



Introduction

Welcome to the Barking and Dagenham Performance Plan. It is our first attempt at bringing together information on how all our services have performed and how we are going to improve performance in the future.



We hope you will find it interesting and useful.

Performance planning is essential in any organisation that aims to deliver high quality services. A Performance Plan is also a legal requirement of the new Best Value Regime. Best Value has been designed to make sure that there is continuous improvement in the quality and cost of services.

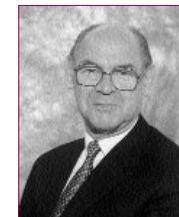
This plan sets out how we are going to improve our services in the future.

It also provides information on the current performance of our services. The Council has published a summary version that will be delivered to every household in the Borough.

Many of our services are excellent, providing high quality at low cost and we are pleased that these achievements have been recognised by a number of external organisations. Nevertheless we are not complacent and know that there is always room for improvement. We are determined to do even better and in some areas much better over the next five years:-

- We must ensure that all services have targets for improvement and collect performance information so that we can check on how we are doing.
- We need to develop our 'sustainability indicators' so that we can see that the improvements we are making to Barking and Dagenham ensure a good standard of living for present and future generations.
- We need to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Department of Health to improve our performance in Social Services.
- We need to develop a performance management system, so that we can make sure that our services are working well and improving. Linked to this system will be a service and financial planning system based around the new Council priorities which will set out how services are going to improve to meet the priorities and ensure that the Council's finances adequately fund these improvements.

- We will develop a more systematic approach towards quality improvement and efficiency. That means making sure that we are not wasting your money, but also making sure that the services we provide are what you want and where they are not, changing the way services are provided to meet your needs.



Cllr Charles Fairbrass
Leader of the Council





Contents

Introduction.....	2
The Council's Priorities and Planning Process	6
Improving Efficiency	8
The Council's Finances	10
How we Consult.....	16
The Five Year Best Value Review Programme	19
Improving Social Services.....	22
Accounts for Payment	24
Administration for the Chief Executive's Department	26
Arts Service.....	28
Assets & Administration in Education, Arts & Libraries	31
Catering Services	34
Cemetery.....	37
Central Policy and Review Services	40
Children and Families Services	44
Children's Support in Education.....	48
Civic Amenity Facility.....	52
Civil Engineering.....	54
Commercial Inspections.....	57
Committee	60
Community and Environment in Housing & Health.....	62
Community Development/Community Halls.....	67
Community Inspection and Advisory Services in Education, Arts & Libraries.....	69
Council Tax Collection	72
Design Services	74
Early Years	77
Electoral Services.....	80
Financial Services.....	82
Health and Disabilities Services.....	84
Heritage Services	88
Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration.....	91

Housing Estate Management	94
Housing Needs and Advice.....	97
Housing Property Services and Central Housing Services.....	101
Housing Repairs Service	103
Housing Strategy	106
Information Systems and Technology.....	109
Internal Audit	112
Land and Property Information.....	114
Legal Services.....	116
Leisure Centres.....	118
Leisure Events.....	121
Libraries	123
Lifelong Learning.....	126
Literacy.....	130
Member Services	133
National Non-domestic Rates Administration.....	135
Older People's Services.....	137
Parking Services	142
Parks & Ground Maintenance Service.....	144
Payroll	148
Pensions Administration.....	150
Personnel in Education, Arts & Libraries	152
Personnel Services.....	155
Planning and Building Control	160
Policy and Planning in Education, Arts & Libraries.....	164
Property Services	167
Public Access to Social Services.....	169
Public Conveniences	172
Public Relations	174
Refuse, Recycling and Waste	176
Registration Services.....	179
Rent Accounting and Recovery.....	180
Security and Emergency Response Services.....	183
Servicing of Council Buildings.....	184
Shape-Up for Homes	185
Sports Development	188
Street Cleansing Service	191
Tenant Participation	193
Traffic and Road Safety Service	196



The Council's Priorities and Planning Process

The Council is developing a new overall vision and a community strategy which aims to improve life for everyone in the Borough.



Last year, we employed Civil Eyes, an independent market research company, to conduct a Community Survey with a large representative sample of local people. We asked what your main priorities and concerns were for the area and what you thought about the performance of a range of local public services, including many Council services. The general state of the environment, crime and jobs featured strongly, along with many other issues.

We believe that our community's priorities should drive what the Council is doing to improve life in the borough and help to define what services we provide and how we provide them. There are, of course, many other things we must take into account – for example, national targets from Government for improving Education, Social Services, Health and crime reduction, what resources we have and what we can bid for, and the rapidly changing economy of East London, particularly in the Thames Gateway partnership area.

We have listened carefully to what you said to us as well as our assessment of many other factors which affect life in the borough, and have agreed a set of Community Priorities on which we now wish to widely consult further.



These are:-

- Creating better opportunities for all
- Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer
- Developing rights and responsibilities with the community
- Improving health and social care in the borough
- Regenerating the local economy – creating jobs, training and enterprise
- Raising general pride in the Borough and projecting a positive image.



We will be consulting a wide range of local interests – voluntary and community groups, local business, other agencies like Health and the Police and many others about what these priorities mean for them and what we can do together to achieve measurable improvement in the area.

This year we have employed MORI, an independent market research company, to establish a Citizens' Panel of 1000 local citizens, randomly selected, to reflect our community and we will be testing our ideas with them over the course of the year. We expect this process to be completed by May 2000 and to result in a document we will publish as a Community Strategy.



However, this is only a start.

We want to continue to engage as many partners as possible in every sphere of life in the borough to help plan the future for the area, agree what action we can take together, what targets we can set ourselves which will improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the borough for everyone who lives, works and visits here. This is called Community Planning, and we will develop this over the next few years.

Our Community Strategy, and the development of Community Planning, will be reflected more precisely in our Performance Plan next year.

However, there are other plans the Government requires us or other public agencies to produce which impact on our Performance Plan. Equally, we have developed strategies which will inform and influence our service performance. The key plans are as follows:-

- Education Development Plan
- Community Care Plan

Early Years and Childcare Development Plans

Housing Strategy

Unitary Development Plan

Community Safety Strategy

Health Improvement Programme

Quality Protects Management Action Plan

Economic Development Plan

Leisure Strategy

The key performance targets (and performance indicators of progress) have been abstracted and included in this Performance Plan.

For 2000/20001 the Government has introduced a range of Best Value performance indicators to complement national Audit Commission performance indicators. Where data has previously been collected, these have been included in this years plan with targets for the coming year. In some areas 5 year performance targets have been set by the Government.

Whilst all these plans and strategies set clear targets for improvement which we aim to meet, they do not necessarily join up to form an integrated whole, and indeed some, like the Health Improvement Programme, are led by other agencies.

However, the Council will be seeking to integrate these plans, where possible, into both Community Planning for the community and its own service and financial planning systems which are currently being revamped.

We intend that next year's Performance Plan will more clearly reflect how the key targets from all these plans and strategies relate to each other, and inform the performance of all our services.

Improving Efficiency

In terms of providing efficient and economic services Barking & Dagenham is generally proud of its performance. In some areas we deliver them to a very high standard, although we know that in others there is scope for improvement, and in a few we have much to achieve.



The Council's medium term financial strategy is based on the following aims and assumptions:

- Government restrictions on expenditure are likely to remain for the foreseeable future
- To maintain expenditure on Education in line with government expectations
- To maintain expenditure on Social Services in line with government expectations

To reflect this Members have adopted a budget strategy which will generate efficiency savings to keep the Council within these limits without the need to use financial reserves.

This will require reducing the Council's overall expenditure by £2.9 million between now and March 2002 representing a saving of 2% of budgets within the Council's control.

The process by which these savings were agreed involved the Chairs of Committees and Chief Officers who considered the opportunities and challenges facing the Council and identified where savings could be made and where growth in expenditure is needed in order to meet the financial targets set. A similar arrangement is proposed for 2000/2001.

From these meetings the following key areas for savings were identified:-

- A review of the buildings used by the Council to include the potential for dual/shared use with the objective of reducing the number of buildings used by Council services. (Anticipated annual saving £150,000 to be achieved by 2000/2001)
- A review of transport services to include joint use with other public bodies and to consider the benefits of leasing replacement vehicles rather than purchasing vehicles. (Anticipated annual saving £800,000 to be achieved in the period 2000/2005)
- A review of charging policies across all Council services in accordance with the Audit Commission's recommendations for full recovery

of costs wherever possible having regard to the Council's anti-poverty strategy. (Anticipated annual saving £0.3 million to be achieved in the period 2000/2002)

- Pursuing Trust/Charity Status for community halls and re-examining charging policy for use of buildings by established voluntary sector organisations. (Anticipated annual saving £180,000 to be achieved by 2000/2001)
- Progressing the review of leisure facilities within the borough, considering dual use of schools sports halls and the extent of any excessive 'public only' facilities. (Anticipated annual saving £750,000 to be achieved by 2001/2002)
- Reduce highway maintenance expenditure to the government's spending target. (Anticipated annual saving £200,000 to be achieved by 2001/2002)

In addition the following savings were also identified and have been achieved in 1999/2000:

- A freeze on recruitment of trainees (£60,000 per annum)
- An increase in cemeteries charges to bring them in line with the London average (£20,000 per annum)
- A reduction in use the of hanging baskets for floral displays (£20,000 per annum)

Efficiency measures have meant that the Authority is able to fund growth in the following areas;

School Crossing Patrol	£200,000
Playground Equipment	£50,000
Access for disabled at cemeteries	£30,000
Roding Barrage operating costs	£50,000
Citizens' Panel	£30,000

The Council sees Best Value as an opportunity to show its commitment to both setting and reaching the highest possible standards for all services, which meet the needs of the local community.

Consulting and involving residents and service users is key to providing efficient and effective services. The Council is working to promote this with Community Forums and a Citizens' Panel as well as through market research for individual services.

The Council has drawn up a 5 year programme in which all of the services provided will undergo a Fundamental Best Value Performance Reviews which will concentrate around the need to ensure that effective and efficient services are delivered. It is anticipated that the Best Value reviews will identify opportunities for savings and opportunities for expansion and improvement working within existing resources. Further details can be found in the section on Best Value.

Where we are doing well we want to be recognised. One example is our Housing Advice Service, which this year received a commendation from the Government's Service First Award Scheme. We have been encouraged to apply next year where the aim will be to achieve the Council's first Charter Mark Award. Other services, which we know are good, will also be making applications for similar status.

Improving the skills of the workforce to enhance the services they are providing is being pursued through a competencies based approach to the management and development of people and training.



The Council's Finances

The Council's agreed budget is £164.4 million for 1999/2000. The main exception being £1 million expenditure relating to refugees and asylum seekers, which is not covered by Government grant. This overspend has been offset by additional interest receipts of £1 million earned on cash balances due to higher than expected interest rates and increased receipts coming from 'Right to Buy' council house sales which are likely to exceed £14 million this year.

Table 1: Estimated and Actual Expenditure (where applicable) 1998 - 2001

	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001
Estimated	£151.9m	£164.4m	£173.1m
Actual	£151.9m	Not available	Not available

Next year's expenditure, including levying authorities including the new Greater London Authority and funding for the Metropolitan Police and the Fire Service, is estimated at £173 million.

Increased expenditure has allowed growth in Social Services to bring it into line with the Government's 'Standard Spending Assessment' of £47 million.

Explanation of Financial Terms

Many people who are not familiar with the way local councils account for their expenditure ask for explanations of some of the terms which are used. In order to help you to use this section a short explanation of some of those terms is set out below.

Housing Revenue Account

Most of the services you receive are paid for from the Council's General Fund which works in the same way that most people use their Current Account. However the Council is also required by law to have a separate account into which all the money collected from the rent paid by tenants in Council housing goes. The Council is only allowed to use the money from this account for managing, maintaining and improving the Council's housing stock.

Financial Reserve

The Financial Reserves are the equivalent of the Council's savings. The Council will not necessarily spend all of the money it receives in any single year on services. Instead it may decide to put money away and invest it so that it can spend it on capital projects such as improvements to school buildings or to offset expenditure incurred in later years.



Contingencies

Contingencies are what the Council puts aside for unexpected expenditure. This means that there is money to cover circumstances where the cost of providing a service have been under-estimated or where circumstances have resulted in the Council spending more than usual. An example would be a particularly cold winter where extra money is spent on salting the roads.

Where contingencies are not spent at the end of the year the money is transferred into the Financial Reserves.

Surplus on the Collection Fund

The Council is required by law to have a Collection Fund. This is because as part of the Council Tax the Council collects money for other agencies and any surplus or deficit from this fund is shared with Precepting Agencies.

Levies and Precepts

Levying and Precepting Authorities are agencies on whose behalf the Council collects money through the Council Tax.

In Barking & Dagenham they are:

Levies

- East London Waste Authority
- Lee Valley Regional Park
- Environmental Agency Thames Region
- London Pensions Fund Authority

Precepts

In 2000/2001 the Council will also collect the money due to the Greater London Authority (encompassing the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority).

Revenue Support Grant, Business Rates and Council Tax Income

The Council receives its money from three different sources. The Council Tax, which you pay, accounts for 19% of what the Council spends. The Revenue Support Grant from the Government accounts for 56% of the Council's expenditure and a proportion of the Business Rates accounts for the remaining 25%.

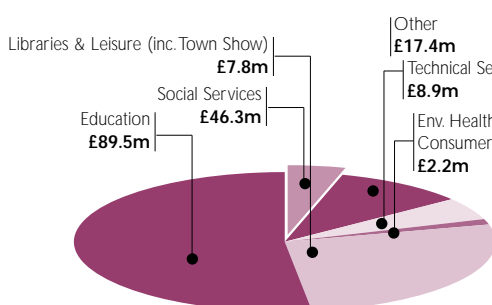
Standard Spending Assessment

The Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) is what the government calculates that each local council should be spending in their borough. This then determines how much Revenue Support Grant the Council will get to provide services.

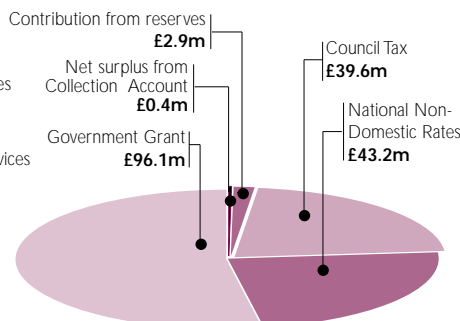
Barking & Dagenham's Budget Requirement

The Council's budget requirement is how much money the Council needs to provide services each year. The variance between the two years is accounted for in terms of inflation. The only significant difference appears under "Other Services", this has arisen due to an increase in capital charges under the main services and a corresponding credit under "other" services. Table 2 shows what the Council estimates to have spent in the financial year 1st April 1999 – 31st March 2000 and

What we spend on services



Where the money comes from



Where the money goes

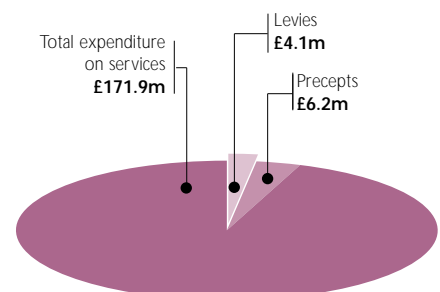




Table 2: London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Summary of Revenue Estimates

Service Area	Estimated Expenditure for 1999/2000			Estimated Expenditure for 2000/2001		
	Gross Expenditure	Net Expenditure (Per Resident)	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure Per Resident
	£000's	£000's	£ p	£000's	£000's	£ p
Education	105,288	96,715	629.02	112,294	103,650	666.32
Social Services	56,809	44,252	287.81	64,310	47,002	302.16
Highways	5,637	5,628	36.60	5,658	5,647	36.31
Planning & Development	2,683	1,988	12.93	3,031	1,983	12.75
Recreation & Tourism	6,587	6,480	42.14	6,853	6,684	42.97
Environmental Health	1,753	1,633	10.62	1,780	1,652	10.62
Refuse Collection & Disposal	3,203	2,603	16.93	3,149	2,542	16.35
Housing	25,534	1,611	10.48	25,816	1,702	10.95
Other Services	14,643 -	904 -	5.88	12,592	(4,593)	(29.53)
Total expenditure on services	222,137	160,006	1,040.65	235,483	165,448	1,068.86
Contingencies	2,650	2,650	17.24	3,600	3,600	23.15
Financial Reserve	2,714 -	1,992 -	12.96	2,054	(821)	(5.28)
Housing Revenue Account	74,251	-	-	79,168	-	-
Sub Total	301,752	160,664	320,305	169,048	1086.74	
Add Levies						
East London Waste Authority	2,781	2,781	18.08	3,087	3,087	19.84
Lee Valley Regional Park	126	126	0.82	128	128	0.82
Environmental Agency Thames Region	682	682	4.44	704	704	4.53
London Pensions Fund Authority	163	163	1.06	165	165	1.06
Barking & Dagenham's Budget Requirement	305,504	164,416	1,069.33	324,389	173,132	1,112.98
Less:						
Revenue Support Grant	-	94,376 -	613.80	-	96,137	618.02
Business Rates	-	37,930 -	246.69	-	43,183	277.60
Surplus on Collection Fund	-	397 -	2.58	-	409	2.63
Barking & Dagenham's Budget Requirement		31713	206.26		33,403	214.73

what it estimates it will spend in the coming year, 1st April 2000 – 31st March 2001.

The Council Tax System is based on property values and whether or not there is a single occupier in a property. Each property falls within one of eight valuation bands as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 also shows how much will be spent by the Borough Council and the new Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2000/2001. The final column shows what Council Tax payment will be required, but excludes any single person discount.

Total Council Tax by Band and proportions allocated to LBB&D and the GLA.

BAND	Range of Values	LBB&D (£)	Greater London Authority (£)	Total (£)
A	Up to £40,000	440.96	81.99	522.95
B	Over £40,000 up to £52,000	514.45	95.65	610.10
C	Over £52,000 up to £68,000	587.94	109.32	697.26
D	Over £68,000 up to £88,000	661.44	122.98	784.42
E	Over £88,000 up to £120,000	808.43	150.31	958.74
F	Over £120,000 up to £160,000	955.41	177.64	1133.05
G	Over £160,000 up to £320,000	1102.40	204.97	1307.37
H	Over £320,000	1322.88	245.96	1568.84



Nature, turnover and profit/loss of the Council's trading operations

Direct Service Organisations (DSO) are set up by the Council to provide services and operate in competition with private commercial businesses. The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham operated fifteen Direct Service Organisations during 1999/2000. The trading results together with comparative forecast figures for 1999/2000 are shown in Table 4.

*Under Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 or the Local Government Act 1998, all DSO's are required on an annual basis, to break-even, after incurring a charge of 6% on capital employed. Three DSOs did not meet these requirements and the appropriate reports will be made to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

The Building Services DSO mainly undertakes repairs to Council buildings. The Council has reduced what it spends on routine building maintenance as funds are

Table 4: The nature, turnover and profit/loss of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham's significant trading operations

DSO	Range of Work 1998/9	1998/99		1999/2000	
		Turnover £'000	Surplus after Capital Charges £'000	Turnover £'000	Surplus after Capital Charges £'000
Building Services	Maintenance of public buildings, schools and council house stock	10597	(1192)*	10,312	0
Highways Maintenance	General highway maintenance e.g. patching, footway crossings, trench reinstatements	1361	(66)*	1,261	(150)
Building Cleaning	The cleaning of all public and education buildings.	1619	19	1,689	0
Other Cleaning	The cleaning of roads, pavements and other public areas	1747	69	1,823	0
Grounds Maintenance	The upkeep and maintenance of the Education, Housing and Highways grounds and the provision of floral decorations for public buildings	3925	339	4,080	19
Catering	For Education and Welfare Services	3823	339	3,929	294
Other Catering	Provision of staff restaurants and committee teas.	208	43	173	28
Refuse Collection	Collection of domestic, trade and clinical waste	1392	43	1,515	4
Vehicle Maintenance	Maintenance of the Authority's vehicle and plant fleet.	1097	27	1,133	15
Leisure Management	The management of the Authority's Leisure Services	4193	157	2,566	10
Parking Enforcement	The enforcement of the Authority's Car Parking Restrictions	260	14	273	0
Legal Services	Mortgages and commercial conveyancing and debt collection litigation	84	28	84	27
Housing Management	Estate management in respect of the Council's Housing Stock	1527	4	1,583	0
Construction Related Services	Architectural, Mechanical and Electrical Design and part Civil Engineering Service, Building Surveying Services on the Shape Up (for Homes) programme	1479	(128)*	1,500	0
Housing Rents	Accounting, Administration and Arrears Recovery	237	20	932	0



transferred to 'Shape-Up', a planned improvement programme investing in the Council's housing stock. The Building Services DSO losses in 1998/1999 can be attributed to a scaling down of its operation.

Similarly, the Highways DSO is in the process of scaling down and by the end of the year it will be a third of its current size and will concentrate on emergency works enabling it to become more responsive and profitable in future years.

The Capital Programme expenditure in 1998/1999 was less than in previous years, as a result the Construction Related Services DSO reported a loss. Resources are now more closely aligned to demand and it is anticipated that the DSO will break-even this financial year.

The Council also undertakes a number of other trading activities which are not subject to competition regulations and therefore are not required to break even. These include:

- The Council's Window Factory, produced 11,000 windows in 1998/99, the majority of these being used in the 'Shape-Up' programme. It currently has a turnover of £2.4 million.

The Window Factory made an annual surplus, in 1998/1999 this was £125,000.

- Community Halls (including Eastbury Manor House) – the cost of operating the community halls in the borough was £1,669,000 in 1998/1999. The halls generated income of £405,000, and therefore reported a £1.26 million deficit. The deficit reflects Council policy to subsidise these facilities for the benefit of the community.

- Commercial property – The Council owns a number of commercial offices including Roycraft House in Barking. Expenditure relating to corporation estates in 1998/999 was £1.426 million, whilst income totalled £1.356 million there was a net deficit of £70,000. Occupancy and usage rates have improved and the operation is expected

to report a £100,000 surplus in the current financial year.

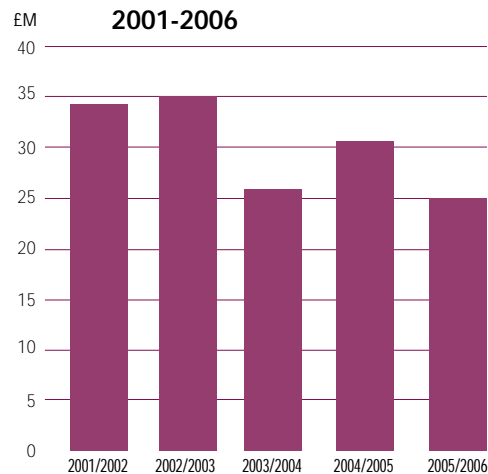
The Council's Major Capital Projects

The Council's Capital Programme (Table 5) for 2000/2001 reflects the community and currently focuses on priorities focusing on education, making the borough a better place to live and economic regeneration.

Table 5: Capital Projects for 2000/20001.

Project		£'000
Primary School Building Programme		1,756
Secondary School Programme		2,861
Housing Capital Programme	- Shape Up - Other Housing Maintenance	13,265 14,167
Highways Structural Repairs		1,575
Other Services	- New Depot, Wantz Road - Roycraft House Adaptations - SRB Schemes (the Borough being the accountable body). - General	1,344 780 2,471 3,506
Total Estimated Capital Expenditure		41,725

Table 6: Estimated Capital Programme 2001-2006





The Capital Programme includes the construction of additional secondary and primary schools in Barking Reach. The Council does not currently have the resources to fund this internally and is examining alternative funding options including a possible 'Private Finance Initiative' bid in the region of £40-£60 million including a number of other projects not yet in the programme.

Funding options are currently being investigated for the £7 million redevelopment and refurbishment of Dagenham Swimming Pool and Wood Lane Sports Centre.

The Council's purchasing proposals are governed by our capital and revenue budgets for 2000/2001 these do not suggest any major changes in purchasing proposals at this time. A Purchasing Strategy will be developed in 2000/2001.



How we Consult

Introduction

The Council is aware of the growing importance of consultation. This is highlighted by recent national government initiatives. Consultation is one of the fundamental principles of the Best Value framework.

The Council is determined to increase consultation and produce more comprehensive information on the views of the local community.

Previous consultation work

Until recently, most consultation undertaken by the Council has been in response to legal requirements as part of Compulsory Competitive Tendering processes or in relation to service delivery. The results of consultation on particular service areas are set out in the individual services' performance plans

Other statutory requirements include:

- Consultations involving the general public and interest groups as part of the Unitary Development Plan process
- Consultations involving school teachers, parents, school governors and the voluntary sector relating to the Education Development Plan
- Consultations involving residents and the business community on changes to the Council Budget
- Consultations involving local businesses on the annual Economic Development Plan.

More recently, the importance of consultation with the local community has been acknowledged and a range of new consultation, communication and engagement initiatives has been implemented.

There have been one-off consultation exercises linked to specific regeneration projects, including consultation workshops on the Gascoigne and Harts Lane Estates. Efforts have also been made to ensure that the views of hard to involve groups are also taken into account, for example meetings with ethnic minority communities, and lesbian and gay groups on community safety, and health and social care.

A number of the Council's initiatives represent particular efforts to encourage greater involvement and participation. These include the Social Services Users' Forums and the Tenant Participation Compacts, the latter being implemented as part of a comprehensive Tenants' Participation Strategy.

During 1999, Town Centre Forums were established at Barking, Chadwell Heath and Heathway,



involving a wide range of local businesses and employers. These provide an opportunity to build on the existing consultation arrangements with the local Chamber of Commerce.



The Community Survey

The Council has shown its increased commitment to consultation by undertaking the first Borough-wide Community Survey which took place in late 1998-early 1999. 721 people, selected at random from the electoral register, were interviewed in their own homes. In addition, 250 on-street interviews were conducted and seven deliberative/focus groups held.

The Survey found that the main concerns of local residents were the state of the local environment, crime and community safety issues, and traffic and parking. This is shown in the table below.

Highest scoring issues of concern (from a list of 14)	
Condition of the local area	41.6%
Personal safety	35.5%
Traffic & parking	34.8%
Opportunities for young people	22.9%
Local shops and facilities	19.6%

The results indicate that the population are aware of and are generally satisfied with most services provided by the Council. Satisfaction rates varied from 85% of respondents who thought refuse collection was "good" or "very good" to just 23% for car parking. In only two Council services out of the eighteen tested were less than 50% of people satisfied. The five highest scoring services are shown in the table below.

Highest scoring Council services (rated "good" or "very good")	
Refuse collection	85.0%
Collection of Council Tax	82.5%
Libraries	80.2%
Nursery education	79.3%
Adult education	75.5%

Almost 54% of respondents agreed with the statement that the Council was doing a good job.

The findings from the Survey have been used to develop the Council's new Community Priorities. They have also informed the development of Council strategies, such as the Community Safety Strategy and the Consultation Strategy.



The future of consultation

In September 1999, the Council relaunched its Consultation Group which includes representatives from the main service areas. The primary objective of the Group is to improve consultation by taking a more strategic approach and co-ordinating survey work across the Council.

It is acknowledged that the quality of consultation exercises across Council Departments has been variable as a result of differing levels of resources and expertise. The Consultation Group aims to encourage a consistently high quality of work through the sharing of best practice and supporting training initiatives.

In addition, the Council is embarking on a series of major initiatives aimed at improving consultation.

Citizens' Panel

The next major stage of the Council's Consultation Strategy is the setting up of a Citizens' Panel of 1,000 residents of the Borough. A specialist market research company is helping the Council with this project.

It is envisaged that the Panel will be used for a number of "omnibus" questionnaire surveys each year that will include a range of questions from Council Departments and potentially other agencies (Health Authority, Police, community and voluntary groups), on views of services and other local issues. The Panel will also provide a way of rapidly testing opinions on particular subjects by telephone and shorter postal questionnaire surveys.

The use of focus groups to better understand people's views might also form part of the Citizens' Panel project. It is hoped that this approach will encourage people to increase their involvement and participation in local initiatives.



A full programme of publicity about the Citizens' Panel and feedback to Panellists, including information on the actions taken by the Council in response to survey findings, is being planned.

Best Value and Community Planning

The Citizens' Panel will be used for consultation as part of the Best Value reviews and other major Council initiatives. This might include:

- Different types of surveys to find out what the public think about the Council's new Community Priorities
- Surveys which relate to national and local Performance Indicators
- Survey work on the Council's Community Planning process

Consultation is at the heart of the Best Value service reviews and consideration will be given to the best means of using the Panel to find out what people think about Council services. However, whilst the Panel may be used to test overall satisfaction levels, it is likely that a range of survey and consultation techniques will be employed by each individual service.

Community Forums

The Council is also changing the way it works in order to involve local people more in Council decisions. One of the major initiatives aimed at improving the accessibility and accountability of the Council is the setting up of six Community Forums covering different parts of the Borough.

The details of the Forums are still being worked out but they are likely to provide an opportunity for ward councillors to discuss issues of importance with

the local community. Other public agencies, such as the Police and the Health Authority will also be invited to the Forums. There is the option to give some powers to the Community Forums to make decisions affecting their area, for example, local planning applications, local highways matters and local environmental improvements.

The Community Forums are intended to provide an opportunity for the local community to make known their views and to encourage their participation in the political process.

Further Information

There are lots of ways that you can have your say about Council services or become more involved in your local community.

If you would like further information on any of the items discussed above please contact **Jessica Cox**, (or one of her colleagues) Policy and Review Officer at **Barking & Dagenham Council**, in the first instance (see contact details below).

Address: Jessica Cox
Policy and Review Services
Chief Executive's Department
Civic Centre
Dagenham
Essex
RM10 7BN

Telephone: 020 8277 2244
Fax: 020 8227 2806
email: jrcox@barking-dagenham.gov.uk
office hours: 9am to 5pm

The Five Year Best Value Review Programme

The Council is now required by law to undertake a fundamental review of all its services from April 2000 to March 2005, with approximately 20% being examined in each year.

A five year programme for conducting a fundamental review of the functions undertaken by the Council has been drawn up and is set out on the next page. The programme was devised by assessing every service against a number of criteria including:

- Whether there was a known or foreseeable statutory need for change
- Whether statutory inspections were due, for example by Education (OFSTED) or Social Services (JRT) Inspectorate
- Whether there were any specific national or local initiatives affecting the service area
- Whether the activity was key in delivering the Council's priorities
- Whether it operated within its defined budget
- How vulnerable were the potential service users
- The degree of customer satisfaction and whether this was being measured
- Whether there were any performance targets and how the service actually performed both against these and other Local Authorities
- How diverse was any gap between user expectation and service delivery

Once this ranking had been completed, activities were placed in scoring sequence, with the highest first. From the criteria above, using a notional example, if a service was about to be affected by new Government legislation, was key to delivering several of the Council's priorities, regularly overspent its budget, had no means of measuring user satisfaction and ranked poorly against other Authorities, it would have scored highly and be towards the top end of the listing.

Once this priority listing had been completed, the outline review programme was then examined in the light of:

- Areas already highlighted for change or early

The Five Year Best Value Review Programme

The Council is now required by law to undertake a fundamental review of all its services from April 2000 to March 2005, with approximately 20% being examined in each year.

A five year programme for conducting a fundamental review of the functions undertaken by the Council has been drawn up and is set out on the next page. The programme was devised by assessing every service against a number of criteria including:

- Whether there was a known or foreseeable statutory need for change
- Whether statutory inspections were due, for example by Education (OFSTED) or Social Services (JRT) Inspectorate
- Whether there were any specific national or local initiatives affecting the service area
- Whether the activity was key in delivering the Council's priorities
- Whether it operated within its defined budget
- How vulnerable were the potential service users
- The degree of customer satisfaction and whether this was being measured
- Whether there were any performance targets and how the service actually performed both against these and other Local Authorities
- How diverse was any gap between user expectation and service delivery

Once this ranking had been completed, activities were placed in scoring sequence, with the highest first. From the criteria above, using a notional example, if a service was about to be affected by new Government legislation, was key to delivering several of the Council's priorities, regularly overspent its budget, had no means of measuring user satisfaction and ranked poorly against other Authorities, it would have scored highly and be towards the top end of the listing.

Once this priority listing had been completed, the outline review programme was then examined in the light of:

- Areas already highlighted for change or early



review, as a result of previous external reports

- Activities that were shown in the Community Survey to be of particular concern to local people
- Contracts that are about to expire
- The ability of the Council to provide the staff time, training and development time to undertake the programme

These additional criteria resulted in some re-aligning of activities for review – some services were brought forward and some deferred, although only one activity that had a relatively high ranking is not included in the first two years – Family Support Services. This is solely due to resourcing and our ability to undertake a fundamental review of this service alongside others.

It is possible that the review timetable will change in future years. Critical areas which may affect the timetable are

- The appointment of a new Chief Executive, who may wish to consider service performance in a different way
- The development of the community plan which could lead to certain services being re-prioritised for review, depending on what our partners and the community say
- The results of external inspections, which may identify areas of poor performance not previously identified by the Council
- The results of the new Best Value Performance Indicators highlighting areas of poor performance within the Council in comparison with others

Once an initial plan was devised, it became clear that a number of cross-cutting reviews could be undertaken, e.g. in the first year - housing maintenance, street scene activities and emergency services.

All the first year reviews have project plans which

include timetables for undertaking each review, who will be on the project team and what the aims of each review are. Outline start and finish dates for the first year of the reviews are set out in the table opposite. Timetables for the second year should be developed by June 2000.

The people making up the first year review teams comprise a mix of staff from both within and outside the service area and, in many cases, from outside the Authority. One person is charged with the task of being a “critical friend” – i.e. not being reluctant to ask the difficult questions about why and how services are delivered. There will be a total of 17 reviews in 2000/2001, involving about 120 people. Teams have now been identified and preliminary resource needs have been highlighted.

These include

- Training on specific techniques
- Funding for external support
- Expenses for external partners
- Additional resources to cover staff working on the reviews

Detailed resource plans for each review should be developed by the time of the publication of this plan. It is hoped that any additional funds required should be made available as efficiencies are identified in the fundamental review process.

To set about achieving this plan of work, we will need to change the way we have worked in the past and adopt new ways of working. We will respond to new needs, the changing culture and people's expectations.

The Council has been seeking the views of local people about our services and in the future we will need to increase this **consultation** and extend the range of ways in which this can take place.

We will need to ensure that our services stand **comparison** with other providers.

We must **challenge** whether we should provide



the services that we do, whether they should be provided differently or by someone else.

We need to check that we are **competitive** in terms of quality and price when we or others provide direct services.

The Council will use these "4C's" to review all of

its services over the next five years commencing in April 2000. Where any factors arise in the future that affect the review timetable for later years, any proposed changes will be reported in later editions of this Performance Plan.

Five Year Best Value Performance Review Programme

In the first year, estimated start dates are shown, together with the target date for the production of the Action Plan which will set out the outcomes and future proposals for each review.

2000/2001		2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Building Surveying & Maintenance Building Services (Maintenance) Repairs Reporting Theme: Housing Repairs	Feb 00 - Jan 01	Assess/Care Management (Children) Care Management [OPS] Care Management [Health and Disabilities] Theme: Care Services	Shape Up for Housing Clerk of Works Architecture and Design Thames-side Development Quantity Surveyor/ Business Support Theme: managing major projects	Sports Development Leisure Centres Leisure – Events Theme: Leisure time	Accounts Finance Services Internal Audit Theme: Making sure we spend money wisely
Public Relations	Jun 00 - Feb 01	Property Services	Family Support Services	Policy, Planning & Review - Housing	Registrars
Council Tax/Debt Recovery NNDR Billing/Debt Recovery Home Loans/Sundry Debtors etc.	Feb 00 - Feb 01	Parking Traffic and Road Safety Theme: Street Safe	Inspection Services	Chief Executive's Admin, General Office and Corporate Complaints	B&D Training Services
Residential Care for Older People	Jul 00 - Feb 01	Home Care	Community Inspection Team	Central Policy and Review – Chief Executive	Food Health and Safety
Education and Social Services Transport	Jan 00 - Nov 00	Community Disability Services	Fair Funding	Central Estates	Electoral Registration
Pupil Welfare	Apr 00 - Apr 01	Adult College	Policy and Planning - Education	Construction Design Management Regs etc.	Building Cleaning
Children's Looked After Services	Apr 00 - Oct 00	Technical Services Administration [Committee Section & Complaints Service]	Applications & Allocations	Committee Services	Window Factory
Cemeteries, incl. Registration	Feb 00 - Oct 00	Asset Management	Contracts and Business Support	Consumer Services	Payroll
Grounds Maintenance	Apr 00 - Apr 01	Child Support	Members' Services	Housing Benefits	Local Land Charges
Highways Maintenance Street Cleansing & Lighting Theme: Street Scene	Feb 00 - Dec 00	Early Years	Economic Development and Graphics	Print	Pensions
Security Communications Centre Emergency Planning Theme: Emergency Services	Feb 00 - Oct 00	Recycling Civic Amenity Site Waste Collection Theme: Waste Services	Technical Review and Analysis	Supported Living	Disability Services [Residential Homes]
Meals On Wheels	Jan 00 - Mar 01	Literacy [Schools]	Freedom Passes	Development Control	Environmental Protection
Day Care [Health and Disabilities]	Mar 00 - Oct 00	Community Development Community Halls	Porterage	Civil Engineering [Design & Projects]	Heritage
Housing (Grants) and Public Health (Environmental Health/Pollution)	Jan 00 - May 00	Governing Body/ Admin Support		Personnel (Central & Departmental)	Arts Development
Adult Literacy	Feb 00 - Apr 01	Urban Re-generation	Information Technology	Estate Management	Rent Accounts
Schools [Post 14]	Jun 00 - Jan 01	Infrastructure Projects	Building Control	Property Database	Procurement and Stores
		Emergency Duty Team	Legal	Libraries	Butler Court
		Public Interface	Thames Gateway	Advice Services	Youth Services
		School/Welfare Catering		Transport [Maintenance and Fleet]	



Improving Social Services



The reason for this review is to evaluate the services being provided by the Council to its local community both in terms of the quality of service and the cost. The review groups Social Services into three categories:

- Those that are providing a good service on the whole
- Those who are failing in parts but show an ability to improve things
- Those that are failing and have not shown the ability to improve things quickly

The last category becomes what is referred to as a “monitored” authority. A team from the Department of Health regularly reviews their progress to make sure that things are improving for the local community. This is done on behalf of the Minister.

Unfortunately, the Social Services at Barking and Dagenham were put into the last category. The main reasons for this, together with what we have done about it, are summarised on the next page.

At a recent meeting held with the Department of Health our progress was set out into three groups: areas where we have made significant progress; areas where some progress has been made but it was too early to assess improvements; and areas where progress still needs to be made.



Areas where significant progress has been made

Improving Services For Vulnerable People

- Setting out clear guidance on priorities for the staff to follow
- Streamlining arrangements for receiving requests for help and providing a single point of contact for all services. Making available a much greater range of public information on services written in a clear accessible style
- Setting standards for services with business plan written for all services. The learning from this

Reasons for Social Services being monitored	
Main Concern	What we have done to address this or what we are planning to do
Setting clear criteria and standards for services. Making sure that these are clearly understood by those who may require our service and applying them consistently to make sure that individual service users get the attention they deserve.	We have set out clear criteria for the circumstances where Social Services will provide a service to an individual and to what level. We have set clear timescales for making services available.
Streamlining the arrangements for receiving requests for help. Making sure that anyone who requires a service from Social Services has a single point of contact	We have set up a service called "Initial Contact Service". Anyone who requires a service from us can either call in at the Civic Centre or phone us on one number.
Training staff to work with users of our services and their carers to identify, agree and record their needs. Review these on a regular basis to make sure that the individuals are getting the right service at the right time.	We have trained all staff in the application of the new system of "eligibility criteria". This is where we assess and record the needs of the individual against an agreed criteria and make sure that we follow it through.
Make sure that we are spending enough money to meet the needs of our local community. Where necessary to buy services from independent providers to offer choice.	The Council has agreed to spend more money in Social Services and bring it in line with the "Standard Spending Assessment". We have also put in place formal structures to commission and contract for services.

first year would enable Social Services to implement a comprehensive performance management framework that would represent good practice.

- Establishing new Corporate Priorities.
- Working in partnership both within the Council and outside. An example of this is the establishment of the Joint Community Disability team.
- Significant improvements in working relationship with NHS.
- Using external resources and research to inform changes to practice in Children and Families Services was praised.
- The establishment of the user and carer forum to test user opinion.
- Effective and collaborative working with Councillors to develop a more rigorous scrutiny of performance of services.

Areas where some progress had been made

- Improving choice and testing for value
- Contracting unit, commissioning managers and joint commissioning boards had been established. This will enable Social Services to make sure that the choice available to the user and carers is improved and that the services provided are of best value.

- All management posts have been assessed against the new management competencies. This will help improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of services provided and make sure that managers are managing

Areas where progress still needs to be made

- Social Services needs to work harder to demonstrate that everything that we do results in improved service outcomes for the users and carers.
- The Services need to work harder to demonstrate that the needs of minority ethnic groups are being met. This will be facilitated by the Council wide approach to promote equality.
- A clear strategic direction for the health and disabilities services is needed.
- Improve robustness of business planning and performance information, review base budgets and bed down the improvements across the board.

We believe that the work that we have already done, together with the work we plan to do in the coming year, will continue to improve the services that we provide to our local community. We hope and expect that this will lead to us no longer being monitored in future.



Improving Social Services



The reason for this review is to evaluate the services being provided by the Council to its local community both in terms of the quality of service and the cost. The review groups Social Services into three categories:

- Those that are providing a good service on the whole
- Those who are failing in parts but show an ability to improve things
- Those that are failing and have not shown the ability to improve things quickly

The last category becomes what is referred to as a “monitored” authority. A team from the Department of Health regularly reviews their progress to make sure that things are improving for the local community. This is done on behalf of the Minister.

Unfortunately, the Social Services at Barking and Dagenham were put into the last category. The main reasons for this, together with what we have done about it, are summarised on the next page.

At a recent meeting held with the Department of Health our progress was set out into three groups: areas where we have made significant progress; areas where some progress has been made but it was too early to assess improvements; and areas where progress still needs to be made.



Areas where significant progress has been made

Improving Services For Vulnerable People

- Setting out clear guidance on priorities for the staff to follow
- Streamlining arrangements for receiving requests for help and providing a single point of contact for all services. Making available a much greater range of public information on services written in a clear accessible style
- Setting standards for services with business plan written for all services. The learning from this

Reasons for Social Services being monitored	
Main Concern	What we have done to address this or what we are planning to do
Setting clear criteria and standards for services. Making sure that these are clearly understood by those who may require our service and applying them consistently to make sure that individual service users get the attention they deserve.	We have set out clear criteria for the circumstances where Social Services will provide a service to an individual and to what level. We have set clear timescales for making services available.
Streamlining the arrangements for receiving requests for help. Making sure that anyone who requires a service from Social Services has a single point of contact	We have set up a service called "Initial Contact Service". Anyone who requires a service from us can either call in at the Civic Centre or phone us on one number.
Training staff to work with users of our services and their carers to identify, agree and record their needs. Review these on a regular basis to make sure that the individuals are getting the right service at the right time.	We have trained all staff in the application of the new system of "eligibility criteria". This is where we assess and record the needs of the individual against an agreed criteria and make sure that we follow it through.
Make sure that we are spending enough money to meet the needs of our local community. Where necessary to buy services from independent providers to offer choice.	The Council has agreed to spend more money in Social Services and bring it in line with the "Standard Spending Assessment". We have also put in place formal structures to commission and contract for services.

first year would enable Social Services to implement a comprehensive performance management framework that would represent good practice.

- Establishing new Corporate Priorities.
- Working in partnership both within the Council and outside. An example of this is the establishment of the Joint Community Disability team.
- Significant improvements in working relationship with NHS.
- Using external resources and research to inform changes to practice in Children and Families Services was praised.
- The establishment of the user and carer forum to test user opinion.
- Effective and collaborative working with Councillors to develop a more rigorous scrutiny of performance of services.

Areas where some progress had been made

- Improving choice and testing for value
- Contracting unit, commissioning managers and joint commissioning boards had been established. This will enable Social Services to make sure that the choice available to the user and carers is improved and that the services provided are of best value.

- All management posts have been assessed against the new management competencies. This will help improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of services provided and make sure that managers are managing

Areas where progress still needs to be made

- Social Services needs to work harder to demonstrate that everything that we do results in improved service outcomes for the users and carers.
- The Services need to work harder to demonstrate that the needs of minority ethnic groups are being met. This will be facilitated by the Council wide approach to promote equality.
- A clear strategic direction for the health and disabilities services is needed.
- Improve robustness of business planning and performance information, review base budgets and bed down the improvements across the board.

We believe that the work that we have already done, together with the work we plan to do in the coming year, will continue to improve the services that we provide to our local community. We hope and expect that this will lead to us no longer being monitored in future.



Accounts for Payment



The Council is a major purchaser of goods and services, all of which have to be paid for on receipt of the appropriate documentation. In the financial year 1998/1999 some 157,000 cheques were issued to suppliers with a total value in excess of £186 million.

The Section employs the equivalent of five full-time staff who account for £94,000 of the £200,000 annual running costs.

The Service makes payments three times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. These produce cheques for all outstanding invoices submitted since the last payment run.

This Service is important in ensuring that the Council delivers on its responsibilities to pay its creditors within the required time scales. Paying promptly also helps to ensure that local businesses thrive and do not suffer cash-flow problems. Therefore, this Service helps to deliver on the community priorities of

- Developing rights and responsibilities in the community
- Regenerating the local economy – generating jobs training and enterprise.



What do people think of the Service?

Although no comprehensive survey has been undertaken to test levels of creditor satisfaction, individual suppliers have commented favourably on the payment record of the Council in comparison to other clients.



How we perform

Accounts for Payment Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The percentage of invoices which were paid within 30 days	54.5%	67.5%	70.0%	95.0%	88.0%	74.0%	69.7%	63.0%	73.0%

Other Information

The figure for 1997/98 compared to 10 other authorities showed the following results in terms of cost per payment processed:

97.5% in 2001/2002
100% in 2002/2003

Costs	Staff Costs Direct Costs	Other	IT Costs	Overhead	Total Cost
London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	£0.36	£0.23	£0.09	£0.09	£0.77
Average	£0.70	£0.13	£0.22	£0.30	£1.35

Each full-time equivalent member of staff in the Authority processes 52,500 invoices annually. This compares to an average of 20,800.

Where it has become clear that departments are under performing in processing payments the section has written to senior manager, and the issue has been raised with the Chief Officers' Management Team.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The cost of the Council's creditor payment service is low compared to other local authorities, but the percentage of invoices paid within 28 days of receipt is well below the top 25% nationally and in London.

To address this in the next year the Section intends to:

- Maintain awareness on the part of service departments of the need for prompt payment by continuing to raise these issues with Directors and the senior Management Team of the Council
- Monitor payment procedures across all departments with a view to identifying areas requiring attention and advice
- Investigate any claims for late payment incurring requests for interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debt legislation

- Record number of telephone complaints from suppliers
- The introduction of direct debit arrangements for some of the suppliers of gas, water, electricity and telephone services has been particularly welcomed. This facility will be available to other suppliers once they are in a position to submit their accounts in the computerised format required by the Council and should improve the efficiency of the service

With the introduction of the new Financial IT system in 2001, it is intended that the following indicators will be monitored:

- Percentage of cheques produced within 5 working days of receipt of an authorised invoice
- Percentage of urgent cheques drawn on the day of request

Administration for the Chief Executive's Department

The Chief Executive's Administration Service is currently undergoing a major restructuring process. The majority of services that previously comprised Administration have been, or are being transferred to other Departments.

However, the Service will continue to provide administrative support under the new Departmental arrangements. It is likely that the Council's arrangements for dealing with complaints will be consolidated and that the Service will assume responsibility for overseeing the Council's corporate customer care, and complaints strategies.

What does this Information Mean and What Are we Going to do about it?

