

# Area Self Assessment 2009/10

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Islington Strategic Partnership (ISP) continues to make improvements in its priority areas and partners work together effectively to contribute to wider community outcomes.
- 1.2 This document provides an update on areas identified in the 2008/9 Comprehensive Area Assessment report of the Audit Commission as in need of monitoring and development, namely the development of a regeneration strategy and a health inequality strategy; and specific community safety issues. It also provides an update on some of our other priorities and highlights areas of particularly good performance and demonstrates that we have continued to be innovative in our approach to climate change.

## 2. Regeneration Strategy

- 2.1 Agreeing a regeneration strategy and a strategic framework across the partnership was identified as a priority in Islington's 2009 CAA report by the Audit Commission. We have made progress in developing an overarching strategic framework that links the physical, economic, social and environmental aspects of regeneration. The draft Islington Regeneration Strategy 2010-2015 is one of a series of key documents that will help Islington deliver our Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 2.2 The approach being adopted by the Regeneration Strategy sets Islington firmly within the wider London context and will provide a framework for building on the existing regeneration activity. It will promote further linkages between people, communities, the local economy and employment and the physical changes in the borough and also set regeneration activity in the neighbourhood context.
- 2.3 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets out what kind of community we want Islington to be in ten to 15 years time and how we plan to achieve it. The SCS was developed by the ISP following extensive consultation with local organisations and residents. The overall vision is of one of creating a stronger, more sustainable community in which everyone will have access to excellent services and can realise their potential.
- 2.4 The Core Strategy Consultation 'Your Neighbourhood, Your Islington' obtained feedback from residents on their priorities for how the borough will develop up to 2025 and beyond on issues such as housing, open space and employment. All 90,000 households were targeted with an additional 1400 sent to individuals that had previously expressed an interest and 1000 of the

Citizens Panel. Pre-consultation feedback from focus groups was used to inform the consultation document which resulted in simplification of the leaflet and amendments to the wording and structure and this, combined with piloting the consultation materials helped to ensure a good return of 2211 responses. The feedback has been used to develop the Core Strategy, which in turn is feeding into the regeneration strategy.

- 2.5 Over recent years significant social, physical and economic regeneration work has been undertaken in Islington as summarised below.

### Physical

- 2.6 Land mark developments including Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, Lough Road, Hornsey Road and Highbury Square, the Ropemaker building and Hornsey Road Baths (amongst others) have resulted in significant benefits to the borough; increased employment opportunities, provision of affordable and key worker homes, and increased provision of community amenities including commercial space, learning centres, day nurseries, community health facilities, public space, and a new waste recycling centre.
- 2.7 A new public square has been delivered and launched at City Road Basin and improvements to Arundel Square have led to quality improvements and an increase in open space in the borough – significant both because of the small size of Islington and the currently low levels of open space per head of population.

### Social

- 2.8 The Social and Economic Wellbeing Board is a thematic partnership of the ISP and over the last two years it has led an overhaul of our approach to social regeneration and produced a prospectus to guide commissioning priorities. We are delivering a multi-disciplinary Child Poverty Innovation Pilot programme funded by the Child Poverty Unit to bring poor households with children out of poverty, including through employability measures.
- 2.9 Other activity being promoted through this board include;
- Strengthening the Third Sector and looking at ways to increase volunteering in the borough
  - Adult learning programmes aiming to increase the skills of residents, especially key skills helping with employability and those with ESOL needs
  - Job creation, particularly for young people through apprenticeships within the council, our external partners and through the Future Jobs Fund
  - Customised vocational and employability training for known vacancies and local business sectors, job hunting support and a recruitment service for employers that pre-screens applicants and tracks their progress to help with retention, this work targeting parents and families with low income.
  - Formal volunteering scheme set up by City and Islington College targeted at the workless and those out of work due to redundancy.
  - 'Help on Your Doorstep' in which advisors contact residents directly through systematic door-knocking on social housing estates.

### Economic

- 2.10 Business Improvement Districts have been established in the borough. The Angel BID Ltd was established in April 2007 after local businesses voted overwhelmingly for a BID to make their trading environment at the Angel cleaner, safer and brighter. Angel BID is an independent business-led limited company delivering services until 2012 to benefit almost 750 businesses in the BID area.

