Group representatives now provide regular feedback to the meeting. They are proposing that a link be established on the Access web site, which was launched in July 2005, to the Council's web site to promote Forums to the disabled community.
- Question and Answer sessions may be held at the beginning of a Forum if this is considered appropriate to the organisation of a particular meeting.
- Heads of Services will be approached in advance of each Forum meeting to ascertain/seek information about any big/important issues in wards linked to a particular Forum so that Members and officers are in a better position to provide a response rather than being caught unaware.

7. Organisational issue – Technical support at Forum meetings

7.1 As a result of the concerns raised about the level of support provided to servicing Forum meetings following the review of the way Community Development staff work at Forums alternative arrangements are being considered to provide technical support at the Forums.

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Agendas and Minutes of Community Forum meetings held in June and July 2005.
- Notes of the Deputy Chair meeting held on 18 May 2005
- Agenda and Minutes of the Meeting of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Community Forums and other Forums held on 7 June 2005.