Actions for 1999/2000 will include:

- Developing the existing arrangements for dealing

How we perform

Administration for the Chief Executive's Department Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators							
The number of complaints determined by the Ombudsman which were classified as:			.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Local settlement	10	18	8	6	3	6	41
Maladministration	0	1	0	0	3	0	4
Local Indicators							
The number of complaints determined by an Ombudsman	74	83	56	50	71	50	229
Telephones & Letters							
Percentage of calls to the main switchboard answered within 20 seconds*	94%	73%	.....	80%			
Percentage of letters responded to within 10 working days	87.8%	89.5%	.....	90.0%			
Handling Complaints							
Does the authority have a complaints policy which covers current good practice?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Is there a follow-up procedure if the complainant is not satisfied with a response from the department to which the complaint relates?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Does the authority have a written policy on remedies?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Is there a system for reviewing the causes of complaints to ensure that avoidable problems do not recur?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Does the authority publish a report on complaints which is available to members of the public?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			

* The authority experienced data collection problems in 1998/99 for this indicator. Therefore, the information is incomplete.

with complaints from the public, primarily by publicising the available means of registering dissatisfaction. This may result in an increase in the number of complaints as local people are given a more effective voice. This will not necessarily be viewed as a negative indicator.

- Increasing accessibility for complainants by publishing the Council's complaints form on the forthcoming Council internet web-site so that criticisms can be made electronically. This may also result in an increase in the total number of complaints.

- Implementing a programme of publicity, both internal and external, to raise awareness of the Council's policy on "whistle-blowing" and the arrangements by which Council staff can register any concerns about the Council's operations.
- A survey will be undertaken with a view to setting targets for complainants' satisfaction with the way in which their complaints are handled.



Arts Service

What is the Arts Service?

In September 1999 the Arts Service at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham joined the newly created Literacy and Cultural Services Division as part of the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries.



This brought together the work of the Arts Development Officer and those members of the Community Inspection and Advisory Service with responsibility for dance, visual arts, drama, literature and music.

The Arts Development Officer works to develop arts activity across all art forms. The Borough's major arts initiative is the A13 Artscape Project, which is the largest public art scheme in the country. Supported by the National Lottery through the Arts Council of England, it aims both to improve the environment around the A13 trunk road and provide opportunities for local people to become involved in arts activities through an education and outreach programme, co-ordinated by the Arts Development Officer. Three local arts organisations - ARC Theatre Ensemble, Studio 3 Arts and East London Dance - are key partners in the programme.

Projects like this are making a significant contribution to the development of the Arts in the borough. The A13 Artscape Project provided the framework and support for successful initiatives in 1999 such as the first in a trilogy of community plays, the Roadworks dance project and the first Summer Arts Season.

The Arts Development Officer manages a budget of £18,000 to support community arts. This is supplemented by the A13 Artscape budget of around £45,000 per year for education and outreach work to support specific dance, drama and combined art projects.

Advisory staff for visual arts, dance and English, work with schools to develop their respective art forms within the curriculum and through extra-curricular projects. In September 1999, the role of Inspectors was enhanced to include provision of advice, support and guidance for their areas of responsibility within the community.

The Community Music Service provides instrumental and vocal tuition to school pupils and adults. The service is led by the Head of Community



Music, supported by two full-time staff and a number of part-time staff. In September 1999, the brief of the Head of Community Music was widened to include the provision of advice, support and guidance to schools and across the community. The service helps to deliver the following community priorities:-

- Regenerating the local economy - generating jobs, training and enterprise
- Raising general pride in the borough and projecting a positive image
- Creating better opportunities for all

Key actions for arts development within the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham were published in the Council's 1999 Leisure Strategy. These were:

- Development of the Malthouse as a local base for cultural industries
- Developing the education and outreach elements of the A13 Artscape Project through community and school-based arts projects
- Developing, consulting on and adopting a Borough Arts Strategy
- Completion of the A13 Artscape Project.



What do people think of the Service?

An arts database for the Borough was established in Spring 1998 in order to create an ongoing dialogue between Arts Development and the local arts community. So far this has 140 members.

Evidence indicates that the profile of the arts in schools and in the community is rising. For example demand for instrumental/vocal teaching and for places on the Saturday Music School far exceeds provision; 209 pupils currently attend, with 80 pupils on the waiting list for the Saturday Music school.

During 1999/2000 arts events sponsored or organised by the service have been both popular and successful with local people being able to participate in the actual events or attend in the audience.

Figures indicating the popularity of these and other events are set out below:-

160 local people took part in the A13 Roadworks Dance Project, 500 people came to watch and there were over 800 enquiries.

The 1999 Community Play - Big Bang, attracted 74 workshop participants with a cast of 31 local people and an audience of 250 over 2 performances.

As part of Studio 3's Generational Arts Project (GAP), 2,782 people were involved in community arts activity, either as participants or in the audience.

These events were part of the first Summer Arts Season, with a programme of performances, workshops and exhibitions.



How we perform

Results in visual arts examinations are among the best in the Authority and courses are very popular. Performance at GCSE art is higher than the national average in most schools, in some it is 15% to 20% higher. Whilst not many students take A level art, the results in some schools are very good, e.g. in summer 1999, of the 12 students who took the exam, six achieved A grades, the top grade, and five a B grade, the second highest grade.

The Borough successfully gained major lottery funding for the Artscape programme of £3,895,000 by the Arts Council of England who rate the project as being of national significance. It is the biggest award ever made for public art.

Representatives from the A13 Artscape Project management team are increasingly being asked to contribute to reports and conferences on arts and regeneration, e.g. at a national conference on arts and regeneration, Officers led a seminar on the A13



Artscape Project. Members of the team have contributed towards the MA Art in Architecture course at the University of East London. Members of the team have also written articles for Arts and Regeneration publications.

The profile of arts activities in Barking and Dagenham is growing, both within and beyond its boundaries. The Community Music Service is oversubscribed, overall demand exceeds what the Service is currently able to provide.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Arts Services is a newly created area which brings together community arts development and work in education. Arts development has already made a considerable impact over a number of years, particularly through the high profile A13 Artscape Project and by encouraging local people to participate in events.

This is a new service and it has not as yet been possible to compare all aspects directly with those of other providers.

However, at this early stage of the Service's development, there are signs that its work is achieving respect and recognition with both the local and arts communities.

The key priority for the arts is to ensure continuous improvement in access, participation, achievement and progression for people who live and work in the Borough, and that this happens in consultation with members of the community.

The new post of Head of Arts Services will be created to provide leadership and provide a coherent and co-ordinated approach to the arts in pursuit of

the Borough's strategic objectives (by Summer 2000) and will also review the efficiency of the service at the same time.

The Artscape Project will continue to be implemented until its completion in 2004. The education and outreach elements of the programme will be extended and the Council will work to encourage artists and arts organisations to work in the area. It has made a successful bid to develop the old malthouse building on Abbey Road as a cultural industries complex with work scheduled to begin in February 2000.

A review of the Music service has just been undertaken and recommendations will be made and considered.

The new division will produce a draft strategy for the arts by summer 2000 which:

- **Aims to provide broad, balanced and comprehensive arts provision for the whole community**
- **Aims to increase and widen direct participation in the arts**
- **Widens access and tackles social exclusion**
- **Works to improve facilities for the display of people's achievements and to develop venues for performance**
- **Looks at how other boroughs provide arts services**

The service will undertake a full review of participation in the arts and set targets for increased participation, drawing on national averages where available. Standards will also be established for aspects of provision and outcome in the arts by end of Summer 2000.

Assets & Administration in Education, Arts & Libraries

What is Assets and Administration in Education, Arts & Libraries?

There are 4 major functions covered by this Service:-

- Assets
- Administration
- Transport
- Fair funding

Assets and Administration employs 29 people, with a budget of £865,000.

The transport budget is £2.17m, of which £550,000 is recharged to Social Services and the remainder across the Education Arts & Libraries Service. There are approximately the equivalent of 76 full-time posts of which the equivalent of 12 full time staff are based in Transport for Social Services.

Assets

This group is responsible for:

- The maintenance and development of property resources, ensuring overall best value and improvement in standards from capital investment in buildings to providing a service to schools as a letting agent
- Development of the Asset Management Plan
- Managing major maintenance and building projects at education buildings
- Supporting schools by acting as a focal point for community use of school facilities

Administration

The primary role of the group is to provide a contact point for school governors and support to schools in their work with governors. Other roles cover general administrative support, keyboard services, reception and servicing school governing bodies.

Transport

This group is responsible for the provision of a comprehensive passenger transport service for schools, the Education, Arts and Libraries department and Social Services. This includes home to school, home to centre and one-off journey planning for special events, functions and school educational visits.





Fair Funding

This area of responsibility covers the development and monitoring of the Local Education Authority's Scheme for Financing of Schools. This includes liaison with schools, determining each school's budget share and supporting them in their understanding of the changes which have evolved in the school's budgeting process over recent years.



What do people think of the Service?

No consultation exercises have been conducted to

substantiate recent activity in these areas, however the following have been evident:

- A number of letters have been received from Schools commending the work of the assets team for their role in capital projects
- In meetings with Chairs of Governing bodies and the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries, positive comments have been made about the support given in the area of school governance, welcoming attendance at meetings with the expert contributions made by Officers.

How we perform

Assets and Administration Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/1998		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/1999		
	1997/1998	1998/1999	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators*									
The percentage of unfilled places in									
(a) primary schools	6.3%	6.9%	7.0%	6.9%	6.8%	5.0%	4.1%	5.7%	1.5%
(b) secondary schools	6.2%	7.4%	5.9%	6.0%	8.4%	7.0%	3.0%	15.3%	6.5%
The percentage of pupils in excess of school capacities									
(a) primary schools	2.7%	3.0%	2.6%	2.8%	2.0%	2.5%	6.5%	3.3%	5.5%
(b) secondary schools	1.8%	2.7%	3.3%	3.2%	1.2%	1.4%	4.7%	1.3%	4.0%
Local Indicators					Local Indicators				
	Justification of target		Target 2000/2001		Justification of target		Target 2000/2001		
Was the asset management policy with the DFEE by their published timescales?	This is a national requirement		yes	Were statements on final expenditure provided to schools by 1st October each year?	This provides financial information to schools so that they can effectively manage their budgets for that year		Yes		
% of projects where timescales set for the service were met	Defined by national or council wide deadline		100%	Was consultation undertaken with schools to agree pupil number forecasts for use in their budgets by the end of the Autumn Term each year	This enables the council to budget the funds provided to schools in the following year		yes		
% of bids for external funding completed within required timescales	Bids will only be considered if national deadlines are met		100%	% of clients arriving at their stated destination within ten minutes of their stated time	In order to provide a reasonable service whilst accounting for local traffic difficulties		90%		
Were details produced for schools delegated budgets for the new financial year by the end of March each year	Targets set to meet national guidelines		yes						

*The fluctuation in figures reflects additions of school accommodation to support increases in pupil numbers



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information above shows that a number of new local targets have been set to improve the level of service provided. No consultation or benchmarking has yet been undertaken.

A fundamental performance review of the Transport Service will be completed in 2000/2001, which will look at efficiencies, user views and benchmarking, it will also look to reduce customer complaints by 50%.

In the other areas key actions for 2000/2001 will be to:

- Develop an Asset Management Plan in line with the timescales set by the Department for Education and Employment
- Develop a process to ensure an ongoing review of governing bodies by Autumn 2000 and annually thereafter
- Review with schools the minuting and agenda service for governing bodies by January 2001
- Review the provision of typing/keyboard services and the way these services are delivered by Summer 2000
- Carry out benchmarking exercise in the assets, administration and fair funding functions
- Investigate ways of consulting with customers in the assets, administration and fair funding functions, e.g. incorporating client feedback in the evaluation exercise on the completion of capital projects



Catering Services

What are the Catering Services?

Catering Services was formed by the recent merger of Education Catering and Welfare Catering, and the new Section relocated within the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries.



Its main functions are to:

- Provide meals for all the Borough's primary and secondary schools. In addition, schools are offered services such as breakfast, mid-morning breaks, packed lunches and catering for functions, events and meetings
- Provide a Meals on Wheels Service to elderly and housebound residents
- Provide meals to luncheon, leisure and day-care centres for older people at various sites within the Borough
- Provide function catering at civic and other events
- Provide refreshments for meetings at both the Town Hall and Civic Centre

Catering Services are managed by the Catering Manager with the following resources and staffing in specific areas of operation.

The Education Catering Service employs two area managers, three area supervisors, an office manager, three administrative assistants (two of whom are part-time) and 46 site supervisors with 250 operatives (most are part-time). The service provides over two and half million school meals per year.

The Welfare Catering Service employs an assistant welfare manager, an administrative assistant, a kitchen supervisor and 13 operatives (including five who are part-time). It provides approximately 275,000 meals on wheels and meals to luncheon clubs.

The other catering services have one officer and four operatives and provides food for 350 functions for approximately 14,000 people.

The budget for the service in 1999/2000 can be broken down as follows:
Education Catering:
Expenditure - £3,618,000
Income - £2,092,000
Deficit - £1,526,000 which is funded through the cost of free school meals

Meals on Wheels:
Income for the Service £455,479
Other Catering:
Income for the Service £207,939



What do people think of the Service?

The number of meals served in schools has risen year on year, giving an indication that customers are satisfied with the service provided.

The number of pupils paying for meals has also increased each year with a 30% overall increase in four years. This indicates that paying customers are also happy with the service provided and that increases in meals served are not confined to those qualifying for free catering.

The Schools Catering Service undertook a survey of all headteachers in 1999. The response to the survey was very small, three replies out of 47 (6%). The issues raised were localised ones and they have been addressed.

The Social Services Department undertook a customer survey of the Meals On Wheels service in March 1999. A good response rate was achieved

(61%) with nearly 400 replies. The results of the survey were:-

- 71% found the meals appetising
- 65% were satisfied with the meals they received
- 80% said the portion size was about right
- 86% said the meals were delivered at a convenient time
- 35% were not satisfied with the meals
- 25% said the meals were not appetising
- 7% described the meals as poor value
- 17% thought there was poor choice.

Luncheon centres have sought informal feedback from clients where mainly negative feedback has been received.

Function catering has increased each year with both the number and type of functions growing annually. 355 functions were provided for in 1998/1999, in comparison with 283 in 1996. As clients have the option to use external providers, this implies satisfaction with the service currently offered by the Council's Catering Service.

How we perform

Catering Service Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/1998		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/1999		
	1997/1998	1998/1999	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
Local Indicators									
Percentage of primary pupils in local authority schools where meals are available to all full time pupils	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	97.0%	100%
Percentage of primary pupils in schools where meals are available to all full time pupils, who brought a meal. (Excluding pupils entitled to free school meals)	46%	45%	100%	100%	44%	100%	47%	35%	41%
The price per primary school meal Infant Junior	£1.10	£1.15 £1.20	£1.15 £1.20	£1.15 £1.20	£1.10	£1.10	£1.05	£1.35	£1.15
Percentage of pupils taking school meals	51.7%	52.6%	54.0%	56%	Other Information Catering and client managers from many councils have visited Barking and Dagenham to view the operation and its achievements. These included Birmingham City Council, Suffolk, Essex & Norfolk County Councils and many London Boroughs Under fair funding arrangements, school meals budgets are delegated to secondary schools who can purchase meals from any provider. Currently all purchase from the Council's catering service. Primary schools have an option to have their budget delegated, currently none of them choose to do so. The price per school meal is different in infant and junior classes to account for the difference in portion size, this follows the recommendations in the National Nutritional Guidelines.				
Percent of a child's E.A.R. (daily nutritional needs) provided from a school lunch	This is a national standard			33.0%					
Percentage of meals on wheels ready for collection between 10:30 and 11:30 each day	If meals are to be delivered on time they need to be ready in advance			100%					



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The number of school meals served has shown a year on year increase, but no customer satisfaction surveys or benchmarking has been carried out.

Survey results of users of the Meals on Wheels Service showed uneven levels of satisfaction, but informal feedback from luncheon centre clients was negative.

The Welfare Catering Service will form part of the Fundamental Performance Review of Meals on Wheels during 2000/2001 which should improve the

efficiency of the service.

In addition key actions for 2000/2001 are to:

- Consider how comparisons with others, by benchmarking against those services provided by private contractors and other local authorities, could be developed
- Consult with customers and clients to correctly assess their needs and requirements
- Measure the nutritional value of meals
- Plan to deliver a two choice menu, in addition to the existing choices of salads, sandwiches or special dietary requirements, in welfare meals

Cemetery Service

What is the Cemetery Service?

The Cemetery Service is a new section within the recently established Leisure and Environment Directorate, having been formed on 1 February 2000.

The service was formerly delivered jointly by the following three departments of the Council and their functions are listed:

Chief Executive's
Cemetery Registrars. The Administrative functions associated with a burial service.
Contract Services
On site services. Grave digging (in accordance with a Service Level Agreement). Grounds maintenance (contract awarded after a competitive tendering exercise).
Development & Technical Services
Monitoring the contracted work for Grounds maintenance and ensuring that the grave digging is properly completed under the terms of the agreement. Dealing with complaints. Overseeing infrastructure repairs.

The Council currently operates three cemetery sites:

Eastbrookend	11.48 acres
Chadwell Heath	11.86 acres
Rippleside	31.29 acres
Total Area	54.63 acres (22.11 hectares)

The London Planning Advisory Council's 1997 report on 'Burial Space Needs in London' indicated that there was between six to eight years of burial space remaining in the Borough. One of the first objectives of a new Cemeteries Manager will be to prepare a strategy for dealing with this issue and this is listed elsewhere as an action for 2000/2001.

The average number of burials administered by the Borough in recent years is 940. Approximately 70% of the current yearly burials are in re-opened graves as opposed to using new grave spaces.

The primary role of the service in 2000/2001 will be to:





- Ensure that bookings for burials are accurately administered and that the appropriate fees are obtained
- Ensure that the graves are dug to the correct dimensions, in the right place and in time for the burial service
- Ensure that the cemetery sites are maintained to a high standard within available finances
- Ensure that the statutory administrative functions associated with the burial service are correctly managed
- Future planning for the service will have regard to the community priorities in ensuring opportunity for access to those denominations that require the service and ensuring that the standards of maintenance enhance the “cleaner, greener, safer” priority

The services are provided by fifteen full-time and two part-time employees, including a Cemeteries Manager, Cemeteries Registrar, Supervisor and site charge-hands. The total cost of providing the service for 1999/2000 was £615,400 and the expected income is £250,440.



What do people think of the Service?

No customer satisfaction surveys have been carried out to date.

Until we have carried out the first survey of

cemetery visitors we cannot, with any accuracy, predict what issues will be of most concern to them. It is therefore not practicable to set other specific improvement targets at this stage.

We hold six monthly review meetings with Funeral Directors. No major problems have been identified during these amicable meetings. Minor issues are dealt with and resolved. The service aims to have less than 2% of burials giving rise to complaints either from bereaved families or Funeral Directors. As a means of monitoring the service standard, Funeral Directors will be supplied with feedback slips.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

There are no performance indicators for these activities and these will be developed with others during the coming year to enable comparisons to be made of the Council's services.

Little in the way of benchmarking has been done in this area to date, activity has been concentrated on charges for services. As this service area is to be the subject of a fundamental performance review between April and October 2000, benchmarking will be conducted as part of the review activity. This will help in identifying potential improvements in service efficiency.

In 2000/01 the following key actions have been identified:

- The Service will be subjected to a Best Value Fundamental Performance Review this year. This

How we perform

Cemeteries Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99 (1999/2000)	Projection (2000/01)	Target
Local Indicators	.....	.....	.....	.....
Percentage of burials giving rise to complaints	The service aims to keep to a minimum the number of people dissatisfied with the burial service			Less than 2%
Percentage of costs recovered	n/a	32.8%	40.70%	42.80%

Religion	Time between registration and burial
Church of England	5-7 days
Roman Catholic	5-7 days
Muslim	By sunset on the day following death

Other Information

Standards for service delivery in relation to timescales is governed by religious requirements.

(Other denominations usually make their own arrangements for services at other, non-Council owned locations)

Following a number of price comparison exercises with neighbouring authorities, our charges have increased by the following percentages:

1999/00	22.33% up on previous year
2000/01	20.52% up on previous year

will give an opportunity to ensure that the service is structured to meet the needs and requirements of users and operates in the most efficient and effective manner possible

- The review will ensure a unified approach to providing the service, which was formerly provided from three departments
- We will be looking at arrangements for providing these services that exist in other authorities, the private and independent sectors
- To continue to provide a burial service which is organised and conducted in a dignified and orderly manner, supported by competent, professional and caring cemetery staff
- To obtain customer satisfaction details from 50 visitors to our cemetery sites, principally those tending graves. Due to the sensitive nature of this service, we do not feel that it is appropriate to survey those more recently bereaved for their comments
- We will survey Funeral Directors and Monumental Masons, who act on behalf of the bereaved, for their comments
- We will be working towards more benchmarking with other local authorities primarily through the Cremation and Burial Authority, including the London Cemetery Managers' Forum
- Develop performance indicators with others and data collection systems to enable monitoring of the service

- To implement the recommendations of the Borough Access Officer to conform with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995
- To renew the water supply pipes at Eastbrookend Cemetery to reduce wastage and minimise supply costs
- To redraft the Cemetery Regulations.
- To continue the annual assessment and identification of the training needs of staff and to implement appropriate training within budgetary constraints
- To commence a rolling programme of memorial inspection. (This year the aim will be to inspect one fifth of the memorials in the Borough's cemeteries.)
- To produce a five year Cemetery Site Strategy, the aims of which will be two fold:
 - firstly, to identify possible alternative burial space within the Borough,
 - secondly, to complement the fundamental performance review and take forward an action plan for the management of the existing cemetery sites.
- To assess and identify the shortfalls of our service against the Institute of Burial and Cremation Authority's Charter for the Bereaved and to actively work towards adopting the Charter by 2003/2004



Central Policy and Review Services

What is the Central Policy and Review Service?

The Policy and Review Service takes the lead in developing corporate policies and strategies. The service also provides support to other Council services to ensure they are helping the Authority to meet its corporate objectives in the most efficient way.

The primary role of the Service in 2000/20001 will be the implementation of changes generally referred to as the "modernising agenda".

These include:

- Best Value and Performance Planning
- Community Planning and Community Leadership
- Public consultation and increasing the community's participation in the democratic process
- New political and organisational structures
- Developing corporate policies and strategies to support the Council's improvement agenda.

However, the work of the Policy and Review Service will continue to embrace a wider range of issues including:

- Co-ordinating economic regeneration
- Employment and training
- Voluntary sector partnerships
- External funding
- Support for competitive tendering
- Information and communications technology (ICT) strategy development
- General consultancy and advice to other Council services

The restructuring of the division will entail the development of a new Urban Regeneration section during the course of the next year.

The Service will contribute to the delivery of all the Community Priorities.

The Policy and Review section currently comprises 15 posts, including that of Community Safety Manager which was created in December 1999.

The objective of the Community Safety Service is to provide support to develop the statutory Community Safety Strategy and to meet the annual





targets contained in it. There are a large number of targets for the Community Safety area, set out under the following headings:

- Burglary
- Tackling racial incidents
- Violence against the person
- Motor vehicle crime
- Disorder and hot-spots
- Youth crime
- Drugs and alcohol
- Reducing the fear of crime.

These targets are owned and shared by the Barking & Dagenham Community Safety Strategic Partnership, which consists of the Local Authority, the Police, North East London Probation Service and the

Barking & Havering Health Authority.

The estimated total budget for Central Policy and Review for 1999/2000 is £671,930.



What do people think of the Service?

A "customer" satisfaction survey is carried out at the end of each stand-alone project. Forms requesting feedback are sent to key individuals (eg. other Council officers) who commissioned the project or were closely involved in it.

In 1998/1999 questionnaires were completed by ten people. 100% of these respondents felt that the service provided by the Policy and Review team was either good or very good. In the current year (1999/2000) all eight respondents surveyed so far have reported that the service was very good.

How we perform

Central Policy & Review Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators							
Does the authority have a comprehensive published policy to provide services fairly to all sections of the community?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the authority formally monitor how it carries out this policy?	No	No	No	No (Yes in 2001/02)	Yes	No	Yes
Which level of the Commission for Racial Equality's 'Standard for Local Government' does the authority conform to in the provision of services to the community?	No level yet achieved	No level yet achieved	No level yet achieved	Level 2 in 2001/02	New PI for 2000/01	New PI for 2000/01	New PI for 2000/01
Local Indicators							
Was the annual Local Performance Plan published to meet the statutory deadline?	-----	-----	Yes	Yes			
Percentage of projects considered "good" or "very good" in the end-of-project customer surveys		100% (part year only)		95% - possible projects may involve unpopular outcomes for those involved			
Percentage of respondents to the annual survey of Executive Members and Chief Officers are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" by the unit's performance	Target has been set at a high level as high satisfaction is necessary for the future credibility of the service. It is likely that, in some areas, there may be dissatisfaction because the work of the service has led to unpopular outcomes			90%			
Percentage of staff time utilised on specific projects (applies only to part of staff group)		75% (part year)	n/a	80%			

Continued over page



Continued from page 43

Percentage of projects where objectives were clarified at the start of the project	If projects are to be effectively managed, it is important that the reasons for undertaking the project and the proposed outcomes are clear at the outset. In some cases this will not be possible because of the nature of the project and the timescales involved.	90%
Percentage of satisfaction for briefings and presentations undertaken by the Policy and Review service.	Target has been set at a high level as high satisfaction is necessary for the future credibility of the service. It is likely that, in some areas, there may be dissatisfaction as the briefing/presentation may be delivering unpopular messages	90%
Community Safety Local Indicators	Targets agreed by the Community Safety Strategic Partnership as required by the Government's Crime Reduction Strategy, based on: - 2% annual reduction in vehicle crime - 2% annual reduction in domestic burglary - zero growth in street robbery	
Reduction in vehicle crime	New Performance Indicator	31.2 offences per 1,000 population
Reduction in domestic burglary	New Performance Indicator	21.7 offences per 1,000 households
Level of street robbery	New Performance Indicator	3.2 offences per 1,000 population



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information above shows that our "customers" are generally satisfied with the services provided. The Service however, will be at the centre of implementing the Council's modernising agenda which will present major challenges over the next year.

The key actions for 2000/2001 are:

- The introduction of the new political management arrangements, as directed by Councillors, by May 2000
- To provide support and co-ordination for the Best Value fundamental performance reviews of services to meet statutory requirements and to achieve an 80% satisfaction rating of the Policy and Review Service's role as judged by the key staff involved
- To produce a Community Strategy and develop Community Planning processes

- To establish a Citizens' Panel (a representative sample of the local community who agree to participate in consultation exercises) and co-ordinate public consultation
- To co-ordinate the introduction of an integrated service and financial planning system
- To lead the development of an Equalities Strategy for the Borough
- To co-ordinate new initiatives to improve access to services electronically and physically
- To roll out targets for the Service and systems for monitoring them
- To work towards increasing the benchmarking of Policy and Review services with other London boroughs, primarily through the London Policy Units Benchmarking Group
- To continue to inform Council staff of the modernising agenda, including through the monthly Barking & Dagenham 2000 newsletter.

The Service will continue to take the lead in co-ordinating and supporting the production of the



annual Local Performance Plan to meet the statutory deadline.

The key action for the Community Safety Service for 2000/2001 will be to address the areas highlighted by the external audit and to implement the Community Safety Strategy with our partners.

In addition, monitoring will be implemented, with a view to setting targets for:

- The number of racial incidents recorded by the Authority per 100,000 of the population
- The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action
- The number of domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 of the population which are provided or supported by the Authority



Children and Families Services

What is the Children and Families Service?

We provide help to families to try to make sure that every child in the Borough has the chance of a safe and secure childhood and can go on to be as successful as possible in their lives. We do this by looking at the needs of children in Barking and Dagenham and working with families to make sure our services offer the most effective help and support.

Our service relates particularly to the following community priorities:

- Creating better opportunities for all
- Developing rights and responsibilities within the community
- Improving health and social care
- Raising pride in the Borough and projecting a positive image

There are approximately 40,000 children under the age of 18 in the Borough. Of these, about one in every nine children is likely to need help from Social Services during the course of a year. We carry out over 800 child protection enquiries every year and over 130 children may need to be placed on the Child Protection Register. At any one time, the Council is likely to be directly looking after approximately 220 children.

We target our services to those children most in need. The Council believes a child to be in need if she or he does not have a reasonable standard of health or development; or their health or development is at risk of deteriorating significantly. We spend £9.9 million each year helping these children. We employ 262 staff, 220 of whom work directly with the public. We also have over 70 foster carers.



What do people think of the Service?

We give great importance to talking directly to users about the services they receive. For some time, we have had a User and Carer Forum where local people have had an opportunity to tell us what they think. We also carry out other specific consultations with particular groups. This year, for example we talked to foster carers about the ways we can provide more support. As a result we have re-structured the way in which payments are made. We have also talked to groups of young people who were in care about what they need to set up life on their own. They told us that they wanted a choice of

Continued page 46



How we perform

Children & Families Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The number of children looked after by the authority per 1,000 children	4.9	5.5	5.1	4.5	3.5	3.3	2.64	2.85	6.97
The percentage of children looked after by the authority who moved three or more times during the year	8.5%	10.9%	5%	5% it is unlikely that this will be reduced further in the near future	10%	10%	13%	18%	19%
The proportion of children who leave care aged 16 years or older, who have at least 1 GCSE	not available	12.5%	13.00%	55%					
Average weekly expenditure on each child looked after in a foster home or residential home	£519	£406	£399	£386, reducing to £356 in 5 years time	£317	£356	£447.00	£608.00	£267.00
Percentage of our total spend on children in need that goes on supporting families	not available	35.0%	33%	37%	41%	51%	41%	not available	58%
The number of children on the child protection register per 1,000 children	4.0	3.7	2.9	2.2	1.9	2.00	1.4	1.7	3.45
Percentage of child protection cases that should have been reviewed and were reviewed	95.0%	85.0%	95%	100%	98%	100%	100%	88%	100%
Local Indicators									
The proportion of children we look after who are in family placements	85%	76%	79%	80%	76%	76%	75%	70%	78%
For those children we have looked after for a long time, the proportion that have been in their foster placement for at least two years	43.0%	48%	48%	62%	61%	69	41	51	
The ratio of children we look after being cautioned for, or convicted of, an offence, by comparison to the general population. This is given as a ratio. The higher the second figure, the more likely that looked after children are cautioned or convicted.	not available	01:01.8	01:01.8	01:01.6					
The proportion of children that we look after that have missed at least 25 days from school	not available	10.8%	10.00%	8%					
The proportion of children we look after who had a comprehensive medical assessment when they came into care	not available	90.0%	95.0%	95.0%					
The percentage of children who have been on the child protection register for 2 years or more	8.2%	10.2%	9.0%	5% by March 2001	7.0%	9.0%	7.0%	29.0%	11.0%
Percentage of children on the register who have been re-registered	18.0%	12.9%	11%	10%	9%	7%	2%	6%	8%
Percentage of initial assessments carried out within 7 working days of request	To deliver a high quality service, assessments need to be made promptly			100%					
Percentage of core assessments carried out within 35 working days. This is the full assessment carried out by social services.	To deliver a high quality service, assessments need to be made promptly			100%					
The net expenditure per head of population on social services for children	£52.54	£57.46	£64	£71	NA	NA	£38.68	£41.23	£155.75
Percentage of users (including children) satisfied with the service	This represents a 20% improvement on the results that we obtained in the joint review of social services			80%					

Other Performance Information

We will ensure that we have over 80 foster carers. We will be helped to do that by a national recruitment campaign being planned by the government. We will also improve the process for adopting children, with at least 10 children adopted each year



accommodation when they left care, including in some cases supported lodgings; a person they could contact after they left care for any help they needed; and a drop-in centre to help young people in similar situations provide mutual support. We have tried to respond to all these suggestions and have now established a separate Leaving Care Service.

Nevertheless, we recognise that this is not enough and we have employed a worker especially to develop new ways of talking to children and their families.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The table above is designed to give you a good picture of how we have been performing in some important areas of our work. For most services, which are monitored nationally, we are able to give you an indication of how we are doing in comparison with neighbouring Boroughs.

Overall, the services are improving. Nevertheless, some remain below average, and in other areas, we are sure that we can do better.

What are the major tasks for the Childrens and Families Service for the coming year?

We have been performing well in:

- Making sure that a high proportion of the children we look after are cared for within a family
- Keeping to a minimum the number of times a looked after child has to move;
- Making sure that all childrens homes are regularly inspected
- Reducing the number of children on the Child Protection Register

We have not done so well in:

- Making sure that the services we provide to individual children are always reviewed on time
- Making sure that young people leave care with good educational qualifications
- Developing services to support families, and so reduce the need for looking after children or placing them on the child protection register

By looking at this kind of information, and our analysis of the needs of children, we have set ourselves targets for future performance. These targets are explained in more detail below.

Much remains to be done. We have significantly increased our spending and reorganised our service, employing 33 new staff. We need to make sure that we maximise our income from Government and other sources. About £600,000 will be available from a Government programme called Quality Protects.

We will also be making a bid for a major scheme in the south of the Borough, called Sure Start, to help families with very young children. Our detailed plans for the main areas of our work are listed below.

Finding a home for children that we look after

When we look after a child, we become, for a short time at least, like a parent. We have to take this responsibility very seriously and we must make sure that whether we place a child in a foster home or a residential home, he or she continues to receive the best possible care. We look after about 220 children at any one time. We do not expect that figure to go up. It does, however, put a lot of pressure on the resources we have, and we need to improve both the number and range of placements available.

We will ensure that we have over 80 foster carers. We will be helped to do that by a national recruitment campaign being planned by the Government. We will also improve the process for adopting children, with at least 10 children adopted each year.

We will reduce the number of children we look after placed in residential or foster care outside of the Borough. We will make sure that we can do this by developing more family support services within the Borough, which will help children to go back home sooner. It is important that we find the right placement first time, and do not keep moving the child. The Government has set a target for this: that no more than 16% of children looked after have to change their placement more than three times. By this measure, we are amongst the best performing Councils in the country. We will maintain these already high standards.

Family placements for looked after children

Children we look after are usually, but not always, much better placed with another family than in a residential home. In Barking and Dagenham we have a

good record of placing most of our children with local families - three out of every four children we look after. We will maintain this record, placing 80% or more in family care.

Children with Disabilities

This group of children have particular needs and we must provide support to their families where we can, to help them give their children the best possible chances in life. Over the coming year, we want to develop clearer eligibility criteria so that families know what they can and cannot expect from our service. We will improve service choices for these children as an alternative to residential care. For example, we will look at developing a summer holiday play-scheme and extending help in the home. We will also ensure services are better integrated, both with health services and with other kinds of social care, to make sure that young people with disabilities experience a smooth transition between child and adult life.

Children Leaving Care

Research has shown that young people leaving care are more likely to face problems. A higher proportion, for example, gets in trouble with the police; fewer get good school results. Most young people leaving care, however, go on to lead ordinary lives. Nevertheless, we need to make sure that everyone has the best start they can get.

We will therefore make sure that everyone leaving care has an agreed plan for the support they will need. By September 2000, we will have a detailed strategy for providing support to young people leaving care. We will monitor the results of work carefully, looking at the achievements and the problems this group face.

Children on the child protection register

Protecting children from harm is one of the most important areas of our work. As we develop our services to support families, we expect to see a reduction in the number of children put onto the Child Protection Register. We expect to see this fall to just over two children per 1000 by March 2001. When a child is put on the register, we work with the family to ensure the child is safe. When circumstances improve the child comes off the register; but if conditions deteriorate, we may have to put the same child back on the register again. This

process is called "re-registration", and it may indicate that we didn't get it right first time.

Barking and Dagenham is currently above the national average for re-registration and will aim to reduce further the percentage of children re-registered. We also want to make sure that we work promptly with families to improve the situation. We would therefore look to reduce the number of children who stay on the register for more than two years: currently nine do so; we want to reduce this to five percent by March 2001

Making sure we understand the needs of the children that are referred to us

Assessing the needs of each child is a crucial first step in planning their care. A good assessment will ensure that services effectively meet need. It will also provide us with important information about the demand for different types of service and so help us to make better overall plans.

We will introduce in 2000/2001, a new assessment system based upon recent Government guidance. To do this we will re-organise our Social Work Teams to create a new Assessment Team. As part of this re-organisation, we will employ eight new social workers, and by the autumn of 2000, all our staff will be trained in the new procedures. We will also use the opportunity to make sure we collect the information we need to plan and deliver better services in the future. Finally, we need to make sure that services continue to meet the needs of children and their families. This means reviewing the needs and services regularly.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We have to make sure that all our services are as good as they can be. Over the coming year we will greatly improve the ways in which we evaluate our services and will work hard to improve our information about how well we are doing.

In the spring, we will undertake a survey of all the children in need that we are currently helping. By the autumn, we will have finished a major review of the services we provide to children that we look after. Both of these will play a big part in telling us how we need to develop our services, and make sure that we meet the Best Value requirements and improve the efficiency of the service.



Children's Support in Education

What is the Children's Support Service?

The central role of this Service is to eliminate barriers and give access and full participation to the school educational system. It provides a range of services direct to pupils/students, parents, schools and to other education institutions.

The Service works closely with other services which impact directly on children - Social Services, the Health Service and the voluntary sector. There is an emphasis on preventative strategies and early intervention with children and families and their implementation. The Service is developing its partnership working, particularly for the Behaviour Support Plan and for Special Needs by working to 5 'C's with Health, Social Services and the voluntary sector as appropriate:

- Communicating
- Co-operating
- Complementing
- Collaborating
- Commissioning.

The Children's Support Service has clear statutory responsibilities under legislation such as special educational needs, out of school, schools admissions, exclusions from school, attendance, student support arrangements (grants and awards).

There are various plans in which the service is a key player, for example:

- Education Development Plan,
- Behaviour Support Plan
- Early Years Development and Childcare Plan.

The service is also a major contributor to the Government's Quality Protects initiative (around children looked after by Social Services) and the requirements of the Children's Act.

Children's Support is responsible for providing services to ensure pupils have equality of opportunity and access to education. Its work is a key factor in implementing the Government's social inclusion agenda locally.

The service plays an important role in delivering the following community priorities:-

- A cleaner, greener, safer borough



- Creating better opportunities for all
- Rights and responsibilities with the community
- Improving health and social care in the borough

The Service's responsibility is to make a positive contribution to the improvement of achievement and attainment in all aspects of education provision. Our aim is to offer practical help and solutions that meet the client's needs promptly and effectively.

There are 88 people who deliver the service, with a budget of £4.625 million, which includes:

- Twenty four posts in the Educational Psychology Service
- Four posts in Portage which works with families who have children with special needs who are under five, working with Social Services and the Health Authority
- Eight posts in the Education Service for Hearing Impaired children
- Five posts in the Early Years Intervention Project
- Seven posts in the Tuition Service, plus part-time teachers as required



What do people think of the Service?

The Community Survey provided the following information about the service:

- 28.2% of people felt they received information about local issues from schools

The consultation exercise for the Education Development Plan (EDP) consisted of a summary document which was sent to all headteachers, chairs of governors, local groups with a particular interest in education and representatives of employment groups. Forty people responded to this. In addition, all parents, teachers and governors were sent a leaflet explaining the outline of the EDP, 148 parents responded, 14 teachers and 6 governors. Some concerns were raised about attendance, support for special education needs, provision for excluded pupils and parents having a better understanding of what goes on in schools.

These are all areas which are being developed and improved.

How we perform

Children's Support in Education Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/1998		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/1999		
	1997/1998	1998/1999	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators 2000/2001									
% of statements prepared within 18 weeks including those involving other agencies	6.0%	4.7%	5.5%	10%	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI
% of statements prepared within 18 weeks excluding those involving other agencies	12.3%	6.8%	8%	30%	82%	92.0%	68.6%	95.0%	45.7%
% of primary school classes with more than 30 pupils	-	-							
(i) Reception to year 2 inclusive	New PI	New PI	5.6%	0%	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI
(ii) Years 3 to 6	New PI	New PI	10.2%	9.8%	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI
% of unauthorised half-days missed in primary schools	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1%	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI
% of pupils sessions lost to unauthorised absences in secondary schools	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%	1.80%	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI	New PI
Local Indicators									
% of primary school classes with	-	-							
(a) less than 21 pupils	11.4%	15.8%	10%	8.3%	-----	-----	27.0%	5.7%	12.6%
(b) 21-30 pupils	79.4%	73.8%	85.8%	87.1%	-----	-----	45.0%	65.0%	77.9%
more than 30 pupils	9.2%	10.4%	4.5%	4.2%	20.0%	6.3%	27.0%	29.3%	9.6%

Continued over page



Continued from page 51

% of new mandatory student awards that include a maintenance grant, paid before 10th October	89.7%	27%	50%	90%	n/a	n/a	99.2	97	100
% of secondary pupils in local authority secondary schools.	90.6%	91.5%	92.2%	93.9%	89.0%	78.3%	98.0%	75.0%	90.4%
The number of statements issued during the year	125	106	104	100	n/a	n/a	121	141	265
The number of pupils permanently excluded from local authority schools per 1,000 pupils	1.86	1.85	1.83	1.80					
% of attendance in Primary schools	92.4%	92.6%	93.2%	93.6%					
% of attendance in secondary schools	89%	90%	90%	91%					
Number of permanent exclusions in primary schools	9	15	10	0 by 2002					
% of children using the Tuition service who are re-integrated into schools within 2 terms	new format for service, enhances inclusion agenda		80%	90% by 2002					
% of clothing grants processed within 10 days of receipt	new measure, set to provide effective customer care			75%					
% of clothing grants distributed within 4 weeks of receipt	new measure, set to provide effective customer care			75%					
% of free school meals processed, authorised at time of request, provided the relevant paper work is available from the parent	100%	100%	100%	100%					
Percentage of new applicants receiving school and college travel within 1st week of term (if application received by closing date)	new measure, set to provide effective customer care		100%	100%					
Percentage of continuing applicants for school or college travel grants who have their passes updated on a termly basis received by the 1st week of term	new measure, set to provide effective customer care		75%	100%					
Percentage of parents informed of secondary school place for their child by the half term of the spring term	new measure, set to provide effective customer care		80%	85%					
Percentage of parents informed of primary school place for their child by the half term of the summer term	new measure, set to provide effective customer care		100%	100%					
Percentage of parents receiving the school place of their first preference for their child	new measure, set to provide effective customer care		75%	80%					

Other Performance Information

The government has set minimum requirements for the % of children leaving care with one or more GCSE or GNVQ qualifications as:

40% by Summer 2000

50% by summer 2001

60% by summer 2002

75% by summer 2003

and these have been set as the targets for the council.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information above shows that the Council is reducing the number of infant classes with more than 30 pupils, in line with government targets, and compares well with neighbouring boroughs in this respect.

Attendance levels have shown a gradual year on year improvement with a corresponding reduction in absence rates (both authorised and unauthorised).

The Council performs badly on the percentage of statements prepared within 18 weeks when compared to other London boroughs.

No benchmarking has yet been undertaken and consultation has not related specifically to children's Support Services.

The low levels of community awareness of the service and the poor turnaround time for grants will be addressed by the fundamental performance review of the Pupil Welfare Service in 2000/2001.

Alongside this review the new Head of Children's Support will be developing a plan for the whole

service in 2000/2001 to:

- Build up a systematic evaluation of the requirements of users of the service and respond to any changes which result
 - Identify and undertake a user survey and identify action required to satisfy any gaps in the service provided
 - Identify and start to work with other authorities and service providers to undertake benchmarking
- In addition we will be monitoring:
- The permanently excluded pupils and the amount of time they spend in alternative tuition and the results they achieve, particularly at GCSE. Targets have been set that 50% will spend between 10 and 20 hours per week in alternative tuition by 2000/2001, the remaining 50% will be less than 10 hours per week. A target has also been set that 50% will achieve at least one A*-G at GCSE or equivalent
 - Primary school class sizes broken down into infant and junior class sizes as a separate measure.

Civic Amenity Facility

What is the Civic Amenity Facility?

The Civic Amenity (CA) Facility is the service traditionally known as "The Tip" – basically a location provided by the Council for the disposal of refuse. The Council has a duty under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 to provide a facility where residents can deposit household waste free of charge.

In order to comply with this duty, the Council provides a Civic Amenity Facility at the Frizlands Lane Depot, in Rainham Road North, Dagenham. The facility services approximately 166,000 residents as its catchment covers not only the Borough but parts of Havering and Redbridge also. It is licensed to open to the public seven days per week (8am to 4pm) 362 days annually, receiving 52,000 tonnes of waste each year. The facility also accepts trade waste for which a charge is made.

The facility directly employs 6 staff and 3 managers. The budget for 1999/2000 totalled £544,530 including £22,000 of income.

The overall objectives of the Civic Amenity Facility are:-

- To provide a convenient location for local people to take rubbish.
- To meet the statutory standards set by the Environment Agency.
- To provide a facility 362 days per year.
- To comply with the Council's lawful duty in the most efficient and cost effective manner.
- To contribute to the Community priority "cleaner, greener and safer Borough" objective.

What do people think of the Service?

A survey was carried out over a weekend during October 1999 of 1,289 users of the site to establish how far they had travelled and whether from the east or west of the site. The data was used to establish the size of the site's catchment area and the effect it would have if an alternative site was found. The survey revealed that 28.86% of the facility's users travelled from outside the Borough. The majority of users were from within a 3 mile radius.

How we perform

Civic Amenities Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators	.....	.....	.....	.....
Was the service provided for 362 days during the year?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Were the standards set out by the Environment Agency Licence for Civic Amenity sites met in full?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Without specific baseline information, it is very difficult to measure our performance, and to therefore compare with other organisations. No national performance indicator comparisons are available, and until we develop local indicators and benchmarks, measuring ourselves against others will be difficult.

It is proposed to develop baseline information throughout 2000/2001, by examining suitable performance indicators and starting the data collection process. This will integrate effectively with the Best Value review planned for the CA facility in 2001/2002.

Further consultation will be undertaken in order to identify how the Service can be improved, and the nature of the facility means that face-to-face questionnaires are a practical method of consulting users. We will also be considering how to consult with non-users.

Changes to the conditions for granting the Environment Agency Licence will require changes to be made to the waste temporary storage facility. The facility currently complies with the existing Licence conditions on putrescible (rotting) waste, but it will

need to be modified to comply with new licensing requirements. The Plan is to establish a containerised facility located on the existing site and this has been the subject of considerable local debate and consultation. Various options have been examined and discussed, and decisions are being made now about the future of the facility.

The future for this facility is, however changing. The priority for a "cleaner, greener Borough", the views of the public and the need for a greater emphasis on recycling will be a major consideration in the way the Service is developed.

Some of the key actions for 2000/2001 will be:

- To develop a Containerised Recycling Civic Amenity Facility, looking also at improving the efficiency of processes undertaken.
- To establish meaningful targets and standards and develop a system of performance indicators to enable us to monitor our performance and compare our service with other providers.
- To contact our partners in the East London Waste Authority to start benchmarking our service and exchange information on best practice.
- To undertake further consultation with users and other stakeholders to establish their needs and perceptions of the service.



Civil Engineering

What is the Civil Engineering Service?

At present two groups provide the Service: Infrastructure and Civil Engineering



Infrastructure is responsible for:

- Maintaining and improving the Borough's road and highway network
- Bringing about and/or overseeing other major developments undertaken by the Authority and private developers

It deals with Highways Maintenance, Drainage/Major Infrastructure developments, Highway Structures and Street Lighting, with a small team providing technical and research support.

The group directly employs 19 people.

A combined annual Council budget of around £7m is spent on projects and maintenance activities. Alongside this work, the team also monitors work funded or carried out by other organisations. The budget for these schemes amounts to many times this figure.

The other group, Civil Engineering, is responsible for:

- Delivering civil and structural engineering projects defined within the Council's Capital and Revenue works programmes, together with any schemes funded by grants e.g. Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), Arts Lottery, Sports Council, English Partnership, etc
- Supporting front line service areas such as Housing and Education in a technical advisory capacity covering all aspects of civil and structural engineering

It directly employs 23 people.

The Engineering Service uses in-house employees and external consultants and agencies. The service also has a statutory role in monitoring the work of outside developers and Utility Companies.