2.11 Over the last two years we have improved our understanding of business and enterprise in Islington using the Beta model analysis tool and improved engagement with businesses, which have highlighted the need to strengthen the focus on business in the regeneration strategy. Regular business forums take place to promote a range of activities from business advice, information on regulatory services and information about the council's activities. In addition a high level business board has been set up at which a few key businesses meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive to help provide a private sector view on the direction of the Council's activity.

### A New Strategic Framework

2.12 Building on current practice, our draft Regeneration Framework is an overarching approach that provides a clear and coherent direction for the future. Work on this framework is set against the context of an economic recession which poses significant challenges for private developers, an anticipated decline in public sector spending and an uncertain political environment - owing to this year's local and national elections.

2.13 Our draft Regeneration Framework focus on "place" as a way of drawing together local resources, improve efficiency, maximise impact and involve people. As a result, a framework approach has been developed that is flexible enough to enable services to respond to specific community needs taking into account the impact of wider factors. The focus on place will enable the interaction of services at a local level that is required to address complex issues that require a multi-disciplinary response. The background to the development of the strategy is attached.



S:\  
Corporate\_Strategy\I

2.14 Practical implementation of this place focus is being tested in two focus areas - Canonbury and Finsbury Park. This resident-led work has focussed on developing and enhancing local coordination of statutory, third and private sector organisations in relation to the thematic groups of the Islington Strategic Partnership. The bringing together of key services at a local level in a focussed manner aims to strengthen partnership working and ensure that services are responsive to area priorities.

## 3. Health Inequality Strategy

3.1 Tracking the delivery of improvements in health outcomes for local people was highlighted as a focus priority in the 2009 area assessment. Over the last year we have strengthened the mechanisms for monitoring health inequalities by incorporating health into the council's performance and financial management arrangements and through the development of a revised [Islington Health Inequality Strategy](#) (2010). The strategy operates as an overarching framework that brings together key strategies and plans to address health inequalities in Islington.

3.2 Islington's Citizens Panel helps us to shape policy and improve services. We used feedback from the panel on attitudes to health and lifestyles to shape the priorities in the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA). The Islington Health Inequality Strategy builds on the previous strategy and takes into account the updated JSNA and the recommendations of the National Health Inequalities Support Team, which reported in 2009. The result is a comprehensive strategy that enables the implementation and monitoring of interventions at population, community and individual levels over the short, medium and long term.

3.3 The strategy is the responsibility of all strategic partners and provides a mechanism to join up all work streams of partner agencies. It sets out both universal and targeted actions and performance is monitored by the Islington Strategic Partnership and through the current LAA monitoring process and sub groups. This process enables the ongoing monitoring of health inequalities across partners organisations to ensure that we are delivering on health improvement for local people.

3.4 This strategy is enabling us to address some of the key health challenges that we face in Islington – particularly early deaths. Death rates from Cardio Vascular Disease (CVD) and Cancer are

higher in Islington than the average for the rest of the country. The Health Inequalities National Support Team identified CVD, Cancer, Infant mortality and Seasonal Excess deaths, combined with the boroughs overall deprivation status as the main reason for inequalities in life expectancy in Islington.

- 3.5 Efforts to prevent early deaths include a number of multi agency programmes to promote healthy lifestyles, improvement of data collection and service provision in primary care and community settings as well as tackling poverty and deprivation across the borough.

## 4. Community Safety

- 4.1 Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour has been identified as a top priority for Islington residents for a number of years. There has therefore been significant effort and money invested in addressing these issues through a range of initiatives which have been driven forward through extremely strong partnerships, including with community organisations. This has yielded very good results. The number of Total Notifiable Offences continued to fall during 2009, with an approximate 6% reduction compared to the previous year's figures. We are aware that, more recently, the long term decline in total offences has appeared to slow, suggesting that levels are beginning to plateau. However, Burglary, Robbery, Criminal Damage, Drugs and most violence offences have been reduced with the most significant reduction seen around Serious Youth Violence (25% down) and Robbery (16% down).
- 4.2 Despite positive reductions in the past, a number of offence categories increased over last year. These include Hate Crime (+8%), Motor Vehicle Crime (+7%) and Theft & Handling offences up by 3% overall. The council and partners have been monitoring this increase, which is a possible consequence of the current economic climate.
- 4.3 Six strategic priorities have been selected for the year ahead; Public Confidence, Serious Violent Crime, Serious Acquisitive Crime, Drugs & Substance Misuse, Hate Crime and Young People's involvement in crime. Some of the key factors we have taken into account as part of a partnership response include the likely reductions in funding available and the World Cup competitions in June. We will be developing action plans for each strategic priority, with the above factors in mind.
- 4.4 The CDRP's most recent Strategic Assessment document is attached.



H:\Audit Commission\  
CAA 2010-11\SIP Str

- 4.5 The Safer Islington Partnership (SIP) is chaired by the Fire Service and includes the Police, Islington Council, NHS Islington, the Probation Service, and representatives from the voluntary, community, faith, and business sectors. The partnership has a very strong performance and delivery culture where nothing is left to chance. Six monthly strategic assessments are used to determine local priorities and to adapt delivery mechanisms as required. Specialist subgroups focus on specific issues and the 2009-10 actions and outcomes for key priorities are summarised below.

### Young People

- 4.6 This has been an area of significant multi-agency service improvement and crime reduction. The positive reductions seen during 2009/10 are attributable to the huge amount of resources the borough has committed to dealing with youth-related issues, especially serious youth violence. The Bronze Group (multi-agency partnership panel targeting the top young people committing violence on the borough) continues to effectively manage those most at risk of committing violence with some clear positive results. The group has been considered so successful in delivering

positive outcomes that the MPS is studying how it can be rolled out London-wide. Underpinning the group's success is excellent partnership working and information sharing, and the work of our specialist services (Gangs Prevention Team, Gangs Disruption Service, Youth Engagement Team and Family Intervention Project). The challenge for the next year will be to sustain this excellent work in the climate of economic troubles.

- 4.7 Towards the end of 2009 two operations were run (Op Autumn Nights and Op Winter Nights) to combat the expected rise in violent crime generally seen around key times of the year (Halloween, Bonfire Night, End of School Term, New Years Eve, etc). This involved all the SNTs being out on patrol in key identified locations with partners and reassurance initiatives with the community. The operations were largely successful with Halloween in particular being the quietest in terms of serious crime that it has been on the borough for a number of years. Islington is a Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP) borough and we are making good progress against all the elements in the programme. In particular, the YOS Triage Programme has quickly established itself as a pivotal service and has built a strong partnership with the police. The Triage Programme works alongside partners in the police service to divert potential first time entrants away from the youth justice system by offering a targeted package of support services. The programme is targeted at young people committing gravity 1 and 2 level offences. Between its launch in June 2009 and Dec 2009, Triage has worked with 93 young people. 10 of the 93 have been re-arrested since and dealt with via the criminal justice system; 2 others were still on police bail as of Dec 2009. This represents a relatively low rate of re-offending, and early indicators are that the Triage programme is having a significant impact on reducing first time entrants. Based on YJB proxy data, Islington is projecting a 51% drop on last years first time entry figures.
- 4.8 A number of key projects involving Homes for Islington (HFI) have been delivering positive outcomes and include:
- The award winning Arsenal Positive Futures partnership, is now involving up to 700 young people in weekly football and educational sessions ("Double Clubs") on 9 HFI estates
  - Access for Sports partnerships who have trained over 100 young people on Sports Coaching and Leadership courses
  - All Change a programme of arts and drama activities culminating in a performance by young people at Sadlers Wells Theatre
  - Funding for a detached youth work service and other diversionary activities for those who have been involved in ASB.

### **Prolific and Priority Offenders**

- 4.9 The council and partners are aware the current performance against the PPO National Indicator (NI30) is unsatisfactory. We are aware of problems with how this is measured, in that the PPO cohort does not necessarily reflect those engaged with us and with whom we are working effectively. To improve this we have now refreshed the PPO cohort to ensure the offence profile reflects the borough's priority crimes and, in order to ensure de-selection of offenders does not have a negative impact on their offending, we have developed a second strand for managing those offenders who still need multi-agency intervention.
- 4.10 The Partnership has completed physical improvement to offices at Highbury Corner Magistrate Court to enable the co-location of a new multi-agency Integrated Offender Management Team. Additional resources have also been allocated to recruit two additional Probation Officers, an IOM Co-ordinator and an IOM Data Analyst who will work alongside current officers in Probation and the Police.
- 4.11 The borough's IOM Action Plan and self-assessment are attached (embedded) for further information about development of the programme.