The total budget for the service for 1999/2000 was:

■ Infrastructure	£932,080
■ Civil Engineering	£756,330

The Civil Engineering Service will play an important role in the helping the authority achieve its



priorities in particular: -

1. Making Barking and Dagenham a cleaner, greener, safer Borough – through extensive involvement in estate environmental improvements, implementing highway improvement schemes and maintenance of the highway and street lighting environment
2. Regenerating the local economy – by playing a major role in regeneration initiatives such as SRB and schemes funded by English Partnership. Civil Engineering expertise is used to secure infrastructure improvements - e.g. better roads, more attractive environment - that are needed to encourage industry to the Borough. This, in turn, generates job and training opportunities for the local community, helping to create better opportunities for all.
3. Raising general pride and image of the Borough –

The service is heavily involved in initiatives such as the Artscape project (see Arts Service) and Roding Valley Environmental Improvement Scheme that have attracted extensive media attention and estate improvement initiatives.

This Service is under review as part of a major re-organisation of the former Development and Technical Services and Contract Services Departments, to form a new Leisure and Environment Department.



What do people think of the service?

Whilst there has been no formal consultation to determine what people want from, or think of, Civil Engineering Services, the environment and personal safety featured highly as areas of concern in the recent Community Survey of residents.

How we perform

Civil Engineering Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The percentage of street lights not working as planned	0.65%	0.68%	0.65%	0.63%	0.69%	0.49%	n/a	1.23%	0.49%
The cost of highway maintenance, per 100 miles travelled by a vehicle	£0.69	£0.77	£0.79	£0.82	-----	-----	£0.19	£0.26	£1.28
Local Indicators									
The percentage of emergency repairs to roads carried out within 24 hours	55.1%	90.0%	92.0%	95.0%	99.00%	100%	97%	91%	93%
The percentage of emergency repairs to pavements carried out within 24 hours	67.00%	89.00%	92.0%	95.0%	99.00%	100%	99.00%	93%	94%
Number of days major council roadworks were in place per mile of busy road.	2.29	4.06	3.5	3.0	-----	-----	0	0	0.6
Percentage of projects completed on time	65%	70%	70%	80%					
Did the trading account break even - i.e. no surplus or deficit	£2,772	£20,712	£0	£0					
Percentage of customers satisfied with the service	No historic data available. Surveys to be undertaken in 2000/01 to establish base line trends			80%					

Other Information

As part of an audit of the Council's management of highways, the services were examined in 1999 by external management consultants and external auditors. They focused on contract management activities and found these to be satisfactory.

As a project based service, performance is primarily measured against set fees. Information on the market rates (produced by management consultants Ernst and Young) has been obtained and, using this information, fee targets are set to achieve industry best practice. Comparison is also made with rates tendered by consultants and this information is used to target in-house costs to meet current industry market forces.

Typical Fee Targets:- Civil Engineering projects: 8-10% of contract value

Structural Engineering: 1-2% of contract value

Current fee levels were set in the CCT contract and trading account figures indicate that they are covering the costs of the group.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information gathered so far indicates that the service is actively pursuing the Government's modernising agenda, particularly through the use of the nationally recognised Business Excellence Model. The Service has developed working relationships with many private organisations and consultants and has learnt a great deal from them in relation to the use of modern processes and procedures.

Many of the initiatives that have been developed or introduced within the technical area of the department stem from the Civil Engineering Group, such as fee benchmarking, target fee rates and development of the self assessment model for Business Excellence.

Direct comparison of the overall service with other similar bodies has not yet been undertaken because of difficulties in establishing common guidelines for data collection or service standards. This however, this will be addressed in the coming year.

Resulting from the impact of competitive tendering on the service and the need to be successful in winning tendered contracts, a commercial awareness and business acumen has developed amongst the in-house teams. This, coupled with the use of some of the initiatives mentioned above has helped to drive down project fees and improved the efficiency and effectiveness of Civil Engineering service delivery.

The performance indicators above show that we are not performing as well as the best on street lights not working as planned, percentage of emergency repairs to roads and pavements carried out in 24 hours, but we are improving. During the coming year, a fundamental performance review of highways maintenance and street lighting services will be carried out. This will produce a "street scene" approach to these and associated maintenance services and is expected to give an opportunity for efficiencies, and help to shape any service improvements. As part of this review, consultation

with stakeholders in this service will be carried out to find out more about residents' concerns as highlighted in the Community Survey and what the Council can do in specific areas to improve street lighting conditions.

Much of the work of the groups is conducted as an internal support service and feedback will be sought from customers and stakeholders to stimulate creativity and innovation in the management of processes and bring about improved service outcomes.

In relation to the Civil Engineering Service generally, the target areas selected focus on processes, results and people. Improvements are proposed to the service focused on the following key actions in 2000/2001:

- **Improve resource planning through monthly project meetings (currently quarterly) and closer monitoring**
- **Involve staff and "customers" in the continuous improvement of key processes such as financial control and project progress targets**
- **Investigate effectiveness of key processes and review**
- **Introduction of business excellence processes to service management**
- **Collect information to enable monitoring of service targets and facilitate improvements in performance**
- **To develop and introduce the use of IT for managing projects to give more effective and efficient control of project work**
- **Compare costs, processes and systems with other organisations, including local authorities**

In addition, there will be an on-going annual review of the training and development needs of all employees, together with training and development outcomes being monitored and measured through in-house feed back systems to ensure that these are better focused both in terms of service provision and employee personal development.

Commercial Inspections

What is the Commercial Inspections Service?

The Commercial Inspections Service is responsible for promoting a fair and safe trading environment. They enforce legislation relating to food safety, health and safety at work, fair trading, consumer safety, weights and measures and licensing.

Food premises in the Borough are regularly inspected to ensure that the storage, processing and sale of food are in line with legal requirements. This is achieved through a combination of advice to businesses and use of legal powers. Complaints about food purchased in the Borough, or the conditions in which it is stored and prepared, are also dealt with by the Team.

Following the Pennington Report into the E-coli outbreak in Scotland, the Council has received additional funding from the Government which has been used to set up a Food Safety Advisory Service. The objective of this is to help food handlers to understand where problems can occur and what steps they can take to prevent them.

The Council is responsible for ensuring workplace health and safety regulations are met in locations such as shops, offices and leisure premises. Regular inspections are undertaken and advice given to employers and employees on their responsibilities and rights.

The Team also investigates accidents to employees or members of the public at premises that fall within the Council's area of responsibility. Large factories and industrial processes are the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive.

Local businesses are regularly inspected to protect consumers. Checks are made on areas such as the safety, quality, quantity and description of goods offered for sale, including pricing and advertising.

Complaints and enquiries to the Consumer Advice Team that appear to involve a breach of law are passed to Commercial Inspection for investigation.

The Team administers a range of licences including street trading, public entertainment and night cafes, and is also responsible for the management of Barking Market.

The Service supports the community priorities for making Barking and Dagenham a cleaner, greener and safer place and for regenerating the local economy. Its overall objective is to secure a fair and safe trading





environment for consumers and traders in the Borough.

Business premises are assessed and given a score depending on the degree of risk they present. For example a butchers shop would present a higher risk to food safety than a greengrocers. Premises in high-risk categories are inspected more frequently. The highest risk premises are inspected every 6 months. National guidelines for determining risk are set out in Codes of Practice which accompany food safety and health and safety at work legislation.

In 1998/1999 Commercial Inspections dealt with:

- 518 complaints about food
- 126 complaints about health and safety at work
- 127 reports about accidents at work
- 700 complaints about consumer issues
- 278 complaints about licensing
- 427 food safety inspections
- 522 health and safety inspections
- 475 consumer services inspections
- 669 licences.

A total of 27 people are employed by the Service, including managerial and support staff. It is led by a General Manager with a range of professional, technical and administrative staff.

The overall budget for the Service for 1998/1999 was £949,178 of which £599,258 related to staffing costs. Income - mainly from licensing and checking of weights and measures - amounted to £187,526.



What do people think of the Service?

Leaflets, setting out what businesses should expect from an inspection, are left with all traders at the end of food, and health and safety inspections and these include a customer satisfaction survey form. Very few are returned and it has not been possible to draw any meaningful conclusions from those which are. The Service is looking at ways of improving feedback from businesses.

The need to develop a training course for businesses that handle food has been recognised. This aims to help them identify potential problem areas and how to avoid them. The Service consulted 269 businesses and their responses have helped shape the content and format of the training course. The Hazard Analysis course, which operates over two half

How we perform

Commercial Inspections Indicators Performance	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nation-wide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The average number of consumer services visits to high and medium risk premises	0.65	0.64	0.68	0.68	0.47	0.46	1.11	0.39	0.42
Percentage of food premises inspections that should have been carried out that were carried out to:									
High risk premises	Not collected	89.17%	58.30%	100%	not collected		94.30%	94.20%	94.50%
Other premises	Not collected	28.16%	33.30%	75%	not collected		8.90%	93.50%	100.00%
Local Indicators									
Net spend per head of population on environmental health and consumer services	£13.90	£13.60	-----	-----	£5.65	£8.62	£7.51	£10.76	£16.56
Target time for responding to complaints and requests for service	2 working days	2 working days	2 working days	2 working days					
Performance against target-environmental health	93.20%	91.63%	92.10%	93%	N/A	N/A			
Performance against target-Consumer Services	99.00%	99.38%	99.30%	99.50%	N/A	N/A			

days, is delivered in partnership with an external trainer and material is available in several languages. Before the course, participants benefit from a visit from a Food Safety Officer who explains the course and provides some pre-course material to help them get the most from the training. The Officer visits again a few weeks after the course to discuss any problem areas. The first course has just been completed and initial feedback has been positive.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information above shows:

- The Council's performance on consumer services inspections to higher risk premises was above average.
- The percentage of due food inspections to high risk premises which were carried out had fallen and was below levels in neighbouring boroughs. This was mainly due to staff vacancies in the team.
- Forms inviting customer feedback on inspections had been introduced, but with limited success.
- Procedures and policies to support the principles of good enforcement had been introduced.

The Council Team will review previous exercises and develop a strategy to improve the effectiveness of consultation by April 2001.

Booklets setting out service standards for food and health and safety inspections and food complaints have been published and distributed. This good practice will be extended to cover all complaints and inspections by April 2001.

The Service deals with a high number of complaints and requests each year and performs well against challenging targets for responding to them. By April 2001 it is intended to review the Team's investigation procedures and identify ways of reducing

the average time taken to resolve complaints and service requests.

The Team has suffered from staff vacancies during the year, particularly at managerial level, and this has affected performance. Temporary measures have been put in place to improve the situation and long-term solutions are currently being considered for implementation.

The overall cost of providing Environmental health and Consumer Services is higher than the London average. We aim to bring the costs down to the average and partnership working with other councils and the private sector to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Service is one area that is being investigated.

In 2000/2001 we aim to establish effective partnership arrangements for running:

- the weights and measures service, and
- the market in Barking town centre.

At least five Hazard Analysis courses will be run during 2000/2001 and, in response to feedback from participants, the possibility of producing material to enable people attending the course to cascade training to their colleagues will be explored.

The Council will also be looking at ways of providing information to low risk businesses that are not routinely inspected on their rights and responsibilities in relation to trading laws.

To make it easier for Service users to contact us, we aim to make all Housing and Health services accessible from any of our local offices. During 2000/2001 we will develop an implementation plan to enable all contact services to be accessed from any Area Office.

During 2000/2001 licence administration procedures will be reviewed. The efficiency of the Service will be improved by computerising more of the process, and standards and targets will be set in consultation with stakeholders.



Committee Services

What is the Committee Service?

Up until May 2000, the core function of the Committee Section has been to administer the Council's committee system and to be the main point of contact for Members, Council departments, the public and external partners.

This work not only involves making arrangements for committee meetings, together with all the associated pre-planning and follow-up, but also providing a variety of administrative functions. In addition, the Service gives general advice to Members and officers on particular meetings.

The Service is based at the Civic Centre in Dagenham and comprises 17 full-time equivalent staff at a cost of approximately £650,000 per year.



The future of the Service

The Council is undertaking a major review of the way it operates and is committed to a process of modernisation. This restructuring will see a move away from a traditional service-based committee system.

The new Council structures will be based on executive and scrutiny functions. The executive will develop policy and make decisions on behalf of the Council. The scrutiny function will allow all elected Members to be informed of decisions made by the Executive and to provide a constructive opportunity for reviewing and challenging the Council's policies and operation.

The modernisation process is aimed at creating an effective means for structured and consultative debate about the overall management of the Authority, its policies and strategies. It is hoped that bureaucracy will be reduced and the programme of meetings will be more streamlined.

By May 2000, a new structure for the Council will have been developed that will meet the demands of Central Government and, importantly, address local needs.

Whilst Council officers are charged with implementing the restructuring, Members of the Council will ultimately be responsible for selecting the system which they feel most accurately reflects their requirements having first consulted the public on the options set out by Central Government. Over the



last year, consultation has taken place with the Borough's residents and community leaders as part of the development process.

Until a new structure is finalised, it is difficult to set any specific, associated targets. The make up, role and indeed the title, of the Committee Section will need to be adapted to meet the changes.

Currently, the Service has to meet legal requirements to make public the relevant papers both before and after committee meetings. These statutory duties will continue under the new system.

In addition, the following actions will be undertaken in 2000/2001:

- Appropriate measures will be taken to obtain feedback on the restructuring process
- Evaluation and review processes will be established to test the effectiveness and appropriateness of the new structure once it takes effect
- The potential for benchmarking with other authorities involved in similar modernisation processes will be explored



Community and Environment in Housing & Health

What is the Community & Environment Service?

Community and Environment is responsible for the control of standards in homes, the monitoring and control of environmental pollution and a range of public health matters. There are four teams with the following areas of responsibility:

Housing

This Team controls standards in properties which are owner-occupied or privately rented. This includes providing advice, assessing fitness for habitation, handling grant enquiries, inspecting and registering houses occupied by more than one household (houses in multiple occupation) and dealing with disputes between landlords and tenants.

Management of the Council's gypsy site is also the responsibility of this Team.

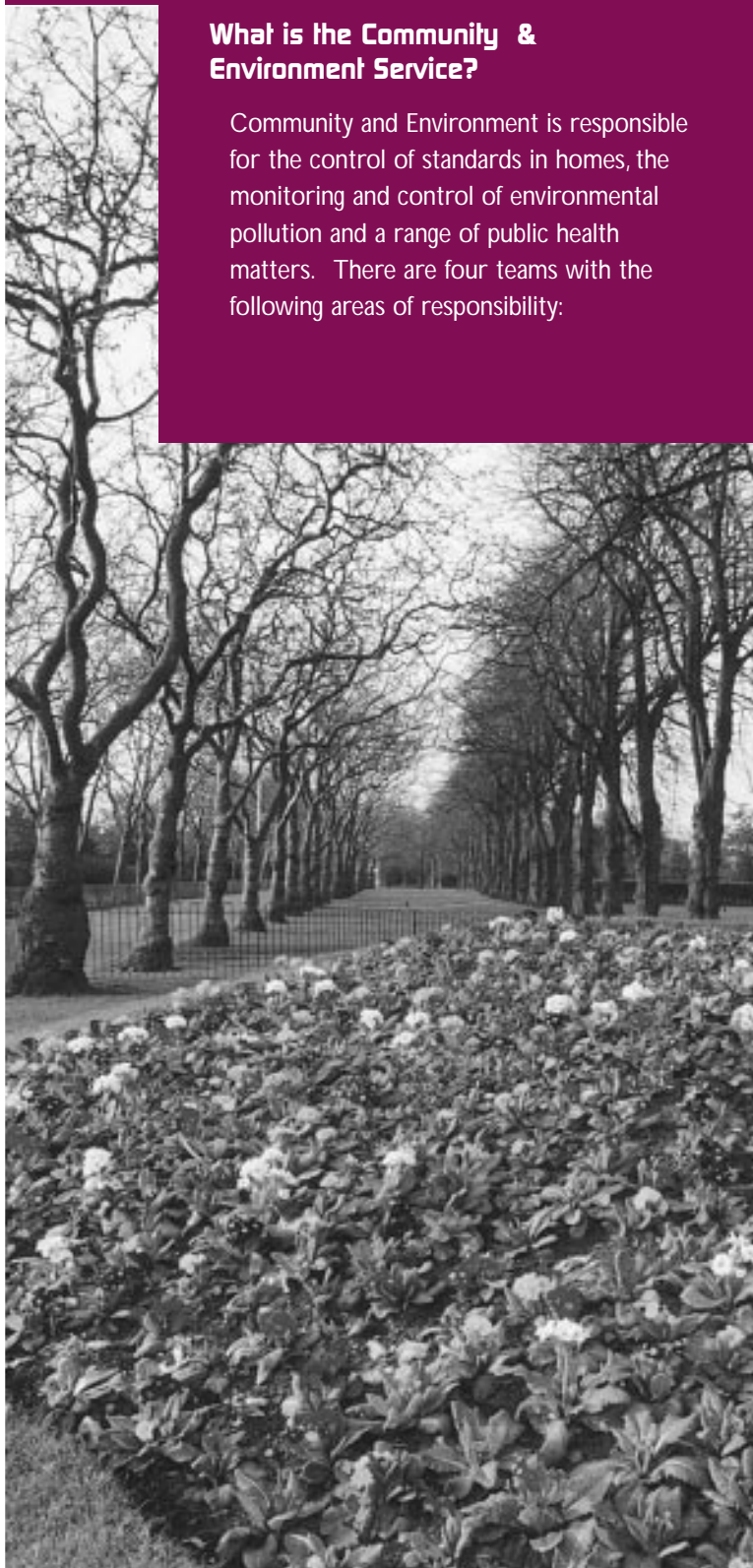
Public Health

The Public Health Team responds to complaints about nuisance caused by matters such as defective drains, dumping of rubbish and bonfires. Environmental Services provides a pest control service which deals with infestations of rats, mice, fleas, cockroaches and other insects. In addition, they provide a dog warden service.

Home Improvements

The Council provides housing grants to improve the condition of homes for owner-occupiers and those in privately rented homes.

It works in partnership with the Anchor Staying Put Agency to provide advice and support to help home owners over the age of 60 with repairs and adaptations to enable them to remain in their own homes. Staff at Anchor offer a high level of support to clients and help with the completion of forms, selecting builders and overseeing work. The administration of disabled facilities grants and the provision of aids and adaptations to meet the needs of disabled residents was the responsibility of this Team. This has now been transferred to Social Services to streamline the service and make it easier for users to understand and access.



Environmental Protection

The Environmental Protection Team deals with complaints and enquiries relating to all aspects of pollution including air quality, water, land contamination, asbestos and noise. A Late Night Noise Investigation Service (LNNIS) operates between 8 pm and 2 am Sunday to Thursday and 7.30 pm to 4 am Friday and Saturday.

The Team has been leading the review of local air quality which all Councils are required to undertake. This involves monitoring air quality at sites around the Borough and identifying areas where agreed standards are likely to be breached.

Local authorities, under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA), regulate pollution from industrial processes. Businesses carrying out certain processes must be authorised by the Council to ensure pollution is minimised by requiring the use of best available techniques not entailing excessive cost. This Team is responsible for registering industrial processes under the EPA and undertaking regular monitoring of water and air quality at sites around the Borough.

Pre-construction work on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) has started in the Borough. The CTRL Act requires contractors to apply to the Council for consents covering all parts of the construction process. These consents set out controls for levels of noise and vibration to protect local residents. The Team is responsible for issuing the consents, undertaking regular meetings with contractors and monitoring the impact of construction work.

Responses to planning applications sent to the Service for comment are co-ordinated by this Team who have overall responsibility for assessing the environmental impact of planning and development proposals.

The Service supports the community's priorities for making Barking and Dagenham a cleaner, greener and safer place and for improving health and social care in the Borough.

The overall objectives of the Service are to:

- Enable all people to have access to warm, safe, affordable housing suitable for their needs
- Maintain a safe environment for people in the Borough and reduce the negative impact of the environment on health
- Improve the health of the Borough by promoting public health and tackling inequalities in health

In 1998/1999 the division dealt with:

- 1,547 complaints on public health matters
- 580 animal welfare complaints
- 4,920 pollution control complaints (3,711 of which related to noise)
- 738 inspections in connection with housing standards
- 42 inspections relating to businesses registered under the Environmental Protection Act
- 5,472 pest control visits

35 staff are employed by the Service, including managerial and support personnel. The Team, which is led by a General Manager, includes two Service Managers and a range of professional, technical and administrative staff.

The overall cost of the Service in 1998/1999 was £1,245,056, with £918,495 relating to staffing costs. Last year, income totalling £122,778 was generated, mainly from Environmental Protection Act licences, pest control work and rents from the gypsy site.

What do people think of the Service?

A survey of 1,200 households, carried out in 1997, measured the condition of privately owned homes across the Borough and gathered information on the



circumstances and attitudes of the people who lived in them. Key findings were:

- 90% of private homes were owner-occupied
- 18% of all private housing is in an unsatisfactory condition, being either unfit for habitation or in serious disrepair
- Unfit homes are mainly in Abbey, Chadwell



Heath, Eastbury and Gascoigne wards

- **Socially and economically disadvantaged people live in the worst housing conditions. A third of all unfit homes are inhabited by older people**

This information has been used to help make decisions about how housing grants are awarded locally.

Users of the Late Night Noise Investigation Service were surveyed in 1997 and of the 81 respondents, 68% expressed overall satisfaction with the service. Following the survey, the hours of operation were changed and in a second survey undertaken in 1998 the satisfaction level had increased to 77%.

The Division has also introduced a customer satisfaction survey for pest control work. At the end of December, 119 people had responded and of these 95%, were satisfied with the service.

Customer satisfaction surveys have recently been introduced for noise complaints and users of the grant service. The Division is currently collating the data.

How we perform

Community & Environment Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators							
Has the local authority completed a full review and assessment of local air quality in its area including consultation with statutory consultees in order to determine whether or not an air quality management area has to be designated	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes. Review to be completed by June 2000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local Indicators							
Target time for responding to complaints and requests for environmental health service	1 hour to 10 working days	1 hour to 10 working days	1 hour to 10 working days	1 hour to 10 working days	5 days	5 working days	24 hours to 20 working days
Performance against target	93%	92%	92%	93%	91%	88%	90%
Percentage of house renovation grant allocation committed	121%	71%	75.7%	100%			
Percentage of approved renovation grants that fall within priority areas identified in the house condition survey	n/a	44%	56%	demand led but grants will be actively promoted in target wards			
Percentage of grants decided within 6 months of application	97%	98%	100%	100%			

Other Information

The Team regularly requests Environmental Impact Assessments to be undertaken on proposed developments at the planning stage to protect the local environment.

Air quality is regularly monitored for a range of pollutants. The European Union has set guide values and limits for each of these and objectives for 2005 are set out in the National Air Quality Standards (NAQS).

The key pollutants measured are:

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) - this is carried out at 7 sites, some at roadside locations. Levels are currently below the NAQS objective and well below EU limits and guidelines. Results from 1993/98 show a steady decline at busy roads and only one roadside site, close to Heathway



station, exceeds the NAQS objective.

Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) is measured at a site in Rush Green and shows levels consistently below the air quality standard and are in the 'very good' band as defined by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Benzene is measured at 4 sites and levels at all these have shown a decline between 1997 and 1998. The proposed air quality standard was not exceeded at any site.

Monitoring for particulate matter (PM₁₀) has recently started and results so far show levels are below the air quality standard.

More information about pest control

An independent audit of the pest control service by the Agricultural Department Advisory Service (ADAS) was carried out in 1997. The report was complimentary and indicated costs were cheaper than in the private sector.

A benchmarking exercise undertaken with 18 other local authorities through the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health on pest control using figures for 1997/98 showed that charges to domestic customers were below average.

	Rats	Mice	Wasps	Fleas	Cockroaches	Bedbugs
Barking and Dagenham	free	free	£22.00	free	free	Free
Number of Boroughs charging	4	12	15	14	11	10
Average fee charged	£37.25	£33.90	£28.90	£37.34	£44.36	£39.46

The exercise also compared direct labour costs of pest control services:

Barking and Dagenham £70,000

LA Average £118,653



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information above shows:

- Air quality is regularly monitored and the Council expects to meet the government target for publishing the information
- Users of the pest control service are satisfied with the service they receive and our costs are below average
- Some consultation and benchmarking has been undertaken and this needs to be extended to other service areas
- Homes in worst condition have been identified and housing activity and grants are being focused on these areas

The survey of privately owned homes identified areas where homes are most in need of repair. Housing activity and grant aid will continue to be focused on those homes in worst condition. People in private rented housing are often the most vulnerable, particularly those living in homes shared by more than one household (known as Houses in Multiple Occupation or HMOs). By April 2001 the Council will launch a registration and inspection programme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to protect this group.

To ensure full use is made of existing housing, a strategy to bring homes in poor repair that have been standing empty for a long time back into use will be developed by April 2001. Starting in 2001, the Authority's aim is to bring 10% of registered empty homes back into use each year.

Systems will be put into place to collect the information necessary for the new national Best Value



Performance Indicators relating to improvements to private sector homes and empty properties which come into effect in 2000/2001.

By April 2001, procedures will be introduced to actively invite all service users we have visited to comment on the quality of service they received.

The Service deals with a high number of complaints and requests each year and the results above show that Barking and Dagenham performs well against challenging targets. The Council now intends to improve the efficiency of the Service by setting rigorous targets to reduce the average time it takes us to resolve complaints and service requests.

In the Community Survey, residents expressed concern about the condition of the local area. Future plans include proposals to target problem areas and work with others to promote a cleaner, greener and safer Borough. By April 2001 we will identify 'hot spots' for littering, dog fouling and the dumping of rubbish and develop effective working arrangements with other agencies to ensure areas are cleared quickly and further occurrences are discouraged.

Where there is a potential risk of local pollution levels being above national standards, the Council will involve local communities in developing plans to manage air quality in their area. This will promote sustainability by raising awareness and actively involving local people in developing solutions.

Pest control services are well used and initial feedback shows people are satisfied. Charges compare well with other authorities, but the aim is to further improve the efficiency of the service by increasing income. By April 2001 income generated will represent 50% of the cost of running our pest control service.

To make it easier for service users to contact us, we aim to make all Housing and Health services accessible from any of our local offices. During 2000/2001 we will develop an implementation plan to enable all contact services to be accessed from any area office.

The fundamental review of the section, which began in November 1999, will help identify additional efficiency measures.



Community Development/Community Halls

What is the Community Development/Community Halls Service?

The aim of the Community Development/Community Halls Service is to promote the views of the residents of the Borough and to encourage community involvement in local schemes and projects, and in the provision and planning of Council services. The Service will therefore play a key role developing rights and responsibilities with the community.

The Service is also involved in regeneration and other partnership projects, helping to deliver the community priority of regenerating the local economy.

The Service oversees the development of 21 community halls and centres across the Borough. It plays a key role in supporting the local community associations (Hall Management Groups) which manage the letting of the halls for activities during the week. The Community Halls section of the Service is responsible for the physical maintenance of the halls and for managing private lettings at the weekend.

The overall objectives of the Service are to:

- Increase the involvement and participation of the community in key projects
- Work with local people on issues and concerns they identify and feel to be important
- Promote enjoyment and celebration within the local community through projects such as the Summer Play Schemes
- Encourage greater use of community halls and centres

The Community Development/Community Halls Service currently comprises 15 staff, including 7 community development workers, 6 community halls workers and 2 administrative staff.

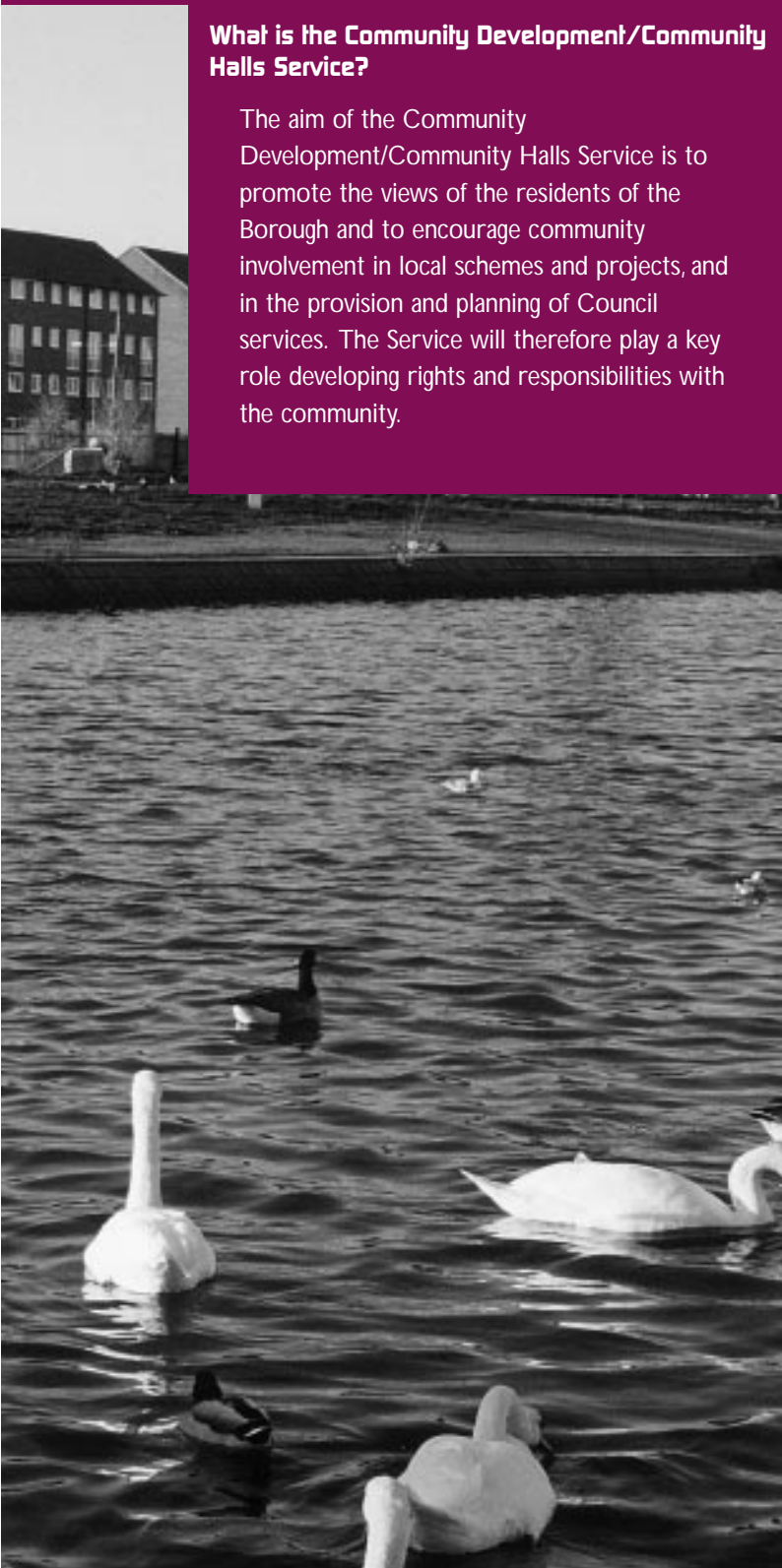
The overall budget for the Service for 1999/2000 was £1,048,880.



What do people think of the Service?

The Borough-wide Community Survey was carried out in late 1998-early 1999. The Survey showed that 65% of the 721 local people interviewed thought that community halls were "good" or "very good". 15.3% of local people regularly used a resident or tenant association as a source of information about local issues, and 12.1% used a society or social group for information.

There were four complaints from weekend hirers of community halls in 1999 out of a total of 300 lettings.





How we perform

Community Development Performance Indicator	Barking & Dagenham Performance	
	Justification for Target	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators		
Percentage increase in the membership of the Hall Management Groups in the age sector which is currently under-represented (25-45 year olds)	This age group is historically the most difficult to involve in community activities in this Borough. The target of 3% is based on the experience of the Community Development team.	3%
To increase income from private weekend lettings of the Community Halls by 2% (from a base of £76,890 estimated private lettings income for 1999/2000)	This will contribute to the increased efficiency of the Service	2%
Have all community centres and halls met all legislative requirements in relation to accessibility	The target has been set based on the available resources and the need to promote the involvement of people with physical disabilities	Yes (By 2003)



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

This service has not collected performance information for last year. In 2000/2001 we will start to collect Performance Indicators for 3 areas of our activities, to start to assess our performance.

Key actions for the Community Development section in 2000/2001 will be to:

- Encourage and monitor the participation of residents in the six area Community Forums that are being set up as part of the Council's political modernisation process.
- Support the development of the Community Planning process.
- Set up benchmarking with other similar service providers.
- Support the establishment of a Tenant Participation Unit in the Housing and Health Department.

The Service will also aim to increase the level of community involvement in hall management. Community Development Workers will attend the majority of Hall Management Committee meetings with a view to encouraging participation through

training and consultation initiatives and the provision of information.

Key actions in 2000/2001 in relation to community halls will be:

- To undertake surveys of Hall Management Groups at the beginning and end of the year. These will include questions that will allow the monitoring of the current makeup of the Groups and so enable the Service to assess progress towards meeting the target of a 3% increase in the membership of 25-45 year olds. This target will be reviewed in the light of the end-of-year survey results.
- To adopt a customer care policy.
- To train all staff in customer care.
- Establish a customer feedback process for hall users.
- To monitor and evaluate the two pilot schemes aimed at greater independence of community halls under which Hall Management Groups also take responsibility for physical maintenance and managing private weekend lettings. If these pilots are successful, they should have the additional benefit of increasing efficiency. These benefits could then be expanded further as the programme is rolled out to the other halls.

Community Inspection and Advisory Service in Education Arts and Libraries

What is the Community Inspection and Advisory Service?

The Community Inspection and Advisory Service builds on and extends the work of the Inspection and Advisory Service in schools. The overall unit also encompasses Lifelong Learning, Literacy, Heritage, Arts and Libraries Services, which are described elsewhere in this plan.

The remaining parts of the Unit:

- Provide key resources and expertise to Lifelong Learning, Literacy, Heritage, Arts and Library Services
- Are responsible for the quality, standards and outcomes of provision for education in schools and lifelong learning
- Ensure that partnerships in learning are strengthened and extended

The Principal and General Inspectors are responsible for ensuring the new Community Inspection and Advisory Service (CIAS) supports all aspects of Education, Heritage, Arts and Library Services. The CIAS works in full collaboration with other parts of the Unit to:

- Offer advice, support and guidance to all learning providers
- Set standards for all learning provision
- Set targets for continuous improvement in education standards, in access and participation in the services provided both to young people and adults
- Monitor the performance of the whole Education, Heritage, Arts and Libraries Service against agreed standards, targets and performance indicators
- Evaluate the quality and standards of the Service through regular inspections, reviews and public reports in order to identify strengths and weaknesses
- Make recommendations for action to improve provision by addressing weaknesses
- Support all aspects of the Service in preparing and implementing strategic and action plans
- Provide high quality professional development opportunities for staff in all settings, contexts and aspects of the Service, including early years and





special educational needs provision.

There are 40 people in the Community Inspection and Advisory Team in addition to those in the Early Years, Literacy, Heritage, Arts, Library and Lifelong Learning Services. There is a total budget of £2.802m.

The Service plays an important role in delivering the following council priorities:-

- Creating better opportunities for all
- Developing rights and responsibilities with the community
- Regenerating the local economy - generating jobs, training and enterprise
- Raising general pride in the borough and projecting a positive image



What do people think of the Service?

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) has commended the work of the Inspection and Advisory Services. Numeracy and literacy efforts were particularly mentioned as were comparisons with other Local Education Authorities. Recently, the World Bank and a Brazilian education delegation visited the LEA to learn from it, in particular the literacy and numeracy projects.

The Foundation for the National Numeracy Strategy is based closely on the development work in Barking and Dagenham.

The Ofsted Inspection in 1997 of the Local Education Authority (LEA) acknowledged:

- The good work undertaken by the LEA, particularly its approach to the gathering and dissemination of detailed information
- The LEA has done, and is doing, much to promote high attainment across all phases of education
- Partnership works to the general good and that: 'The Authority - Councillors as well as officers - has achieved a relationship with the schools that enables them for the most part to see the activity of the LEA as entirely and most helpfully supportive'

- The value which the Inspection and Advisory Service adds, for example it noted: One of the most striking findings of the survey is that the work of inspectors and advisory teachers has had a perceptible effect on the quality of teaching in every secondary school visited. The LEA is judged to have helped to improve the quality of teaching in many of the 16 primary schools visited'

From a school's point of view:

- 'The schools - and this is a fundamental point - share the LEA's belief that improvement is both necessary and possible'

The most recent report from the Chief Inspector of Schools noted that Barking and Dagenham is one of only nine LEAs which provide effective support to schools and this contrasted with four that were found to be failing and twelve which had received critical reports.

The LEA has received favourable mentions in a wide range of published reports from regional and/or central government agencies. These include:

- Ofsted guidance in "School Evaluation Matters" (1998) said " An effective LEA can have a marked effect on the standards in its schools.... Barking and Dagenham LEA is a good example"
- The DfEE's Final Report on the Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy specifically endorses (page 17) Barking and Dagenham's Mathematics Project as a "good quality, properly supported programme to raise standards in mathematics"
- The Ofsted Report on "Primary Education in England 1994 - 1998" endorses the Authority's approach to interactive whole class teaching and its links with mathematics teaching in Switzerland
- The DfEE has identified the Council as one of 12 in the country to receive funding to support the government's pilot for Key Stage 3 maths and we have been asked to prepare materials for this. This work will help to develop the national requirements at Key Stage 3



How we perform

Community Inspection & Advisory Service Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 for tests and teacher assessments	55%	60%	71%	73%	68%	68%	66.0%	68%	49%
	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	National Average (1999)	Statistical Neighbours* Average (1998)			
% of 7 year olds achieving level 2 or above at Key Stage 1 in maths	85%	82%	87%	87%**	87%	83%			
% of 7 year olds achieving level 2B or above at Key Stage 1 in maths	65%	58%	60%	63%	63%	n/a			
% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 in maths	54%	54%	68%	69%	68%	52.6%			
% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 in science	59%	66%	81%	78%**	78%	64.6%			
% of 14 year olds achieving level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 in maths	46%	46%	49%	58%	62%	50.2%			
% of 14 year olds achieving level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 in science	50%	43%	44%	55%	55%	45.7%			
Local Indicators	1997/1998	1998/1999	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001					
Percentage of schools receiving a minimum of one day visit to an agreed agenda per term		100%	100%	100%					
Percentage of systematic visits completed to schedule	100%	100%	100%	100%					
Percentage of requests met for advisory teacher support in schools	100%	100%	100%	100%					

* Statistical neighbours is the term used by Ofsted to describe a group of other boroughs with similar social characteristics.

** previous performance has exceeded projected target, future targets will be reviewed in the light of the coming year's attainment.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The improvement in the performance of schools in the Borough has been very marked and the CIAS is working to ensure resources and support are put into areas of greatest need.

The Education Development Plan sets out the targets and action plan which the CIAS will address. The nine priorities clearly set out the requirements

and how they will be achieved.

We will also undertake two reviews of performance of schools in 2000/2001 to complement Ofsted inspections and to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of teaching.

As a result of the recent reorganisation, the Service is expanding work within the community. In 2000/2001 work will be undertaken to consider:

- How community inspector resources can secure improvements in adult attainment
- How efficiency can be improved



Council Tax Collection

What is the Council Tax Service?

Council Tax is a form of local taxation and meets approximately 20% of the cost of the services provided by the Council, the Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority. The remaining 80% of the cost of providing these services are met from Government Grants and the National Non Domestic Rate.

There are approximately 67,000 properties in the Borough which are subject to the Council Tax. The amount payable by each property depends on which of the eight valuation bands the property falls into and whether there are one or more adults living in the household.

The total income to be raised by the Council Tax in 1999-2000 is £38.4 million. £10 million of this sum is met from Council Tax Benefits leaving £28.4 million to be collected from Council Tax payers.

Council Tax administration costs £1.148 million, the largest element of which is for staff salaries amounting to £537,000. Part of this cost is offset by the receipt of income of £250,000 each year in the form of court costs as a result of recovery action against Council Tax debtors. Currently 26 full-time staff are engaged in the administration of the Council Tax.



What do people think of the Service?

The Community Survey identified a high level of satisfaction with the means of collecting the Council Tax with 82% of those surveyed expressing the opinion that the service was either good or very good. This compares with a figure of 48% from a similar survey conducted on a London-wide basis.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The service performs well in

- Collecting a high level of Council Tax
- Keeping the cost of collection low.

The service aims to improve in:

- Increasing the number of methods by which people can pay their Council Tax

In the External Auditor's Management Letter to the



How we perform

Council Tax Collection Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
Percentage of Council Tax which the Authority should have received during the year that was received during the year, excluding reliefs and rebates	95.0%	95.3%	95.3%	95.3% rising to 95.5% * in 5 years time	97.9%	95.1%	96.1%	96.8%	83.5%
Local Indicators	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Cost of collecting Council Tax per chargeable dwelling	£13.86	£12.77	£13.40	Cost to be within lowest quartile in London (£15.18 in 1998/99)	£13.08	£16.32	£21.93	£22.20	£21.84
Percentage of overall Council Tax collected regardless of the year in which it was owed to the Council	To maximise income through Council tax to the Council			98%	Other Information In the period April 1998 to March 1999 only 0.45% of Council Tax has been written off as bad debts The Council subscribes to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) benchmarking club for Council Tax Administration. The 1998/1999 figures for this authority compared to ten other authorities showed the following results in terms of cost per dwelling.				
Percentage of Council Tax bills despatched at least 14 days prior to the first date for payment	In order to maximise the income to the authority			100%					
Percentage of changes to Council tax valuation processed within 7 working days of the receipt of information from the Valuation Officer	In order to keep records as up to date as possible			100%					
Percentage of irrecoverable Council Tax (to the total amount due)	To reduce to a minimum the amount of irrecoverable debt to the Council			1% by March 2001					

* The Council already performs well in this area in comparison with the rest of London. Any further ways to significantly improve performance will be identified as part of the Fundamental Performance Review which will take place in 2002/2003

full Council on the 3rd March 1999, he commented that the Authority continues to perform well in its collection rates for Council Tax and is above average compared to Outer London Boroughs.

Our service is based on continuous improvement and whilst the Council's current performance and costs compare very favourably with similar authorities, there is no room for complacency.

The annual Audit Commission benchmark survey, including over 30 other local authorities, also showed that the number of dwellings per member of staff at Barking and Dagenham was 4,430 compared with an average of 3,100. It also showed that this Authority incurred higher enforcement costs than the other authorities in the survey. However our collection rates are in the top 25% in London for 1997/1998. Overall the Council's costs compared favourably with the other local authorities in the survey

Most of the Council Tax payers who contact the Council Tax Section during the course of the year do so either in connection with arrears of Council Tax or

to report changes in personal circumstances.

To address these issues we intend, in the next two years to:

- Introduce payment by credit cards, including a telephone "hot line" service for those who prefer to pay their bills this way, by 1st April 2001
- Evaluate the possibility of offering alternative payment dates for direct debit payers and the extension of the payment period over 12 months by April 2001
- Distribute leaflets on behalf of the Welfare Benefits Alliance with our own mail-shots to the community to increase benefit take up
- As part of our Best Value Review this year we will aim to identify further improvements to the service
- Introduce loop systems and a Minicom for people with hearing difficulties by April 2001.



Design Services

What is Design Services?

Design Services is the Council's design consultancy, which undertakes the design and supervision of all the Council's construction work relating to new build, conversion and refurbishment works.

The service consists of three main groups;

- A multi-disciplinary design group of architects/surveyors and mechanical/electrical design engineers
- A Mechanical and Electrical Maintenance Group
- An Energy Conservation Group

The multi-disciplinary team and the mechanical and electrical maintenance group undertake construction design and maintenance works for all the Council's stock of public buildings and schools, hence, they work for a very wide client group on a range of project types.

The Energy Conservation Group is responsible for ensuring new and existing premises are compliant with energy conservation standards to improve energy efficiency and reduce running costs.

In addition to projects funded by the Council, the Division has attracted an increasing amount of work from external clients including Housing Associations, Health Authorities, Sports Council, various charities, sports and social organisations etc.

The overall objectives of the Service are:

- To provide the Council and all other clients with a high quality multi-disciplinary design and maintenance service, ensuring that standards in building design and specification are improved wherever possible
- To provide clients with a design and technical advisory service specifically tailored to their needs
- To promote good design, maintenance and energy conservation standards to achieve 'healthy' conditions in the built environment creating a greener, cleaner safer Borough
- Following the Council's initial award of the contract for the building design and maintenance consultancy under the Compulsive Competitive Tendering arrangements, our aim is to continually provide clients with an economic and cost effective service





■ To procure oil, gas, electricity, transport and other fuels by tender and monitor their consumption and water usage, together with invoicing

The Council's Capital Programme has reduced in recent years and staffing levels within the team have changed to reflect the shift in emphasis from capital design schemes to major maintenance projects.

The Service employs the equivalent of 42 full-time staff and the total cost of the service for 1999/2000 is £1,495,130.



What do people think of the Service?

The end product of our service is of variable interest to the public dependent upon the nature of

the specific design or improvement schemes undertaken by the Council. Most residents in the Borough will have benefited from the work of the Service in one way or another. Until our user survey is completed it is difficult to comment on current public perception of the service.

From previous improvement schemes, it is known that there is a continuing high demand for home insulation and central heating improvement. Modern expectations are for higher standards in our housing properties. Continued energy conservation measures will help to fulfil these expectations and ensure that higher standards are provided.

How we perform

Design Services Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators				
Did the financial trading account break even - i.e. no profit or loss	No - Profit £8,332	No - Loss £109,567	Yes - Break Even	Yes - Break Even
Percentage of projects completed to programme and within the clients agreed budget.	65% (estimate)	70% (estimate)	70%	80%
Percentage of schools and public buildings maintained to an appropriate standard in accordance with National Associations safety & efficiency standards	100%	100%	95%	95%
Percentage of schools and public buildings with energy conservation measures to improve efficiency and reduce running costs.	100%	100%	100%	100%
Level of finance invested on energy efficiency measures in Council housing stock	£8.5m	£4.3m	£3.64m	£10.75m
Level of finance invested on energy efficiency measures in private sector housing	£5.7m	£5.8m	£4.8m	£1.12m

Other Information

Energy Conservation Group	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/2001
Standard of Performance (SOP) Grant Value Obtained	487,000	£300,000	£774,000	£500,000
Domestic properties with cavity fill insulation. (Total properties: 33,000)	4,000	6,000	8,700	10,000
Reductions in water supply cost	90,000	£120,000	£160,000	£170,000
Overall improvement in CO2 emissions from domestic properties	3%	7.20%	9.00%	9.80%

Consultation

The division maintains close liaison with its clients and has regular monitoring meetings with principal clients. Post-contract reviews of a random sample of various projects have been and will continue on an annual basis to measure client satisfaction and to define areas requiring modification or improvement.

We have previously obtained a variety of design awards and commendations for both new build and refurbishment schemes, and continue to compete vigorously for work with external consultants as part of a process of continuing professional development and to meet 'Best Value' standards.

Schools

Currently 95% of schools in the Borough have accepted the Council's Fair Funding proposals. This is a good indicator of service performance, especially as the Education Service is the major client group that we serve within the Council. We plan to develop the services we offer these schools so that they will retain our services, and continue to develop our services to meet individual needs. Fair Funding proposals are aimed at improving liaison with schools providing a better service specifically suited to their individual needs whilst improving building standards generally. Closer liaison with other building users will also take place to ensure that site needs are met

Staffing

The reduction in staffing, necessitated by the reduction in workload, has been achieved by early retirement and internal redeployment, and the Council is currently conducting a comprehensive review of its Technical Services organisational structure to deliver value for money services to clients and building users.

Design Services has continued to attract work from external clients to reinforce links with local public sector and voluntary groups, whilst generating fee earning consultancy work for its technical staff.

Other Performance Information

Successful pilot projects have been completed improving water services, heating and lighting which can be replicated in other areas, resources permitting. Previous experience indicates that energy conservation, water efficiency and tariff reduction works are self-financing and projects of this type undertaken by external consultants have not proved as cost effective as "in-house" schemes.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

It is difficult to make an accurate comparison with other similar organisations due to the wide diversity of our services, and lack of recorded data for our service. The fact that the in-house Design Services Team won the CCT contract for building design services and maintenance in competition with external consultancies some two years ago, indicates that we can perform competitively. This competitive pressure will need to be maintained in the future under 'Best Value'. The Service should break even in 1999/2000 and this year we have developed some project management indicators which show we need to continue to improve.

As a preliminary to the Council's fundamental review of this service under Best Value legislation, comparison with other organisations will be made during 2000/2001.

Key actions for 2000/2001 include:

- Carry out a user survey of clients and building users to identify their needs and examine our services in the light of this information and produce an action plan for any changes and improvements that may be required
- Undertake more public relations exercises to make the public more aware of our consultancy and the range of services we have to offer
- To achieve continuous improvement year-on-year we are developing our client liaison role including improving assistance with brief preparation, cost and technical advice etc
- Investigate new ways of project procurement to benefit our clients as recommended by the Latham & Egan reports on project procurement
- Continuously review resource requirements and expected income from project and other fees, and effect financial benefits to our clients by the reduction of our overhead costs etc. The Council is currently conducting a comprehensive review of its Technical Services organisational structure, one of the aims of which is to improve efficiency by reducing overheads
- Develop services to existing clients, and build new relationships with additional public sector clients to broaden and increase the range of work that we undertake to strengthen our trading accounts
- Ensure that 80% of projects we undertake are completed to programme and within the clients' agreed budget
- Meet "break even" standard on the trading accounts and continue to benchmark services competitively to enable service efficiency improvements to be identified and introduced
- Maintain a programme of introducing energy conservation measures that will best improve efficiency and reduce running costs
- Maintain ongoing monitoring of fuel costs and improve building fabric to offset anticipated fuel cost increases
- Begin to implement the Joint Affordable Warmth Strategy which was agreed in December 1999
- Investigate and apply for grants under the Home Energy Conservation Act, Home Energy Efficiency Scheme and support the Government's initiative on the standard of performance managed by Electricity Supply Companies
- Participate in ESCO – independent Energy Supply Companies for gas and electricity domestic consumers

Early Years

What is the Early Years Service?

The Early Years Service has three main functions:

1) To provide a model curriculum for children of nursery and reception age, which aims to ensure common high standards for all.

2) To co-ordinate and service the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and be responsible for the Early Years Development and Childcare Plan and its implementation.

3) To undertake the Annual Childcare Audit which looks at services for childcare from 0-14 years of age in the borough and covers a range of information including population details, existing childcare services, funding for childcare services and identifying where childcare services do not meet demand. This forms the basis for planning and developing high quality childcare and early years education for future years which is designed to shape the Service to meet the needs of children and in which parents have confidence.

Advice, support and training are also given to ensure all providers of early years education are of a high quality and that parents are offered choice and diversity.

The Service plays an important role in the delivery of the following community priorities:-

- Developing rights and responsibilities with the community
- Improving health and social care in the borough
- Creating better opportunities for all
- Regenerating the local economy - generating jobs, training and enterprise

The budget is £505,000 and there are five people involved in the service. They include:

- Two staff who, with secretarial support, are responsible for the implementation of the Early Years Development and Childcare Plan and the National Childcare Strategy locally
- A General Inspector (part time) and advisory teachers for early years who are responsible for curriculum advice support and guidance.



How we perform

Early Years Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/1998		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/1999																																			
	1997/1998	1998/1999	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham																																	
Local Indicators																																										
Children under five in local authority maintained schools as a percentage of all three- and four-year olds.	75.9%	74.0%	74%	76%	74.0%	67.0%	59.9%	49.7%	77.7%																																	
The percentage of all four-year-olds in nursery places provided or funded by the council through a Government approved plan.	new indicator	98.4%	89%	93%	-----		101.5%	4.0%	88.8%																																	
Percentage of 3 year olds in nursery places	New target set by DfEE			81.90%	Other Performance Information 80% of children will be expected to meet the minimum expected standards at the end of both the nursery and reception years by 2002.																																					
Maximum adult-child ratio in reception classes	New target set by DfEE			1:15																																						
Four year olds with a place in reception classes if requested	New target set by DfEE	100%	100%	100%	Children undertake a Baseline Assessment at the beginning of the reception year to assess their performance against a number of measures. Over the last two years the results were as follows:																																					
Additional childcare places provided	New target set by DfEE		296	362	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Autumn 1998</th> <th>Autumn 1999</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Approach to learning</td> <td>66%</td> <td>69%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social interaction</td> <td>67%</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Speaking and listening</td> <td>31%</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing</td> <td>15%</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading: meaning & enjoyment</td> <td>28%</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading: Letter knowledge</td> <td>13%</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading: Phonological awareness</td> <td>24%</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths: number</td> <td>27%</td> <td>26%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths: shapes, space and measure</td> <td>37%</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical development</td> <td>62%</td> <td>62%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Autumn 1998	Autumn 1999	Approach to learning	66%	69%	Social interaction	67%	60%	Speaking and listening	31%	32%	Writing	15%	13%	Reading: meaning & enjoyment	28%	34%	Reading: Letter knowledge	13%	13%	Reading: Phonological awareness	24%	27%	Maths: number	27%	26%	Maths: shapes, space and measure	37%	48%	Physical development	62%	62%
	Autumn 1998	Autumn 1999																																								
Approach to learning	66%	69%																																								
Social interaction	67%	60%																																								
Speaking and listening	31%	32%																																								
Writing	15%	13%																																								
Reading: meaning & enjoyment	28%	34%																																								
Reading: Letter knowledge	13%	13%																																								
Reading: Phonological awareness	24%	27%																																								
Maths: number	27%	26%																																								
Maths: shapes, space and measure	37%	48%																																								
Physical development	62%	62%																																								
Additional places for 0-3 year olds	Target set by Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership		63	44																																						



What do people think of the Service?

Although a number of surveys have been carried out to identify needs and how they could be met, there has been little work done on how the Service is viewed.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Barking and Dagenham has a high proportion of 3 and 4 year olds in local authority maintained schools in comparison with other London boroughs.

There has been no work undertaken to benchmark against other authorities and there is little information to make systematic comparisons with other services.

Early Years Curriculum

In order to give every child the best possible start to their education, the minimum standards to be achieved by our children at the end of nursery and reception years have been defined. These incorporate the Desirable Learning Outcomes and the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They will be revised by July 2000 to include the Early Years' Training Goals.

Provision of Early Years Places

The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership will be seeking to offer a free place to all three and four year olds whose parents want one, although for this year, the target set is 89.1% for three year olds. It will be looking to the private sector to prioritise providing places for three and four year olds in their nurseries.



Childcare

As part of the implementation of the National Childcare Strategy, the partnership will ensure children and parents have access to high quality, affordable childcare for children up to the age of 14. It will also:

- Meet Government targets in the provision of out of school care with the development of clubs both in the voluntary sector and in schools. It will link out of school hours learning and study support to provide a comprehensive package of both care and learning opportunities for children and parents by 2003.
- Develop existing and new holiday play and care schemes to ensure children and parents - particularly working parents - have access to quality care, this will be an ongoing project.
- Meet Government targets for the provision of pre-school care. Develop childminding networks and full day care in the Authority to assist working parents by 2003.
- Plan and implement a strategy to increase the involvement of local employers in the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership by 2003.
- Raise the profile and importance of good quality, affordable and accessible childcare. One of the benefits of this is to support work to regenerate the area by working with other agencies and other parts of the Council to ensure that regeneration programmes include plans for early years provision and thus help to reduce barriers to employment and training. This will be a particularly important element in the Single Regeneration Budget Bid for 2000/2001.

Other Initiatives

In 2000 the Council will investigate with the Government and other partners ways to fund the

proposals set out in its Education Action Zone bid. These concentrate on the education of children before the age of four.

The proposals are aimed at delivering radical and sustainable improvements in the attainment of all children in the Borough at the end of nursery and reception years. The curriculum, teaching and learning methods and classroom arrangements will be designed to include all children. As a result children will reach challenging minimum standards before they go to Key Stage 1 and thus reduce low achievement and social exclusion.

We will continue the development of a bid for Sure Start funds for Thames Ward by May 2000. This project will work with parents and pre-school children, particularly those who are disadvantaged so that they are better prepared for entry into school.

Information gathering

A plan will be developed in 2000/2001 to:

- Build in systematic evaluation of services including regular consultation with users
- Work with other authorities and service providers to benchmark
- Use the new Children's Information Service (which has been set up to help parents match their children's need to childcare places) to gather views of parents and providers
- Implement plans to survey providers and Partnership members on the Council's service and undertake any necessary follow up action
- As part of the 2000 Childcare Audit, develop consultation with parents and children

Plans are also in place to commission a consultant to evaluate the working of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the effectiveness of the Plan.



Electoral Services

What is Electoral Services?

Electoral Services are responsible for the annual production of the Electoral Register and the organisation and running of all Parliamentary, European Parliamentary and Local Elections and referenda.

The Service has one manager and two officers.

There are 115,026 electors registered in the 2000 Register. In order to keep the Register up to date and to improve registration levels, the 66,430 properties in the Borough are canvassed each year. The Service employs approximately 60 canvassers from the end of August until the middle of October.

The number of polling stations used at each election varies according to the type of election and the electorate. At the last European Parliamentary Election there were 107 polling stations employing 107 Presiding Officers and 193 Poll Clerks. 120 staff were employed for the verification and counting of votes.

The cost of running the Service in 1998/1999 was £113,500 (£1.71 per household). Parliamentary and European Parliamentary Elections are funded by Central Government. The budget for the Local Elections is approximately £85,000.



What do people think of the Service?

No consultation has been undertaken to date.

Since 1993 the Service has dealt with five complaints from members of the public which received written responses.

How we perform

Electoral Services Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1998/99	1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
Local Indicators						
Percentage of adult population on the electoral register	96.99%	96.65%	97%	92%	89%	84.50%

Other information

In a survey in 1998/99 of all 32 London Boroughs and the Corporation of London, Barking and Dagenham recorded the seventh best registration rate.

In a 1997/98 survey to which 15 London Boroughs responded, the cost of producing the Council's register per household was third lowest at £1.87p (the highest being £4.61p and the lowest £1.70p).

In a survey carried out by the London Borough of Westminster, to which 31 London Boroughs responded, Barking and Dagenham was the fifth fastest in announcing election results for the 1997 Parliamentary Election.

In the most recent European Parliamentary Elections, the Council announced its two constituency results fifth and seventh out of 74 in London. Both of the Borough's constituencies completed the count at least one hour faster than two constituencies of a similar size (Hayes and Harlington, and Camberwell).



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

From the information above, the Service appears to perform well in all the areas measured. That is, relatively high levels of electoral registration, relatively fast election counting and relatively low costs for producing the Electoral Register.

There are many changes proposed in the Government's modernising agenda to the electoral and electoral registration processes. The Service is committed to the monitoring of these proposals and will work as efficiently and flexibly as possible to implement changes as and when they are introduced. Throughout this process the Service will strive to maintain the current high standards and its impartial and professional approach.

The Service continues to look at ways of improving facilities for voters with disabilities and has an ongoing programme to provide booths suitable for wheelchair users. It has also produced a leaflet giving details of the service it provides to the public, which is available in libraries and civic buildings.

Key actions for 2000/2001 will be:

- To organise and run elections for the Greater London Assembly and Mayor
- To compile and publish the 2001 Electoral Register
- To be involved in a wider process of investigating and implementing means of receiving more feedback from the public on the service we provide
- To work towards improving benchmarking via the Association of Electoral Administrators. The focus of this work will be on tightening benchmarking criteria in order to make comparisons more meaningful
- To examine the scope for improvements to the Service by introducing IT systems. The two areas for initial consideration are to assist with the "Early Voting" initiative (in which people can vote prior to the election day), and to improve record filing arrangements



Financial Services

What is Financial Services?

An annual revenue budget of £306m for the current financial year, £287m worth of capital programmes for the next five years, and an estimated £562m gross expenditure on regeneration programmes over a seven year period, form the centrepiece of work by Financial Services.

In providing financial advice, information and support to Councillors, managers and other staff engaged in the direction and operation of all Council services, much of the work is influenced by statutory requirements and regulations or best professional practice.

The Service provides accountancy support to the Council by:

- Managing and developing the Council's financial systems
- Ensuring that the Council meets financial regulations
- Supporting managers on budget monitoring and setting
- Ensuring the Council has adequate insurance cover

The services are provided by 68 staff comprising accountants and a range of other appropriately qualified or experienced personnel. This was increased by six in February 1999 to handle financial administration associated with asylum seekers. There are also continuing pressures to increase staffing resources to deal with areas such as capital project planning and management, regeneration partnerships and Best Value.

The total estimated operating costs in 1999/2000 were £2,631,000; £1,737,000 of which related to staffing.



What do people think of the Service?

The users of the services are essentially internal. Although their views have not been regularly surveyed, a review of the Division in the mid-1990s provided users with a comprehensive analysis of the main options with the decentralisation of services proving to be the preferred direction. This resulted in reduced staffing and a cost saving in the region of £300,000 per annum.

There is a separate service for schools, which they choose to purchase using their delegated budgets.



How we perform

The Division's Business Plan was published at the end of 1999, and at the time this document was prepared the monitoring of performance measures had not started.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has supplied an initial benchmarking report comparing Barking & Dagenham with two other London Boroughs and five English Metropolitan Boroughs. Accountancy costs have been expressed in terms of £000's per £million of gross revenue turnover. Excluding Treasury Management, Barking & Dagenham costs are £5,561 per £million of turnover compared with a group average of £4,900. Barking & Dagenham is 13% above the average. In terms of staff numbers the excess is 4%.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

At present, there is little evidence to demonstrate how well the Service performs. Monitoring of performance measures in the business plan will, however, start from April 2000.

Benchmarking information is sparse. Action is

being taken to benchmark against a wider and more comparable group of local authorities, via the CIPFA Benchmark Club. So far, the Club has only looked at costs. Work has now commenced on detailed clarification of whether or not, and why, the Council's accountancy costs are high and results of this analysis will be available in this financial year. The use of external providers will obviously remain an option. However, given the service improvements and cost reductions which have been achieved as a result of decentralisation and the commitment to benchmarking, it is not something the Council intends to pursue in the short term.

The Financial Services Section will develop user-feedback systems in 2000/2001. In addition, as part of the merger of Development and Technical Services and Contract Services departments, managers within the two departments have been asked to comment on support services, including finance. Results should be available this year.

Service managers and schools are supplied with regular budgetary control reports and, where appropriate, trading accounts. The Financial Information System (FIS) also provides good on-line access to substantial areas of financial transaction data. Financial information will be improved following the replacement of FIS in April 2001.

In 2000/2001 we will also develop a set of Performance Indicators and targets for the Service which are comparable to other boroughs.



Health and Disabilities Services

What is the Health and Disabilities Service?

We are responsible for assessing need, planning care and providing services for adults aged 18 – 65 who are affected by a wide range of disabilities – physical, sensory and learning disabilities, mental health needs, drug and alcohol misuse and HIV/AIDS – and their carers. Some services are provided directly by the Council, while others are purchased from organisations with whom we work in partnership.

The objectives of the service are:

- To help service users to make informed choices about their life-style, achieve greater independence and improve the quality of their life
- To tell us what they think about the services they receive and act as partners in the planning and development of future services
- To provide a range of quality services that respond to individual need and promote independence within the community
- To create opportunities for service users in the field of employment and in the use of mainstream community facilities

We will do these things by:

- Putting people first, promoting fairness, equal opportunities and choice in service provision and access to services

We recognise that increased independence brings an element of risk and will support carers and staff in this.

We will use all available resources as effectively and creatively as possible.

The Council has an agreed list of priorities for its work. The Health and Disability Service contributes to the following Community priorities:

- Improving health and social care
- Creating better opportunities for all
- Developing rights and responsibilities within the community
- Raising pride in the borough and projecting a positive image

In addition, to the local priorities mentioned above, there are a number of Acts of Parliament and national priorities that guide the overall direction of our services. Copies of these documents can be obtained by contacting any of the Borough's Libraries.

The total budget for the Health and Disability Service for 1999-2000 was £11.8 million. £4 million is spent on supported living – including residential care;



£5.6 million is spent on the provision of day opportunities and care at home while £2.2 million is spent on assessment and care management.

The service employs around 200 people; the majority of whom are directly providing care. We provide all staff with training and development opportunities to ensure that they are professional and competent.

We use published criteria to decide who will be a priority for different levels of assessment and who will receive services. In this way, we can ensure help gets to those in greatest need and at highest risk. During

an average week we help approximately 1,300 people between the ages of 18 - 65.



What do people think of the Service?

Talking to service users and their carers about the services they receive is very important to us. We did this in a variety of ways throughout 1998 and 1999; we talked to individual service users about their needs and the services they receive; we talked to the residents of our residential homes and the users of day centres.

How we perform

Health and Disabilities Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The percentage of items of equipment costing less than £1,000 provided within 3 weeks of assessment. (Includes Over 65's)	89%	95%	85%	87% rising to 96% in five years	95%	95%	91%	69%	97%
The percentage of people receiving help from the authority who have been given a statement of what their needs are and how they will be met. (Includes over 65's)	85%	83.0%	85%	90% rising to 92% in five years	89%	88.0%	63%	83%	100%
The number of nights of respite care provided or funded by the authority per 1000 adults (Includes over 65's)*	107	115	119	150	112	69	47	115	75
Local Indicators									
The number of adults with physical disabilities the authority helps to live at home, per 1,000 adults under 65	4.54	3.79	4.6	4.6- Numbers will increase when new developments come on stream in future years	-	-	2.40	1.08	3.16
The number of adults with mental health problems the authority helps to live at home, per 1,000 adults under 65	0.96	1.28	0.96	1.55	-	-	2.05	0.78	0.80
The number of adults per 1,000 population aged 16 to 64 whom the authority provided support re-admission to residential / nursing care		0.35		0.32					
Percentage of emergency psychiatric re-admissions	15%	15%	15%	12%					
Unit cost of residential and nursing care for people with mental illness	£178.00	£289.00	£300.00	£310.00					
Unit cost of residential and nursing care for people with physical disabilities	£211.00	£403.00	£415.00	£427.00					
The net expenditure per head of population on social services for adults with learning disabilities	£23.70	£24.10	£24.82	£25.54					
The net expenditure per head of population on social services for adults with physical disabilities	£24.36	£25.47	£26.22	£27.00					
The net expenditure per head of population on social services for adults with mental health problems	£11.51	£10.60	£10.91	£11.23					
Other Information									
Work continues at the Gascoigne Centre to help people use community resources. We also fund an employment programme for people with learning disabilities and have made use of partnership grant money to provide employment opportunities for people with physical disabilities.									
In response to users comments, we have undertaken a major re-vamp of the service and created a new Community Disability Service in a combined team of Housing and Social Services Staff.									
The Community Care Action Group has been re-vamped and is now jointly chaired by two disabled people.									

*Calculation per 1000 not yet undertaken, figures show actual numbers.



We consulted on specific issues such as transport and leisure, and carried out general consultation through the well attended Service User and Carer Forum that meets every two months.

As a result of talking to service users and carers we learnt that:

- Several services were highly valued by people with learning disabilities and their carers. These include; the Employment Service; Heathlands – both the building and the service; Sheltered accommodation at Louise Graham House and Mencap's advocacy service.
- Service users and carers want easy access to social workers and community nurses; more choice in daytime activities; increased respite care opportunities and greater involvement in the planning and development of their services.

People with physical disabilities commented positively on new activities outside of day centres; the planned development for Sweetland Court, which will provide supported housing rather than residential care and the support given to those living at home. Dissatisfaction was expressed with the Community Care Action Group.

The old Occupational Therapy Service was criticised over the long waiting times for initial assessments and for adaptations to be carried out; lack of consultation on the provision of aids and adaptations; and poor or no response to enquiries and complaints. In addition, instances of wastage when removing adaptations from properties before re-letting was mentioned.

People with mental health needs asked for more talking therapies and closer involvement in planning care together with alternatives to hospital admission. Monitoring by Breakthrough (a nationally renowned user organisation) in the autumn of 1999 will identify further comments. This report is still awaited.

Substance Misuse: Consultation in this area is notoriously difficult. However, the Alcohol Advisory Service has a strong user group at James Cooke House. It is strongly supportive of the service and feedback helps to shape the programmes that are available.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The service is performing well in the following areas:

- We help more people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs to live at home
- We provide residential and nursing home care more cost effectively
- We have fewer emergency psychiatric re-admissions to hospital

Areas the service needs to improve are:

- We could help more people with physical disabilities to live at home
- We could improve the cost effectiveness of services for people with physical disabilities
- We need to improve the quality of our monitoring information

What do we need to do in the coming year?

As a general principle, we will continue to transfer resources away from institutional care to community based care systems. This process will be undertaken in consultation with service users, their carers and partner organisations.

During the coming year, proposals will be developed to extend the employment opportunities service for people with physical and learning disabilities to include work with mainstream employers.

We will undertake a fundamental Best Value performance review of all day services. This review will challenge the way in which day services are currently provided and how the service meets the needs of its users and improve efficiency.

Work will take place across all areas of service to ensure that information is recorded consistently and accurately and that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in this area.

Learning Disabilities - Levels of overnight respite care in Barking and Dagenham compare favourably with other Boroughs. Work is underway at Tudor



House, which, when complete will provide an additional 52 weeks per year of respite care. Daytime respite care will be provided at weekends at Heathlands in Spring 2000.

We are responding to the views of carers by setting up a single Community Team comprising both health and social services staff based at Heathlands

The net expenditure per head of population on Social Services for people with learning disabilities is broadly comparable with other local boroughs and we intend to maintain this position for 2000/01.

Physical Disabilities – We are planning to increase opportunities for physically disabled people by replacing Sweetland Court (a residential care home) with a new development of individual supported living units. This is being developed in partnership with a housing association and work should begin during 2000/01.

The net spending on Social Services for people with physical disabilities is relatively high in comparison with other local boroughs. We will be investigating ways of improving efficiency in this area so that our resources can be better targeted during 2000/01.

In 1998/99, 95% of equipment costing £1000 or less was delivered to the service user within three weeks of assessment. This year, we are projecting that this will have fallen to 84%. The reason for this is that the equipment we are now providing tends to be larger items such as stair rails, grab rails and bath lifts. These items need to be delivered and installed which increases the waiting time. We will investigate ways in which this could be improved.

The new Community Disability Service has brought together staff from Social Services and Housing. This will make significant improvements to

the Aids and Adaptations Service. All adapted properties will be registered and a system for buying back adapted homes that have been sold is being considered.

We will also ensure that all services provided on our behalf are provided in accordance with standards that will be set out in a service specification.

Mental Health – The number of people with mental health needs that we help to live at home will increase during 2000/01, as a result of people moving from Warley Hospital to live with support in the local community.

Drugs and Alcohol – Services to people who misuse alcohol and drugs will continue to develop in line with the Government's plan "Tackling Drugs for a Better Britain".

We will continue to work in partnership with the Health Service to ensure that services are better co-ordinated and easily accessible to those in need.

An Arrest Referral Scheme will start in 2000 and together with Treatment Orders will ensure that people who are arrested and have substance misuse problems will be offered prompt access to the appropriate service. A local alcohol strategy will be completed in 2000 in line with a proposed national document.

Consultation: Our plans for talking to service users and carers during the coming year are as follows; Firstly, we will continue to consult individually with service users and carers through the assessment and care planning process.

Secondly, we will carry out formal consultation on specific issues, which are to be decided by the Community Care Action Groups. One area that has already been identified is day opportunities for people with disabilities.



Heritage Services

What are the Heritage Services?

The various parts of the Heritage Service were, until 1999, the responsibility of different departments.

In 1999 provision for heritage was brought together within the Literacy and Cultural Services Division of the new Department for Education, Arts and Libraries.



The two main historic buildings in the Borough are Eastbury Manor House and Valence House.

Between 1995 and 1999 both buildings enjoyed considerable development and increase in the number of customers (each attracts over 23,000 visitors a year), with the numbers projected to rise by 5% year on year.

Valence House is the Borough's registered museum. It houses the Fanshawe Collection, a collection of paintings donated to the Borough and employs two professional curators/managers. There are approximately 350 members of the Friends of Valence House Group who support the work of the museum undertaking fundraising and promotion of the service. Of these around 60 members undertake voluntary work, e.g. staffing the café on Saturdays.

A general property manager is in post at Eastbury Manor House. This building dates from around 1566 and is acknowledged to be an exceptionally fine and complete example of a Tudor gentry house. It is a Grade 1 listed building owned by the National Trust.

Both venues have administrative support (one person at Eastbury House, two people at Valence House plus additional support for museum staff at the Central Library Office in Barking). Eastbury House and Valence House Museum employ porters. In addition Eastbury House provides catering.

In 1998/1999, the Valence House Museum Service cost £222,230 to run directly, and made income of £10,900. Eastbury Manor House cost £193,238 with an income of £64,855.

The overall aim of the service is to provide learning opportunities for local people and participate in the development of heritage and tourism in the Borough.

The Heritage Service helps to deliver the Community Priorities of:-

- Creating better opportunities for all
- Regenerating the local economy - generating jobs, training and enterprise
- Raising general pride in the borough and projecting a positive image



What do people think of the Service?

Valence House Museum Service gathers information from visitors bi-annually through surveys. The last visitors survey was in December 1997, 171 people completed the questionnaire. 29% said the reason for visiting the museum was that the visit was related to studies and 11% because of its reputation. All facilities were rated as either 'excellent' or 'good' by the majority of respondents, with only 3% or less rating each facility as 'not very good' or 'poor'.

These surveys provide information on visitor usage of Valence House Museum and show that visitors like to see active events, programmes and changing exhibitions. They have also requested the availability of refreshments.

Eastbury Manor House staff regularly request feedback from clients and visitors and this shows that those using the services respond positively. At Eastbury House a questionnaire is available for visitors to the house. There have been 202 questionnaires returned so far, all said something positive about the house and/or service. Of the other comments, four suggested better signage and one better marketing.

A good relationship has been developed with The National Trust by better communication and involving their members on Project teams. The National Trust now helps the House in a number ways e.g. loaning furniture for the house, National Trust staff training, development of the shop and provision of advice and skills.

How we perform

Heritage Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/1998	1998/1999	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001
National Indicators				
The number of museums that are registered under the Museums and Galleries Commission registration scheme	1	1	1	1
The net cost per visit/usage	£9.10	£8.40	£8.40	£9.43

Other Information

There are robust national standards in relation to museums and archives. The Borough complies with the standards of the Museums and Galleries Registration Scheme and has been awarded full registration status under Phase II of this system. In order, however, for the Borough to meet the national standards for archives, a new post of archivist (conforming to professional qualifications) would have to be created.

The Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO) has devised a benchmarking scheme to compare similar organisations. The Heritage Services Manager is part of a group organised by the London Museums Service to consider appropriate benchmarks for museums and galleries.

At Eastbury House Manor House all indicators show a positive response to the mixed programme of heritage, educational, arts, community and business use from the different groups. The growing popularity of the House is reflected in the number of visitors in attendance at events - which are usually fully booked - and in the hire of rooms. There are 30 active volunteers who continue to play a most important role from distributing leaflets to staffing the tea room and shop, guiding, providing day-to-day administration. Together they worked a total of 2,047 hours during 1998/9. Last year Eastbury Manor House facilitated a total of 686 bookings and welcomed 23,606 visitors/clients.

The Museum Service compares well with other services in achieving full registered status. The Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO) statistics for benchmarking - figures, however, suggest that local authority investment in this area is low compared to others e.g. Croydon. [Locally, there is the

potential to raise grant-in-aid, lottery funding and private funds, e.g. from the Friends Group.] There are national performance indicators which apply to spending and costs and these will be reviewed as part of the re-organisation of the service.

Other grants include:

- Regular grant aid from the South Eastern Museum service e.g. £2,900 to purchase storage equipment for 1999/2000
- £2,777 from the Campaign for Museums for a new display
- Friends of Valence House have recently received £1,600 from the lottery for a new video screen, projector and a new notice board
- The Museums Service is improving its provision for people with disabilities. It was awarded £1,000 by the Adapt Trust/Railtrack towards improvements at Valence House Museum in 1999.
- Eastbury House has worked very closely with Sutton House in Hackney to improve its service to the extent that Sutton House is now also learning from Eastbury House

Information about Valence House Museum can be found on the database for Registered Museums called DOMUS which provides details about all registered museums. It is maintained by the Area Museums Council and details are also available on the Council's web-site.

The Archive Service and Local Studies currently compares unfavourably to other services such as those offered in Redbridge. Both need urgent reviews in order to fulfil their potential. One of the main reasons for this is that Valence House Museum does not have an archivist.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Council meets national standards relating to museums and has been awarded full registration status, but the archive service does not currently meet national standards.

Initial benchmarking findings show that the Council spends less on heritage services than other boroughs, but we have been successful in attracting funding from outside sources.

The growing popularity of the Service is reflected in the growing number of visitors to both sites. The consultation undertaken has provided positive feedback from visitors with high satisfaction levels, but there has been no consultation with non-users and other stakeholders.

Heritage Services have been united in one section within the new department for Education, Arts and Libraries. The Head of Heritage Services will have responsibility for all heritage sites and provision in the borough and this will allow a coherent approach to development and for the identification of efficiencies.

The appointment of Head of Heritage will be made in early 2000 and there will be a full review of the Heritage Service, benchmarked against similar areas. This will be completed by 2002.

The key priorities for heritage are to:

- Develop a coherent new strategy linking schools and other providers by July 2000
- Significantly improve input into schools, not just in history by Autumn 2000

- Increase visitor rates at Valence House Museum in 2000/2001
- Develop a plan to improve the standards of facilities at Eastbury House, e.g. use of tea room, toilets, access and staffing/housekeeping in 2000/2001
- Development of new heritage-related courses during 2000/2001
- Strengthen links with the National Trust and other key agencies
- Work on a lottery bid for Eastbury House for submission in 2000/2001. This work includes consulting with the public regarding the House and garden developments and moving towards the creation of a business plan, as part of the requirements for submitting a Heritage Lottery Bid
- Maximise other external funding for heritage, e.g. bids for conservation grants and signage and a bid to English Heritage for Eastbury House in 2000/2001
- Investigate the use of an electronic counter at Valence House to provide more accurate details about visitor numbers in 2000/2001
- Consult with non-users of the services by 2002 by using questionnaires in public places, e.g. in the Vicarage Field shopping centre
- Analyse the results of consultation including a specific consultation with neighbours of Eastbury Manor House and local people in 2000/2001

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration

What is the Housing and Council Tax Administration Service?

Housing and Council Tax Benefit is a form of social security administered by local authorities on behalf of the Government.

It is designed to help local authority, housing association and private landlord tenants with their rental payments, and both tenants and owner-occupiers with their Council Tax liabilities.

At April 1, 1999 the number of benefit cases in payment and the estimated amounts of benefits to be paid during 1999-2000 were as follows:

	Number of Cases	Estimated Payments £m's
Council Tenants – Rent Rebates	14,358	33.80
Private Tenants – Rent Allowances	3,120	14.16
Council Tax Benefits	20,780	10.36

Government grants will finance 95% of the amounts paid out by the Council on Rent Allowances and Council Tax Benefits, with the remaining 5% being met by Council Taxpayers.

The overall budget for the administration of benefit payments in 1999-2000 is £1,305,000, including £756,000 for staff salaries. Currently 41 full-time staff are engaged in the administration of Housing and Council Tax Benefits.

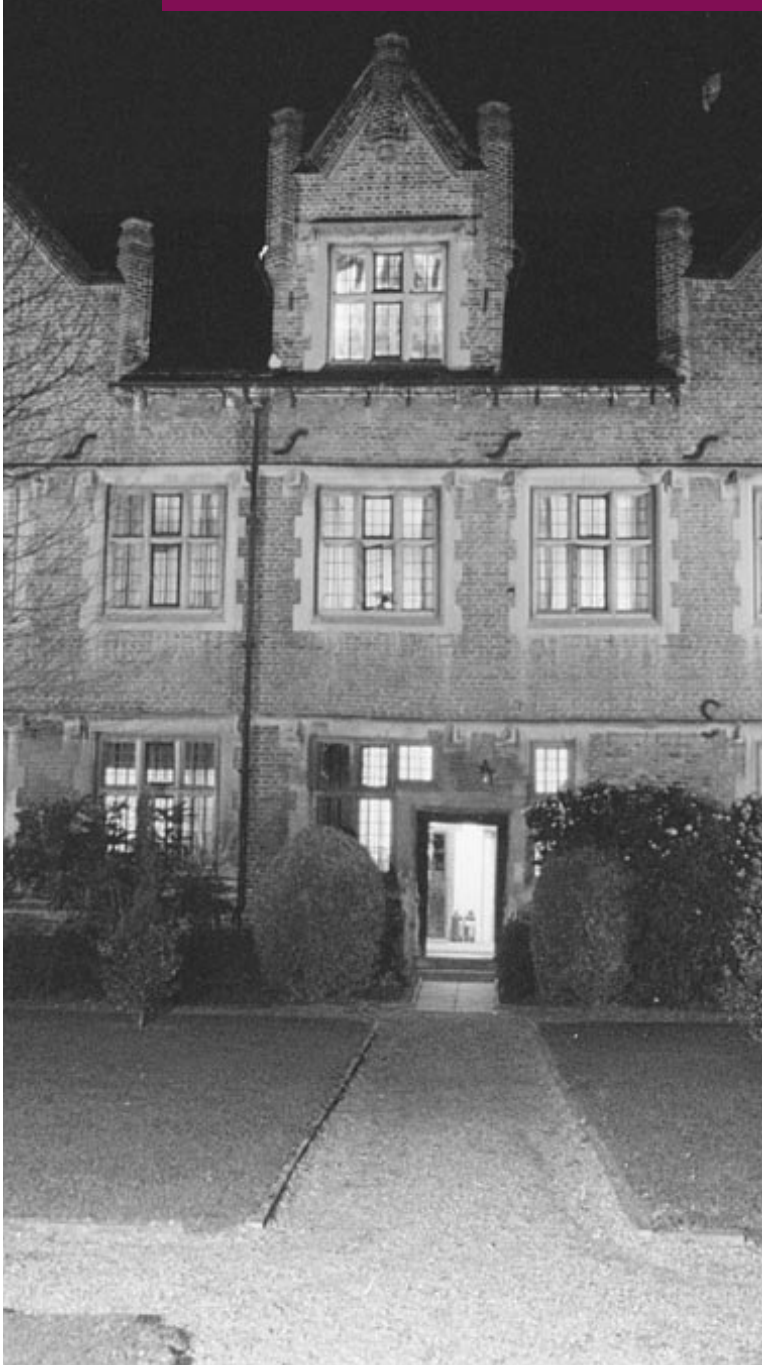
Specific Government grants of £617,000 and £190,000 were received in 1999/2000 for general Housing Benefit Administration costs and the running costs of the new Housing Benefit Verification Framework. This Framework is a Government initiative to reduce levels of fraud by personal contacts with claimants to check the information provided.



What do people think of the Service?

The Community Survey identified that:

- 52.6% of respondents thought the Service was either good or very good
- 21.5% regarded the Service as satisfactory
- 9% of those surveyed regarded the Service as poor or very poor.



How we perform

Housing & Council tax benefits Administration Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The cost of administration per claimant	£47.68	£66.43	£75.00	£78.00	£63.97	£99.62	£85.91	£100.67	£159.35
The average time for processing new claims for council tax/housing and rent allowance benefit from the date of receipt of the claim by the local authority	New PI	New PI	45 days (6 months only)	40 days	-----	-----			
Percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax) that were recovered in the year	New PI	New PI	77%	80%	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Percentage of claimants who were satisfied with the way they were dealt with by the authority.	New PI	New PI	80%	82%					
Local Indicators (Some of these indicators are being phased out)					-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
The percentage of renewal claims for rent allowance paid on time	n/a	95.51%	96%	97%	-----	-----	95.44%	33.10%	90.85%
Percentage of claimants who felt they were clearly told what information to provide.	New PI	New PI	83%	85%					
The percentage of new claims for council tax benefit processed within 14 days. (Projection from July 99 to March 00)	79.8%	93.6%	85.4%	90.0%	94%	87%	90.39%	67.60%	72.46%
The percentage of new claims for housing benefit from local authority tenants processed within 14 days (Projection from July 99 to March 00)	79.8%	94.4%	85.0%	90.0%	95%	88%	97.34%	82.00%	73.86%
The percentage of successful new claims for rent allowance paid to tenants within 14 days, or direct to landlords by the due date after the start of the tenancy. (Projection from July 99 to March 00)	74.8%	88.8%	85.9%	90.0%	92%	90%	90.25%	69.40%	73.16%
Percentage of Renewal Claims processed without a break in payment	98.7%	95.5%	96.0%	96.0%	97%	93%	95.44%	33.10%	90.85%
Percentage of verification framework compliant claims settled within 14 days.	This is a test of the efficiency of the service		-----	95%	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Other Information

Other performance indicators collected by the Audit Commission relate to the cost of benefit administration per claimant. This authority's cost of £47.68 per case in 1997/98 was the lowest in London and compares with an average cost for London of £123.38.

Each year the Council subscribes to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) benchmarking club for benefit administration. The benchmarking club compares the performance of a balanced range of local authorities throughout England and enables the Council to identify the relative cost of its service.

The figures relating to 1997/98 show the following results:

	Cost Per Weighted Case	
	LBB & D	Club Average
Staff Costs	£11.60	£20.90
Postage, Stationery, Travelling etc.	£1.30	£3.60
Information Technology	£2.00	£6.80
Cost of Accommodation	£0.80	£2.10
Central Finance Costs	£4.50	£5.50
Sub total	£20.20	£38.90
less Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	£12.30	£13.10
Total cost	£7.90	£25.80

A New Approach to Measuring performance

During 1999 the Government changed the method of calculating the performance indicators for housing benefit administration. This involved a move from the percentage of new claims processed within 14 days of receipt of the full information necessary to determine eligibility, to a system where the average length of time it takes to determine the claim from the date of receipt.

The processing target set by the Council for new claims under the old target was 75% within 14 days.

The new measure of performance takes into account the efficiency with which the Authority deals with defective claims (largely as a result of incomplete information being made available by applicants in their initial submission). Currently some 50% of applications are unable to be progressed without further correspondence.

However, this position altered significantly from August 1999 with the introduction of the Benefit Verification Process as part of the Government's anti-fraud initiative.

From this date all new applicants were required to attend an interview in order to determine eligibility for Housing and Council Tax benefits. This process afforded the opportunity for every applicant to be assisted with the completion of the application form, and also to ensure they brought with them all the relevant documentation necessary to establish entitlement.

The full year effect of these changes will not be apparent until mid 2000.

New National Performance Indicators

The projections for the new National Indicators 2000/2001 are estimates. The new IT system is collecting the required data, but is at present unable to provide the necessary reports. This information will be available at year end. The key issue relating to the new indicators is the reliance of claimants to provide the necessary information at the correct time.

Satisfaction Survey

The areas on which satisfaction are based are:- polite treatment, resolution of queries, together with personal, written and telephone contact. The 82% reported figure reflects an across the range average. Strong satisfaction levels were achieved across the board, except for telephone contact which received poor scores.

Local Indicators

Projected performance figures from the local indicators have been calculated from July 1999 to March 2000. The first 3 months of the financial year have been omitted due to the introduction of the new IT system. During this period, very few new claims were processed.

Compared with a London-wide survey conducted by the Association of London Government, these figures are similar to levels found in other London Boroughs.

What is not clear from the local and London-wide surveys however, is the degree of satisfaction with the administrative service provided by the Council as opposed to the level of benefit received by the claimant, following the successful determination of an application.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Service performs well in the

- Time taken to process Housing Benefit claims
- Time taken to process Rent Allowance claims
- Time taken to process Council Tax Benefit claims
- Low cost of administration

The Service aims to improve on the:

- High number of claims that are defective and in need for further correspondence before the claim can be determined

An analysis of complaints received showed that the main area of concern arises from the length of time it takes to process some claims.

Investigations into individual complaints reveal that the most common reasons for the delay in processing are:

- (i) a failure on the part of applicants to respond to requests for further information
- (ii) inconsistencies between information given on application forms with other information held by the Council.

It is intended that these issues will be addressed during 2000/2001 by:

- The full implementation of the Verification Framework
- The arrangement of home visits for those unable to attend the Council's offices

- Carrying out home visits to those currently in receipt of benefits, to check their entitlement
- Continuing to set up meetings with advice centres, housing associations, private sector letting agencies, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Barking and Dagenham Translation Service and the Benefit Agency, in order to discuss issues that have arisen during the year, new legal requirements and improve processes
- Undertaking analysis and reacting to customer surveys
- The introduction of new arrangements in reception to reduce waiting times and increase the throughput of clients
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of the Housing and Council Tax Benefit schemes by taking an active part in the Tenant Participation Compact & Housing Forum initiative meetings, where tenants have the opportunity to discuss housing and benefits issues
- Reducing the number of defective claims that fail to reach determination through a scheme of targeted home visits expressly for the purposes of obtaining information the customer has previously failed to supply
- Increasing the number of prosecutions for Housing & Council Tax Benefit fraud and maximising local press coverage with the aim of creating a realistic deterrent.
- Improving efficiency by continuing a phased review of working practices to raise standards and turn-around times, in the interests of both the customer and the taxpayer as part of the preparatory work for a Best Value review
- Allied to the introduction of the Benefit Verification Process, every applicant will be asked to comment on the standard of service provided, the results of which will be analysed to determine where improvements can be made in service delivery.



Housing Estate Management

What is Estate Management?

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham manages around 25,000 housing properties, as well as 1,500 sold leasehold flats.



The Council was required to put housing management services out to competitive tender (CCT). The Borough's housing stock was divided into seven geographically-based contract areas and the in-house teams were successful in winning all contracts. The contracts are managed from three area offices in Barking, Becontree and Dagenham.

The area office teams undertake a variety of duties. Day-to-day tasks include signing up new tenants, processing requests for joint tenancies and transfers. In addition, investigations are carried out into alleged breaches of the Conditions of Tenancy, for example a neighbour nuisance or racial harassment. Other duties include leasehold management, routine inspections to check the condition of properties and repossession actions.

Caretaking services for the Borough's flats are also managed from the area offices. Two caretaking services officers oversee high-rise blocks, which have resident caretakers. There is a Concierge Officer for the Goresbrook Village.

There are three housing welfare officers, one based at each area office, who manage the wardens of sheltered accommodation, and make visits to tenants to assess re-housing needs on urgent medical or social grounds.

The effective management of Council estates will make an important contribution to achieving community priorities, especially in relation to the creation of a cleaner, greener and safer Borough.



The overall aims of the Housing Estate Management Service include:

- Ensuring the provision of affordable housing in a safe and healthy environment offering a good quality of life and enhancing opportunities to improve homes and access to better homes within the Borough
- Working with Social Services to ensure



Community Care services are delivered in the best way

- Seeking to maintain decent standards for all residents and to achieve a better environment for households most in need
- Providing equality of access in provision of services

During 1998/1999 the area offices dealt with the following numbers of requests for service and inspections:

	1998/1999
Barking	15,650
Becontree	8,727
Dagenham	12,924

A total of 135 staff are directly employed by the Service. A General Manager, three service managers (housing estates) and seven housing contract managers are supported by estate officers, estate inspectors, caretaking services officers, caretakers, welfare officers, wardens and a team of administrative staff.

The direct cost of the Service for 1998/1999 was £2,814,049 of which £2,258,197 related to staffing costs.



What do people think of the Service?

The Community Survey undertaken in 1999 reported that 48% of residents thought the Housing Service was good or very good and a further 25% rated it as satisfactory.

Questionnaires are issued to 10% of people using the Service to establish whether they are satisfied with the service in general and identify areas of concern. In 1998/1999 625 forms were returned and of these 87% expressed satisfaction with the overall level of service. Any comments and complaints received are acted upon. Many issues raised are the responsibility of another Council service and these are passed on for action.

The Council welcomes and values feedback from residents. Extensive consultation with all tenants was undertaken in 1996 when the conditions of tenancy were reviewed and there was wide-ranging support for the proposals. As a direct result of feedback from tenants, specific reference to harassment on the grounds of disability was included in the revised tenancy conditions.

How we perform

Estate Management Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators							
Average weekly cost per dwelling of housing management	£9.84	£10.41	£11.98	£12.69	£24.80	£12.04	£18.94
Local Indicators					Other Information		
Overall performance measured against the standards published in the housing contract.	91%	91%	93.30%	94%	A Housing Management Cost, Resource and Performance Benchmarking study in 1999, led by consultants Arthur Andersen enabled us to compare our services with other London boroughs and housing associations. The results are still being analysed but initial findings show:		
Barking	92.4%	92.1%	90.50%	93%			
Dagenham	93.2%	93.8%	93.10%	94%			
Becontree	87.5%	87.0%	93.20%	94%			

*tenancy and estate management costs are below London average (cost per property for Barking and Dagenham £38; London average £52)

* Barking and Dagenham has below average number of staff relative to number of properties (41% below London average)

* Estate areas are large in comparison to other London authorities which contribute to reduced costs



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Housing Estate Management Service was exposed to open competition in 1997 and was successful in winning all seven contracts. Many of the practices that demonstrate Best Value, including consultation and benchmarking, have already been introduced. There is now a need to build on this to ensure continuous improvement.

Customer feedback shows high levels of satisfaction with the overall level of service provided. In 2000/2001 the customer satisfaction questionnaires in use will be reviewed to improve response rates and ensure information gained can be used effectively.

The benchmarking study and performance information above confirm that our estate management costs are lower than average. Further work on analysing and acting on the results of the benchmarking exercises will be undertaken by March 2001.

The contract specification, which was drawn up in consultation with tenants, residents and staff, sets out well-defined standards for the Service. Performance against these standards is high, but further work will be done on the analysis and presentation of information. During 2000/2001 key performance indicators will be identified and monthly and annual reports will be produced to a standard format.

Procedures and quality standards are set out in the Housing and Quality Manuals. These will be reviewed

and updated with procedures introduced to ensure staff are kept informed of changes by March 2001.

A review of the warden service was completed in 1999. A number of new initiatives have now been put in place as a result, including:

- A code of conduct for wardens
- Satisfaction surveys of tenants in all warden controlled sites
- A revised induction programme for all new wardens

During 2000/2001 the Council will continue to implement the remaining recommendations to ensure that policies and procedures relating to the Service are fully understood and implemented by all staff to promote consistency and extend good practice across the Borough.

A review of the caretaking service - looking at all areas of the service - will begin in 2000. Tenants, residents, staff and Councillors will all be consulted during the review, which will explore opportunities to improve the efficiency of the service.

During 2000/2001 the management of the repairs and allocations services will be more closely integrated with estate management to enable us to provide a more comprehensive service and improve accountability.

To make it easier for service users to contact us, we aim to make all Housing and Health services accessible from any of our local offices. During 2000/2001 we will develop an implementation plan to enable all contact services to be accessed from any area office.



Housing Needs and Advice

What is the Housing Needs and Advice Service?

The Housing Needs and Advice service covers two main areas:

- Housing Needs and Allocations
- Advice Services

The Needs and Allocations Service is responsible for the assessment of people requesting housing and the allocation of Council houses and flats. The team handles initial applications for housing (the Housing Register) and transfer requests from Council tenants who want to move to another Council property (Transfer Waiting List). Nominations to other boroughs or to Housing Association properties and applications by tenants to exchange properties (Mutual Exchange) are also dealt with.

Both the Housing Register and Transfer Waiting List are run on a points system, which ensures homes are allocated fairly. Points awarded to applicants are based on factors such as length of time on the list, type and size of present home, and number and ages of children in the household. Points can also be awarded for reasons of poor health.

The team deals with around 36,000 telephone enquiries a year, and in an average year process 6,000 housing applications and make 3,500 offers of accommodation.

The Advice Service covers four main areas:

Reception services operate from four offices across the Borough providing advice and front line information on all the services provided by the Housing and Health department. In the first six months of the last financial year they dealt with around 32,500 enquiries.

The Housing Advice team provides advice and assistance relating to both Council and privately owned housing and tenancy issues. In 1998/1999 the team handled nearly 2,000 referrals. In the first six months of the last financial year they dealt with over 1,300 enquiries.

The Homeless Persons Unit provides advice and information on homelessness and temporary accommodation and support for homeless families. People presenting themselves as homeless are interviewed by the team and assessed to see if the Council should house them. During 1998/1999 decisions on more than 700 cases of homelessness were made, and in the first six months of 1999 427



applications were received. In December 1999 288 cases were being actively investigated. The team also manages a hostel for homeless people.