H:\Audit Commission\  
CAA 2010-11\IOM Ac

## Anti-social behaviour

- 4.12 The ISP has agreed that a proportion of the reward grant should be used to strengthen the partnership's approach to tackling low level crime and anti-social behaviour. The Borough Commander has restructured his neighbourhood policing arrangements to create a 28 strong task force whose main focus is on the Borough's estates and the night time economy. He has designated 4 sector inspectors whose jurisdictions are co-terminous with the Council's area committees and Multi Agency Geographical Panels in Islington. The reward grant is funding four Council based MAGPI coordinators and an additional police team, the South Islington Problem Solving Team (which compliments the Council funded team already based in the North of the Borough). This amounts to significant additional resource, the allocation of which is decided through partnership tasking process which takes into account the views of the MAGPIs, SNT panels and intelligence produced by the shared Intelligence Analyst. There has already been a reduction in the number of people perceiving ASB as a problem in relation to the composite indicator, with some really significant reductions in the individual aspects of ASB making up that indicator. The partnership has continued to use a range of tools to tackle ASB, including controlled drinking zones, introduced after consultation with the public, dispersal orders and crack house closures. All these have met with public approval.
- 4.13 During 2009/10 the council and partners secured the following in response to ASB: 5 Drug Closure Orders (13 in 08/09), 5 Dispersal Orders (9 in 08/09), 35 'live' ASBOs and 47 'live' ABCs.
- 4.14 The CDRP have agreed minimum service standards for tackling ASB, which is aimed at reassuring residents and providing support. A Victims' Champion has been selected to ensure the views of victims are taken into account and that services deliver to these minimum standards. See attached.



H:\Audit Commission\  
CAA 2010-11\ASB Mir

## Public confidence

- 4.15 The Community Safety Partnerships Unit (CSPU) continues to work with residents to involve them more in community safety initiatives. An example includes the participatory budgeting initiative held in the Finsbury Park ward at the start of the year whereby residents were able to vote on how money should be spent to reduce crime and improve community safety. NI17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour is performing well against our own target. However, we rank 23rd in London and this is something we are trying to address.
- 4.16 Since January 2009, Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) have carried out surveys with residents within their wards. The aim is to improve public perceptions of Policing and ASB. Every three months approximately 150 residents are surveyed and the feedback has enabled the partnership to target resources differently. The most recent survey results suggest that the initiatives to improve public confidence are having an impact. Four key areas are being addressed by the council and the police to increase public confidence. These are Community Engagement, Fair Treatment, Effectiveness of dealing with crime, and Alleviating ASB, The SIP has recently approved a community engagement action plan (attached) which sets out a range of activity designed to improve the quality of interaction between the public and crime reduction agencies. This is being reinforced by the work of the Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Co-ordinator, work with the Courts and the emergent victims and witnesses strategy.



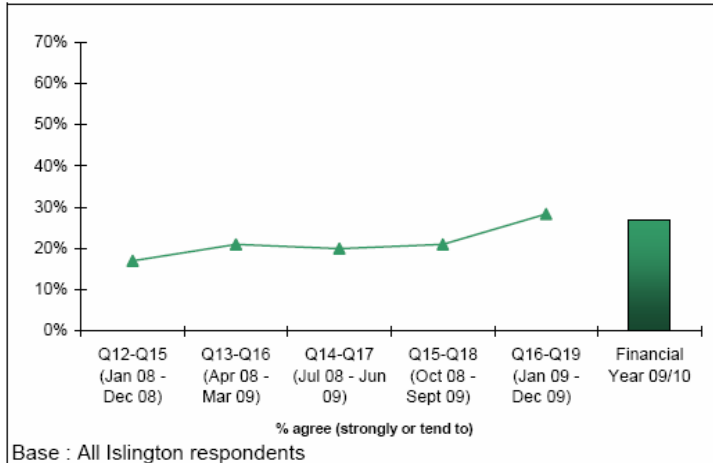
H:\Audit Commission\  
CAA 2010-11\SIP Cor

- 4.17 An interim Place Survey was carried out by the Council late 2009. The results of this survey are not official and it will be the next survey carried out in 2010 that will inform the official NI outturn.