The Consumer Advice team offers advice and assistance to consumers on a wide range of matters relating to goods and services and provides support to people pursuing claims through the small claims court. In 1998/1999 they dealt with more than 4,500 cases and helped their clients to recover more than £216,000.

The Service supports the Council's priorities of creating better opportunities for all, developing rights and responsibilities with the community and improving

health and social care in the Borough.

The Service employs 44 staff. The General Manager is supported by 2 managers and a range of professional and administrative staff.

In 1998/1999 the cost of the Service was £903,705, of which £808,370 related to staffing costs. Income for the year totalled £26,015, which was mainly from rents from the hostel.



What do people think of the Service?

Regular monthly surveys of people using Reception and Housing Advice services are undertaken and the

How we perform

Housing Needs & Advice Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in rented housing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-----	-----	Yes	No	Yes
Percentage new tenancies given to vulnerable people. (Elderly people are excluded from these figures)	n/a	n/a	10%	Dependent on cases presenting					
Average number of homeless households during the year in Bed & Breakfast	n/a	n/a	3	0*					
Local Indicators									
The average time taken to decide whether to accept people as homeless.	n/a	116 days	60 working days	50 working days* reducing to 33 days within the next 5 years	14	42	47.9	18	56
Average number of homeless households during the year in Bed & Breakfast and hostel accommodation	14	9	25	15	3	83	173	61	333
Other temporary housing	241	222	300	250*	4	117	404	3	1325
Average length of stay in B&B and hostel accommodation (weeks)	7	4	4	3	4	10	15	13	6
Average time taken to relet dwellings available for letting or awaiting minor repairs. (Weeks)	9	10	10	9 weeks reducing to 42 days within next 5 years	4	6	8	5	8
Percentage of letting to new tenants:									
Homeless households	13%	20%	30%	25%*	-----	-----	43%	0%	43%
Others	87%	81%	70%	75%*	-----	-----	57%	100%	57%
Percentage of housing advice clients offered an appointment within 8 days and seen within 10 minutes of their appointment time	New Indicator	New Indicator	100%	100%					
Percentage of empty properties where an offer of accommodation is made within 2 working days of becoming available	This target was set based on a review of current performance and consultation with tenants groups and sta			80%					

* Performance in these areas will be influenced by the rate at which the impact of changes to legislation relating to asylum seekers takes effect.

results are displayed in reception areas. This information is used to monitor our performance against the standards we have set and to gauge overall satisfaction. Suggestion boxes are also available at all reception points. Feed-back is generally very positive and overall satisfaction levels high. The most recent figures, for January, showed that 100% of people visiting the Becontree Office were satisfied with the way their enquiry was dealt with and were seen on time.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The above information shows that:

- The time the Council takes to decide whether to accept people as homeless is above average
- The Council takes longer than other London boroughs to relet homes
- Regular surveys of users of reception and housing advice services are undertaken and satisfaction levels are high. Similarly performance standards which have been set are met
- No formal benchmarking to compare our services with others has been undertaken

The Council's Allocations Policy is under review. Extensive consultation has taken place on proposed changes to the policy and procedures and there are 3 tenant representatives on the working party undertaking the review. During 2000/2001 further consultation with stakeholders will be carried out and their views reflected in the revised policy.

By March 2001, a customer satisfaction survey of 10% of housing applicants will be carried out and appropriate standards and targets for the service set in consultation with users and other stakeholders.

Quality checks on the processing of cases will be introduced and ways of using information technology to improve the efficiency of the service will be explored during 2000/2001.

During 2000/2001 the management of the Allocations Service will be more closely integrated with Estate Management and Repairs Services to enable us to provide a more comprehensive service and improve accountability.

The average time for people to be advised of the outcome of their homeless application is currently around 60 days. Although this is longer than the 33 working days set out in the Housing Act Code of Guidance, the Council is able to house the majority of applicants in Council housing while they are waiting for a decision.

We will, however, be looking at ways of improving the processing of homelessness applications to reduce the time taken to reach a decision. During 2000/2001 standards and targets for the Homeless Persons Unit will be developed in consultation with service users and other stakeholders.

The average time taken to relet properties is above the national average which represents a missed housing opportunity and loss of income through rents. During 2000/2001 a range of procedures will be introduced to reduce this, such as:

- Closer working procedures between voids, allocations and homeless persons and area housing teams
- Introducing, on a trial basis, early offer of houses before they are actually ready to let
- Closely monitoring the performance indicators for applications and allocation processes

Reception and Housing Advice Services made a joint application for a Service First Charter Mark, the Government award scheme for excellence, and received a commendation. The Cabinet Office congratulated the Council on its application and encouraged us to resubmit. In 2000/2001 we will:

- Resubmit an application for a Service First Charter Mark for Housing Advice and Reception services using the fast track route
- Apply for a Charter Mark for the Consumer Advice Service

The Service has developed good practice in a number of areas such as setting and monitoring standards and targets and consulting users. By March 2001 performance data will be further analysed and targets for improvement set in consultation with service users.

To improve access to services, the housing advice team works closely with other agencies and runs advice



surgeries at other offices. To make it easier for service users to contact us, we aim to make all Housing and Health services accessible from any of our local offices. During 2000/2001 we will develop an implementation plan to enable all contact services to be accessed from any area office.

There has been little formal comparison of our services with other providers. During 2000/2001 we will begin to compare practices and procedures with other councils, housing associations and agencies to identify ways to improve the service.

Housing Property and Central Housing Services

What is Housing Property and Central Housing Services?

This service covers three main areas of responsibility:

Central Housing in this team provides a range of support services to the department's Housing Service. Right To Buy applications, when Council tenants buy the properties they have been renting, are processed. The team also deals with leasehold matters on flats that are being bought under Right To Buy.

This team monitors the performance of the Housing Management Service and updates the Housing Estate Management manual which sets out procedures and standards for the Housing Management Service. It is also responsible for advising relevant staff of changes to legislation and case law relating to landlord/tenant matters.

Voids Control Service in this team has overall responsibility for ensuring that homes that have been vacated are brought back to the required standard and made ready for re-letting as quickly as possible. They inspect void properties, assess and order any necessary works.

Resources in this team are responsible for monitoring the Council's Capital Programme for housing and revenue expenditure on repairs.

In 1998/1999 the service dealt with around:

- 1,200 Right To Buy applications
- 2,200 void properties
- capital and revenue works worth over £50 million.

The service supports the Council's priorities for making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer, raising general pride in the borough and projecting a positive image.

17 staff are directly employed by the service. The General Manager is supported by 3 Service Managers and a team of professional and administrative staff.

The overall cost of the service for 1998/1999 was £418,942 of which £402,286 related to staffing costs.



How we perform

Housing property & Central Housing Services Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
Local Indicators									
Percentage of homes that are empty that are....	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
available for letting or awaiting minor repair	1.9%	1.6%	2.2%	2.0%	0.7%	0.9%	1.8%	1.2%	0.9%
other - e.g. awaiting major works, demolition	1.3%	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%	0.1%	0.3%	3.5%	0.6%	0.9%
Percentage of initial inspections carried out within 4 day standard	100%	100%	100%	100%	Other Information A Housing Management Cost, Resource and Performance Benchmarking study in 1999, led by consultants Arthur Andersen, enabled us to compare our services with other London boroughs and housing associations. The results are still being analysed, but initial findings on void properties show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the costs per property at £11 are lower than the London average of £21 • average pay at £19,371 is lower than the London average of £20,758 • void turnaround times are in line with the London average at 10 weeks, but higher than the national average 				
Percentage of snagging inspections undertaken within 2 day standard	85%	60%	54%	75%					
Percentage of empty homes available for letting within 36 days	70%	56%	50%	70%					

What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Much of the Service is already covered by performance standards, but no consultation has been undertaken. We need to survey service users and stakeholders to measure their satisfaction and monitor the quality of services provided. This will be developed during 2000/2001. We need to develop targets as landlords for the remaining areas of the service in consultation with users and stakeholders. Key standards and targets should be published by March 2001 and our performance against them regularly monitored and reported.

Some work has already been done to compare our performance with other providers. The benchmarking exercise shows that our costs for servicing void properties is lower than average and our performance is close to the London average. During 2000/2001 measures will be developed and implemented to improve efficiency by reducing the length of time properties are vacated. This should increase the amount of rent received.

To make it easier for service users to contact us, we aim to make all Housing and Health Services accessible from any of our local offices. During 2000/2001 we will develop an Implementation Plan to enable all contact services to be accessed from any area office.

The increase in Right To Buy applications has put pressure on the small Central Housing Team. Their role in monitoring and supporting the housing service is an important one and we need to ensure that they are adequately resourced to fulfil it. By March 2001, a specialist team will be established to provide advice and information to leaseholders on their rights and responsibilities. They will also ensure a co-ordinated approach to consultation with leaseholders.

The services provided by the Voids and Resources Teams will be included as part of the fundamental performance review of the Repairs Service which will be carried out during 2000/2001. This will identify opportunities to improve the efficiency of the service.



Housing Repairs Service

What is the Housing Repairs Service?

Responsibility for repairs to Council homes is spread over three departments. Housing and Health, Development and Technical Services and Contract Services are responsible for the client, agent and contractor functions respectively. The latter two departments are currently the subject of a re-organisation. These arrangements were set up under Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) which required the Council to put its building contracts out to tender.

Repairs are reported (by letter, telephone or in person) to the Repairs Reporting Service in Housing and Health during normal office hours and to the Control Centre, part of Development and Technical Services, in the case of emergencies which occur out of hours.

The Repairs Reporting Service provides a one-stop-shop to deal with requests for repairs and complaints relating to repairs undertaken. The Repairs Reporting team orders repairs direct or arranges for a surveyor to visit and makes appointments with contractors on behalf of the tenant or leaseholder (Repairs by Appointment).

The Government has set certain times within which repairs must be carried out under the statutory Right to Repair scheme. These times vary depending on the type of repair. In addition, the Council has adopted local timescales for repairs that are not covered by the Right to Repair. Examples are given in the following table.

The Repairs Reporting Service handles over 147,000 calls each year. 5,500 complaints about repairs are also dealt with. More than 80,000 repair jobs are undertaken every year.

The Service supports the community priorities of creating a cleaner, greener, safer Borough and improving health and social care.

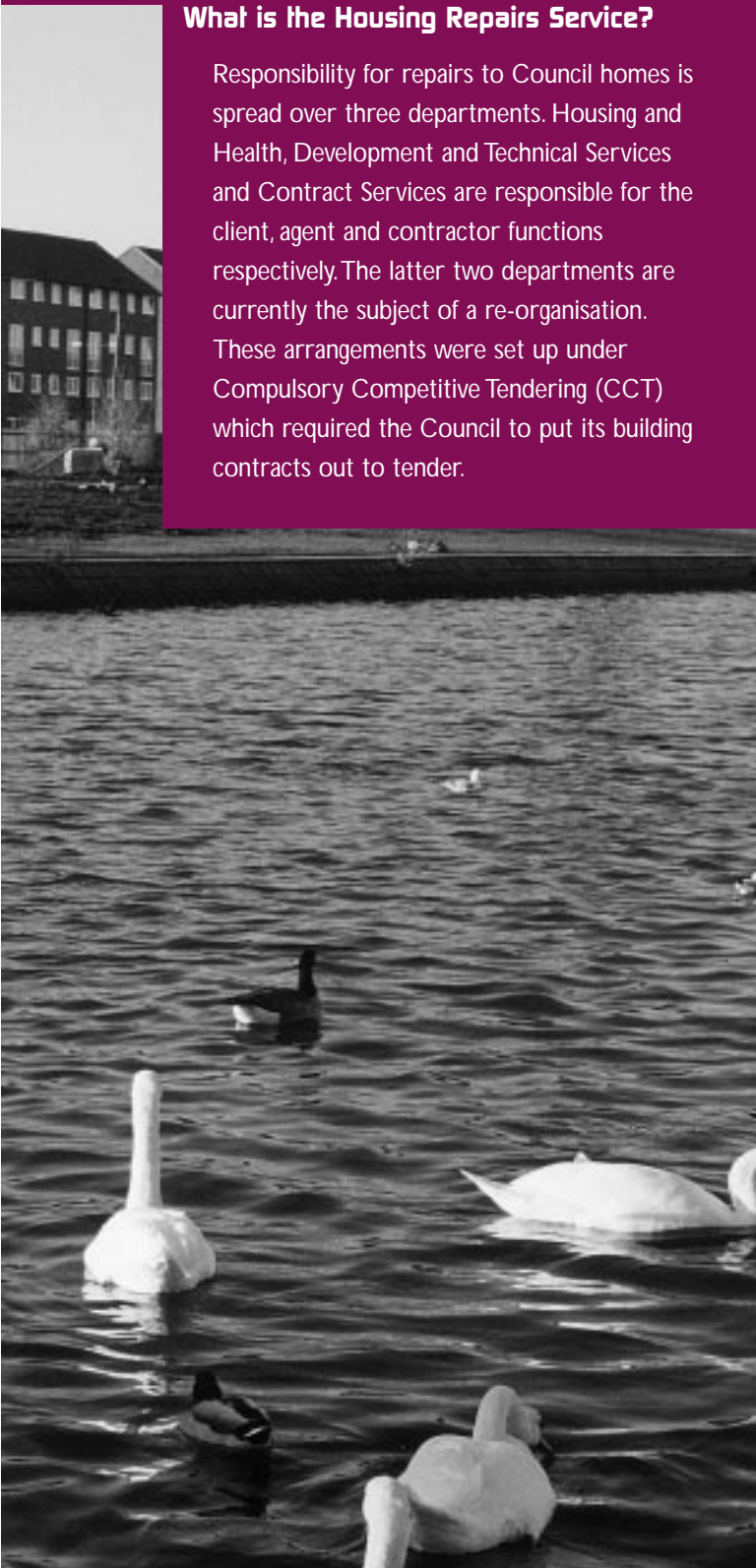
The overall cost of the Repairs Service for 1998/1999 was £15,018,715. The majority of this, £12,299,879, was for carrying out repairs and maintenance.



What do people think of the Service?

The Repairs Policy, which sets out the type of work which the Council takes responsibility for, was developed following extensive consultation with tenants and leaseholders.

A customer satisfaction survey of users of the Repairs Service was undertaken in 1998. Of the 560





respondents, 96% thought the repair was carried out in a reasonable time, 85% felt the repair service represented value for money and 81% reported overall satisfaction with the service.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information shows that Barking and Dagenham provides a low-cost repairs services with

costs below averages for London and neighbouring boroughs.

The proportion of repairs for which an appointment was made and kept was low when compared with other London boroughs.

The survey undertaken in 1998 showed that most people were satisfied with the time taken to carry out their repair, but the percentage of repairs undertaken within the timescales set by government is lower than the best performing boroughs.

How we perform

Housing Repairs Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
Percentage of relevant repairs completed within Government time limits	78%	78%	80%	85%	95%	92%	98%	80%	89%
The average weekly costs per local authority dwelling of repairs	£11.28	£9.58	£11.37	£11.88	-----	-----	£11.71	£11.44	£14.07
Local Indicators									
Percentage of relevant repairs completed within local time limits	73%	76%	60%	65%	91%	89%	99%	85%	84%
Percentage of repair jobs for which an appointment was made and kept by the authority	33%	39%	29%	45%	32%	81%	80%	0%	85%

Other Information

The Government has set certain times within which repairs must be carried out under the Right to Repair scheme. These times vary depending on the type of repair. In addition the Council has adopted local timescales for repairs that are not covered by the Right to Repair.

Examples are given below:

Priority 1: Any matter involving a danger to health and safety that needs to be made safe – problem will be made safe within 2 hours (providing access given). This includes emergency call-outs which occur out of office hours

Examples in this category would be flooding, burst pipes, lack of heating, power or light for vulnerable people.

Priority 2: Any matter involving a danger to health and safety that needs repair – repaired within 24 hours (provided access given)

Examples in this category would be lack of drinking water, major leaks, broken toilet pan and items posing danger to life, limb or property.

Priority 3: - repaired within 3 days

Examples in this category would be partial loss of water or power supply or blocked sink, bath or basin.

Priority 4: Any repair that affects the tenant or condition of the property – to be completed within 10 days of inspector's visit.

Examples in this category would be lack of heating or hot water, defective toilet cisterns or leaking roofs.

Priority 5: Any other routine repair not covered in 1-3 above – to be completed within 28 days of inspector's visit.

Examples in this category would be external joinery and fittings to metalwork, windows, window sills and door (except for security reasons) and faulty or damaged guttering or rainwater pipes.

Priority 6: Non-routine repairs where materials or equipment needs to be ordered – to be completed within 68 days of inspector's visit.

Examples in this category would be windows needing replacement or defective brick joints.

A Housing Management Cost, Resource and Performance Benchmarking study in 1999, led by consultants Arthur Andersen, enabled us to compare our services with other London boroughs and housing associations. The results are still being analysed, but initial findings have:

- confirmed that repair costs are below London and national averages
- shown above average number of repairs per property
- commented on unusual management structure
- identified limited data on performance and administrative costs

The Council was part of a pilot study of eleven local authorities across the country carried out by Arthur Anderson in conjunction with the Local Government Association. Its objectives were to:

- compare the cost, scope and performance of the housing repair service
- consult customers on levels of satisfaction and areas for improvement
- consult key service providers to gain an internal perspective of the performance of the service

An interim report recommended that we:

- improve and extend our repairs by appointment system
- improve relationships between housing managers, construction professionals and the repairs contractors
- monitor more closely the quality of work undertaken by contractors
- look at what the service provides and make sure tenants are clear about what they are and are not entitled to
- increase consultation with tenants before, during and after works have been completed.

The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service is currently provided by staff in three separate departments. The benchmarking report confirms that there are weaknesses in the arrangement, which is not the most effective way of delivering the service.

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the service, the Council intends to set up a fully integrated Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service. This will be achieved by merging all existing sections into a single team within the Housing and Health department by March 2001.

Key features of the integrated Housing Repairs Service will include:

- **Joint responsibility of all parties involved in repairs to meet agreed service levels**
- **Individuals and teams will have clear responsibilities and will be held to account for their performance**
- **The needs and aspirations of tenants and other service users will be clearly set out in the specification**
- **Appointments for all repair requests and the appointment system will be rigorously implemented**
- **A high degree of satisfaction on the part of users. Customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out**

and policies and practices reviewed in the light of findings from them

- **Work and success measured in terms of outcomes rather than outputs and inputs:**
- **Every job should be done on time**
- **Every job which can be done in one visit, will be done in one visit**
- **There will be no duplication of functions between repairs reporting, surveyors and operational staff and the management and workforce will be fully integrated**

During 2000/2001 the management of the Repairs Service will be more closely integrated with Estate Management and Allocations Services to enable us to provide a more comprehensive service and improve accountability.

To make it easier for service users to contact us, we aim to make all Housing and Health services accessible from any of our local offices. During 2000/2001 we will develop an implementation plan to enable all contact services to be accessed from any area office.

A fundamental review of the Service will start in 2000 and the results will be used to inform future decisions on financial and service planning and improve the efficiency of the Service.



Housing Strategy

The Service

The Council recognises that its Housing Strategy affects the lives of all residents and is central to successful regeneration of the Borough.

The team has 3 main areas of responsibility:

Housing Strategy

Each year local authorities have to submit a Housing Strategy Statement to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions as part of the Housing Investment Programme. The Strategy provides information on local housing needs, the condition of homes in the area and our services. It sets out the Council's objectives and proposals for responding to these issues, and reports progress made to date on the previous year's strategy. It covers all housing in the Borough.

The team undertakes research into local housing needs and conditions; co-ordinates production of the Housing Strategy, including consulting with tenants and other interested agencies, and directly leads on delivering some parts of the strategy. It also monitors performance and progress against the strategy on a quarterly/annual basis.

Social Housing Grant Programme

The Council plays a key role in encouraging, enabling and working with other providers of housing and this is essential if the housing needs of the Borough are to be met. Working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private developers, the team is directly responsible for managing an annual £12.8 million Social Housing Grant programme set within the following investment framework:

- 60% on new build properties for rent, with a focus on the needs of older people in support of the Council's Older Persons Accommodation Strategy; and those of extended families & minority ethnic communities
- 20% on regeneration-related initiatives to support the purchase/refurbishment of empty private sector properties which can be adapted to meet specific needs; support for a 'mortgage rescue' scheme to help people with special needs who have trouble meeting their mortgage repayments; and Estate Renewal/Single Regeneration Budget work

- 15% on other schemes to meet specific needs such as those of people with learning disabilities, mental health problems and supported tenancies for young single mothers/young people leaving care.
- 5% on low cost home ownership initiatives for people unable to buy their home outright in the first instance, or afford full market rents.

A separate 3 year 'trickle transfer' programme, supported by a further £5.1 million social housing grant, will lead to the disposal of 122 homes in need of refurbishment being transferred to an RSL in 2000/2001. A key feature of this programme is the joint intention with the RSL to set up a Local Housing Company.

Regeneration

The team leads and co-ordinates improvement work on selected Council-owned estates and areas identified as being in need of regeneration, covering both Council and privately owned property. This is done in close consultation with local communities and other agencies. Regeneration proposals link into, and contribute the delivery of the objectives and principles set out by the Government's Urban Task Force, the forthcoming White Paper on regeneration and the Council's Unitary Development Plan.

The team is also responsible for implementing a strategy to improve private sector homes in need of repair or renewal. Both these areas link into and contribute to major Council regeneration proposals such as Single Regeneration Budget schemes.

The Housing Strategy team, which comprises 5 people, has been part of the Policy, Planning and Review division. In 1998/99 the overall cost of the

division was £269,947, of which £234,583 related to staffing costs. Following a review, the division is to be divided into two distinct sections Housing Strategy and Planning and Review with additional resources being devoted to Housing Strategy.



What do people think of the Service?

A borough-wide Housing Needs Survey questioned more than 1,200 households about their housing conditions, needs and aspirations. The most common problems identified by households in unsuitable housing included:

- Home in need of major repair
- Home is too small
- Condition of home affecting occupants' health
- Shared facilities
- Need less expensive housing

Local people have been invited to participate in planning improvements to their estates. A follow up survey of 462 residents on the Gascoigne estate was carried out in 1998 to see what effect improvements undertaken since 1992 had had on residents' lives. Overall people's satisfaction levels with their home, block or part of the estate had not risen significantly. However, a high proportion of residents felt that the following measures had been successful in improving parts of the estate:

- Improved lighting – 88%
- Fencing to enclose areas around blocks/create shared gardens – 72%
- Resident caretakers for high rise blocks – 78%

How we perform

Housing Strategy Performance Indicator	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators	.....	.....	.....	.....
Assessment of Housing Strategy Statement by Government Office for London	Below average	Below average	Below average	Average

Other Information

The Housing Strategy is assessed by the Government Office for London (GoL) and this year we were judged to be below average. GoL have confirmed, however, that we have made a significant improvement over previous years and that the increase of our 'score' was the highest of all London boroughs.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Housing Strategy is an important corporate document with strong links to regeneration, job creation, education and social care. The new, bigger housing strategy team which will be established in 2000 will ensure our strategy plays its full part in improving the lives of residents. Our aim is that by 2005 our housing strategy is rated as being as good as the best.

The data from the Housing Needs survey will be further analysed to project future housing needs and to shape developments and spending on housing in the coming year.

Regular liaison and consultation with private sector developers has resulted in a number of successful informal partnering arrangements, including new build homes, SRB funded initiatives and estate renewal proposals. The public-private sector partnership will be strengthened and further developed during 2000/2001.

From April 2000 we will begin implementing the new Private Sector Housing strategy to improve physical standards and conditions in this sector. The strategy includes proposals for improving existing

housing, promoting the best possible conditions in new developments and encouraging and supporting the private rented sector.

During 2000/2001 at least 300 new homes will be provided for people in housing need.

Three sheltered housing schemes will be completed by April 2001, providing 77 new homes.

122 empty homes in need of refurbishment will be transferred to an RSL during 2000/2001 and a formal application to set up a Local Housing Company will be made.

Work will continue to encourage people to get involved in planning improvements to their area.

During 2000/2001 we will:

- **Start the first phase of redevelopment at St Anns on the Gascoigne Estate**
- **Work with tenants to provide a vision for the estate for the next 10 years**
- **Involve residents of the Cleveland, Bloomfields and Wakerings in developing long term options for the estate**

We will work more closely with Housing Associations on customer satisfaction feedback and introduce performance indicators during 2000 to assess how well Housing Associations are meeting the needs of their tenants.



Information Systems and Technology

What is the Information Systems and Technology Service?

The Information Systems & Technology (IS&T) Division provides computing and communications services to all departments of the Council. Its work is carried out through the following sections:

- Five departmental IT teams - 23 full time equivalent (FTE) staff at a cost of £713,968 per year
- Production Services, which undertakes systems development and operations - 21 FTE staff at a cost of £645,942 per year
- Technology Services, which provides business support, technical support and telecommunications - 20.5 FTE staff at a cost of £231,013 per year.

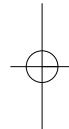


What do people think of the service?

In 1994, an IT value improvement programme by an external consultant was commissioned. The purpose of the programme was to initiate actions to improve the real and perceived value of IT by:

- Identifying areas where needs are not being met
- Identifying areas where performance is seen to be poor
- Identifying areas where communication is seen to be inadequate
- Identifying areas where management processes are inadequate
- Improving understanding of the cost base

During this programme, about twenty senior managers in all the service departments were asked which of the services provided by the internal IT function was the strongest and which the weakest. This revealed that the strongest was the mainframe operational service and the weakest was the support of desktop PCs. The reorganisation of the Service three years ago was designed partially to address these issues.



How we perform

Information Systems & Technology Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators	-----	-----	-----	-----
Percentage of overall customer satisfaction with the service received	-----	64%	-----	70%
Percentage of support calls resolved within the agreed timescales	-----	82%	-----	85%
Percentage of projects completed within:	-----	-----	-----	-----
(a) agreed budget	-----	85%	-----	90%
(b) agreed timescale and standard	-----	78%	-----	90%
(c) Delivering agreed benefits	-----	89%	-----	90%
Annual cost per workstation - Leasing and support	-----	£869	-----	£800
Number of work-stations supported by a member of ICT support staff	-----	87	-----	100
Ratio of workstations to staff	-----	54%	-----	60%
Number of employees who have access to e-mail from their computer	The Council wishes to increase the number of staff with access to e-mail			1000

Other performance information

The Council will aim to perform within the upper 50% of local authority IT services in 2000/2001. The Benchmark Club which we will compare ourselves against includes: Camden, Haringey, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston, Merton, Redbridge, Islington, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Greenwich, Brent, Barnet, Bexley and York.

An e-mail survey of 200 users was conducted in October 1999 and revealed the following satisfaction levels for the four areas of the service:

- Telephone service 79%
- Operational service 59%
- System Development 59%
- Desktop support 72%

What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

We only have performance information for one year so far. We have set targets to improve our performance in 2000/2001 for every indicator. Until we obtain data from our Benchmark Club, it is difficult to assess whether our performance is good or bad in comparison with others. In order to improve our

customer satisfaction, particularly in the areas of operational services and system development, we have set ourselves challenging project management targets for 2000/2001 and will be improving our operational services next year as set out below.

Options are always under review to improve services and reduce the cost of delivery. The following initiatives are being actively pursued in 2000/2001.

- A review of the ICT systems support arrangements for the Education Department will be undertaken. The aim will be to rationalise duplication, which currently exists through the separation of curriculum and administrative systems.
- A review of the PC maintenance contract following the extension of the warranty period of the existing PC supplier to three years, with the aim of introducing a more cost effective maintenance service provided in-house. This will lead to improved efficiency in the operation of the Service.
- Aim to standardise operations on a single system and date for future applications, which will simplify the support workload and reduce dependency on individual members of staff.

- Review the current support service for UNIX, NT and Novell servers. These computers number approximately 70 and are used to store data centrally in a secure environment. It is also intended to assess the case to re-locate all the servers currently in remote locations (schools excepted) to a secure, air-conditioned environment at the Civic Centre. This will allow the housekeeping functions (such as taking security copies of the data) and the day-to-day support to be carried out in a controlled way by central IT staff.
- Review staff responsibilities and remuneration with the aim of eliminating the dependence on contract staff and realise financial savings to the customer. This will improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the service.
- Review the auto-attendant service – (which allows telephone calls to be answered and transferred to the correct extension automatically) with the aim of improving the quality of the service provided and consider the options for a call centre to replace the current switchboard arrangement.

- Investigate the feasibility and use of Microsoft Terminal Server, which would remove the need for each PC to retain its own software.
- Establish an inter-departmental customer group to ensure that the opportunities provided for new communications media are fully exploited.
- Investigate providing access to the Council's mainframe and other text-based systems by a browser, the software associated with interrogating web sites. Also under investigation is software called "middleware" which allows systems on disparate computer platforms to be interfaced with each other. This could be achieved by address or resident's name. The aim of the exercise is to allow a range of applications to provide a similar look and feel and make use of systems directly by the public, or in a call centre or one-stop-shop, very simple.
- Roll out e-mail to one thousand customers throughout the Council.
- Use the telephone call-logger to provide improved management information on telephone usage.



Internal Audit

What is the Internal Audit Service?

The independent and objective auditing of the Council's wide-ranging financial operations and procedures is the responsibility of Internal Audit.

The Section reviews and advises upon the adequacy of internal controls and procedures across all existing financial systems and on the development of new systems.

It also provides assistance to both managers and councillors on issues relating to corporate governance and the application of regulatory frameworks. That is, ensuring financial systems and decisions are made for the benefit of the whole Council and its community and that they meet legal requirements. The Section also investigates all suspected or reported cases of fraud and financial irregularity. It investigates instances of waste or inefficiency and undertakes, where appropriate, value-for-money reviews. The Section is responsible for ensuring that the Council is seen to be acting honestly and with integrity – it administers probity. The Section audits, to test existing systems and to help maintain appropriate standards of financial conduct. This work is an essential part of the Council's priority of developing rights and responsibilities with the community.

Its work covers auditable income and expenditure estimated to be in the region of £300 million. The overall budget for the section is £415,000, which includes a staffing budget of £359,000. The department has nine in-house posts and the equivalent of two posts subcontracted to Deloitte and Touche.



What do people think of the Service?

The independence and objectivity of the Service is crucial to its effectiveness and customer satisfaction can be hard to gauge. Nevertheless, opinion has been sampled following the fifteen system audits that were undertaken in 1998/1999. Once an audit was completed, copies of a post audit questionnaire were distributed to systems managers who then passed these on to those affected by the audit. 60 questionnaires were returned through this process. The results are set out below:-

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Adequate	Unsatisfactory
28 (46.7%)	31 (51.7%)	1 (1.6%)	- (0%)



How we perform

Internal Audit Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators				
Percentage of responses made, at senior level, within 1 working day to all allegations of fraud or irregularity	The Internal Audit services aims to make an appropriate response to all allegations of fraud or irregularity			100%
Percentage of high priority areas covered - as identified in the audit plan (eg major financial systems and contract audits in schools)	The work underpins the 'Managed Audit Status' accredited to the service			90%
Percentage below the average cost (Per £1m turnover) against the CIPFA Benchmark Club - containing 30-40 comparable authorities	LBB&D costs may rise as the service undertakes a greater level of non-financial work	£867		25% below CIPFA Benchmark Club average (£975 per £1m turnover)

Other Information

The Council has been awarded "Managed Audit" status by the Audit Commission in recognition of work conducted to a reliable, effective and professional standard.

Attaining Managed Audit status in a relatively small section is an achievement, which indicates the overall quality and competence. It does not, however offer an insight into the section's relative effectiveness, or the quality of its performance as viewed by internal customers.

The CIPFA Benchmarking Club suggests that the Internal Audit section at Barking and Dagenham provides a low cost service when compared both with neighbouring authorities and on a national level.

LBB&D		Club Average
Cost per £1m Turnover	£867	£1,300
Days per £1m turnover	4.9	6.8
Daily cost as percentage of club average	89%	100%
External Audit fee per £1m turnover	£300	£550

Comparisons on cost efficiency with similar private sector services can be drawn by looking at external audit and the in-house sub contractor.

	LBB&D	Deloitte Touche	External Audit
Daily Rates as a percentage of External Audit rate	44.50%	69.90%	100%

Internal Audit is the only service subject to an annual external inspection by our external auditors. The primary objective being to ensure the Director of Finance is fulfilling his statutory responsibility to provide an adequate and effective internal audit service.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information set out above indicates:-

- A high level of satisfaction with projects undertaken by the service where feedback has been sought.
- A low cost service with a target to maintain this at lower than average for comparable services.
- Further work needs to be undertaken on developing performance information around quality and effectiveness to give a fuller appreciation of the service's performance.

Recognising the complexities of internal auditing procedures and the difficulties in accurately monitoring and evaluating performance, the Internal Audit Section at Barking & Dagenham is looking at developing

additional performance measures both in-house and within a benchmarking club. To address this, the Section has developed a set of targets and will be setting up procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of these targets in spring 2000. The development of the benchmarking club will be dependent on timetables set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

By the end of March 2001, we also intend to:

- Agree with our private sector auditors that we use for audit work, a balance of the work they undertake and work we carry out in-house
- Agree a programme of work with the audit sub-contractor so that we can start to develop computer-assisted audits
- Identify and provide resources needed to develop the section's role in support of the new Councillor scrutiny arrangements, by May 2000



Land and Property Information

What is the Land and Property Information Service?

The broad objectives of the Land and Property Information Service are:

- To provide an accurate, responsive and efficient Local Land Charges Service which undertakes searches on properties for house-buyers
- To provide a central information resource for all Council departments based on a single "Land & Property Gazetteer" that lists all addresses in the Borough
- To co-ordinate the development of a corporate strategy for property based information systems.

The Land and Property Information Section also manages the following services:

- The Local Land Charges Service, which currently processes 4,200 searches a year with approximately two full-time equivalent staff
- The Corporate Property Database Programme which includes the following current projects:
 - Computerisation of the above service (including development and support of the technical link with the planning database)
 - The development of the corporate Geographical Information System (computerised mapping) to provide accurate land and property information to all departments of the Council
 - The development and maintenance of one accurate corporate address file (Land & Property Gazetteer) which will be used to link all land and property information systems across the Council
 - The development of an Integrated Property Management System (computerised Register of the Council's land and property ownership, Asset Register and Commercial Property Management System)
 - Land registration programme with HM Land Registry to streamline the Council's land and property ownership records





- Responsibility for affixing the Council's Seal to formal and legal documents in accordance with standing orders, and the maintenance of the Sealing Register that lists all these documents
- Map production (for Right to Buy and other conveyancing transactions, etc.)
- Filing services for the Legal & Property Services Division

All the above, with the exception of Local Land Charges, are in support of other services provided by the Council, primarily through the provision of land and property information.

The Section comprises the equivalent of five permanent staff and two temporary staff. Their skills include Geographical Information Systems and data management, specialist local land charges, conveyancing and land registration skills. One member of staff is dedicated to data input.

2000/2001 will be the fifth and final year of the land registrations programme for which there is a remaining budget of £50,000.

With the exception of the land registrations programme, the current projects are funded by the reduction in staffing levels through natural wastage and increased local search fees. The projected income from the Local Land Charges Service for 1999/2000 is £378,530.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Council is proud of the improvements that have been made to the turnaround and quality of the Local Land Charges Service. Not only are we projecting that we will turnaround all standard searches in ten days, but we have set ourselves an even more stringent target of turning around 95% of standard searches in five days in 2000/2001.

However, there are issues that need to be addressed in the future. The key actions relating to Land Charges for 2000/2001 are: -

- To undertake work on assessing customer satisfaction
- To consider additional services in consultation with users
- To develop a Customer Service Statement for the Local Land Charges Service
- To make an application for a Charter Mark

The Service will also aim to complete the development of a single corporate address file (Land & Property Gazetteer) to replace the separate lists of addresses held by different Departments. This will increase efficiency by improving the quality of information and avoiding duplication of effort.

How we perform

Land and Property Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
Percentage of 'standard' searches carried out in ten working days	79%	89%	100%	100%	100%	100%	61%	96%	100%
Local Indicators	-----	-----	-----	-----					
Percentage of standard searches carried out in five working days	Target has been set in order to achieve excellence in service delivery			95%					

The service is now computerised and the system went "live" on 1st April 1999. This has led to a dramatic and measurable improvement in the service as shown above.



Legal Services

What is the Legal Service?

The Council's Legal Service is an internal support service organised around a small team of corporate Legal Officers. They have responsibilities for the legal needs of departments and services within the Council and for Council-wide legal functions.

The Service has the following objectives:

- To monitor the work of the Council to ensure that it acts lawfully in all its activities
- To oversee legal processes within the Council to ensure consistency, fairness and best practice
- To contribute to the development and implementation of corporate policies
- To provide support to Members and Council services (the "clients") by:
 - providing legal advice,
 - defining and specifying legal casework requirements,
 - directly supplying or contracting casework to meet the agreed standards.

The internal Legal Service is primarily concerned with defining clients' needs and the management of clients' legal business. This is because most casework and advice is delivered under contract with private solicitors.

The present in-house staff consists of seven corporate Legal Officers including the proposed Solicitor to the Council. They are supported by a team of six specialist officers and four clerks/administrative assistants.

Additional assistance is provided by a Business Support Unit shared with Property Services and the Land and Property Information Section.

Each Council department has a fixed budget allocated to fund any legal casework required. Any additional expenditure on legal work must be funded by the department itself.



What do people think of the Service?

In relation to casework that is contracted out to private solicitors, satisfaction levels are assessed through a client feedback survey, in addition to ongoing informal client contact. Feedback is used

primarily to assess individual contracts and no comprehensive compilation of survey results has been implemented to date.

The feedback is, however, discussed with all concerned and any areas below expectation are dealt with immediately by discussion with the client and, if necessary, by raising issues such as billing adjustment. Where a successful working relationship emerges with a private solicitor, this is rewarded by increasing the amount of work given to that contractor. This increase can in turn be used to negotiate discounts and so lead to efficiency savings.



How we perform

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) produced draft Performance Indicators for Legal Services in Spring 1999, which reflect the general health indicators proposed by the Audit Commission. They are intended as a basket of measures to address overall performance and the main emphasis is on customer satisfaction (to be ascertained from a regular use of surveys). The indicators are:

- Accuracy of advice
- Expertise and competency
- Meeting agreed time scales
- Consistent advice in content and approach
- Effectiveness in meeting client demands and objectives

These performance indicators were included in a six monthly, client satisfaction survey which was carried out in December 1999. Responses were

CIPFA Performance Indicator	Out of a possible total of 100
Accuracy of advice	93
Expertise and competency	93
Meeting agreed time scales	85
Consistency in content and approach	91
Effectiveness in achieving client objectives	91

received from 18 Chief and Divisional Officers across the Council.

The performance of the corporate Legal Officers was scored as follows:

The statistics for legal casework are not easily comparable, as each case is different. The CIPFA performance indicators will, however, provide a more robust basis for comparison in the future.

A substantial proportion of the casework is carried out in partnership with external contractors (i.e. private sector firms of solicitors) who have been selected by means of both voluntary and compulsory tendering processes.

Demanding performance standards are written into the contracts in consultation with clients. In many cases, these standards are set above those required by the courts and the Law Society. There are regular meetings involving the contractors, corporate Legal Officers and clients to monitor all aspects of service delivery, including quality and costs and how best to achieve continuous improvement.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Following the recent restructuring of the Legal Services Division, a full review of the Service is being undertaken to facilitate the Council's modernisation agenda. This will continue through to mid-2000.

Actions for 2000/2001 will include:

- The adoption of CIPFA standards and the setting of targets based on them
- The application of a more consistent and comprehensive system for the collection and collation of customer satisfaction data
- The development of benchmarking with other authorities through CIPFA
- The further application of new technology to create a seamless provision of services to clients whether the work is done in-house or by external partners or contractors. This will help to speed up communications and reduce costs.



Leisure Centres

What is the Leisure Centre Service?

The Leisure Service has been exposed to Compulsory Competitive Tendering for ten years. Therefore, at the time of writing leisure provision remains split between:

- Client – which monitors and develops the service
- Contractor organisations – which deliver the service

This Performance Plan covers both parts of the Service, which will merge during the year 2000.

The Leisure Client Team is responsible for the monitoring, management and ongoing arrangements for the delivery of leisure activities to people living and working in the Borough.

The Team seeks to bring about improvements in leisure services whether delivered through contractors, voluntary organisations, non-profit making organisations or commercial companies.

During the era of Compulsory Competitive Tendering for Council Leisure Services, the Team has organised research and data collection for contract preparation, written contract specifications, evaluated tender submissions and monitored the performance of contractors.

A major reorganisation of the Department will take place during 2000/2001. This will address the client/contractor split directly, and seek to develop a modern, forward looking service.

The Leisure Client team consists of two officers; one Client Officer assisted by one Technical Officer. The budget in 1999/2000 for the whole of the Leisure Service was £3,233,580 of which £3,600 was financed through rents and lettings.

The Leisure Management Direct Services Organisation directly manages the following sites: Dagenham Swimming Pool, Abbey Sports Centre, Wood Lane Sports Centre, the Broadway Theatre, as well as outdoor facilities and pitches across the Borough, including an athletics arena at Mayesbrook Park. These employ 66 full-time staff and 188 casual and part-time staff.

The Council also works in partnership with Glendale Leisure Limited who manage the facilities at Goresbrook Leisure Centre.



What do people think of the Service?

No sports centres or pools have User Forums to gain feedback from regular user groups and individuals.

In the absence of any formal customer feedback, attendance figures at facilities may give some indication about users "voting with their feet". Figures appear in the spreadsheet below, but as a general guide between 1997/98 and 1998/99 attendance rose by 8%, and are expected to rise by the same amount by the end of 2000/2001 to 993,296.



What does this information mean, and what we are going to do about it?

No surveys have been conducted in the recent past, and the lack of depth of the questions means that there are no direct conclusions that can be made

from the Community Survey. This position will be rectified during 2000/2001 when consultation will be implemented.

We do not yet have usable information on customer feedback regarding this service. It is the intention to undertake user surveys starting in 2000.

The CCT contracts under which facilities currently operate set a limited range of targets for contractors to achieve overall increases in attendance figures. Goresbrook Leisure Centre has seen a fall in the number of people using the centre over the past two years. The Service was externalised last year and the new management of the centre have put in place a plan to increase the use of the existing facilities. As a result, it is projected that attendance at the centres will increase in the next year, alongside a planned reduction in costs.

Key actions for 2000/01 will be as follows:

- To identify the extent to which client and contractor functions can be merged, bearing in mind the principles of Best Value

How we perform

Leisure Centres Provision and Management Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The net cost per swim/ visit to Leisure Facility	£1.73	£1.51	£1.09	£0.97	£0.72	£1.10	£2.10	£0.80	£2.07
Local Indicators									
Number of swims and other visits	851,408	919,315	955,558	993,296	-----	-----	476,803	829,178	1,141,961
Total net spending per head on sport and recreation	£29.16	£28.29	£27.03	£26.37	-----	-----	£18.50	£14.95	£27.29
The number of sports pitches available to the public	121	116	114	112	54	105	77	173	44

Other Information

In the absence of any formal customer feedback, attendance figures at facilities may give some indication about users 'voting with their feet'. The following shows attendance figures since 1996/97 and indications are that the upward trend is continuing.

Centre	1996/97	% change	1997/98	% change	1998/99	% change
Abbey Sports Centre	167,452	-6.2	168,793	+8	171,287	1.5
Dagenham Pool	173,171	-15	169,827	-1.9	208,221	23
Goresbrook Leisure Centre	318,450	+4.7	308,260	-3.2	307,013	-0.4
Wood Lane sports Centre	250,938	-6.0	230,320	-8.2	261,981	14
Park Sports	136,857	-7.9	137,666	-0.6	139,590	1.4
Broadway Theatre	28,370	n/a	30,709	+8.2	41,456	35



- Develop a strategy for community fitness which will look at investigating the introduction of fitness testing and programmed exercise for Council employees, taking forward “healthy workplace” and “well-worker” initiatives
- Review and reform the Leisure Pass and develop a resident’s card scheme to make marketing and targeting more effective
- To deal with corrosion in structural steelwork at Goresbrook Leisure Centre. Funding is in place in the 2000/2001 Capital Programme. The work will mean the closure of the pool area for a period in the autumn of 2000, but represents a key re-investment in this facility
- To investigate and progress options for a funding package for the refurbishment of Dagenham Swimming Pool in line with the chosen option
- To monitor the performance of contractors in achieving the targeted minimum 3% increase in throughput at all facilities
- To identify and encourage voluntary clubs to take on the management of the facilities they use, subject to capability
- To examine and encourage setting up user forums to gain feedback from regular user groups and individuals
- To liaise with and monitor private sector provision of leisure facilities on Council land; e.g. golf course and driving range, five-a-side soccer centre
- To initiate customer satisfaction surveys, initially amongst users, both individuals and clubs
- In the light of proposals to refurbish Dagenham Swimming Pool, and the construction of a sports hall at Robert Clack Comprehensive School, to assess the future role and value of Wood Lane Sports Centre
- To review our charging policy, in the light of London and local prevailing charges and the balance between cost recovery and market forces
- To progress with neighbouring authorities arrangements for a benchmarking club
- To investigate alternative means of funding leisure services in the Borough, such as trusts, looking for more efficient use of resources
- To develop a plan to achieve the Investors in People (IiP) Award at pools and sports centres, and to assess the potential for subsequently extending this initiative to the rest of the Leisure area
- To review the effectiveness of operational procedures for leisure sites by December 2000
- To examine ways to encourage an increase in the average spend per person at leisure sites, particularly secondary spend (items such as drinks, sports equipment, snacks etc)
- To review the Leisure Services Business Plan and if found necessary, make changes
- To promote the health benefits of exercise beyond the GP Referral Scheme by introducing the following activities:
 - Cardiac screening
 - Cardiac rehabilitation
 - Active Family sessions
 - Fit Kids sessions
 - Health in the workplace.



Leisure Events

What is the Leisure Events Service?

The Leisure Events Service is responsible for organising and co-ordinating the Borough's two large public events, the Dagenham Town Show and Barking Festival.

It also organises an annual half marathon and fun run and a Christmas Parade. It co-ordinates music and entertainment on the bandstand in Barking Town Centre; liaises with the Barking Rotary Club who organise an annual firework display and entertainment in Barking Park and co-ordinates the use of the Borough's parks for fairs, circuses, fetes and other entertainments. It advises other Council departments and organisations on the planning, arranging and staging of events and entertainments at Council premises to ensure statutory requirements are met in areas such as public entertainment licensing and food hygiene requirements.

It is planned to change the service focus from 2 major events in the year to a programme of events and entertainments in the Borough's parks and other performance spaces, spread more evenly through the year. The aim will be to raise the general pride in the Borough and project a positive image while helping to regenerate the local economy.

There are two full-time equivalent posts; an Events Officer and an Assistant Events Officer and the Service is managed by the Recreation Manager, a principal officer in the Recreation & Parks Group.

The budget for the Barking Carnival Festival for 1999/2000 is £66,398 of which £4,279 is raised from income. For the Dagenham Town Show the total cost is £162,663 of which £53,184 is raised from income.



What do people think of the Service?

The first customer survey of 350 people undertaken by the Service was at the Dagenham Town Show in July 1999. The response showed a general level of satisfaction with that event by visitors. Specific responses were:

- 87.4% said they would visit the show again next year
- 64.2% said that they came every year



- 18.9% said that 1999 had been their first visit
- The most popular attractions were the concerts and the marquees

No other surveys have yet been undertaken of the attitude of the general public to the events provided. In the absence of formal customer research, reliance has been placed on the content of local newspaper reports of the events, which have generally been positive and favourable.

In the past the staging of the Borough's major events was overseen by the Dagenham Town Show and Barking Festival Committees. There were representatives on both these Committees from community groups and organisations which participated in the events, and they gave valuable feedback, acting as a sounding board between the Council and members of their organisations in the community.



How We Perform

Due to the fact that both major events are offered to the public at free admission, it is impossible to be accurate on attendance figures, and therefore to compare statistics with neighbouring shows. Despite this, the following comparisons have been identified:

Indicator	Dagenham Town Show	Havering Town Show
Attendance	Estimated 100,000	25,000
Entrance fee	Free	£2.50 Adults £1 concession
Car parking	£3	£1
Trade fee 10x 20	£120	£71.40
Charity Stall	£10 (Barking Festival)	£29.40

It is the intention to establish a benchmarking forum with Havering and Redbridge during 2000.