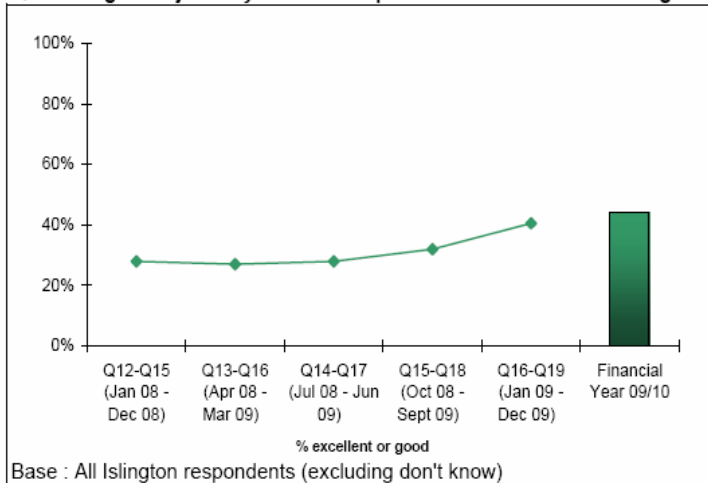
However, results show a positive direction of travel in NI17 – Perceptions of Anti-Social behaviour from the baseline with a reduction of 1.3% to 27.5%, very near to the target. 4.9 In addition, regular surveying of victims demonstrates improved satisfaction with the way HFI deals with anti-social behaviour.

4.18 The graphs below show the recent police confidence survey results;

The police and local council seek people's views about the ASB and crime issues that matter in this area



Q60 How good a job do you think the police IN THIS AREA are doing



## 5. Climate Change and Sustainability

5.1 Since the last Area Assessment, the Council has developed a comprehensive 3 year sustainability strategy and action plan in consultation with stakeholders, updating its 2006-10 action plan. The strategy covers our work in key areas such as climate change, waste minimisation, the built environment, food and affordable warmth. We are continuing to build on our success in working in partnership (e.g. the Climate Change Partnership). Over 2009-10 we have developed two particularly strong delivery partnerships with NHS Islington on food and on seasonal health and affordable warmth, thereby strengthening the way individual work streams address interrelated SCS priorities.

5.2 The borough continues to reduce its residual domestic waste (NI191), currently projecting less than 470kg per household for 09/10, itself a 9% reduction on the already excellent figure for 08/09. Good progress is also being made in increasing commercial waste recycling through significantly increasing the number of local businesses with recycling contracts.

5.3 Our work on climate change mitigation and adaptation has continued to achieve results and to build innovation on the previous success outlined in 2008/9.

### Climate Change mitigation

5.4 The council's own carbon management is more accurate than ever before, with quarterly reports received by the Carbon Management Board and corporate management board. The council has hit its Quarter 3 target of 12% CO2 reduction. A programme of investment focused on value-for-money energy efficiency interventions has helped overachieve on CO2 reduction from gas consumption reduction by 1000 tonnes CO2. This is a major achievement given two unusually cold winters.

5.5 With NI 186, wider partnerships are key to delivery. The Climate Change Partnership of organisations who commit to 5% year on year CO2 savings has grown to 179 organisations with an extremely active steering group. Reflecting the maturity of the partnership, chairing has now passed from the council to the Director of Facilities at Slaughter and May – a major legal firm based in the borough. The Council offers a range of support services to members, as well as celebrating success through awards.

- 5.6 We have also been successful in securing, through a competitive bidding process, one of London's 10 Low Carbon Zones in the Archway area. That area now has a 20% CO2 reduction target by 2012, and is a testbed for intensive carbon reduction activity with businesses and residents. Also secured has been £4.3M of funding over two years for 6,000 'hard to treat' council homes to be cavity wall insulated.
- 5.7 A recent example of successful partnership working is the award-winning Energy Doctor service. The council and Groundwork London work together to run this intensive in-depth service for residents based both in community settings (schools, community centres and even pubs), and in the home. As well as advice the service offers the free installation of measures such as reflective radiator panels and power down plugs. The service is targeted at fuel poor residents, and saves residents an average of more than £100 per household on annual bills. All programmes combined have delivered over 4,000 energy efficiency interventions for Islington households in 2009/10.
- 5.8 We have been working together to plan ahead to achieve more significant borough wide CO2 savings. In December 2009 a motion was passed unanimously at a full Council meeting to set a 40% CO2 reduction target by 2020 for the borough, and develop an action plan to achieve this. In March the Council's Executive will consider the first stage of this action plan which has involved both a detailed technical assessment of targets and potential, and a series of public consultation events – the Big Reduction where residents have given us their ideas for this step change.
- 5.9 Our plans to develop a borough wide decentralised energy network are central to major CO2 reduction and we are on programme to deliver the first phase of this project in the south of the borough in 2012. We are working in partnership with the London Development Agency and the Greater London Authority on our programme.
- 5.10 Our Local Development Framework will go before the planning inspector later this year, and contains well developed robust carbon reduction policies, which go beyond the requirements of the London Plan. We propose a zero carbon development policy, with an on-site reduction in CO2 of at least 40%, and the remainder to be offset through financial contribution.