What does this information mean and what we are going to do about it?

No performance indicators have yet been set for this Service. Our early research shows that in comparison with neighbouring town shows, attendance is good. We need to do more work on the other figures in

our benchmarking forum to understand the impact on the Town Show.

For 2000/01, we will:

- Introduce a customer feedback survey at Barking Festival
- Continue and develop the survey at Dagenham Town Show
- Develop a focus group for events generally, drawn from the respondents to both customer surveys
- Establish a benchmarking forum with neighbouring Boroughs of Havering and Redbridge on the area of event management, promotion and development
- Work to increase community involvement and support for major and minor events, using survey information to establish preferences for types of events
- Create a unified events/entertainment budget by combining the existing Dagenham Town Show and Barking Festival budgets, supplemented by income generated from the use of parks by fairs, circuses and similar professionally promoted events
- Change the focus of the service to towards a programme of events, entertainments and activities in parks and performance spaces across the Borough and throughout the year
- Encourage commercially promoted events to visit the Borough's parks as part of the events/entertainments programme by promoting the availability of resources
- Review the provision or distance of the half marathon and fun run in the light of reducing numbers of participants
- Investigate methods of increasing income generated from sources such as sale of exhibition or display space, concessions for food, drink, side-shows etc., donations or sponsorship at all events

It should be recognised that income from most sources in connection with outdoor events is "fragile", as poor weather can adversely affect attendance.

Libraries

What is the Libraries Services?

The Library Service aims to :
“encourage all who live and work in the Borough to use books, information, audio-visual materials and knowledge, which will support their education and enrich their recreational interests by providing a welcoming, quality service tailored to local needs”.

It also aims to offer an enjoyable experience through a welcoming service focused on the customer. A service that:

- Listens to the views of local people, responds to customers’ needs and is sensitive to the varying requirements of a multi-cultural community
- Ensures equality of access for all sections of the community
- Supports education, promoting lifelong learning and encouraging self-development
- Provides value for money
- Provides information, ensuring that it is comprehensive and up to date
- Enriches leisure activities, providing material and arranging events which assist in the creative use of recreational time
- Stimulates interest in the arts, supporting local cultural organisations and individuals
- Enhances heritage awareness, creating a unique resource of materials relating to the historic and present day life of the Borough

The Service plays an important role in improving education and training, providing wider opportunities for leisure, encouraging community involvement and helping to reduce social exclusion.

The Library Service is provided through 11 libraries. The main library is the Barking Central Library and there are 10 branch libraries throughout the Borough, linked through a computer system.

86 people are employed in the Library Service (which is the equivalent of 75 full-time staff (FTE), as some work part-time), with nine support staff (8.7 FTE). There is a budget of £2,962,000 and income of £110,000.

The staff includes both qualified librarians, experienced senior library assistants and library assistants, as well as a small team of support staff. The majority of the budget is spent on staff, premises and





new library materials (books, cassettes, CDs, videos, etc). The Service has a stock of over 400,000 books to borrow and a range of CDs, cassettes, videos and computer facilities.

Membership is free and available to all residents of the Borough, as well as to those people who work or study in Barking and Dagenham. In September 1999 there were 67,000 members.



What do people think of the service?

The Community Survey showed that 80% of respondents rated Barking and Dagenham's Library Service as good or very good and it was ranked as the third best service provided by the Council.

The last major survey was carried out several years ago, however more recent ones included:

- Audio Survey in 1998/1999 when 122 people responded. The purpose was to find out ways in which the Library's Music Service could be

improved. The results indicated that customers wanted up to date material, that the Service should continue to provide a broad spectrum of music, and that feedback on the more flexible ways to pay subscription fees was positive. There is a ruling which prevents the library holding new material until three months after it is released. Customers are now able to pay their fees either quarterly, half yearly or yearly – this has recently been introduced

- Whalebone Library – a survey was carried out in February 1998 in Whalebone Library and the Chadwell Heath Sainsbury's store. The aim of the survey was to find out what services should be provided at the new Library, as well as other comments about opening hours and views on the existing service and staff. 272 questionnaires were completed. Additional facilities which were provided at the new Library included the provision of listening and multimedia facilities and internet access – these were all identified as part of the survey

How we perform

Libraries Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/1998		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/1999		
	1997/1998	1998/1999	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The number of visits per head of population to public libraries.	4	4	4	4*	7	8	10	7	7
Number of book issues per head	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	7	7
Number of other items issued per year period	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1
Local Indicators					Other Performance Information				
Number of home library service and residential home issues	129.3	175.2	180.5	181	The Library Service is compared with similar services by CIPFA and an annual planning profile from CIPFA data that compares the Borough service with 11 other London boroughs as a comparative group. When compared with those other boroughs, the Service is				
Total number of issues per front-line member of library staff	25.7	29.6	30.1	30.2	above average in:				
Compliance with published opening hours	100%	100%	100%	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •net floor space per 1,000 population •total hours of access per 1,000 population •total staff in post per 1,000 population •book stock per 1,000 population 				
Number of class visits per year	866	653	426	450	below average in:				
% of reservations satisfied within 30 days	82%	82%	82%	82%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •computer terminals per 1,000 population •visits per 1,000 population •expenditure on materials •net expenditure per 1,000 population 				
% of reservations satisfied within 60 days	90%	91%	91%	91%	The number of school visits has reduced over the last two years as a result of the introduction of the literacy hour in schools. However we are looking at the possibility of including a visit to the library as part of the initiative to improve literacy in schools.				

* The new commitment towards adult literacy and the development of learning villages will encourage more people to visit libraries. When the effects of these initiatives are known, more challenging targets will be set. It should be noted that an increase of one visit per head of population would require an additional 155,000 visits. The same levels of increase would also be required for book and other issues.

- A pilot of the National Children's Survey took place at Whalebone Library in June 1999. This sought the views of children on the new Library and took place in the Library and at local schools and nurseries. 300 responses were received and the general view was that the services at the new Library were good



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The above information shows that the overall cost of the Library Service is cheaper than other comparative London boroughs. The hours that libraries are open and numbers of books stocked are also higher, but the number of computer terminals is below average. Usage levels, measured by average number of visits per head of population, are also below average. However the development of Learning Villages in libraries (community based learning opportunities) and the improvements for adult literacy will encourage more people to visit the library.

From the information available it is clear that the local community is relatively satisfied with the service provided.

However, Barking and Dagenham recognises there are still improvements to be made, especially concerning more regular consultation with users and non-users. Improvements are needed in the areas of information and communication technology and in supporting the drive to achieve higher standards of literacy at all ages. In the next year it is intended to:

- support the drive to improve education, especially through specific family learning and through reader development initiatives
- Support lifelong learning initiatives, particularly in improving literacy and developing libraries as an integral part of the Learning Villages initiative. These are community based learning facilities, which provide local people with a chance to improve their computer and other skills in their local area
- Provide a wider range of information and communication technology in libraries, including the internet, supported by well-trained staff
- Improve access, especially to people with disabilities, e.g. by training two staff in sign language and providing videos in sign language
- Work more closely with other library services outside Barking and Dagenham to identify examples of good practice and enable us to provide books and other resources more efficiently and economically, and to compare service provision
- Publicise the range of services more widely to encourage more use, e.g. by more leaflet drops in the areas close to libraries and providing a leaflet about the Home Library Service for the Carers' Forum
- Consult the community through the Public Library User Survey, which will seek the views of both users and non-users of the Service



Lifelong Learning

What Is Lifelong Learning?

The recently created Lifelong Learning Service seeks to raise the standards of attainment reached by local residents and the level of qualifications they acquire.

It will do this by co-ordinating a coherent Lifelong Learning Strategy, to establish agreed principles and priorities with partners. It will also secure significantly higher participation in quality learning opportunities and rigorously evaluate provision in relation to agreed standards.

The service focuses mainly on learning services for young people of 14 and over and for adults. It encompasses the work of the Adult College, the Youth Service, the local Education and Business Partnership, Trident, the Barking and Dagenham Training Service, the School Governor Training Programme and a range of major nationally recognised initiatives in schools. The team seeks to strengthen its work with existing partners and build links with new partners. Examples of key partnerships include the Strategic Employment and Training Partnership and the Strategic Lifelong Learning Partnership with Havering and Redbridge.

The service pays particular attention to removing barriers to participation. To do this it is developing a long-term strategy to ensure Borough residents have the confidence, support and incentive to take advantage of the provision available for them.

The overall budget for the service is £3.371million, this includes:

- Trewern, Hainault and Mayesbrook centres- £200,000
- Adult College with a net expenditure of £902,000
- Barking and Dagenham Training Service with a net expenditure of £283,000
- The Youth Service - Expenditure of £1,095, 000 which includes support to the East Street Information Shop for Young People, also funded by Single Regeneration Budget and other funding. The shop is now set up as a voluntary organisation



The Youth Service employs six full-time managers, one full time youth worker and six part-time administrative staff as well as approximately 60 part-time youth workers. A thorough review of this service took place in 1999/2000.

The Adult College employs the Head of College, six senior and assistant managers, five support staff, three part-time support people (a Quality Manager, Access Facilitator and Student Resource Centre staff) with 130 part-time tutors and 30-40 assistant part-time tutors.

Barking and Dagenham Training Services employs 20 people. Education Business Partnership employs two people and the remainder of the Service is supported by 18 people including the Head of the Lifelong Learning Service.

The service helps to deliver the Community Priorities of:-

- Creating better opportunities for all
- Regenerating the local economy - generating jobs, training and enterprise
- Raising general pride in the borough and projecting a positive image

In 1997, 21.5% of the workforce were qualified to NVQ level 3, compared with the national average of 41%. In 1996, Barking and Dagenham had the lowest proportion of the workforce holding NVQ level 3 or above in Greater London. Only 7.3% of the workforce had achieved NVQ level 4, against a national average of 24%.

In 1998, the Basic Skills Agency reported that the Borough's adult population had the fourth worst attainment in literacy skills and the second worst attainment in numeracy skills in the country.



What do people think of the Service

The London East Training and Enterprise Council in its "Report on Vocational GCSEs (1999)" stated that Barking and Dagenham's 14+ Pathways Project was

"exemplary", while the Community Survey provided the following information about the service:

- Adult education was considered good or very good by 75.5% of those surveyed, 58.6% felt the same about secondary education
- Willingness to learn (44.8%) and computer skills (44.1%) were the two areas seen to be the most important skills for people in work in the next five to 10 years
- More than half felt they had the skills they would need, however a recent survey of local businesses did not reflect this
- Of those who felt they would be likely to take part in training over the next two years, computer and office skills (36.8%) and on-the-job training/further education (21.2%) were the two areas most likely to be pursued

Adult College

A survey of 300 students in 1998/1999 at the Adult College showed that 69.9% felt they gained greatly from the course and 86.6% felt that their course either definitely or mainly met their expectations.

Youth Service

A survey was undertaken in May 1999 of pupils via the schools intranet to all secondary schools in the borough. 8.6% of pupils responded and the results were:-

33.4% attended a youth group or project at that point in time. The most common reason for not attending was 'not interested'. 62% and 63% of pupils would go to friends or parents respectively if they needed confidential advice. The top 5 youth facilities which would be of most interest were sports club (46.3%), football pitch/basketball court (34.1%), teenage friendly areas (37.3%), and computer club (23.1%). Pupils were most likely to go out on to the street (60.4%) followed by a youth organisation (50%) and then Barking Town Centre (42.9%).



How we perform

Lifelong Learning Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
Educational Achievement									
% of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE	31%	32%	34%	40%	44%	42%	55%	46%	34%
% of pupils achieving one or more A* to G grades at GCSE	91%	93%	95%	96%	94%	34.5% (1998)	-----	-----	-----
The average point score per pupil at GCSE/GNVQ	30.4	30.1	32.3	33.5	38.1	31.9 (1998)	-----	-----	-----
Adult Education									
The number of enrolments on adult education courses per 1,000 adult population	51	57.4	64.4	67.4	66	73	42.63	26.0	27.3
Spending per head of adult population on adult education	£8.91	£8.29	£7.57	£7.41	£6.25	£12.18	£7.66	£1.45	£2.54
Local Indicators									
% of pupils achieving two or more grades A* to E at A-level or equivalent	73%	74%	79%	79%	85% (1998)	16.1% (1998)	1999/2000		
Average points score at A-level	11.1	12.7	13.3	14	18.2 (1999)		15.8	17.3	12

Other Performance Information

As part of the Lifelong Learning Plan, targets for 2002 have been set by the Government Office for London and include:

1,310 of 19 year olds in the borough should have attained 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent - 1998/9 there were 1204

567 of 21 year olds should have achieved A-level or equivalent - 1998/9 there were 540, the full set of targets can be found in the Lifelong Learning Plan

The Adult College has set targets for enrolment on Basic Skills courses as follows:

Projected out-turn for 1999/2000 - 1,505

Target for 2000/2001 - 1,635



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information above shows a gradual year on year improvement in the proportion of pupils passing GCSEs and A-levels and in the average points scores.

The proportion of people on adult education courses is also rising steadily and is higher than neighbouring boroughs. Spending on adult education is higher in Barking and Dagenham than in neighbouring boroughs and survey results showed high levels of satisfaction with the service.

A recent survey showed that around a third of young people attended a youth group or project with 60% reporting that they were most likely to spend their free time on the streets.

The provision of Post-16 education is incorporated in the Government's proposals to set up Learning Skills Councils, which will set out a strategy for each region and provide funding for Post-16 education by April 2001. This will also include the setting up of a

regional Youth Support Service, which will have far reaching implications for the Youth Service e.g. the way they are organised and funded. The Local Education Authority will be a key partner in the delivery of Post-16, adult and community learning.

The Education Development Plan sets out the targets and action plan for Post-14 education in schools and this is particularly detailed in Priority 6: Raising overall standards at GCSE and above.

The service area: Schools Post-14 - including Trident and Education Business Partnership - will undergo a fundamental performance review during 2000/2001, which should identify improvements to the service and efficiency improvements.

The main focus for the adult population is to improve basic skills in literacy and numeracy. A fundamental performance review of adult literacy will be carried in 2000/2001. This should identify where significant improvements in the service could be made.

Literacy and numeracy form an integral part of the Lifelong Learning Plan, which addresses initiatives for



improvement. Key actions for 2000/2001 in this area will be:-

- **Framework of standards and qualifications for numeracy and literacy to make attaining qualifications more understandable and accessible**
- **Local accredited courses will be developed**
- **Roll out the Learning Villages project (community based learning)**

Further targets for the Adult College will be set in line with the developments in Lifelong Learning and the review of the service.

The review of the Youth Service has identified major changes to the way the service will be

delivered in the future. In the next month we will be working closely with the voluntary sector to assess what areas of the service they would wish to provide.

Barking and Dagenham Training Services has prepared a business plan to develop and strengthen its training programme during 2000/2001. Key actions from this plan include:-

- **Developing a programme to improve the numbers of people leaving training who get a job within three months**
- **Launching an NVQ sport and recreation course by September 2000**
- **Celebrating and publicising trainees' achievements**



Literacy

What is the Literacy Service?

Literacy is central to the Council's work in education and lifelong learning. There have been significant improvements in performance in the national tests and at GCSE level in schools. However adult illiteracy in the borough is currently as high as anywhere in the country and therefore must be tackled as a high priority.

The Service is part of the newly formed Literacy and Cultural Services Division, as part of the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries.

The Literacy team is part of the Community Inspection and Advisory Service (CIAS). Its purpose is to work with the whole community to raise standards of English and literacy.

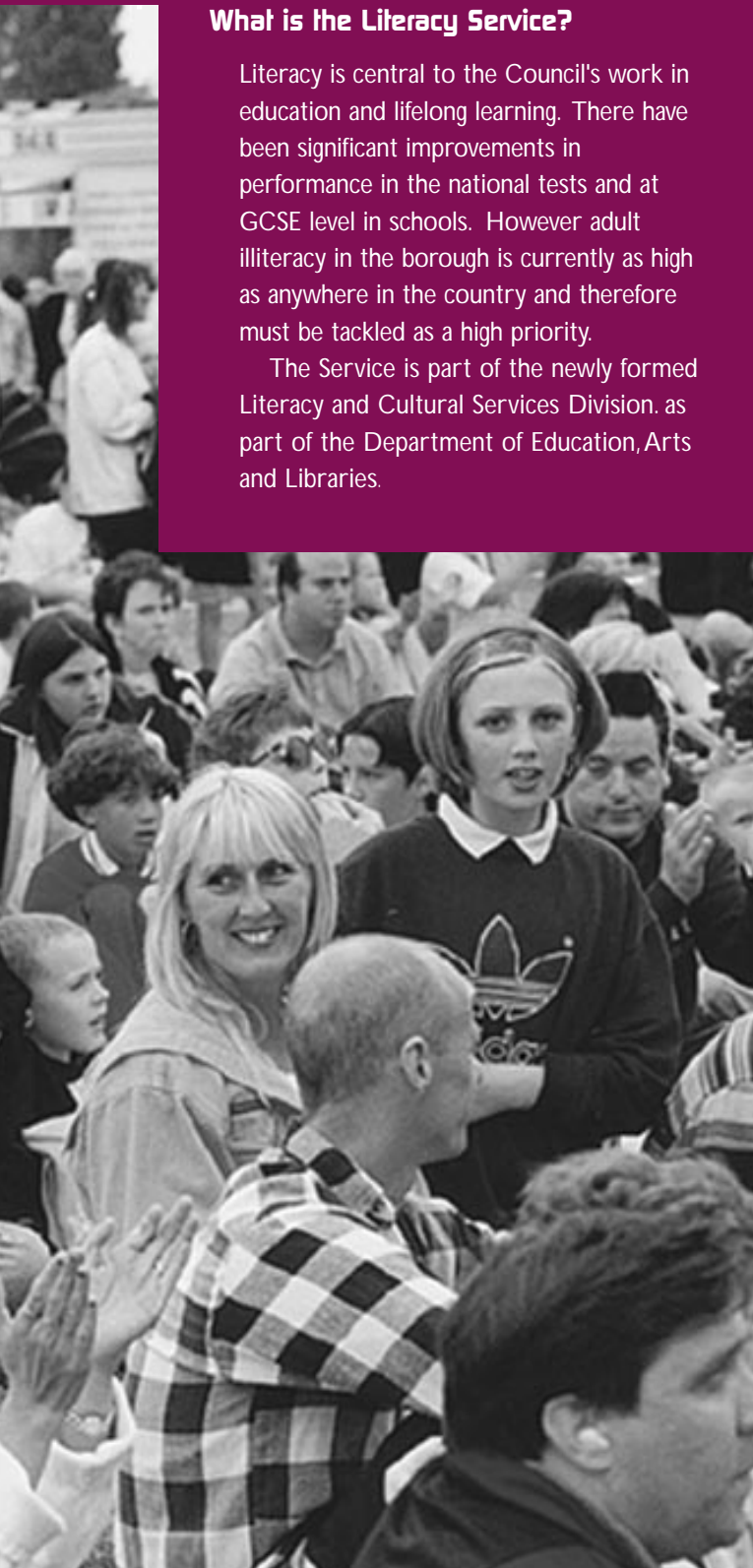


Current major initiatives within schools include:

- The Primary Literacy Project - aligned to the National Literacy Strategy, aims to raise the standard of reading, writing, speaking and listening for all pupils. This is being achieved by writing an English curriculum for each year group, with targets, which describe the expected standards for them. Detailed teaching manuals, training for teachers and advisory teacher support in classes are also provided
- The Key Stage 3 English and Literacy Project - is a similar project to the Primary Literacy Project but for 12 -14 year olds
- Support for GCSE - this project is similar to the Key Stage 3 project and aims to increase the number of pupils who gain or improve on their GCSE grade at English language or English literature
- Working with parents - family literacy through the FLARE project which identifies children aged 4 to 7 who are struggling to learn to read and spell, providing a programme to help children to catch up by working with schools and parents. It also helps to improve the parent's literacy skills

The Literacy Service is strongly placed to launch a drive to raise levels of adult literacy, which are currently the fourth lowest in the country. The Language Support Unit, which is part of the Literacy Service, works to support and to raise the attainment of pupils learning English as an additional language.

There are eight people in the team, which includes the Head of Cultural Services who is also the





Community Inspector for English. The budget for the service is £642,000. The Language Support Service is mainly funded via the Standards Funds with a budget of £330,000, £150,000 of which is for the central strategic role with the remainder devolved to schools.



What do people think of the Service?

The Literacy Service has worked closely with the Regional Literacy Adviser from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), who is very supportive of the Local Education Authority's (LEA) approach to its Literacy project. The DfEE have identified the Council as one of ten in the country to receive funding to support the government's pilot for Key Stage 3 Literacy Programme, for 12 to 14 year olds, and we have been asked to prepare materials for this. This work will help to develop the national requirements at Key Stage 3.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

There has been a focus on improving English in primary schools over the last five years and this has been borne out by improvements in the results achieved. It is particularly marked at Key Stage 2 for 11 year olds.

In the national tests for 11 year olds in English, Barking and Dagenham is the second most improved borough in the country since 1995. The percentage of pupils at level 4 and above has increased by 30%. In 1995, only 35% of pupils reached this standard, whilst in 1999, 65% did. Major improvements are also being achieved at Key Stage 1, for 4 to 7 year olds, and there is a particular focus on improving the achievement of children at higher levels.

As improvements in primary school English are established within the system and children move through their educational lives, Barking and Dagenham recognises that it needs to give increasing attention to Key Stage 3 and GCSE.

This is where resources will be focused over the next two to three years and this is reflected in the Education Development Plan.

Whilst schools have been involved in developing projects there is a need to undertake specific consultation with schools on their views of the service provided.

For adult education, a major drive will start in 2000/2001 to improve literacy to match the improvements already made in schools. This will be achieved by:

- Increasing the number of family literacy courses and the numbers attending

How we perform

Literacy Performance Indicators						
Local Indicators	1998/1999	1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Target 2001/2002	National 1999/2000	Statistical neighbours* 1998/1999
% of 7 year olds achieving level 2 or above at Key Stage 1 English reading (Test)	76%	78%	81%	83%	82%	76.9%
% of 7 year olds achieving level 2 or above at Key Stage 1 English writing (Test)	76%	79%	82%	83%	83%	78.2%
% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 English	60%	65%	72%	76%	70%	59.9%
% of 14 year olds achieving level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 English	59%	53%	65%	68%	63%	58.3%
% of children achieving A* to C grade in English at GCSE	39%	41%	42.3%	45%	57% (1998)	

*Statistical neighbours is the term used by Ofsted to describe a group of other boroughs with similar social characteristics

Other Performance Information

The Adult College will be supporting courses in Basic Skills which are designed to improve both literacy and numeracy skills for adults. These are reported in the Lifelong Learning Section

At Key Stage 2, the borough has the second fastest rate of improvement in the country from 1995 - 1999



- Improving the Partnership with Parents Initiative which helps parents to work with their children to develop their literacy skills
- Working with the Adult College to increase participation and the numbers gaining qualifications
- Working in partnership to develop learning centres in libraries and other local venues

The recent re-organisation of the department will assist with the focus for these improvements. A fundamental service review of adult literacy will take place during 2000/2001 which should provide an opportunity to review the efficiency of the service.



Member Services

What is Member Services?

Member Services provides secretarial, organisational, information and research support to all 51 Local Councillors



The Service also includes the Town Twinning function which promotes and develops links between the Borough and its twin town of Witten in Germany. This contributes to the Community Priority of raising general pride in the Borough and projecting a positive image.

The Member Services section comprises four officers (the Leader's Personal Assistant, Town Twinning Officer, Mayor's Secretary and Members' Secretary).

The post of Mayor's Secretary provides a service dedicated to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor but includes support and cover to the other three officers in the Section. The Town Twinning Officer provides advice, information and organisational support to official guests, individuals and a variety of organisations.

The Service had a budget of £143,590 for 1999/2000 (including £14,000 for Councillor's training which is administered separately). The budget included £1,600 per year from Barking & Havering District Health Authority for a GP recruitment programme in Witten which will end in 2000/2001. There is also a small amount of income from the sale of Council ties and gifts.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

No performance information was collected last year. In 2000/2001 we have set ourselves a number of targets based on current service expectations.

The Section recognises that in order to provide the quality service Members require, it is essential that it regularly reviews its role, and where possible, compares that role with other authorities.

The following actions will be undertaken over the next 12 months:

- Determine the best method of setting up useful and realistic monitoring systems to assess performance and provide a basis for setting future targets

How we perform

Member Services Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance	
Local Indicators	These standards represent the formalisation of current service expectations in respect of the four members of staff	Target 2000/01
Members' Secretary		
Percentage of official letters prepared and sent out within 2 working days of a Councillor's instruction		100%
Percentage of replies to invitations to the Leader of the Council prepared and sent out within 2 working days of invitation being received		100%
Updating of annual Council diary of meetings in readiness for printing within 5 days of its finalisation at the Council's Annual General Meeting		100%
Mayor's Secretary		
Percentage of official letters prepared and sent out within 2 working days of receipt of Mayor's instruction		100%
Percentage of replies to invitations to the Mayor prepared and sent out within 3 working days of invitation being received		100%
Percentage of thank you letters prepared and sent out within 5 working days of the engagement		100%
Organisation of annual ceremonial events completed 5 working days in advance		100%
Town Twinning Office		
Percentage of replies prepared (including translation) and sent out 5 working days after receipt of letter		100%
Percentage of requests for general information about twin town dealt with in 3 working days		100%
Number of work experience placements for Witten residents organised per year		15
Number of school placements for Witten pupils organised per year		3
Number of professional exchanges organised per year		1
Leaders' PA/Section Manager		
Percentage of initial responses to Members' enquiries/requests for information produced within 3 working days		100%
Percentage of follow-up responses to Members' enquiries/requests for information produced within 7 working days of initial response		100%
Percentage of general correspondence prepared and sent out within 2 working days of receipt of instruction		100%
Percentage of information circulated to all Members within 2 working days of request by the Leader		100%

- Implement a six-monthly survey of Councillor's opinions of the service they receive, starting in early 2000. Although personal contact with Councillors allows the Section to judge the service provided in a subjective way, no structured survey has previously been conducted
- Carry out regular reviews of what is available in terms of I.T. support and how it might best be applied in order to improve the Service
- Undertake three-monthly comprehensive budget reviews
- Undertake comparisons with other local authorities in order to establish a clear benchmarking framework

- Establish a system whereby complaints about Council services that are addressed to Councillors are incorporated and used positively as part of the Council's corporate complaints strategy.

The standards that the Service has set for itself will need to be reviewed in response to Councillor's proposals for political modernisation and the likely changing role of Member Services in the new support structures. Likewise, the future role of Town Twinning will need to be reviewed in terms of developing a clear strategy in partnership with the community.

National Non-Domestic Rates Administration

What is the National Non Domestic Rates Administration Service?

The National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) is a form of local taxation levied on the occupiers of commercial and business premises. Local authorities are responsible for the billing and collection with proceeds paid into a central pool managed by the Government.

The most up to date records available show that there are 3,914 premises in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham subject to the NNDR, with a total rateable value in excess of £101 million.

The Council currently employs 5 full-time staff who are engaged in the administration of the NNDR function.

The NNDR collected minus a specified allowance for the cost of collection is redistributed annually by the Government to finance local authority services on the basis of an amount per head of population.

This source of finance meets approximately 23% of the cost of Council services locally.

The amount of money expected to be collected from ratepayers by the Council and paid in to the national pool in 1999-2000 was £39.5 million. The Council will receive £37.9 million from the pool in 1999-2000 from central government which goes toward financing Council services this year.

The allowance made by the Government for collecting the business rate in 1999-2000 was £233,000, which together with the income generated from Court costs of £35,000 levied against defaulters, exceeded the Council's estimated costs of collection of £232,500 (which includes £117,000 for staff salaries) by £34,000.

Any disputes relating to the liability for the NNDR on the valuation of individual properties are dealt with by valuation tribunals.



How we perform

National Non-Domestic Rates Administration Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The percentage of business rates which should have been received which were received	97.43%	96.30%	96% (Lower figure as a result of new IT system)	97.5% rising to 98% in five years time	-----	-----	99.25%	93.90%	96.20%
Local Indicators					Other Information The external auditor in the 1998/9 management letter has commented that the authority continues to perform well with its collection of business rates. In the period April 1998 - March 1999 on 1.55% has been written off as bad debt, mainly as a result of business failures. No comprehensive survey has been undertaken to calculate the satisfaction level of ratepayers with the standard of the administration process for the collection of the NNDR. The annual liaison meeting with the Barking and Dagenham Chamber of Commerce has, however, consistently produced positive feedback. Any disputes relating to the liability for the NNDR on the valuation of individual properties are dealt with by valuation tribunals.				
Percentage collected against the total amount due for that year within the financial year	97.43%	96.30%	96.5%	97.0%					
Percentage of write-off of irrecoverable amounts (This PI is partly dependent on the level of business failures in the Borough, which is outside the control of the Finance Dept.)	-----	1.55%	1.55%	Less than 2%					
Percentage of refunds of over-paid rates, together with interest, where appropriate, made within 10 working days of an authorised request from the rate-payer	The service aims to meet its responsibilities within the required time scale		95%	100%					



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The above information suggests that the Council runs a cost effective and efficient NNDR administration system achieving high collection rates and very low write-offs of arrears.

In 2000-2001 the service will be subject to a Best Value review, which will include consultation with non-domestic ratepayers and will identify ways of continuously improving the service.

Older People's Services

What is the Older People's Service?

We provide information, advice, assessment, care management and social care for older people and their carers. About 5,500 older people receive a service during an average week; this is almost 1 in 4 people aged over 65.

We work closely with the health services, voluntary sector and other care providers to ensure that local needs are met as cost effectively as possible. We involve service users in planning the care they receive and in making sure that we deliver services in a way they most value.

The total budget for the service is £27.5 million. Nearly £13 million is spent on residential and nursing care, and a similar amount is spent on care services that help people stay at home, such as day care and freedom passes (allowing older people use of buses and trains). £2.3 million is spent on staffing and other costs required to identify needs, plan and manage services to local people. The Service employs approximately 730 people; about 690 are direct care providers.

We used approximately £0.75 million of Government modernisation funding in partnership with the NHS to manage pressures caused by flu and the long Christmas and Millennium holiday. The funding was also used to generally improve co-ordination between hospitals, community health care and social care provided by the Council. The National Health Service and Council local winter plans successfully maintained health and social care services over the long holiday period.

The Service also makes a vital contribution to the community priorities, these include: improving health and social care, developing rights and responsibilities, raising pride in the borough and providing greater opportunities for all local people.



What do people think of the Service?

We intend to keep talking to service users and the public about all services. A regular service User and Carer Forum every two to three months, provides local people with an opportunity to say what they think about services and suggest improvements. We are also asking people how individual services, such as





home care, may be improved. We have held meetings for residents and relatives in the older people's homes that are due to be replaced by new forms of care and accommodation, and appointed an independent advocate to speak on their behalf. We have responded to the concerns expressed by relatives by arranging for individual assessments of residents and by giving an assurance that residents will not be made to leave residential care or move home against their wishes.

Since November 1998 the Social Services User and Carer Forums have influenced policy and practice. Examples of the Forum's impact include a range of information leaflets to be launched in April 2000, changes to the complaints procedure, new customer care standards, and involvement of users and carers in the recruitment of senior managers.

We take complaints very seriously and have just revised our procedure. The majority of complaints have come about services where we acknowledge a

How we perform

Older Peoples Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The number of older people whom the authority helps to live at home per 1,000 adults aged 65 and over	184	142	140	140	-----	-----	96	69	136
The percentage of people receiving help from the authority who have been given a statement of what their needs are and how they will be met. (Includes under 65's)	85%	83%	85%	90% rising to 92% in five years	89%	88%	62.6%	83.0%	100.0%
Number of nights of respite care* provided by or funded by the authority per 1,000 adults (Includes under 65's)	107	115	129	150	112	69	47	115	75
The cost of intensive social care for adults (Includes Under 65's)	n/a	£352	£352	352 rising by 3% to £362 in 5 years					
The number of households receiving intensive home care (10 or more hours and 6 or more visits)	n/a	266	218	240					
Local Indicators									
Percentage of single adults going into residential care who were allocated single rooms	60%	59%	60%	60%	100%	100%	73.5%	84.0%	100.0%
Net expenditure on services provided for older people per head of population	£111.11	£120.64	£132.00	£145.00	-----	-----	£78.81	£81.39	£105.30
Emergency admission for older people to hospital per head of population	n/a	3.6	3.7	3					
Cost of residential and nursing care to older people	£290	£301	£308	£315					
Delayed discharge of people aged over 75 per thousand people over 75	n/a	4.3	3	3					
Intensive home care as a proportion of intensive home and residential care	n/a	25%	26%	27%					
The cost of home care for adults	£9	£11	£11	£11					
Admissions of older people to residential and nursing care supported by the Service per ten thousand of the population	260	260	260	260					
Inspection of residential care	100%	100%	100%	100%					
The number of assessments of carers conducted under the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act	n/a	New Indicator	120	150					

* Actual figure shown here, not calculated per 1000.

Other Performance Information

Why we have set the residential care targets

The council's 8 residential care homes were built in the 1960s and despite refurbishment they reflect the standards of that period. The council is transferring three homes to the independent sector, replacing two homes with extra-care accommodation and introducing specialist care into the remaining three. These changes will start to impact over the next few years. The current year will be regarded as a baseline for future measurement.

The target for older people going into single rooms remains low at 60% for 2000/01, but will rise to at least the national average of 87% over the next 5 years. A high figure for the number of people living in residential care may indicate the need to develop or enhance services which help people stay in their own homes. The aim is to reduce the growth of residential care and invest more resources in community services. This will be challenging as the number of people aged over 85, who form the majority of people needing residential care, is predicted to increase until 2006.

Why we have set the home care and support at home targets

The respite care, or "breaks for carers", target for 1999/2000 represents a 12% increase on 1998/99, which reflects the extra money made available from central Government to help carers. The Service is introducing a new carers break service and is also working with voluntary sector partners to increase help for carers within ethnic minority communities.

The Service helps about 140 older people per 1000 older people live at home. This is high compared to local and national rates. The estimated figure this year is the result of targeting services to help the most vulnerable people, a trend that is evident nation wide. The service target seeks to maintain a balance between help to a comparatively large number of people with some care needs (preventive services) and intensive help to people that are very vulnerable and at risk. We are also carrying out a review of all current home care service users to ensure that the service provided is appropriate to assessed need.

Net expenditure on Services for Older People is relatively high because Barking and Dagenham has a high proportion of older people and high social care needs. The target reflects the Council's commitment to turn policy priorities for older people into affordable and practical services.

Other Relevant Information

Local hospital and community health services have acknowledged the good work undertaken by the Service's residential rehabilitation unit; a new health liaison team that works closely with hospitals; and new developments in care management. The residential rehabilitation service has been given as an example of innovative practice by the Kings Fund, a major national charity that promotes research and good practice in health care.

need for improvement, such as home care.

A local conference held at the Gorsebrook Leisure Centre in November 1999 was addressed by Professor David Challis, one of the country's leading figures in the development of assessment and care management. A wide range of people attended the conference and two service users presented their views. We were encouraged to learn that it is pursuing practice, which is recognised as making important improvements to the care of older people.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Nationally the Service is performing well on:

- The cost of intensive social care for adults
- The cost of residential and nursing care for older people
- Supporting older people in residential or nursing care
- The number of older people helped to live at home

- The number of emergency admissions of older people to hospital

- Inspections of residential homes

The Service performs less well on:

- The cost of home care for adults
- The cost of intensive social care for adults
- The number of households receiving intensive home care
- The number of people who have been given single rooms in residential care
- The number of delayed discharges from hospital

We used to provide a limited range of inflexible services to a large number of people. This meant that the services were not meeting individual needs and that the people most at risk often did not receive the help that they needed. By 1997 we had fallen behind many other Councils. Since that time we have been working hard to improve efficiency, effectiveness and quality.

The Service is responding to very high local need, and at the same time moving rapidly towards



achieving local and national policy targets, for example the number of delayed hospital discharges was kept to a minimum during the winter of 1999/2000. We are confident that within available resources we are on track to provide the best possible service to older people and their carers.

In the next year the Service will:

- **Introduce a new way of assessing individual needs and planning to meet them, based on research and experience elsewhere in the country of what works best**
- **Improve the choice, quality and specialist care for people who require residential placements through a partnership arrangement with an independent sector provider**
- **Together with Anchor Trust, create a new extra-care accommodation complex to replace one of the old residential care homes. Extra-care accommodation allows older people to remain independent in a home of their own and receive the care that they need, even if their health declines. The new complex will be built in Marks Gate and will reflect the best design and practice.**
- **Introduce a Community Mental Health Team for older people**
- **During 2000 we will prepare business plans with detailed targets for all staff**
- **In future we will organise consultation with other agencies on issues where there is a shared responsibility, for example, tackling loneliness and depression**

Alongside this, in order to improve the efficiency of the service in 2000/20001, we will:

- **Improve quality, consistency, reliability and value in externally purchased home care services by introducing new commissioning arrangements. These are formal agreements with service providers which specify clearly the quality of the service to be provided**
- **Improve the directly provided home care service by the introduction of new technology and better management arrangements; for example, the introduction of senior home carers, able to meet**

complex needs, and help supervise and train other carers

- **Conduct a Best Value review of three residential homes for older people (Lake Rise, Brocklebank Lodge and Riverside)**
- **conduct a Best Value review of Meals on Wheels**

In 1999 we set up a new system to improve the way in which we work with the Health Service called the Joint Commissioning Board. The Board has prepared a plan called the Joint Investment Plan, which sets out how it intends to improve health and social care for older people.

The Access Service provides advice and practical help. Where necessary the Service will help people by putting them in touch with mental health, hospital liaison and intensive Community Care Teams. These specialist teams will conduct two surveys in 2000/2001 to test and evaluate outcomes experienced by customers. The survey questions will be based on those used by the Government's Social Services Inspection Service. Customers will be asked for their views on the Meals-on-Wheels service, during the year. This will be a major review of the purpose, value-for-money and quality aspects of the service. These far-reaching reviews are called "Best Value" Reviews and over the course of the next few years all our services will be looked at in this way.

We have done a great deal to make sure that we listen to the views of service users, but we need to do more. We will work with local health services and the voluntary sector to find more effective ways of engaging with older people.

In response to complaints, the introduction of senior home carers to a local area during 2000 is intended to improve the management of the service. Service user satisfaction will be an important part of the evaluation process.

The Service unit cost for home care remains high at £11 per hour. There are cost pressures arising from improvements to working conditions and competition from other employers such as supermarkets. The pressure on cost is likely to increase in the future with the introduction of National Care Standards. We will be seeking better value-for-money by setting up "block contracts" with



independent providers which will give more value and better quality guarantees. We will absorb new cost pressures by increased efficiency. At present the direct home care service accounts for about 80% of hours provided, with the other 20% provided by the independent sector. We intend to change this ratio to 60/40, which will bring us close to the national average by April 2001.

The number and proportion of households receiving intensive home care are important indicators. More people being cared for in their own homes in proportion to residential care indicates better choice and often better efficiency. We need to improve performance in this area. This will start to happen in 2000 with the changes to the home care

service and will be achieved by 2005 with the full residential and extra-care accommodation programme in place.

The Meals-on-Wheels Service will be reviewed in 2000. The Service has set a target to increase the number of meals delivered, but needs to explore whether this is actually a good outcome. An important part of the review will be to ask customers what it is about the service that they really value and what they would like to see changed.

Carers provide invaluable care to vulnerable people and it is very important that health and social care services support them. Our target of assessing the needs of carers represents a 25% increase on our performance in 2000/2001.

Parking Services

What is the Parking Service?

The Service is responsible for the management of existing public car parks and the enforcement of all on street parking regulations (including waiting and loading restrictions), designated on street parking and resident parking zones known as Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ's).

Availability of adequate and reliable parking areas contribute to a range of community priorities, namely:

- Creating better opportunities for all
- Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer
- Developing community rights and responsibilities
- Regenerating the local economy
- Raising local pride and image

The Service employs 22 staff, with a budget for 1999/2000 of £1,228,440, of which £1,048,160 is funded through income, mainly from parking charges and fines.

What do people think of the Service?

In the Community Survey which was carried out in May 1999, 79.5% of those who have experience of using the Council's car parks reported being satisfied or better in their rating of the service, and 67.2% regard the charges as reasonable or of better value. There is some limited support for using green spaces and verges to improve local parking but this would have to be tested using consultation against alternative uses of the land and the availability of funds needed to do the work.

In a follow-up study, within the Community Survey, it was established that concerns about parking seem to focus mainly upon residential areas rather than public car parking facilities. Vehicle owners, however, expressed a reluctance against enforcement in streets where they live, a problem that will need delicate consultation.

The views of local people are sought whenever there is a proposal for a new or revised CPZ. In the past year, consultation has been carried out in the Dagenham East and Heathway/Broad Street areas of Dagenham. Resulting from any of these consultations, action for change is taken in the light of the majority view.

How we perform

Parking Performance Indicator	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators	.....	.....	.....	.....
Percentage reduction in the number of commuters parking on residential roads	A Commuter Survey will be undertaken in 2000/01 to establish base-line figures for these performance indicators			5% reduction by 2005
Percentage reduction in the number of long stay parking spaces in the Town Centres				5% reduction by 2005

Baseline data will need to be collected during the coming year as no historical data is available. Surveys will need to be carried out in areas known to be used by commuters (in the vicinity of stations etc.). The use of Controlled Parking Zones around station areas has tended to move commuters further afield but the problem still exists.

Other Information

Penalty Notices Issued & Fines Paid	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Penalty Notices Issued	20,435	22,362	21,129	21,659
Number of Fines Paid	12,684	14,182	12,580	12,188
Percentage Paid	62%	63%	60%	56%

What does this information mean and what are we doing about it?

Little performance information is available for this service and targets and new performance indicators have been set for this year. The figures indicate a reduction in fines paid and action will be taken to improve performance in this area.

The Audit Commission has set up a special directorate to address local authority charging activities, including car parking.

In the light of the forthcoming report, and using principles of Best Value, we have developed an approach to embody the principles of both. To take this forward, these actions are proposed for the coming year:

- Define financial and strategic objectives for car parks by examining existing and potential capacity and reviewing the relative need for short or long stay facilities
- Collect data from parking surveys, operational appraisal, traffic counts, observations and consultation to help determine service needs
- Look at whether the existing management is effective, efficient and secure in terms of personal

safety for the Enforcement Officers. Safer methods of working are currently being examined in consultation with the employees' representatives

- Identify suitable performance indicators to enable improved management and comparison with others
 - We will also be taking a more pro-active approach to the clearance of outstanding car park penalty notice fees by making direct contact with individuals, with a view to reversing the impact of the current trend
- Overall service performance will be assessed regularly against –
- Other local authority figures
 - Known performance of external contractors
 - Strategic policy objectives
- The Council agreed an Interim Transport Plan last year and this identifies a number of targets for this service:
- Reduce the number of commuters parking on residential roads by 5% by 2005
 - Reduce the number of long term spaces in the Town Centres by 5% by 2005



Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service

What is the Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service?

The Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service has had elements exposed to Compulsory Competitive Tendering for over ten years. Therefore, at the time of writing, service provision remains split between:

- The Recreation and Parks Group (“Landowner” and Client Service)

- The Grounds Maintenance DSO (contractor)

These two aspects will be merged during 2000 as part of the creation of a Leisure and Environmental Services Department.

The Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service is responsible for the management and development of the Borough's parks and countryside sites, and for the management and provision of grounds maintenance, allotments, arboriculture (the cultivation and management of trees) and a Plant Nursery Service.

The Service also provides a Ranger Service, which is responsible for encouraging use and enjoyment of the Borough's parks and countryside sites through formal and informal activities and the management of the Millennium Centre (a countryside based educational and management resource situated at Eastbrookend Country Park).

The section works in partnership with London Wildlife Trust to whom it has delegated via Service Level Agreements, responsibility for the management of the Chase Nature Reserve and Old Dagenham Parish Churchyard.

It also takes the Council's lead as a partner in Thames Chase Community Forest, which promotes the planting of trees across East London as far as Aveley.

The service has its own plant nursery, adjacent to Central Park, which was built in 1990, replacing former provision on two separate sites. The nursery produces 500,000 bedding plants and 10,000 shrubs annually at an annual cost of £220,000, providing plant material for parks, open spaces, schools and landscape projects.

The Borough is well endowed with parks and open spaces. Council-owned urban parks, country parks, nature reserves, sports grounds and allotment account for approximately 16% of the land area of the Borough, a total of 525 hectares. There are also substantial areas of privately owned open space,



especially in the Marks Gate area to the north of the Borough.

In total, there are 18 parks in Barking & Dagenham, which can be put into four broad categories, based on size, current use and mix of existing provision:

- Ornamental town park / garden
 - Multi-purpose parks
 - Sports Grounds
 - Local open space.
- In addition, the Borough provides:
- Thirteen allotment sites managed by individual Allotment Societies
 - One country park
 - Two nature reserves
 - Various rights of way
 - Two closed churchyards.
 - A nursery adjacent to Central Park, Dagenham.

The service directly links to the community priority of making Barking and Dagenham, " cleaner, greener and safer."

The section is staffed by six Rangers, three Technical Inspectors, two Data Clerks, a Parks Officer, a Horticultural and Arboricultural Officer and is managed by the Parks & Countryside Manager. A two year temporary post of Beam Valley Project Officer, (partly grant aided by the Countryside Agency) has been established to progress the Council's wish to further develop the Country Park southward down the Beam Valley.

The Grounds Maintenance Service is separately managed by a Grounds Maintenance Manager, supported by two Assistant Managers, a Plant Nursery Supervisor and 114 manual employees.

The total budget for the service in 1999/2000 was £3,400,630 of which £84,030 was expected in income.



What people think of the Service?

To date, there have been no surveys of park users other than the question included in the Council's Community Survey questionnaire, which showed that out of a sample survey of 259, 80% of people live within 10 minutes of a park and 39% regularly use the Borough's parks. Of this group, 31% visit the park to use the playground.

From February 2000, members of the public taking part in courses, events or walks organised by the Ranger Service will be invited to complete feedback forms or slips so that we can measure customer satisfaction. The Millennium Centre maintains a Visitors' Book in which comments are invited, most of which are favourable and complimentary.

Eastbrookend Country Park maintains regular contact with most of its user groups through quarterly meetings of the Eastbrookend Support Group. Work at Old Dagenham Parish Churchyard is reported to the Old Dagenham Village Partnership Group via the

How we perform

Parks & Grounds Maintenance Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
National Indicators				
Number of playgrounds per 1,000 children under 12	n/a	2.40	2.61	2.61
Percentage of these playgrounds conforming to the national standards for local equipped play areas	n/a	76.8%	15%	8%*
Percentage of these playgrounds conforming to the national standards for larger, neighbourhood play areas	n/a	15.9%	46%	75%*
Local Indicators				
The number of sports pitches available to the public	121	116	114	112
The net expenditure per hectare on parks and open spaces	£7,180	£6,100	£5,411.54	£5,440.04

*These figures should be viewed concurrently as improvements to the facilities changes the category.

The number of playgrounds which meet or exceed the standard set by the National Playing Fields Association for a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP):

Borough	No of Playgrounds	No of Playgrounds meeting NEAP standards
Barking and Dagenham	14	10
Havering	42	20
Redbridge	25	25
Newham	50	4



attendance at their meetings of the London Wildlife Trust Warden – this helps to shape their future planning.



What this information means, and what we are going to do about it

The Community Survey showed that the main purpose for visiting parks was to use playgrounds. The performance information shows we have a large number of sports pitches. It is unclear whether our expenditure levels on parks and open spaces is high or low. The indicators also show a relatively high number of larger playgrounds meeting national standards. Local equipped play areas are not, however, of a high standard. In many locations, the quality and diversity of playground facilities and equipment do not meet the required standard.

A five-year programme of playground renewals and refurbishment have started this year. By concentrating funding on selected sites each year, the quality of playground facilities in the Borough's parks will significantly increase until the end of the current programme. It is probable that there will be insufficient funds over the five year programme to refurbish every park playground.

Outside the Community Survey we have not conducted research among either users or non-users of the Borough's parks. We therefore have limited information on public opinion, other than gained through informal feedback.

Partnerships with the local community have been established via the A13 Artscape Programme at Newlands Park and Scrattons Eco-park during 1998/99 and at Goresbrook Park during 1999. The Playground Refurbishment Programme will be a further catalyst for community consultation as progress is made down the priority list.

There is continuing public pressure (not measured, but received via newspaper articles and letters, telephone complaints, a petition and a campaign mounted in 1999 by the NSPCC) for there to be a staff presence in parks, especially those with playgrounds, to reduce the perceived danger to children at play. This suggests that opportunities should be taken to address this matter, possibly by

expanding the Parks and Countryside Ranger Service. Our key actions for 2000/01 will be:

- To identify the extent to which client and contractor functions can be merged, taking into account the principles of Best Value
- Increase the number of playgrounds meeting the required standard through a playground renewals and refurbishment programme beginning in 2000/2001
- Establish a benchmarking club for the Parks and Countryside Service with neighbouring authorities
- Develop park partnerships with users and local residents by establishing "Friends of the Park" groups to promote local issues and understand local demands. Barking Park will be used as a initial pilot in early 2000
- Develop a modern, "model" allotment site in consultation with user groups
- Progress and secure the "Pub in the Park" proposal (a partnership with a brewery to enable a pub/restaurant to be constructed in Barking Park) as a key element to the regeneration of Barking Park
- Proceed with the tasks identified in the Leisure Strategy
- Produce Parks Management Plans – currently awaiting response from Heritage Lottery Funding for feasibility funding
- Undertake a Best Value Fundamental Performance Review of the Grounds Maintenance Service in the Borough, which will increase efficiency of the service
- Undertake park consultation exercises (until 2002) to identify a rolling programme of investments. From February 2000, members of the public completing courses or events at the Millennium Centre will be invited to complete feedback forms
- Establish Local Nature Reserve status for The Chase Nature Reserve



■ **Introduce footway parking controls throughout the Borough by the year 2010**

A start will be made in 2000/2001 to collect more detailed baseline data to enable work to be planned on meeting these targets. Annual reviews of progress will be carried out.

A Best Value Fundamental Service Review is scheduled for 2001/2002. By going through a review process, the Parking Service will be in a position to

know whether its financial and strategic objectives are appropriate and can be met. For off-street parking, care will be needed when using indicators or benchmarks to compare performance as there can be variations between the size and type of town environment and their parking policies and strategies. More importantly, the Best Value process will be used to ensure that the service provided will comply with community priorities and stakeholders' requirements.



Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service

What is the Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service?

The Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service has had elements exposed to Compulsory Competitive Tendering for over ten years. Therefore, at the time of writing, service provision remains split between:

■ The Recreation and Parks Group (“Landowner” and Client Service)

■ The Grounds Maintenance DSO (contractor)

These two aspects will be merged during 2000 as part of the creation of a Leisure and Environmental Services Department.

The Parks and Grounds Maintenance Service is responsible for the management and development of the Borough's parks and countryside sites, and for the management and provision of grounds maintenance, allotments, arboriculture (the cultivation and management of trees) and a Plant Nursery Service.

The Service also provides a Ranger Service, which is responsible for encouraging use and enjoyment of the Borough's parks and countryside sites through formal and informal activities and the management of the Millennium Centre (a countryside based educational and management resource situated at Eastbrookend Country Park).

The section works in partnership with London Wildlife Trust to whom it has delegated via Service Level Agreements, responsibility for the management of the Chase Nature Reserve and Old Dagenham Parish Churchyard.

It also takes the Council's lead as a partner in Thames Chase Community Forest, which promotes the planting of trees across East London as far as Aveley.

The service has its own plant nursery, adjacent to Central Park, which was built in 1990, replacing former provision on two separate sites. The nursery produces 500,000 bedding plants and 10,000 shrubs annually at an annual cost of £220,000, providing plant material for parks, open spaces, schools and landscape projects.

The Borough is well endowed with parks and open spaces. Council-owned urban parks, country parks, nature reserves, sports grounds and allotment account for approximately 16% of the land area of the Borough, a total of 525 hectares. There are also substantial areas of privately owned open space,



especially in the Marks Gate area to the north of the Borough.

In total, there are 18 parks in Barking & Dagenham, which can be put into four broad categories, based on size, current use and mix of existing provision:

- Ornamental town park / garden
 - Multi-purpose parks
 - Sports Grounds
 - Local open space.
- In addition, the Borough provides:
- Thirteen allotment sites managed by individual Allotment Societies
 - One country park
 - Two nature reserves
 - Various rights of way
 - Two closed churchyards.
 - A nursery adjacent to Central Park, Dagenham.

The service directly links to the community priority of making Barking and Dagenham, " cleaner, greener and safer."

The section is staffed by six Rangers, three Technical Inspectors, two Data Clerks, a Parks Officer, a Horticultural and Arboricultural Officer and is managed by the Parks & Countryside Manager. A two year temporary post of Beam Valley Project Officer, (partly grant aided by the Countryside Agency) has been established to progress the Council's wish to further develop the Country Park southward down the Beam Valley.

The Grounds Maintenance Service is separately managed by a Grounds Maintenance Manager, supported by two Assistant Managers, a Plant Nursery Supervisor and 114 manual employees.

The total budget for the service in 1999/2000 was £3,400,630 of which £84,030 was expected in income.



What people think of the Service?

To date, there have been no surveys of park users other than the question included in the Council's Community Survey questionnaire, which showed that out of a sample survey of 259, 80% of people live within 10 minutes of a park and 39% regularly use the Borough's parks. Of this group, 31% visit the park to use the playground.

From February 2000, members of the public taking part in courses, events or walks organised by the Ranger Service will be invited to complete feedback forms or slips so that we can measure customer satisfaction. The Millennium Centre maintains a Visitors' Book in which comments are invited, most of which are favourable and complimentary.

Eastbrookend Country Park maintains regular contact with most of its user groups through quarterly meetings of the Eastbrookend Support Group. Work at Old Dagenham Parish Churchyard is reported to the Old Dagenham Village Partnership Group via the

How we perform

Parks & Grounds Maintenance Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
National Indicators				
Number of playgrounds per 1,000 children under 12	n/a	2.40	2.61	2.61
Percentage of these playgrounds conforming to the national standards for local equipped play areas	n/a	76.8%	15%	8%*
Percentage of these playgrounds conforming to the national standards for larger, neighbourhood play areas	n/a	15.9%	46%	75%*
Local Indicators				
The number of sports pitches available to the public	121	116	114	112
The net expenditure per hectare on parks and open spaces	£7,180	£6,100	£5,411.54	£5,440.04

*These figures should be viewed concurrently as improvements to the facilities changes the category.

The number of playgrounds which meet or exceed the standard set by the National Playing Fields Association for a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP):

Borough	No of Playgrounds	No of Playgrounds meeting NEAP standards
Barking and Dagenham	14	10
Havering	42	20
Redbridge	25	25
Newham	50	4



attendance at their meetings of the London Wildlife Trust Warden – this helps to shape their future planning.



What this information means, and what we are going to do about it

The Community Survey showed that the main purpose for visiting parks was to use playgrounds. The performance information shows we have a large number of sports pitches. It is unclear whether our expenditure levels on parks and open spaces is high or low. The indicators also show a relatively high number of larger playgrounds meeting national standards. Local equipped play areas are not, however, of a high standard. In many locations, the quality and diversity of playground facilities and equipment do not meet the required standard.

A five-year programme of playground renewals and refurbishment have started this year. By concentrating funding on selected sites each year, the quality of playground facilities in the Borough's parks will significantly increase until the end of the current programme. It is probable that there will be insufficient funds over the five year programme to refurbish every park playground.

Outside the Community Survey we have not conducted research among either users or non-users of the Borough's parks. We therefore have limited information on public opinion, other than gained through informal feedback.

Partnerships with the local community have been established via the A13 Artscape Programme at Newlands Park and Scrattons Eco-park during 1998/99 and at Goresbrook Park during 1999. The Playground Refurbishment Programme will be a further catalyst for community consultation as progress is made down the priority list.

There is continuing public pressure (not measured, but received via newspaper articles and letters, telephone complaints, a petition and a campaign mounted in 1999 by the NSPCC) for there to be a staff presence in parks, especially those with playgrounds, to reduce the perceived danger to children at play. This suggests that opportunities should be taken to address this matter, possibly by

expanding the Parks and Countryside Ranger Service. Our key actions for 2000/01 will be:

- To identify the extent to which client and contractor functions can be merged, taking into account the principles of Best Value
- Increase the number of playgrounds meeting the required standard through a playground renewals and refurbishment programme beginning in 2000/2001
- Establish a benchmarking club for the Parks and Countryside Service with neighbouring authorities
- Develop park partnerships with users and local residents by establishing "Friends of the Park" groups to promote local issues and understand local demands. Barking Park will be used as a initial pilot in early 2000
- Develop a modern, "model" allotment site in consultation with user groups
- Progress and secure the "Pub in the Park" proposal (a partnership with a brewery to enable a pub/restaurant to be constructed in Barking Park) as a key element to the regeneration of Barking Park
- Proceed with the tasks identified in the Leisure Strategy
- Produce Parks Management Plans – currently awaiting response from Heritage Lottery Funding for feasibility funding
- Undertake a Best Value Fundamental Performance Review of the Grounds Maintenance Service in the Borough, which will increase efficiency of the service
- Undertake park consultation exercises (until 2002) to identify a rolling programme of investments. From February 2000, members of the public completing courses or events at the Millennium Centre will be invited to complete feedback forms
- Establish Local Nature Reserve status for The Chase Nature Reserve



■ **Introduce footway parking controls throughout the Borough by the year 2010**

A start will be made in 2000/2001 to collect more detailed baseline data to enable work to be planned on meeting these targets. Annual reviews of progress will be carried out.

A Best Value Fundamental Service Review is scheduled for 2001/2002. By going through a review process, the Parking Service will be in a position to

know whether its financial and strategic objectives are appropriate and can be met. For off-street parking, care will be needed when using indicators or benchmarks to compare performance as there can be variations between the size and type of town environment and their parking policies and strategies. More importantly, the Best Value process will be used to ensure that the service provided will comply with community priorities and stakeholders' requirements.



Payroll Services

What is the Payroll Service?

The Payroll Section is responsible for the payment of salaries, wages and pensions to 11,500 current and former employees of the Council and also performs payroll services for a number of voluntary and external organisations.



Typically the Payroll Section produces 9 payrolls per month involving 21,000 payments to employees and pensioners.

The annual gross value of the payrolls processed in 1998/1999 exceeded £138.5 million for the following categories of employees:-

	£ms
■ Weekly paid employees	28.5
■ Monthly paid staff	53.0
■ Monthly paid teaching staff	46.5
■ Monthly paid pensioners	10.5

The Payroll Section is also responsible for the calculation, deduction and payment to the relevant authorities of income tax, national insurance and pension contributions.

The relevant amounts in respect of 1998/1999 were as follows:-

	£ms
■ Income Tax and National Insurance	34.9
■ Local Government Pension Scheme	8.9
■ Teachers' Pension Scheme	4.8

The gross cost of the payroll service was estimated to be £670,000 in 1999/2000, comprising salaries £358,000, computer services £213,000 and other overheads £99,000.

There are the equivalent of 18 full-time posts in the Payroll Section.

During 1999/2000 the Payroll Section should generate £30,000 income from the distribution of literature with pay advice slips.



What do people think of the Service?

Staff surveys were sent to every member of staff during 1997/1998 to test the level of satisfaction with the service provided by the Payroll Section. The response rate was between 60-65% depending on



How we perform

Payroll Service Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators	.....	.....	.....	.....
Percentage of pay awards included in the next in the next pay/wage slip, provided full details are received 3 weeks prior to the pay date	The service intends to implement the pay awards when due to employees		96%	98%
Error rate in the calculation and payment of salaries, wages and pensions	Although the error rate in payroll calculations is low compared to other local authorities in the CIPFA benchmarking club a target has been set to reduce this to 0.03% over the next three years.		less than 1 in a 1000 improvement rate of 0.01% per annum.	

Other Information

In the last ten years there has only been one occasion when employees have not been paid on the due date, because of a failure in the submission of data to the BAC System clearance centre – (payroll computer system). The service has a target of producing 100% of payrolls on time

Each year the Council subscribes to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) benchmarking club for payroll administration.

The benchmarking club compares the performance of a range of local authorities throughout England and enables the Council to identify the relative cost of its service with other local authorities in the survey.

The results of the 1998-99 survey which compared the performance of this authority with ten other local authorities are set out opposite:-

Cost Per Payslip	LBB&D	Club Average
Total Cost	£2.16	£2.56
Staff Cost	£1.20	£1.42
IT Costs	£0.53	£0.61
Other Costs	£0.47	£0.54
Income	-£0.04	-£0.01
	LBB&D	Club Average
Payslips Per Employee Per Year		
Weekly Paid	52	52
Monthly Paid	12	12
Weighted Average (based on number of weekly paid employees)	22	19
Cost per Employee Per Year	£47.52	£48.64
	%	%
Payroll Error Rate	0.06	0.08

Overall this Authority's costs per payroll slip was the fourth lowest in the survey but issued the second highest weighted number of payslips per employee due to the high level of weekly paid employees. In addition, as part of this exercise a private payroll provider was asked to quote for a full payroll service. A comparison of our costs show our costs to be 82% of those quoted by the payroll provider.

the department. Over 90% of those responding to the survey expressed satisfaction with the efficiency of the Payroll Service .



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The above information shows that the Payroll Section provides a relatively cost efficient service which is viewed as efficient by most staff. The Service is proud of its low error rate which we will continue to reduce. We are aware that providing pay increases quickly is important to our staff. We intend to improve our performance in this area.

Any further reduction of operating costs in the Payroll Section is largely dependent upon reducing

the number of weekly paid employees.

Negotiations on the further implementation of the single status arrangements with employees will seek to make monthly pay the accepted norm for all Council employees which should improve the efficiency of the Payroll Service.

Subject to the availability of additional finance on external sponsorship the current edition of the employees payroll booklet will be updated and expanded in 2000/2001, to incorporate details of the Council's new priorities and other information relating to the Council's modernising agenda.

There is scope to generate more income and thus increase the efficiency of the Service from payroll advertising, which is currently being explored.



Pensions Administration

What is the Pensions Administration Service?

The Council administers the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which all employees, with the exception of teachers who have their own pension arrangements, are eligible to join.

The LGPS is a fully funded scheme with defined benefits. Employer and employee contributions are invested to ensure sufficient monies are available to meet pension entitlements and to provide other associated benefits.

The scheme also permits the admission of other external bodies. The main organisations are The University of East London, Barking College and Barking Magistrates Court Committee.

All new employees of the Authority pay a contribution rate of 6%, although some employees retain the right to pay a lower contribution of 5%.

In March 1998, there were 8,835 members of the Council pension fund. The value of fund investments exceeded the potential liabilities to existing and future beneficiaries by £44.9 million, or 16.7%.

Liabilities	No. of Members	£ms
Active Members	4,204	127.5
Pensioners	3,329	122.9
Deferred Benefits	1,302	18.6
Total	8,835	269.0
Assets		
Investments		313.9
Surplus		44.9

As a result of the actuarial review, the Council's own employer's contribution rate was set at 8% of pensionable remuneration. Different employer's contribution rates apply to the admitted bodies.

The estimated cost of administering the pension fund during 1999/2000 was £1,026,780.

This comprised:

- Pensions administration £226,780
- Investment management fees £800,000

Currently five staff are involved in the administration of the LGPS and the TPS at an annual salary cost of £138,000.



Although the TPS is administered centrally by CAPITA, the scheme is almost identical to the LGPS and provides a similar service to teachers.

How we perform

Pensions Administration Performance Indicator	Barking & Dagenham Performance		
	1997/98	1998/99	Target 2000/01
Local Indicator
Position in the investment return league table of Local Authority Pension Funds		2nd best performer	Top 25%

Other Information

The performance of the pension fund investments are important in terms of the employer's contribution rate, which has to be met from the Council's general fund. Any deficiency in the value of the pension fund has to be made good by an increase in the employer's contribution rate.

In the 10 year period to 1998 the fund returned 15% per annum, 1% above the average return and placed the Council's funds performance within the top 5% of local authority pension funds. In the year ending 31st March 1999 the Authority's fund was the second best performer with a return of 11.6% compared to the average rate of return of 8.0%.

Returns from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's benchmarking club for pension funds administration placed this authority's costs almost exactly at the "club" average of £14.90 per pension fund member.

The same benchmarking exercise identified the average cost per member for out-sourced administration services was £24.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Over a five and ten year period, the investment return of the Council's pension fund is among the best local authority funds in the country. In 1998/1999 the fund performed 2nd best. Our costs of administering pensions appear to compare well

with others.

In 2000/2001, key actions will include:-

Periodic newsletters will be sent to all members advising them of any changes in benefit regulations, together with details of the overall investment performance.

All scheme members will receive an annual benefit statement setting out entitlements accrued to date, together with a forecast of benefit entitlements at an individual's retirement date.

- All new employees are to receive, as part of their induction pack, details of the benefits of the LGPS and TPS
- Advice is to be given on the transfer of benefits from pension entitlements accrued during previous employment
- Advice is to be given on individual pension entitlements and options on buying additional pension benefits, or through standing additional voluntary contribution schemes
- Advice on future benefit entitlements will be available on individual request.

Consideration is currently being given to organising pre-retirement courses specifically for scheme members and a pensioners' newsletter, which will aim to feature a major input by retired personnel.

Further monitoring of 'lump sum payments made within 30 days of the date due' will take place after the introduction of the new financial IT system in 2001



Personnel in Education, Arts and Libraries

What is Personnel in Education Arts and Libraries ?

The Education Arts and Libraries Personnel Services team provides a comprehensive Human Resources Management and Development Service (HRM/D) to approximately 3,000 staff covering the Education, Arts and Libraries Department and schools.

70 percent of the salary budget for the Personnel Service is delegated to schools and all schools buy their services back from the unit. It offers support to schools and to the other services to fulfil their delegated Human Resources Management and Development (HRM/D) responsibilities.

The Service covers the following areas:

- Advice and guidance on employment law
- Recruitment and terms and conditions of service
- Health and Safety
- Employee and industrial relations
- Welfare
- Training and development, including for governors
- Job evaluation and staff competencies

The Service also manages Butler Court, which provides accommodation for newly qualified teachers. There is also a hospitality suite for council visitors.

The Service team works in accordance with the Council's HRM policy which states that responsibility for many staffing issues should be devolved to line managers. This way of operating is well established within schools.

There are 12 people in the Education, Arts and Libraries Personnel Team with a budget of £444,000.



What do people think of the Service?

Schools are able to purchase their personnel services from other private organisations. In Barking and Dagenham all schools purchase their services from the section.

The Education, Arts and Libraries Personnel Service regularly consults customers to check if the service provided is of a high enough standard and appropriate to their needs.

Headteachers

For several years the Service has sent customer satisfaction surveys to all headteachers and has found this a useful mechanism for obtaining a good rate of response and useful feedback.

Where specific problems are identified the department contacts the headteacher concerned to discuss the matter further. Scores in most areas tend to be between excellent and good with the following strengths identified consistently: 83% rated the service as good or excellent in terms of speed of response and 80% rated the service as good or excellent quality for:

- The service provided by patch personnel officers

who are generally the first point of contact for schools

- The advice and support provided in handling contentious and sensitive issues, such as the implementation of disciplinary, redundancy and competency procedures

Other line managers

A similar annual survey is sent out to all non-schools.

The response to this questionnaire tends to be lower, with only a third being returned. However, where problems are identified these are followed up.

How we perform

Personnel in Education, Arts and Libraries Performance Indicators Target 2000/2001		
Local Indicators	Justification for Target	-----
Percentage of contracts issued to new members of staff within two weeks of receipt of the required documentation or at the start of the next school term if documents received at the end of the previous term	This target has been set on the basis of what is achievable and on informal feedback from new members of staff	100%
Percentage of adverts placed by the next copy deadline when received by our own published deadlines	This target has been set to meet the needs of our customers who require prompt action to fill posts	100%
Percentage of staff phone queries responded to within one working day	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service	100%
Percentage of written queries from staff responded to within three working days	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service	100%
Percentage of initial responses made to requests for advice from schools within one working day	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service	100%
Percentage of schools receiving sickness monitoring reports once a term	This target has been set in response to the needs of schools	100%
Percentage of job evaluations completed and notification of new grade provided within three weeks of receipt of the finalised job description	This target was set in response to non-schools customer survey which identified a slow turnaround in processing as a problem	100%
Percentage of requests for caretaker cover met on the same day	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service in an essential service area	100%
Percentage of initial responses made to requests for assistance for disciplinary and competence cases made within the next working day	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service	100%
Percentage of police checks, accident reports and occupational health referrals processed within three working days	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service in an essential service area	100%
Percentage occupancy rate of teacher rooms at Butler Court	This target has been set to maximise income generation	95%
Percentage of Headteachers provided with human resource management training on at least four topics based on a training needs analysis by the end of the 2000 Summer Term	This target has been set as a result of the training needs analysis of headteachers	100%
Percentage of timescales agreed and met for personnel support to major projects i.e. transport, ethnic minority support grant	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service in an essential service area	100%
Percentage of policies and guidance issued to Governing bodies within three weeks of the final notification of legal/DFEE policy change	This target has been set to provide efficient customer service in an essential service area	100%
See Central Personnel for other targets which also apply to the Service.		



71% rated the Service as good or excellent in terms of speed of response and 81% rated the Service as good or excellent quality.

Job applicants

Since 1998 the Team has regularly sent a quality assessment questionnaire to a 20% random sample of people who requested an employment application form in the previous three months. In 1999, 18 out of 128 people responded. 100% rated the quality of information received as average or better. All respondents received details about the job they were applying for within 4 working days of their request and 89% found the answerphone service to be clear and adequate.

Issues that have been raised include some difficulties using the answering machine and some delays in receiving application forms.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

With 70% of costs being met by schools their needs must form the basis of the Service. Areas for development are set out below and the Service will consult with schools on the services they require. Targets have been set for all parts of the Service and these will be monitored.

Other Services

For non-school staff, we will continue to devolve HRM/D - and to develop the use of appraisal, with a view to systematic training needs analysis and the production of individual Personal Development Plans in 2000/2001. Again there will be consultation with users to identify needs.

Survey of other Line Managers

When this survey was last conducted some concerns were expressed about the speed of evaluating job descriptions and obtaining committee approval to implement re-gradings.

The department has already agreed a revised process for evaluating job descriptions. As this is being increasingly delegated to Departmental Personnel Managers from the Council's Central Personnel Service, an assessment as to whether it is possible to streamline it further will take place in 2000/2001. However, part of the difficulty could be that managers have unrealistic expectations in this area. A timetable has been drawn up for managers to show the stages involved in job evaluation with timescales, and there are plans to have meetings with each manager to clarify roles within HRM.

Job Applicants

To respond to comments about the answering service and delays in receiving application forms, we have increased the capacity of the answering machine. We have also ensured cover is available for issuing job details and established a target for issuing details which we will continuously review.

General

The Education, Arts and Libraries Personnel Service is working with line managers to equip them with the skills and confidence to take on their devolved HRM/D responsibilities more effectively.

The Service seeks to identify improvements in efficiency on a continuous basis through the use of customer surveys, informal feedback from users and team discussion.

Personnel Services

What is the Personnel Service?

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham employs 7,800 staff within its five Departments and its schools. Personnel services, for the Council's staff, are provided by 40 personnel, development, health, safety and welfare staff and 20 support employees.

The majority of these staff work within the various Council Departments, reporting to the Borough Personnel Officer, but there is also a Central Personnel team.

The services provided encompass the following:

- Human resource management
- Organisational development
- Employee relations
- Employee development and training
- Health and safety
- Welfare
- Equal opportunities
- Information

There is a published strategy for the delivery of personnel services which sets out the aims of personnel specialists, whilst emphasising that human resources management is also the responsibility of line managers. The stated objectives for personnel staff include:

- To undertake work recognised as contributing directly to the achievement of the Authority's corporate and service goals, and to act as effective advisors.
- To provide line managers with expert information and assistance on the range and complexity of issues involved in managing people in order to enable them to fulfil their roles.
- As experts in employment matters, to identify the need or opportunity for new approaches or responses.
- To provide a Personnel Service that:
 - is effective in meeting legal, Council and departmental requirements
 - provides the necessary assistance to manage change and uncertainty





- is flexible, responsive and cost effective;
- encourages development and teamwork within and across the Authority, and with external bodies where joint working takes place;
- focuses on people and how to achieve quality services through them.



What do people think of the Service?

As parts of the Personnel Service work within the various Council Departments, they have different "customers". Surveys aimed at a range of users of the Service have indicated the following levels of satisfaction:

Members and Chief Officers

At the end of 1999, Central Personnel surveyed 40 Members of the Council and five officers from the Management Team (the most senior officers in the Authority) in respect of the personnel services they receive. 82.76% of respondents rated the Central Personnel Service good or excellent. Over three quarters rated the Departmental Personnel Services good or excellent. 90% of both sets of respondents agreed that the Personnel Service meets their needs both centrally and departmentally.

Development and Training

Staff attendance on training courses has risen during the 1990s from 250 per year to over 1,000. Surveys of course attendees and their line managers six months after completion of a course indicates that work has improved as a result of the training. In 1998, the survey response rate was 80.4% with 82.6% of respondents rating courses from "fairly useful" to "very useful".

Chief Executive's Department

All managers across the Department have been surveyed for individual opinions of the personnel services they receive. There was an 89% return rate and the overall performance of the Service scored well at eight out of ten.

Education, Arts and Libraries

Annual customer satisfaction surveys are carried

out with headteachers (70% of the personnel budget is delegated to schools). In the 1999 survey, 80% rated the quality of the service provided as good or excellent. A survey of line managers in the same year produced a figure of 81% rating the quality as good or excellent.

Social Services

A survey was undertaken in 1999 with customers, both internal and external (eg. health, voluntary and independent sectors). There was a response rate of 86% and 100% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the Service. The survey did indicate, however, that personnel resources needed strengthening to meet the changing demand. The Council supported this view and the section has now been reviewed and the numbers and level of staff increased.

Housing and Health

A survey of nine managers was conducted two years ago by the Policy Division of the Department. This highlighted mixed views about the quality of service provided and there has subsequently been a total overhaul, together with the recruitment of a new personnel manager for the Service.

Leisure and Environmental Services

This is a newly formed department and customer surveying has not yet commenced.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The available information shows that Personnel provides a low cost service which is regarded with satisfaction by the majority of its users. There will, however, be challenges to meet over the next year. Targets have been set to improve our recruitment processes which have been highlighted as needing development. Work will also be necessary on data collection and monitoring systems in order to improve consistency.

The community's expectations of Council employees is changing. The Authority is subject to significant changes at present and Departments and services are undergoing reorganisation. Employees may face changes to their role or responsibilities, or



How we perform

Central Personnel Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance						
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01			
National Indicators	-----	-----	-----	-----			
The number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee	Currently data collection is not consistent with definitions for the national PI, but the available figures for average days lost per employee are "Blue collar" employees - 7.27 White collar" employees - 7.95 Teachers - 5.58			6.75 days reducing to 6 days in 5 years time (subject to review when data monitoring is consistent)			
Early retirements (excluding ill health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce	Figure is consistent with meeting London Boroughs' 0.45% target in five years			2.45%			
Ill health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	Figure is consistent with meeting London Boroughs' 0.35% target in five years			2.35%			
The answer to these questions					Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
Does the authority -					Redbridge	Havering	Newham
(i) Follow the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 codes of practice on employment?		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(ii) Carry out formal monitoring of its employees with respect to equal opportunities?		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Local Indicators							
Recruitment and Selection							
Percentage of recruitment and selection timetables established and agreed with managers and Members (where relevant) before an advertisement is placed	This is an area of weakness as reported by the Audit Commission in their 1999 review			90%			
Percentage of employee appointments offered within 25 working days of the closing date of the advertisement	Previous average was 47 days, national comparator is 21.2 days			70%			
Recruitment and assessment of senior managers within the timescale agreed, integrating the Authority's Competencies for Managers approach	The target has been set to achieve the same efficient approach as for regular recruitments			95%			
Percentage of new appointments inducted into the organisation in line with Council policy within 6 months of taking up the post	No previous data is available but the target demonstrates the importance given to staff induction			100%			
Percentage of new employees attending the Council's corporate induction programme within 2 months of appointment	No previous data is available but the target demonstrates the importance given to staff induction			80%			
Organisation Reviews and Projects							
Percentage of projects, including organisation reviews, carried out within the agreed timetable	No previous data is available but the challenging target demonstrates the importance given to effective change management and project management			90%			
Employee Relations							
Percentage of arrangements for negotiating and putting in place single status agreements (giving consistent terms and conditions to manual and office workers)	This is a challenging target to meet nationally set time frames			90%			

Continued over page



Continued from page 157

Development and Training		
Percentage of job competency profiles, job training profiles and personal development plans to be in place for all jobs (excluding previously designated manual jobs)	Personal development plans were an area raised by the Audit Commission review of 1999 as requiring further development This target represents one stage in a longer term strategy	50%
Percentage of staff appraisals undertaken in line with the authority's new procedures (excluding previously designated manual workers)	This target represents first stage in meeting Council's mandatory requirements	70%
Percentage of trainees gaining level 3 NVQ or equivalent within 3 years of starting with the authority	A challenging target has been set to justify the level of investment in training	100%
Percentage of targets achieved in respect of NVQ Assessment Centre for Care	National requirement to meet annual targets as set by the Department of Health	90%
Health and Safety		
Percentage of risk assessments of people/posts completed	This is a challenging target to meet legislative responsibility	100%
Percentage of risk assessments carried out to meet statutory requirements under the new fire regulations	This is a challenging target to meet a new legislative responsibility	100%
Welfare		
Percentage people seen by the welfare officer within 2 working days of the initial request	This target has been set to meet the interests of employees	90%
Customer Satisfaction		
Percentage of respondents to customer surveys registering satisfaction or better	This has been set as a consistent target for improvement across all Departments	85%

Other Information

Benchmarking of Personnel Services is a developing area but some information is available:-

Compared to other London Boroughs, Barking and Dagenham has the lowest ratio of personnel staff to the total workforce. This means that the Borough is top of the benchmarking list. The Audit Commission's data on this subject is measured slightly differently and shows the Authority as being in the best 25% for London.

According to the 1999 Audit Commission review, the Council has the lowest central training budget of any London authority and yet it provides as much training as many of those resourced to a significantly higher level. Informal feedback from the Greater London Employer's Association indicates that the quality of training is good.

The Council also compares sickness levels with other London Boroughs (excluding school-based employees). The authorities participating in this exercise record absence differently so the analysis is an indicative rather than absolute measure of its position. However, out of 25 other boroughs, Barking and Dagenham has the seventh best record for non-manual employees, the third best for manual employees and for all employees it is ranked fourth.

the way in which services are provided, which in turn require different skills.

In the light of this, it is imperative that Personnel Services gives priority to the Council's objective of developing human resources across the whole range of services in order to create the conditions for dealing with change.

In addition, the Service will need to develop new or improved systems to address the statutory national performance indicators that have been set for

Personnel Services.

The key actions that will be undertaken in 2000/2001 will include working to meet statutory indicators on the following:

■ **The percentage of senior management posts filled by women**

A more comprehensive system of monitoring for this indicator will be established, subject to clarification of the definition of "senior



management" to be adopted. Appropriate targets for 2001/2002 will then be recommended to Members for approval.

■ **Voluntary leavers as a percentage of staff in post**

A more comprehensive system of monitoring for this indicator will be established to allow appropriate targets to be set for 2001/2002

■ **The number of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act disability definition as a percentage of the total workforce**

A more comprehensive system of monitoring for this indicator will be established to allow targets to be set for 2001/2002.

■ **Minority ethnic community staff as a percentage of the total workforce**

The information on this indicator is currently affected by the fact that it is not mandatory for employees to declare their ethnicity. Consideration will be given to the possibility of improving existing monitoring arrangements. Targets for 2001/2002 will be recommended for Members' approval.

■ **More comprehensive and consistent systems of data collection will be established in order to monitor progress towards meeting the targets for the following:**

- the proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence

- early retirements (excluding ill health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce

- ill health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce

Other actions for next year include:

Specific policy projects to:

- Implement new disciplinary provisions across the Council

- Develop and implement a stress management policy

- Develop and implement an alcohol and drug related policy

- Engaging in further work with line managers on their role in people management. This will involve the production and launch of pocket guides for line managers setting out their responsibilities and briefings to support this

- Continuing to work with the Greater London Employers Association and the Inter Authorities Group to develop and use meaningful benchmarking criteria

- Expanding customer satisfaction surveys with each Departmental Personnel Section to carry out at least one survey of their customers per year



Planning and Building Control

What is the Planning and Building Control Service?

Planning and Development provides a range of services, predominantly statutory and non-statutory Town Planning and Building Control services together with a range of Economic Development and Urban Regeneration initiatives.

There are currently 6 Groups:

- Development Control
- Building Control
- Urban Regeneration
- Thames Gateway/Strategic Planning
- Thameside Development
- Economic Development

In addition there is an Administration Support Group and a Graphics unit.

Through its planning and development function and influence in shaping construction and design projects in the Borough, the division plays both a direct and indirect rôle in delivering the Council's priorities, namely:

- Creating better opportunities for all local people
- Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer
- Improving health and social care
- Regenerating the local economy – jobs, training and enterprise
- Raising general pride and projecting a positive image of the Borough

The Development and Technical Services Department, of which the Planning and Development Division is part, is currently undergoing a reorganisation to form a new Leisure and Environment Department. The Council also intends to set up a Strategic Regeneration Unit within the Chief Executive's Department. These factors may lead to a need to review service objectives in the short to medium term.

The principal Service Objectives are summarised below, by Group. Collectively, staff aim to provide a high quality, professional, cost-effective service, working in partnership as necessary to implement and adhere to the Council's policies and provide professional advice and guidance on planning and building control policy, legislation and associated issues.

Development Control:

- Process applications for development to meet statutory obligations under the Town and Country Planning Acts and associated legislation and in a manner which would attract further development within the Borough
- Conduct statutory inspections and enforcement.

Building Control:

- Ensure that buildings are designed and constructed in accordance with the Building Regulations and process applications for building consent including maintaining up-to-date knowledge of new building materials and methods of construction
- Deal with street naming and numbering, issue scaffold/hoarding licences, inspect, advise and issue guidance in connection with places of public entertainment, safety of sports grounds and night cafes
- Take enforcement action to ensure that statutory obligations are met, with public safety as the highest priority

Urban Regeneration:

- Undertake specific urban regeneration projects, working with the community and other partners to ensure that regeneration is sustainable and meets the community's needs; produce associated strategies and plans
- Investigate the availability, range and purpose of funding - e.g. Europe, Single Regeneration Budget, Lottery - for grant aided regeneration projects and make bids
- Co-ordinate the A13 Artscape Scheme and provide urban and landscape design advice to the Division and other Council Departments

Thames Gateway / Strategy:

- Provide liaison with the Thames Gateway London Partnership (TGLP) unit and other partners
- Undertake the review of the Borough's Unitary Development Plan
- Liaise and work with the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC), South East Region

Planning Advisory Council (SERPLAN) and the Government Office for London on strategic planning and transport issues

Thameside Development:

- Secure the implementation of and co-ordinate the Council's input to the Barking Reach development through the formation of multi-disciplinary groups dealing with specific study areas
- Secure the economic regeneration of Dagenham Dock and the wider Dagenham Riverside industrial area
- Co-ordinate the Council's response to proposals to develop the Channel Tunnel Rail Link through the Borough

Economic Development:

- Provide the economic development and business liaison function for the Council and provide links with all areas of the business community and encourage business development and investment within the Borough
- Produce the Council's annual Economic Development Plan
- Provide economic development advice and monitoring capability to other Groups and Departments for corporate plans, policies and programmes

The service employs 47 staff – including a Divisional Head and six managers. In 1999/2000, the cost of providing these services was £1,572,240, of which £1,192,800 related to staffing costs. Income of £379,000 was received, mainly from charges for Planning and Building Control applications.

Targets and Standards for Town Planning and Building Control related activities have traditionally revolved around the turn-around of applications made under statutory procedures, e.g. Planning and Building Regulation applications.

With the introduction of an expanded range of Performance Indicators by the Audit Commission and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), a checklist of Planning Best Practice has been produced and the Division will be working towards compliance with much of this during 2000/2001.



There are no current national Performance Indicators for Building Control. The District Surveyors Association, and others, have, however, produced a set of Performance Indicators. These indicators relate to effective plan checking; effective inspections regime; effective provision of expert advice; effective administration; and effective performance review.



What do people think of the Service?

In the Community Survey, 61.8% of the population surveyed said that the Council's Planning Service was either 'good' or 'very good'. No detailed customer satisfaction surveys have, however, been carried out.

How we perform

Planning and Building Control Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The number of advertised departures from the statutory Unitary Development Plan approved by the Council	1	1	1	0	-----	-----	0	2	1
The net expenditure per head of population on planning	£6.07	£8.42	£8.66	£8.90	-----	-----	£3.61	£4.86	£5.29
Local Indicators									
Planning									
The Percentage of householder applications decided within eight weeks	91.1%	82.4%	80.0%	83.0%	83.0%	72.0%	72.0%	74.2%	84.8%
The Percentage of non householder applications decided within eight weeks	NA	NA	48.0%	51.0%					
Number of decisions on planning applications taken to appeal	19	21	20	20			117	60	51
Percentage of appeals that were successful	21.1%	23.8%	20.0%	20.0%			25.6%	19.0%	23.5%
Percentage of the Borough covered by a Unitary Development Plan	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%			100%	100%	100%
Building Control									
Cost of staff per fee earning account	£186,379.20	£203,326.20	£192,276.00	£205,818.00					
Percentage recovery of cost of above	n/a	97.0%	98%	100%					
Cost of staff other work (Statutory work etc.)	£124,252.80	£135,550.80	£128,184.00	£137,212.00					
Percentage of applications received and acknowledged within 3 days	n/a	96.7%	92.50%	95%					
Percentage of decisions issued within	-----	-----	-----	-----					
within 10 days	n/a	23.0%	37.21%	40%					
within 15 days	n/a	31.0%	39.75%	45%					
within 20 days	n/a	36.0%	42.29%	50%					
Percentage of decisions notified within the statutory time	n/a	100.0%	78.65%	100%					
Percentage of requests for site visit made on the same day by 10.00 am	n/a	100.0%	100%	100%					
Percentage of scheduled entertainment licence inspections carried out	n/a	97.0%	100%	100%					
Percentage of complaints responded to within 10 day time limit	n/a	100.0%	100%	100%					
Percentage of completions to commencements	n/a	20%	27%	30					
Percentage of plans determined within 8 weeks of deposit - improving to 5 weeks by 2001	n/a	n/a	79%	100%					
Percentage of construction sites inspected within the last 3 months	n/a	n/a	26.32%	30.00%					

Other Information

The Divisions' Urban Regeneration projects are mostly funded through Central Government programmes such as the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund, European Union programmes and the National Lottery funds or indirectly through organisations such as English Partnerships. In the case of SRB, EU and Lottery Funds, Performance indicators are determined annually through the 'Delivery Plan' mechanism. English Partnerships funded schemes are required to perform to EP's own Performance Indicators.

In comparing the Performance Indicator information for processing applications for planning consent, the service is placed 6th most efficient in London. However, it is uncertain whether this represents a real comparison as the returns are based upon only part years and our relatively low number of applications processed – 434, compared to figures of over 1100 for the next lowest Borough. This will need to be examined over the coming months leading toward a fundamental review of the service which is anticipated in 2003.

Building Control benchmarked its service with eleven other London authorities. Their figures indicated a mixed performance but scored well in the key areas of acknowledging and determining applications, site visits and response to enquiries.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

As mentioned above, we may not be comparing 'like with like' and this will have to change for meaningful comparisons to be made. It will be necessary for the Division to join Benchmarking Clubs to truly assess performance, especially for Development Control by establishing comparators with others against processes, people and costs.

Performance Indicators are to change under Best Value. Preliminary indications are that the Division would probably only meet 50% of the new targets and procedural changes will need to be made to improve upon these figures. An essential element of this change is the greater focus within the new Performance Indicators on delegation of decision making to officers.

In addition, greater efforts will need to be made to gather feedback from applicants, residents and community groups via reply slips/questionnaires or other methods, and review the Division's, already considerable, public consultation procedures, particularly in relation to applications for planning consent, major development and regeneration proposals, with a view to scoping improvements.

To progress these issues, the following key actions have been identified for 2000/2001:

- Reorganise the Division to adapt more readily to Best Value Performance Indicators
- Work towards compliance with DETR's checklist of Planning Best Practice

- Investigate available benchmarking clubs for Development Control, with a view to joining in the following year as preparation for a Best Value fundamental performance review which is due in 2003
- Seek greater delegated authority for planning applications
- Examine the recording of planning applications to enable better comparisons with other authorities
- Publish a 'Citizens' Charter' setting out our performance standards and targets
- Publish a 'plain language' guide to Planning and Building Control in English and other languages
- Undertake a satisfaction survey of users of our services
- Set a timetable for Unitary Development Plan review to maintain target of 100% of the Borough covered by an up to date plan
- Produce an Economic Development Plan annually
- Investigate and examine options for extending the time at which advice and assistance is available to the public
- Expand and improve data collection for Performance Indicators and local service targets
- Consider ways in which the foregoing information and data can be used to improve efficiency within the Division and provide a more effective service.



Policy & Planning in Education, Arts & Libraries

What is Policy & Planning in Education, Arts & Libraries?

The Policy and Planning unit currently undertakes a key role by providing data and analysis on the performance of the Education Service and is responsible for a number of major plans required by law by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE).

The service covers:

- Strategic planning, the development of policies within the Education, Arts and Libraries Department and the wider Council. Many of these are statutory requirements and are set out by the government, in particular the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and include the Education Development Plan, School Organisation Plan, Infant Class Size Plan and the Performance Plan
- Data collection, analysis and the preparation of reports for the Council and schools, including Key Stage test and exam data, attendance statistics and organising and analysing the schools' annual census
- Organising the annual local testing programme in primary and secondary schools
- Monitoring and review of progress of plans
- Developing communications for the department
- Developing the corporate role of the Education, Arts and Libraries department including the implementation of Best Value

There are four people in the unit, with proposals for an additional post to be added. The budget is £189,000.



What do people think of the service?

Although there have been favourable comments from people who use the service - and ad hoc requests for information are often made and these are met - there has been little formal consultation to determine how users actually view the service. Comments from primary headteachers have included the fact that they felt additional resources should be included in the group.

The Ofsted Inspection report from 1997 acknowledged 'the good work undertaken by the Local



How we Perform

Education Finance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators - Finance							
The expenditure per pupil in Authority schools as follows.							
Nursery and primary schools under 5	£1,943	£2,398	£2,494	£2,594	£2,400	£1,864	£2,355
Primary schools, pupils 5 and over	£1,983	£2,129	£2,214	£2,303	£1,864	£1,874	£1,975
Secondary schools, pupils under 16	£2,479	£2,665	£2,745	£2,855	£2,449	£2,701	£2,791
Secondary schools, pupils 16 and over	£3,740	£4,025	£4,186	£4,353	£3,792	£3,533	£3,240
Policy & Planning Local Indicators							
Percentage of information required by DfEE provided to their deadlines i.e. Baseline Assessment results, Key Stage test results, attendance data, and Standards Fund Grant bids		100%	100%	100%			
Was analysis of attendance data reported to schools by the beginning of the Autumn term		yes	yes	yes			
Was the School Organisation Plan published for consultation by the 1st June and formally published once agreed by the School Organisation Committee		new plan	yes	yes			
Was the Education Development Plan with the DfEE by the deadline		yes	yes	yes			
Number of Education Matters (department's newsletter) published each year		2	3	3			
Was the forecast of pupil numbers completed during the Autumn Term following the national counts and was an analysis completed of the accuracy of previous year's forecast made during Spring term		yes	yes	yes			
Percentage of the assessment of all Key Stage test results and GCSE and A' level results along with comparisons with other schools and national figures with schools by the Autumn term each year		This target has been set in response to schools' needs		100%			

Education Authority (LEA), particularly in its approach to the gathering and dissemination of detailed information'. Equally the LEA's DfEE Advisor, at a recent visit, commended some of the statistical reports prepared by the group as examples for good practice.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The information above shows that the service performs well in the collection and distribution of information to required timetables and that Ofsted has commented favourably on the work of the section. Figures relating to the expenditure for Education Services show increasing expenditure for all school phases reflecting the Council's strong commitment to improving educational attainment. However, further improvements are to be introduced.



A Plan will be developed to:

- Determine whether users are receiving the information and data in the format and detail they require by September 2000
- Build up a systematic evaluation of the requirements of users of the service and respond to any changes required by April 2002
- Consider how the group could develop benchmarking with other authorities or other providers who undertake a similar function by April 2001
- Develop and implement a consultation plan for the Education, Arts and Libraries Department which will also inform what users think of the Policy and Planning service by December 2000
- Analyse the results of consultation and inform relevant services including Policy and Planning, of the results by March 2001
- Develop an action plan arising from the consultation results by September 2001

Work is scheduled with Cambridge Education Associates and the Local Government Association on their collaborative study on Best Value in Education, which should report in Summer 2000.

During 2000/2001, the service will continue to collect data for schools and the DfEE, including the annual census of schools, termly pupil numbers and test and exam results. It will work alongside other parts of Education, Arts and Libraries to help them improve their data collection, e.g. setting up performance information and data on the intranet. It will also set up a Central Pupil Database and work with schools on their requirements for pupil information.

There is already a Plan to reduce the infant class size in schools to 30 or less by September 2000. Funding from the DfEE has been sought to support this. Ongoing monitoring will continue to ensure infant class sizes are 30 or less after September 2000 alongside liaison with DfEE.

Throughout 2000/2001 we will continue to assess the local testing programme and progress efficiencies identified in this area to use staff resources more effectively.



Property Services

What are Property Services?

Property Services currently focuses on three main areas:



- Estate management: managing the commercial portfolio of around 500 shops, office buildings, etc. which are owned by the Council
- Buying and selling land and property with the emphasis on bringing in funds which can contribute to the Council's Capital Programme
- Consultancy advice, mainly to other Council departments. This covers a wide range of activities, for example:
 - reducing the level of rates payable by the Council
 - supporting regeneration initiatives
 - providing new Council facilities including libraries, doctors' surgeries, social housing, residential care homes and leisure facilities
 - valuation of all Council property and advice to service departments on the acquisition of additional accommodation.

The main aim of the Service is to add value to the resources available to the Council. This can be through increasing financial resources, such as capital receipts and rental income, or through the provision or enhancement of accommodation for facilities that might not otherwise be available, for example, the new Whalebone Library.

The property owned by the Council also includes shopping parades across the Borough. These provide a service at a local level, particularly in areas where access to private cars may be limited.

The commercial property portfolio currently produces around £2.75 million per annum in rental income, whilst over £40 million (including £10.7 million in 1998/1999) has been realised in capital receipts since 1992.

The Service has reduced the amount of the rates paid by the Council on its operational property (property owned and used by the Council). These rates appeals have produced savings of around 20% on the 1995 valuation list. Approximately 500 houses are valued for disposal under the Right to Buy scheme each year.



The core in-house team comprises the equivalent of three and a half qualified surveyor posts and two administrative support staff. Service provision is undertaken in conjunction with a number of appointed private sector property consultants, instructed and managed by the corporate Property Team. The level of expenditure on external consultants is determined by activity, but the projection for 2000/2001 is £345,000.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The key area of action that the Service will undertake in 2000/2001 is:

- To review current functions in the light of the Audit Commission Report on Property Services, due in Spring 2000, with a view to implementing recommendations on best practice. The outcome of this review may mean the reprioritisation of the Service's work programme over the year, and may also result in the disposal of some commercial property

Other actions that the Service will pursue over the year are:

- Implementing Performance Indicators and setting targets consistent with those adopted by other Boroughs. Performance Indicators are being formulated by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and the

Audit Commission as a result of a collaborative effort with local authorities

- Starting a programme to review local shopping parades, which are currently facing difficult trading conditions and competition, with a view to maximising lettings and maintaining local services. This will include surveys of tenants of the shop units to gauge their views of the Service
- Providing a corporate lead, in conjunction with the Finance Department, in the development of effective asset management plans for each Council department to identify long-term requirements for investment. The objectives are to provide accommodation that meets service requirements and to reduce costs. A "dry run" exercise will be undertaken in 2000/2001 with a view to putting asset management plans in place the following year
- Strengthening partnership working with the Borough Finance Officer in order to share intelligence on commercial tenants and improve the efficiency of rental income collection
- Investigating opportunities for benchmarking in the public and private sectors. The Service has been working with other London Boroughs through the Association of Chief Estates Surveyors to compare costs and benefits. The results of this work were still being collated at the time of writing but will provide a London-wide comparison

Public Access to Social Services

What is Public Access to Social Services?

We provide information about and access to practical help from Social Services. Our aim is to make your first impression of Social Services a positive one. The Service has been known as the "Initial Contact Service". As we now offer much more than an "initial contact", we will be asking service users to help rename the Service.

The Service has been for people of working age and older people. By June 2000, however, there will be one route to information and service available to everyone, including children, and families.

We can:

- Provide information about services and tell you what is available, who the service is for and whether there is a charge
- Put you in touch with voluntary sector organisations and Health Service help-lines
- Deal with applications for Freedom Passes, Orange Badges and other mobility or travel schemes
- Provide advice about how to obtain basic items of equipment to help people who are disabled
- Make arrangements for you to see someone to help assess your needs
- Give you advice or help regarding the care of children
- If you are caring for another person we can arrange an assessment of your needs and help you take a break
- Arrange interpretation and translation when necessary

We are based at the Civic Centre, Dagenham. The Service employs 14 people and the total budget is over £325,000. The Service will receive over 40,000 telephone calls and advise and will help almost 18,000 people this year.

The Service impacts on the following community priorities: improving health and social care, developing rights and responsibilities, raising pride in the Borough and providing greater opportunities for all local people.

From the time we started in 1998 we have worked hard to be customer orientated. A first step was to cut red tape and respond more quickly to requests for help.



A key improvement was to be more honest with callers, even if this meant saying that a service could not be provided. We are now much less likely to say that your name has been placed on a long waiting list. Rather, in order to be fair and consistent we use written "eligibility criteria". This means that people who ask for help will be told clearly whether they qualify and if so how soon they can expect a service.



What do people think of the Service?

The Users and Carers Forum, meets every 2-3 months to advise us about the quality of services. Since November 1998 the Social Services User and Carer Forums have influenced policy and practice. Examples of the Forum's impact include a range of information leaflets to be launched in April 2000, changes to the complaints procedure, new customer care standards, and involvement of users and carers in the recruitment of senior managers.

We conducted a small survey of 48 people to see if users were satisfied in March 1999 and a positive outcome was received from all. Users and carers have, however, told us that it has been difficult to find out about what care services are available.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The service performs well in:

- Providing people with information about services and how to access them.
- Making arrangements for people to be assessed as to their needs.

The service aims to:

- Increase the availability of the access service outside office hours.

In response to the views of users and carers and to improve public awareness and access to

How we perform

Public Access to Social Services Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators	.....	.....	.....	.....
Percentage of customers who are satisfied or very satisfied with the Service	New Indicators. The Initial Contact Service started in 1998		.....	75%
Average time taken to answer telephone calls to the Service	The Initial Contact Service aims to answer telephone calls as quickly as possible		4.3 secs	4 secs
Annual number of calls answered	The service anticipates a 10% increase in the number of calls		41,000	45,000
Percentage of unanswered telephone calls	These calls are lost when the switchboard closes at 4:45pm. Alternatives are being investigated		5%	Less than 5%
Annual number of referrals to the Service	The service anticipates a general increase in activity over the next 12 months		17,718	20,000
Referrals requiring action			4,200	4,500
The percentage of Council buildings in which all public areas are accessible to disabled people	2.9%	9.8%	11.0%	12.5%

	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
Net spending per head of population on public transport	£22.93	£21.29	£22.20	£22.29	£21.64	£24.01	£19.55

information we are publishing 16 new Social Services leaflets and an A-Z of services. These leaflets will be available in April 2000. We have identified a need for at least another 6 leaflets and are currently consulting users and carers on the need for any further written information. We are following the advice of the User and Carer Forum and are now producing the leaflets in large clear print.

During the next year we will conduct a quarterly survey of 100 randomly selected service customers. The first survey will be in April 2000. The results of the surveys will be placed in the Social Services Reception at the Civic Centre and published in the next Performance Plan.

There are about 15,000 people living in the Borough who are from ethnic minority communities. We are consulting about the best way of making information accessible to people in their community with social care needs and their carers. We are also working with carers' representatives, to raise awareness amongst ethnic minority communities of services that are designed to give carers a break. In the first year, £10,000 has been used of the carers' grant to fund work with ethnic minorities, e.g. translating materials, hosting groups, and undertaking sessional work etc.

Leaflets are only part of the answer to improving access. By June 2000 the Service will be using "Help Box", an easy to use information system which allows you to look up details of a local or national service on a computer screen. The system has already proven to be very useful at the Health Authority's Information Shop. Help Box will be made available to members of the public, initially in libraries.

Whilst access to the Internet within the Borough may be limited at present, we anticipate that the local importance of this media will grow rapidly over the next few years. We are increasing the amount of information available on the Council's Internet web site (www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk) and access will be made available through libraries. The potential for

an inter-active web site (which might for example allow a request for help to be made by e-mail) will be explored during the next year. We will also work with the Health Service to improve the exchange of information where this is in the interest of patients and does not break confidentiality.

Our offices and buildings need to be accessible to everyone; this means that if you have a disability or sensory impairment, or you are a parent with a child in a pushchair, you should be able to enter and make use of all public areas. You should also be able to gain access independently, and not be made to feel a nuisance. An audit of all Council buildings has been undertaken and improvements will be considered within available resources. We are also looking at ways of funding a feasibility study in to what is required to make the Social Services Reception fully accessible to everyone. Around 10% of Council buildings are fully accessible to disabled people. Whilst this is as good as most Council's performance, we recognise that it is not good enough and will aim to improve the number of buildings that are fully accessible each year.

Another aspect of good access is the availability of advice and help when it is needed. The need for help often arises outside normal office hours. At present the Service runs from 9am-5pm on weekdays. During November and December 1999 we extended the Service to cover 5pm to 12 midnight. Despite the fact that this experiment was not publicised, we received 244 referrals. During 2000 we are exploring ways in which all night time and weekend health and social care services may be better organised to improve both access to services and the response to emergencies around the clock.

During 2000 we will be introducing a new way of assessing individual needs and planning to meet them. There will be different types of help, each suitable to the needs and preferences of the individual. This will ensure that people are offered the right level of help, rather than a "one size fits all" deal.



Public Conveniences

What is the Public Convenience Service?

The Council provides a total of 23 facilities well placed throughout the Borough.

These sub-divide into four groups,

Parks Toilets	8
Unattended facilities	6
Attended facilities	4
Superloo's	5

The total budget for providing this service for 1999/2000 is £354,177.

The overall objectives of the service are:-

- To provide public convenience facilities at suitable locations in the Borough
- To ensure that the facilities are maintained and available for use for the optimum period of time
- To ensure the facilities are safe and suitably equipped
- To comply with the Council's Priorities to make the Borough cleaner, greener, and safer; raise pride in the Borough and project a positive image.



What do people think of the Service?

This is naturally an area that is difficult to consult users. It needs to be addressed as part of overall Council surveys rather than individually. It is intended to examine how this can be achieved effectively during the 2000/2001 financial year.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

In comparison with the best in London, nationally and with our neighbouring boroughs we have relatively low numbers of public conveniences. We have, however, proportionately higher numbers with disabled access. None has baby changing facilities.

The Service has been subject to criticism by the public in the local press, probably because a lack of





How we perform

Public Conveniences Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
Local Indicators									
The number of public conveniences provided by the authority which are									
(a) Open for less than 12 hours per day	n/a - new indicator	6	6	6	22 (All hours)	33 (All hours)	13	29	2
(a) Open for more than 12 hours per day	n/a - new indicator	12	12	12			21	5	16
The percentage of these with access for disabled people	84.6%	61.1%	61.1%	61.1%	-----	-----	58.8%	38.2%	11.1%
Baby-changing facilities	0.0%	0.0%	0%	0.0%	-----	-----	8.8%	2.0%	11.1%

Other Information

The number of facilities provided is a questionable measure - this Borough is the smallest of the London Authorities and therefore it should be expected to have fewer facilities overall. A better indication might be based upon population or per square kilometre. These types of measure will be investigated for future comparative purposes and form the basis for benchmarking.

The future for these facilities is subject to the savings programme currently being discussed, and possible closure of facilities.

investment and a high level of misuse historically.

In recent years the move towards introducing more "Superloo" facilities, which provide 24 hour facilities including disabled provision, has enabled modernisation of the service to take place, but this is a relatively expensive and therefore slow process. That is not to say that improvements cannot be made based on existing resources.

On an operational basis, it is acknowledged that more work needs to be done to ensure that the existing facilities are maintained to an acceptable standard.

The Service has set out the following key actions for 2000/2001.

- Capital investment will be made to refurbish some of the existing facilities to minimise the effects of vandalism. The number treated will be governed by the cost of the adaptation and the funding made available

- Where funding opportunities allow, the extension of the "Superloo" programme will take place
- Performance indicators and standards/targets will be developed and data collection/monitoring systems devised to establish a more comprehensive baseline position. Particularly important will be qualitative standards which rely on consultation with residents, an area which itself will be investigated
- Comparison with other Councils will require consideration of the size and population of the areas in question. This work has not previously been carried out but will be as part of the 2000/2001 pre-review process
- Investigation will take place to establish the best way to consult with users of the service and to ensure, where possible, that their preferences are met



Public Relations

What is the Public Relations Service?

The objective of the Public Relations Service is to promote the Borough of Barking and Dagenham in general, and the work of the Council in particular, through the media and the production of marketing material.

The Service contributes to the Community Priority of raising general pride in the Borough and projecting a positive image.

The work of the Public Relations Service covers the following main areas:

- Handling all aspects of the Council's media relations
- The production of the monthly *Citizen* magazine
- Providing a public relations, publicity and marketing service for the Council and the Borough
- Managing the production of publications, both printed and electronic, and organising exhibitions
- Editorial control of the Council's Internet and Intranet sites
- Promoting projects that are managed in partnership with other agencies, such as regeneration initiatives.

There are also shared services that are part-managed by the Public Relations Service. These include the Council's public information service, graphic design services for Council publications, and supporting film production in the Borough.

As of January 2000, when there were three new appointments, the Public Relations Office comprises seven posts (full-time equivalent). These include five public relations staff, one graphic designer and one administrative worker.

The budget directly under the control of Public Relations for 1999/2000 was £312,170.



What do people think of the Service?

It will not be meaningful to undertake a wide-ranging survey of opinions of the Service until the new complement of staff is better established.

A small-scale survey of the local media was, however, carried out in December 1999. Twelve respondents were asked to rate press releases, the efficiency of the response to their requests for information, etc. The results are shown in the table below.

Service	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Not Answered
Press Releases	10	2	0	0
Efficiency of Response	7	5	0	0
Briefing Sessions	7	2	0	3
Photo Sessions	7	2	0	3
Individual Relationship	10	2	0	0
Relationship with Organisation	11	1	0	0
Total	52	14	0	6

The results show that the majority of the Service's contacts in the local media regard its operations as good.

How we perform

Public Relations Performance Indicator	Barking & Dagenham Performance	
	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Percentage of media enquiries answered within the deadline given by the journalist.	100%	100%
Percentage of press releases issued to meet the deadlines of the target media.	100%	100%
Percentage of material produced for campaigns on time and within budget.	100%	100%



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Newspapers and other media organisations work to very tight deadlines. Therefore the Public Relations Service has to meet its performance targets in order to ensure that the Council's position is represented in the media. The Service currently meets its targets and the results of the initial Customer Survey are good. There is, however, scope to improve media coverage through greater use of forward planning, rather than merely reacting to events.

Currently, the Service's performance is monitored by the manual recording of media enquiries, responses and press releases. New computer

software, which will be introduced in 2000, will automatically monitor response times to media enquiries and produce management information about the use of press material. This will allow the Service to monitor performance more effectively.

An "Objectives, Standards, Evaluation and Development" document was published in early 2000. The document gives an outline of the present position of the Public Relations Service and how it needs to develop to ensure it remains competitive in the media industry.

In order to improve performance by March 2001, the following actions will be undertaken:

- Implement an electronic system for recording media enquiries and the issuing of responses, for each of the press officers
- Ensure that published media work is available to the Council in an electronic format
- Establish quarterly reporting of relevant media headlines to Councillors and senior officers of the Council
- Expand the information available on the Internet and Intranet and work towards increasing its use
- Introduce a radio ISDN line and radio link within the Council
- Undertake a Residents' Survey to assess views on the features produced in *Citizen* magazine
- Provide information and briefings to senior officers in order to develop a wider understanding of planning media campaigns and taking a proactive approach to publicity
- Develop and implement a new reprographics strategy

The Public Relations Service will be one of the first service areas in the Council to undertake a Fundamental Best Value Review in 2000/2001. The potential for efficiency improvements will be a key element of the review. It will also involve comparative and benchmarking exercises with similar public and private sector organisations.

Once the present Public Relations Officer structure has been operational for twelve months a Customer Satisfaction Survey will be undertaken. This will seek the views of Council officers who have commissioned work from the Public Relations Service or have been represented by the Service.



Refuse, Recycling and Waste Service

What is the Refuse and Recycling Waste Service?

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a statutory duty upon the Council (as a Waste Collection Authority) to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area.



In order to comply with this duty, the Waste Collection Service provides a once weekly doorstep collection of household waste to around 66,000 premises and collects approximately 50,000 tonnes of waste annually. Additionally, household rubbish is collected up to three times per week from container compounds at blocks of flats throughout the Borough. The Waste Collection Service also provides a trade waste collection service for which a charge is made. Other types of service offered include:

- Free collection of bulky furniture
- Free collection of domestic clinical waste
- Free collection of garden waste
- Free supply and delivery of twenty refuse sacks per quarter

The Service has been subjected to Compulsory Competitive Tendering for more than ten years and was last tendered in December 1998.

The Service is equipped with a fleet of 12 specialist compacting waste collection vehicles. It directly employs 48 manual staff and 3 managers with a budget of £2,620,974 for 1999/2000 of which £464,000 is provided through income.

The Recycling Service operates mainly through the provision of Recycling Banks throughout the Borough, although there is a trial scheme for the collection of recyclable newsprint. The Service employs 1 manager and 2 manual employees and for 1999/2000 is expected to make an overall profit of £76,340.

The main objectives of the services are:-

- To provide regular, reliable, efficient and effective refuse collection and recycling facilities
- To comply with the lawful duty in the most efficient and cost effective manner
- To contribute to the Council's objective of providing a "cleaner, greener, safer Borough"





What do people think of the Service?

The Waste Collection Service was highlighted as the best Council service in the 1999 Community Survey with over 80% of respondents rating the service as either "good" or "very good".

Although this is very encouraging news, there clearly is not enough detail and the intention is to consult the users of the Service, both internally and externally. This process has already begun with liaison meetings being held with the Housing Department for example, and a "Refuse Roadshow" travelling the Borough seeking the views of the public.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

People are generally satisfied with the Service, but we intend to introduce improvements. In particular

we need to improve our performance on the number of missed household waste collections and the proportion of household waste which is recycled. More work needs to be undertaken to identify costs; the reorganisation of the department will allow for the accounting system to be reviewed during 2000/2001.

The Service is due for a Best Value Fundamental Performance Review during 2001/2002, so it is intended to identify major improvements in the Service during this process.

Preliminary work such as initial contact with potential partners and benchmarking will begin during 2000/2001 to provide key performance information on which to base Service improvements.

Some of the key actions for 2000/2001 will be:

- Prepare for the Best Value Review by carrying out an initial review of the operational methods of Service delivery, which may lead to initial

How we perform

Refuse, Recycling & Waste Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
Net cost per household of refuse collection	£22.58	£22.71	£23.39	24.42 - the government has set a target of £18.41 in five years time	£20.74	£17.51	£23.26	£16.56	£27.83
Percentage of household waste recycled	4.2%	4.9%	5%	5.1%	10.50%	9.90%	8.0%	9.6%	2.6%
Local Indicators									
The number of household waste collections which were missed per 100,000 collections	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
During May- September	106.6	114.21	108	105	23 (Full Year Figures)	43 (Full Year Figures)	28.52	8.00	25.90
During October - April	(Full Year)	97.9	96.5	95			22.07	10.00	18.4
The tonnes of waste collected per household that was not recycled	0.80	0.67	0.71	0.76	-----	-----	0.90	0.71	0.85
The tonnes of waste collected per household that was recycled	New PI	0.034	0.036	0.038	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Percentage of missed collections put right by the next working day	95.2%	91.0%	92%	93.0%	99.7%	98.6%	100.0%	99.0%	99.6%
Percentage of weekly collections made on the published day	It is inevitable that some collections will not be made on the published day given the nature of the Borough and the current level of resource used - the compaction machinery used in a refuse vehicle for example is subject to very high pressures and can at times result in operational problems when unforeseen failures occur.			99.90%					
Percentage of areas around recycling centres cleaned within one day of notification	New initiative developed in response to residents requirements, determined by specific complaints.			100%					



efficiency improvements before the review takes place

- Review budget presentation to ensure budgets and costs are clear and identifiable
- Carry out initial consultation with stakeholders to identify what the requirements of the users and the expectations of the Service are
- Identify potential partners and join or establish benchmarking clubs to enable our services to be compared with other providers
- Encourage staff input into the review process through staff consultation and involvement in improving working practices
- Provide the public with more information on recycling sites and availability of facilities to actively promote their use

- Expand the range of Performance Indicators and monitor our performance regularly, using the information to identify areas for improvement
- Provide a weekly service, with collections being made on the same day (except for public holiday periods when residents will be informed of alterations)
- Collect recyclable newsprint in a pilot area of the Borough on a fortnightly frequency and to review the success of the scheme and consider its future accordingly
- Ensure that the areas around recycling centres are cleansed within one working day of notification

Registration Services

What are the Registration Services?

- Civil registration, for local residents, of births, marriages and deaths
- Production of certification for these events
- Conducting civil marriage ceremonies at Arden House and Eastbury House in Barking and any other premises within the Borough that are licensed for these services

The statutory process governing these events and associated administrative activities are controlled by the Registrar General's Office, a Department of Central Government.

The budget for the service in 1999/2000 was £193,730, of which £57,450 was received in income from fees and £119,250 related to staffing costs. Four people, including the Superintendent Registrar, are employed in providing the service.

The day-to-day management and operation of the Registration Service has recently been transferred from the Chief Executive's Department to the new Leisure and Environment Department.

The following actions are planned in 2000/2001:

- Set and publish standards and targets for the service and set up systems to monitor performance against these
- We will be looking at how best to obtain the views of service users so that they may influence the future standard of service provision





Registration Services

What are the Registration Services?

- Civil registration, for local residents, of births, marriages and deaths
- Production of certification for these events
- Conducting civil marriage ceremonies at Arden House and Eastbury House in Barking and any other premises within the Borough that are licensed for these services

The statutory process governing these events and associated administrative activities are controlled by the Registrar General's Office, a Department of Central Government.

The budget for the service in 1999/2000 was £193,730, of which £57,450 was received in income from fees and £119,250 related to staffing costs. Four people, including the Superintendent Registrar, are employed in providing the service.

The day-to-day management and operation of the Registration Service has recently been transferred from the Chief Executive's Department to the new Leisure and Environment Department.

The following actions are planned in 2000/2001:

- Set and publish standards and targets for the service and set up systems to monitor performance against these
- We will be looking at how best to obtain the views of service users so that they may influence the future standard of service provision





Rent Accounting and Recovery Service

What is the Rent Accounting and Recovery Service?

The Rent Accounting and Recovery Service is responsible for maintaining rent accounts for the Council's 25,000 tenants.

The Service calculates and notifies tenants of the weekly rents due, allocates payments made to tenants' accounts and takes action against those tenants who fall into arrears with their rent payments.

The rents for Council properties are determined on an annual basis as part of the Authority's duty to publish a balanced Housing Revenue Account budget by the end of February each year. Rent increases are normally applied from the first Monday of April each year.

The Council is in the process of moving towards a points-based rent system based on the type of property, which is taken into account annually when new rent levels are set. New tenancies are let on the basis that the rent will be the higher of either the current rent, or the "standard" points assessed rent.

The estimated total rent due to be collected from tenants in 1999/2000 is £69.07 million comprising the following elements:-

	£ms
Net rent	62.319
Water charges	2.589
Sewerage charges	1.888
Heating charges	1.315
Garage rents	0.874
VAT	0.085
Total	69.070

The estimated amount of Housing Benefit payable to tenants to assist with their rent payments in 1999-2000 is £36 million or 58% of the net rent. Currently 16,000 tenants receive Housing Benefit. This service is only responsible for collecting rents not covered by Housing Benefit.

Water, sewerage and heating charges are not eligible for any assistance from Housing Benefits.

During the course of 1998/1999, over 7000 Notices

Seeking Possession were served on tenants for rent arrears. Of these, 1,689 cases were heard at Court.

The number of eviction warrants granted by the Court was 969, of which 611 were suspended on arrangements being made with the tenant to pay the arrears and 358 cases led to eviction.

At the 31st March 1999, 9,705 current tenants were in rent arrears which totalled £1,431,000 and 995 former tenants had left their properties owing a total of £609,000.

The Service plays a key part in delivering the Community Priorities, most notably, developing rights and responsibilities within the community. We recognise that housing is a basic human right, but also that tenants must be responsible for their property and for its up-keep and therefore should pay their rents promptly.

The cost of the service in 1999/2000 was £931,000. The service employs 22 full-time staff at a cost of £451,000.



What do people think of the Service?

A survey of 300 tenants was carried out in Summer 1998 as part of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering exercise. Tenants were asked a range of questions on:-

- Methods of payment
- Clarity of rent statements
- Dealing with rent queries
- Information given on changes/new tenancies
- Arrears recovery procedures
- Overall impressions of the Service

Of the 300 survey forms issued at random, 126 or 42% were returned. As a result of the responses the Council has now introduced payments by credit and debit cards.

85% of tenants found the rent statements easy to understand and the majority (89%) indicated that two statements per year were adequate. Most of the queries raised by tenants concerned rent arrears, payment details or were requests for new payment vouchers.

Nine out of ten were satisfied with the manner in which new tenancies were handled and with the clarity of the payment instructions.

Only 22 tenants responded to the questions on the handling of rent arrears and of these only 2 tenants complained that arrears notices were served too early.

How we perform

Rent Accounting & Recovery Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The rent collected as a percentage of rent due	99.95%	99.60%	99.30%	99%*	99.90%	99.80%	96.52%	98.70%	102.00%
Local Indicators									
Percentage of all current tenants owing over 13 weeks rent at 31 March excluding those owing less than £250	3.66%	3.04%	3.30%	3% (Standard specified in contract, 5%)	1.70%	5.50%	5.63%	2.90%	10.80%
Percentage of rent accounts amended within 5 working days of notification	The service operates most effectively when records are kept up to date			100%	Other Information * Changes to housing policy may lead to a small reduction in performance over the next two years Over the past seven years the amount of rent arrears written off as irrecoverable as a percentage of the total rent debit is 0.62%. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) publish annual statistics on the costs of housing management. These show the cost per dwelling for general management per property in the Council's Housing Revenue Account is estimated to be £356.21 per annum for 1998-99, the lowest of all London Authorities and compares with an average of £615.59.				
Percentage of tenant mortgage reference requests responded to within 5 working days of request	The service aims to support tenants buying their homes, by supplying the necessary information to the lending agency as quickly as possible			100%					



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Service performs well in:

- Collecting a high percentage of rent due
- Minimising the percentage of tenants falling into rent arrears

The Services aims to improve on:

- Reducing the number of cases taken to Court

The information contained in this plan shows that the Rent Accounting and Recovery Service provides a relatively low cost, efficient service with high levels of rent collection combined with low arrears figures as measured by the Audit Commission Performance Indicators.

Whilst seeking to maintain the same financial performance standards the section will this year, as part of a continuous performance programme and

efficiency improvement, seek to improve services to tenants by improving and developing procedures for:

- Liaison with the Housing Benefits Service to identify tenants whose housing benefits have lapsed and help tenants to complete new application forms thus preventing the tenants from going into rent arrears
- Liaison with the Social Services Department to identify hospitalised tenants and ensuring that benefit payments remain in place
- Seeking to avoid court action against tenants wherever possible by offering alternative payment methods and avoiding the addition of court costs to existing arrears
- Liaison with Housing Estate Officers when tenants incur rent arrears in order to establish whether there are any changed circumstances of which the Rent Accounting and Recovery Service is unaware.



Servicing of Council Buildings

The responsibilities of this activity include:

- Cleaning services in Council buildings
- Porterage at the Civic Centre, Town Hall and other municipal buildings.

The operating cost in 1999/2000 was £2,983,500, of which £2,570,500 related to employee costs.

The building cleaning service employs 462 people, including 5 managerial and supervisory personnel. Most of the people providing these services are employed on a part-time basis; 19 people provide the porterage service, including 3 supervisory staff.

Management and operation of these activities are currently being re-organised and restructured within the new Leisure and Environment Department. No performance data is currently available for these services. Once the revised departmental arrangements are put into place later this year, user liaison and consultation, comparisons with other organisations, service performance targets, and data collection and monitoring will be introduced.



Shape-Up for Homes

What is Shape-Up for Homes?

Shape-Up for Homes is a major refurbishment scheme to improve Council owned houses and low rise flats. During the 7 year programme 22,000 homes will be upgraded with, where necessary, central heating, loft insulation, double glazed windows, new doors and repairs to roofs and rendering.



In 1993 a condition survey had been carried out on the housing stock and the results of this survey were used to help us decide in which order homes should be done – properties in the worst condition were put to the front of the programme.

As well as improved homes for residents, the project has provided employment for many local people. Contractors were encouraged to give local people priority for training and jobs, and the proportion of the labour force resident in the borough is monitored on a regular basis.

Shape-Up supports the community priorities of creating better opportunities for all, improving health and social care in the borough and regenerating the local economy – generating jobs, training and enterprise.

The overall aim of Shape Up for Homes is to ensure that the Council's houses and low-rise flats remain available as good quality homes for social letting for the next 30 years.

This is being achieved by undertaking work to ensure that:

- The structures are in good repair
- Properties are secure, adequately heated and insulated
- There is a high degree of certainty about future maintenance costs
- The risk of potential liability for damage is reduced
- The properties enhance the local environment
- Tenants' needs and wishes are taken into account.

Project management services are provided by Schal International, an outside firm of consultants whilst the Council's resident liaison team acts as the link with tenants, dealing with queries and problems as they arise.

The total budget for 2000/2001 is £20.6 million which is funded through the Council's capital programme.



How we perform

Shape Up for homes Performance Indicator	Barking & Dagenham Performance				Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1997/8		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
Local Indicators							
Average spend per home on major repairs and improvements	£1,123	£934	£869	£606	£1,102	£456	£675
Reduction in capital costs of project on Egan	New target based on principles and data from review of Shape-Up			10%			



What do people think of the Service?

Resident Liaison Officers have assessed customer satisfaction on an ongoing basis, although this was not in the form of a survey. Complaints and enquiries were dealt with on an individual basis, but there was no overall assessment of satisfaction levels.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Shape-Up project is a major investment in the Council's housing which will bring improvements to the lives of thousands of tenants.

The original programme was to cost £95 million, plus an allowance for yearly inflation. Early on in the programme, it became apparent that the overall costs had been underestimated and in 1997/98 around £5.9 million more was spent than had been planned.

When problems with the management arrangements and costs began to emerge, the Council conducted a full investigation, which challenged the scope of the project and the way the service was being delivered. Whilst the inquiry was taking place, the programme was suspended and this is reflected in the amount of work completed that year.

The key findings from the report were:

- That the extent and costs of the work needed to bring homes up to standard had been underestimated. For example more roofs had needed replacing than was expected.
- That the project management arrangements were

inadequate for a large scheme such as Shape Up: complex line management arrangements made communication difficult and obscured accountabilities, and monitoring arrangements were inadequate.

In response to the inquiry, additional resources were put into managing the scheme. A Project Manager was appointed to take overall control and review both the scope of the scheme and the management arrangements. Schal International were appointed as project management consultants with the stated aim:

'to create an integrated team comprising Council officers, consultants and contractors working in partnership to meet the objectives of the Shape-Up programme'

The appointment of Schal was initially for a three month pilot period to complete the review of the scheme. The appointment was then confirmed for the implementation of the agreed programme.

Two major reports on the construction industry (Latham 94; Egan 98) highlighted the need for changes and made recommendations which have brought significant benefits to private sector companies adopting them. The Shape-Up project management team is applying Egan principles for delivering Best Value to achieve year on year savings.

The appointment of Schal International and the review of the Shape-Up project led to the production of a comprehensive report 'A Fresh Start to Shape-Up'.

Having considered the recommendations, the Council has decided that the project should proceed on the basis set out in A Fresh Start to Shape Up.

- By April 2000 new procurement procedures will

be introduced which are anticipated to achieve continuous efficiency improvements in line with the targets set in the Egan report, which include a reduction in capital costs of 10% per annum.

- All central heating installations will be completed by April 2002.
- All elements of Shape-Up, with the exception of roofs, will be completed by 2004.
- 35% of roofs needing replacement will be completed by 2004 (the remainder being the subject of a planned maintenance programme after that).
- Planned levels of work are set out below:

	1999/2000	2000/2001
Units of central heating	350	1600
Number of homes refurbished	600	3,110
Total budget*	£4.8 million	£18.2 million

* the late start of Phase 2 of the programme led to some of the budget for 1999/2000 being rolled forward into 2000/2001.



Street Cleansing Service

What is the Street Cleansing Service?

Street Cleansing is essentially what it says – keeping the environment in which we live and work clean, by delivering litter picking and sweeping services to all parts of the Borough.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) places a duty upon the Council (as a Principal Litter Authority) to ensure that the land is, so far as practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse. In order to comply with this duty, the Street Cleansing Service provides a once weekly sweeping and gully cleansing service to over 900 residential streets in the Borough. Additionally, in busy areas such as shopping centres, there are cleansing services provided to a level necessary to keep the areas clean – so for example, in the Town Centre, there are permanent cleansing staff solely responsible for continuous cleansing in that area. There is also the duty to monitor and arrange for removal of abandoned vehicles in the Borough.

The Service seeks to comply with the 1990 EPA Code of Practice on Litter and Fly-tipping, which sets out various standards for street cleansing in different types of area.

The Service is equipped with 11 specialist mechanical sweeping and gully (the drains in the side of the road) emptying vehicles and directly employs 48 manual staff and 3 managers. The service has also been subject to Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) for the last ten years, and the Council's Direct Service Organisation has successfully retained the contract to carry out the work. The last tender process was in 1995 for a four year period which has been extended to await the introduction of Best Value.

The budget for 1999/2000 was £1,054,256 of which £1,000 was funded from income.

The overall objectives of the service are: -

- To contribute to the community priority– “cleaner, greener and safer”
- To comply with the lawful duty and the Environmental Protection Act Code of Practice in the most efficient and cost effective manner





How we perform

Street Cleansing Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
Average Number of Days taken to remove fly-tips	5	7	6	3	3	1.4	1	1	1
Percentage of Highways cleaned to a high standard*	94.0%	92.3%	65%	67%	69.9%	48.0%	42.8%	34.0%	37.6%
Percentage of Highways cleaned to an acceptable standard	5.8%	7.7%	25.0%	27.0%	66.1%	67.4%	46.3%	48.0%	50.4%
Local Indicators									
Net spending per head of population on street cleaning	£6.44	£6.44	£6.77	£6.97			£9.49	£5.72	£18.61
Percentage of public satisfaction with the service		52.0%	Not yet available	57%	*Performance relating to these street cleaning indicators will show a fall during 1999/2000 as the methods used for inspection have been reviewed and standards re-enforced. The figures for the current year present a more realistic picture of the levels of cleanliness achieved on the Borough's streets as a baseline for the Year 1 fundamental performance review of Street Cleansing.				
Percentage of gullies cleaned at least once per year.	47%	57%	60%	100%					

Other Performance information

The Council's street cleansing service was subject to a competitive tendering process in 1995. The in-house service's bid, which was assessed in terms of both cost and quality won the contract, against external competition.



What do people think of the service?

As the Community Survey found that 52% of people felt the service to be satisfactory, this service is of concern to a large percentage of the public. There is a perception that it could be improved – clearly this is a message that we will be addressing in the coming year.

The ability to retain the work in-house on two occasions, under the constraints of competitive tendering, gives an initial indication that the Council's Street Cleansing Service is competitive in terms of both quality and cost.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The proportion of highways cleaned to a high standard has fallen this year, reflecting the new inspection regime, but performance is still in line with the best performing Councils nationwide and better than local Boroughs. Net spending on street cleansing is lower than the average for neighbouring Boroughs, but average time taken to remove fly-tips is longer than in comparable authorities.

The Service does not enjoy the best public perception. Whilst major improvements in the Service

may be dependent on the availability of additional funding, there are improvements that can be made within existing resources and a review of "Street Scene" services – highway maintenance, street cleaning, lighting and associated services - will address this. It would be inappropriate to pre-judge the outcome of the review, but it is envisaged that one key result will be the bringing together of street based services under one management structure. This will enable a more dedicated approach to maintain the Borough's streets, covering cleaning, lighting and highway maintenance. This will contribute to the Borough's "cleaner, greener, safer" objective in a more direct and efficient way.

Key actions for 2000/2001 include:

- A fundamental performance review will be carried out in the "Street Scene" area, including Street Cleansing and will be subject to a high degree of stakeholder consultation. This review will challenge the fundamental need for and provision of the Service and identify opportunities to improve efficiency
- Ensure that the monitoring of existing cleansing contracts is rigorous and that current specifications are met throughout the Borough by a regime of regular inspection
- Ensure regular, co-ordinated clearance of litter bins

Tenant Participation Service

What is the Tenant Participation Service?

The small, recently established, Tenant Participation Team works with local people to promote resident involvement in planning, monitoring and improving the Council's housing services.

It provides support to existing Tenants' and Residents' Groups and other tenants' representatives and helps encourage new ones, working with residents on selected estates.

Its main responsibilities are:

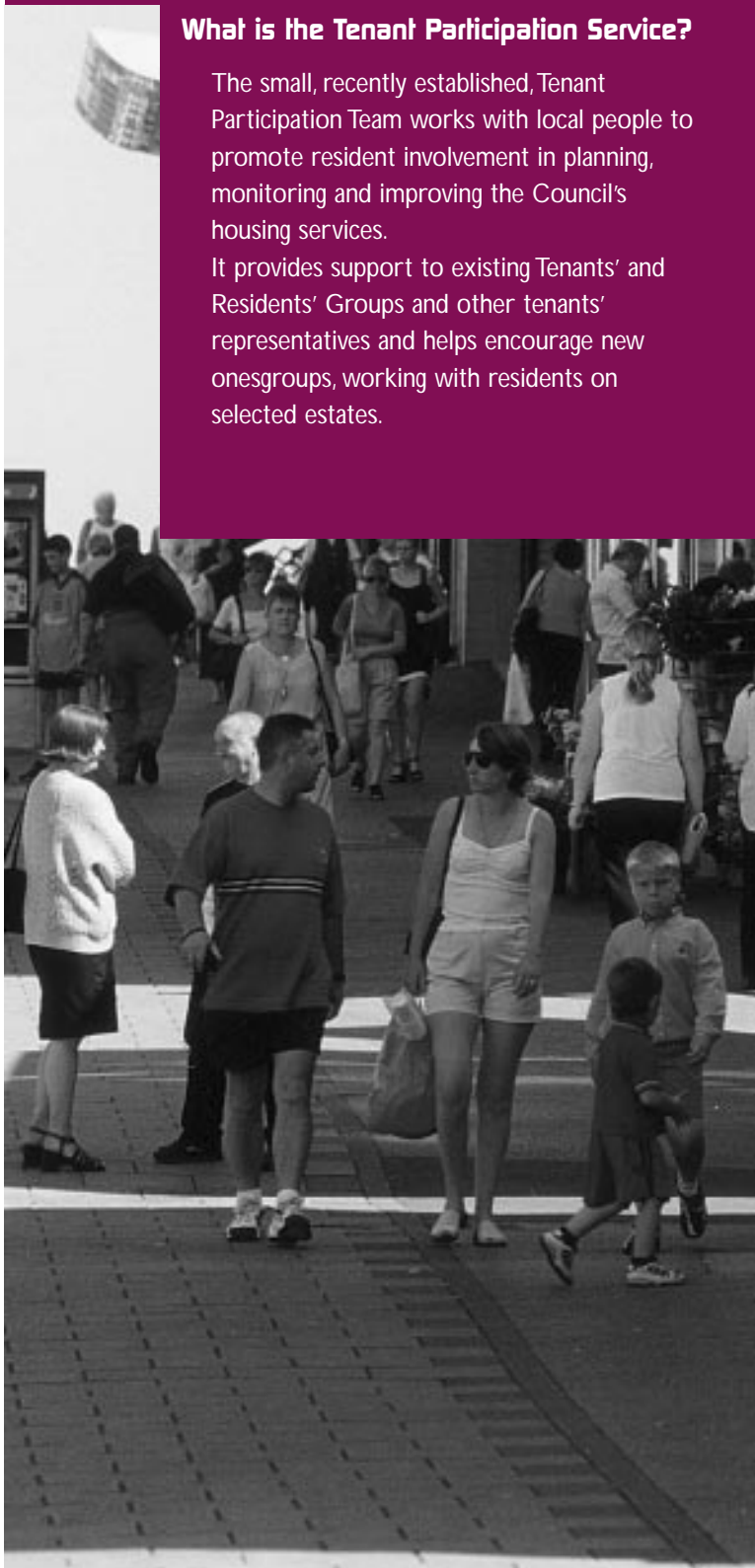
- Helping tenants to gain the skills and confidence to enable them to be more meaningfully involved
- Supporting meetings to ensure they are well run and effective
- Administering start up and continuation grants,
- Providing general help, guidance and advice about the Council and the way it works

There are a number of formal meetings where tenants and their representatives can meet with the Council.

The Borough has more than 20 Tenants' and Residents' Associations, many of which are formally recognised by the Joint Tenants' and Residents' Liaison Council, a quarterly meeting of representatives of Tenants' and Residents' Associations and Councillors. Some groups, particularly those newly created, are less formalised.

Three Area Contract Panels meet every one or two months to monitor the way the Council manages its housing. The Panels include representatives from Tenants' and Residents' Associations, Councillors and individual tenants. Housing Forums, which are open to all tenants, are usually held quarterly.

From April 2000, all councils will need to have in place arrangements for establishing a 'Compact', or formal agreement, with their tenants to set out:





- How tenants can work together to get involved in local decisions on housing matters that affect them
- What the Council and tenants want to achieve through this agreement, and
- How the agreement will be put into action and progress checked

Tenant participation supports the Community priority of developing rights and responsibilities with the community. The overall objective of the Service is to promote effective and meaningful tenant and resident participation, especially to increase local democracy and influence service standards and performance.

The team has this year been enlarged to ensure targets for increasing participation are met. The new team consists of a Manager supported by two Tenant Participation Officers and administrative support. Tenants' representatives took part in the appointment process.

The overall budget for the Service for 2000/2001 is £118,760 of which £88,010 relates to staffing costs.



What do people think of the Service?

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) worked with tenants' representatives during 1998/1999, both individually and through meetings.

This exercise found that tenants felt there were few extreme problems with housing services and that a good relationship existed with active tenants' representatives. Tenants who were not actively involved needed more information and encouragement to enable them to participate.

43 tenants' representatives were surveyed in 1999 on the level of support they received from the Council. Overall 60% were satisfied with the Tenant Participation Service. As a result of feedback from the survey, changes have been made to improve the quality of agendas and ensure they are sent out promptly. Arrangements for dealing with enquiries when tenant participation staff are out of the office have also been reviewed.



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

The Council is committed to helping tenants and residents have a say in decisions affecting their lives. However, the level of tenant participation in the Borough in the past has been low and additional resources have been identified to develop a small tenant participation team to address this.

The Team will actively encourage participation and aims over the coming years to create a strong network of local groups, working closely with Community Development, Estate Management and

How we Perform

Tenants' Participation Performance Indicator	Barking & Dagenham Performance			
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01
Local Indicators	.....	.....	.....	.....
Percentage of tenants living in areas covered by a Tenant's Association	n/a	20%	23%	25%
Assessment of tenant participation component of Housing Strategy Statement	well below average	well below average	below average	average

Other information

During 1997/98 four new Tenants' and Residents' Associations were formed.

The extent of tenant involvement has increased during 1999/2000:

- Tenant representatives were actively involved in the development of the Housing Strategy, including attending meetings with the Government Office for London.
- The working party reviewing housing allocation policy within the Borough includes tenants' representatives, who were also on the appointment panel when the Tenant Participation Team was appointed.
- The Council recently agreed that three tenants' representatives should sit on its Housing Committee, and whatever body supersedes it when the Council is re-organised.

There has been no formal benchmarking of the Authority's performance against others. Tenant participation is one of the elements of the Council's annual Housing Strategy Statement, which is assessed by the Government Office for London. In previous years our performance on tenant participation has been judged as 'well below average' and some of the proposals to improve our performance are set out below



other departments and agencies.

The structure of meetings that has developed over time leads to some overlap. This has been reviewed and a decision made by both tenants' representatives and the Council to improve existing arrangements. The new arrangements, which will improve efficiency, will be put into place during 2000.

During 2000/2001 the team will encourage tenants who do not play an active role to participate through continuing to run Open Forum meetings, which are open to all tenants, and by a regular section in the Council's Citizen magazine. This will be edited by tenants' representatives and the Tenant Participation Team.

Particular effort will be made to encourage sections of the community who are under-represented to participate. This will start in 2000/2001 with projects to involve younger people, tenants from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities.

Specific issues around service charges led us to examine services to leaseholders and ways of improving them. The Council will establish a Leasehold Management Team and a Leaseholder Forum during 2000 to improve communication with this client group.

The extent of tenant involvement has increased over the past year. To increase the capacity of tenants to be involved, a training programme will be implemented. To support training, a budget of £10,000 has been devolved to tenants' representatives. £9,000 of this will be used for a training scheme and tenants' representatives are actively involved in drawing up the programme, which will be implemented during 2000. A budget of £15,500 has been allocated to produce publicity material and newsletters.

The Council employed TPAS to help it develop a Tenant Participation Strategy, which was formally launched in November 1999. By April 2000 it aims to have the basis of Tenant Participation Compacts in place for all areas in line with Government requirements.

During 2000/2001 the Council will employ a specialist to carry out an objective assessment of the progress we have made on implementing the strategy.

There is little information to enable us to compare our performance with others. We will explore opportunities for benchmarking with other organisations by March 2001 to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.



Traffic and Road Safety Service

What is the Traffic and Road Safety Service?

The service ensures that "Road Safety" and "Accident Remedial" schemes are designed and implemented within the Council's Road Safety Strategy to reduce the numbers, severity and type of road traffic accidents which is an important part of the community Priority to make the Borough cleaner, greener and safer.



Road Safety education, training and publicity activities are currently aimed at those most at risk – such as children, cyclists and new drivers. National campaigns allow the group to heighten awareness of specific road safety issues and so the work of the group tends to focus around the national road safety agenda.

Traffic management measures are an essential part of traffic and transportation policies. They help to reduce the impact of ever-increasing traffic levels on the road network. This involves taking into account Government policies and in particular the new Traffic Restraint policies which will require local authorities to develop achievable targets for limiting traffic growth.

The Council's Interim Transport Plan sets out over 70 service targets with measurable outputs.

The service, which employs a total of 16 staff, has a budget for 1999/2000 of £544,800, of which £2,480 is funded by income from Road Safety course fees.



What do people think of the Service?

The Community Survey conducted in March 1999 found 34.8% of the sample were concerned about traffic and pollution. A follow-on survey within the Community Survey, involving 555 people, was conducted in May 1999 which found substantial support (82%) for traffic calming (traffic reduction and speed limitation).



How we perform

Traffic & Road Safety Performance Indicators	Barking & Dagenham Performance				London and Nationwide Comparisons 1997/8		Comparisons with Neighbouring Boroughs 1998/9		
	1997/98	1998/99	Projection 1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Top 25% Nationally	Top 25% London	Redbridge	Havering	Newham
National Indicators									
The percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people	71.7%	80.7%	80.0%	80%*	75.0%	77.0%	73.4%	24.1%	63.5%
Local Indicators	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Percentage increase in the use of cycles	Baseline data is being collected, a screen line count was carried out in August 1999 at 13 sites within the borough during a 12 hour period. (1,392 cycles counted) Similar surveys will be taken during the coming year.			10%					
Percentage reduction in the number of child cyclist and pedestrian accidents occurring on journeys to and from school	Baseline data will be collected during the coming year, no historical data is available. A snapshot survey at one school indicated that 30% travelled to school other than by car. More detailed surveys will continue.			10% of the current level in each category by the year 2005.					
Percentage increase in the proportion of school pupils and teachers travelling to school other than by car.				5%					
Number of accidents to children under 16 years old	145	149	150	150					
Number of accidents to children under 16 years old on the way to school	31	23	22	21					

*Percentage will not increase until a major scheme and available funding is agreed to alter the remaining crossings

Other information:

In comparing accident data, compiled from Metropolitan Police statistics, the percentage change for 1998 over 1997 is as follows for Barking and Dagenham:

Borough	Total Casualties		Pedestrians		Pedal cyclists		Powered two-wheelers	
Total Inner London	19,653	(-0.1%)	4,691	(-0.3%)	2,434	-0.70%	3,949	-6.10%
Total Outer London	25,894	(-2.7%)	4,341	(-2.8%)	1,881	(-6.6%)	2,893	-2.40%
Barking & Dagenham	961	(-5.7%)	169	(-6.30%)	65	(-18.8%)	78	-9.90%
Borough	Car occupants		Total vehicle occupants					
Total Inner London	6,597	(-4.0%)	14,962	0				
Total Outer London	14,732	(-4.0%)	21,553	(-2.6)				
Barking & Dagenham	584	(-5.8%)	792	(-7.9)				



What does this information mean and what are we going to do about it?

Barking and Dagenham is among the best performing Councils in the proportion of crossings with facilities for disabled people.

The Council is committed to reducing the number of road accidents to children and has set out a number of proposals to achieve this.

The following key actions have been identified for 2000/2001:

- The Service is scheduled to be the subject of a Best Value Fundamental Performance Review in 2001/2002. As part of the preparatory work, we will be looking at benchmarking the activities with other authorities and organisations
- Current baseline performance indicators to enable comparison with other London Boroughs are limited. Local baseline data will be established during the coming year by carrying out assessments using the objectives laid out in the Interim Transport Plan. The Interim Transport Plan will enable a comparison with other local



authorities although care must be taken in comparing like with like

In assessing the effectiveness of the Traffic and Road Safety strategy, performance will be assessed, reviewed and measured using the following mechanisms.

- Screen line counts (traffic counts at strategic locations undertaken year on year to enable comparisons).
 - Accident data (London Research Centre data from Metropolitan Police statistics).
 - Consultation with stakeholders.
 - Surveys (public transport users).
 - Journey times (sourced from private and public transport users, pedestrians, cyclists etc.).
- Investigate how to implement an increase by 5% the proportion of school pupils and teachers travelling to school other than by car

Improvements in efficiency are being made by linking studies connected with the Safe Routes to Schools initiative and general improvements in traffic management. This will enable a joined-up approach to pedestrian routes, cycle routes and reviews of junction layouts.

In addition, resources have been diverted from motor cycle training – which is well-provided for in the private and independent sector – to focus on “young driver” training and “cycling on roads”. The latter represents a shift away from the traditional cycle training using closed areas or school playgrounds. This involves a careful risk assessment of usable locations and, so far, has been getting positive, albeit informal, feedback from schools, parents and young cyclists. A formal questionnaire response system will be introduced in the coming year.

A number of current proposals – in particular those linked with the Safe Routes to Schools project - are aimed at encouraging the use of alternative forms of transport to the motor car, thus promoting environmental sustainability.