### **Climate Change Adaptation**

- 5.11 We are on target for achieving level three for NI 188 in 2009/10 and this builds on the position of being only one of two London boroughs that achieved level 2 in the previous year. We have published a council wide adaptation strategy, and are working to broaden this out beyond the council. A key area of work is a partnership with the UK Climate Impacts Programme to develop business' awareness and planning around climate change adaptation. This has included a series of workshops with Islington businesses to help them plan appropriate business responses to climate change impacts.
- 5.12 We have also developed a series of planning guidance notes – on climate change adaptation overall, on passive cooling, and on sustainable urban drainage (SUDS). We are working with a SUDS expert to develop a series of actual design case studies in the borough where new development is taking place that can serve as an exemplar to other developers.
- 5.13 We have continued to develop a range of other specific responses to climate change impacts ranging from the trialling of new street tree species to the installation permeable paving projects. These have featured in DEFRA publications and are now being drawn together in a publishable portfolio of practical projects that are effective, affordable and replicable, to be shared with other local authorities. We have also used its planning powers to embed adaptation in new developments with the result that it now has more green roofs than any other Borough in London.
- 5.14 The Strategic Partnership is funding and advising a series of replicable community adaptation projects – for example passive cooling at the City Farm, rainwater harvesting in community gardens and growing projects, dry garden, green roofs and walls. All community growing projects funded through the council's £1m Edible Islington programme also have to incorporate rainwater harvesting and are supported to do so.

5.15 The Council's Climate Change Adaptation Board continues to meet regularly to map out and monitor responses to climate change and has been working with Metis Arts to develop an interactive production that will tour the Borough in September to raise public awareness and secure engagement in the adaptation strategy.

## 6. Housing

- 6.1 The key challenges relating to housing in Islington remain broadly the same as set out in the last Area Assessment with providing more affordable homes, reducing poverty and overcrowding and sustaining high standards for council-owned homes and housing services and improving access to and housing conditions in the private rented sector.
- 6.2 Since the last Area Assessment Islington Council has adopted its ambitious Housing Strategy 2009-2014 which aims to not only address the housing issues experienced by residents but connects these with the other big challenges in terms of economic prosperity, educational attainment, public health, climate change and environmental sustainability.
- 6.3 Engaging residents and tenants has been central to developing solutions to housing challenges. The Islington Housing Commission with membership comprising housing professionals, local resident and tenant representatives and political nominees from the local parties guided its development. To ensure the right priorities were identified a range of consultation opportunities were provided for wider stakeholders, including residents. These included questionnaires, visits to organisations that represent many of our diverse communities, commissioned work with youth groups and a Housing Network event.
- 6.4 During the early consultations on the Core Strategy there was support, particularly from housing associations and local community groups, for ensuring that a range of homes are provided in the borough, including greater provision of accommodation suitable for families. A young people's consultation also came out in favour of provision of family housing. In addition, concerns were later expressed about subdivision of family housing. The policy development on Housing in the various iterations of the Core Strategy has reflected these views, requiring a range of unit sizes within each housing proposal to meet needs in the borough as well as reference to resisting loss of exiting family housing.



S:\  
Corporate\_Strategy\

- 6.5 The new housing strategy shares the vision of Islington's Sustainable Community Strategy through a focus on the following key objectives:
1. Making housing a solid foundation for improving lives and creating opportunities;
  2. Delivering more homes;
  3. Building better quality homes and neighbourhoods;
  4. Providing better managed homes and value for money services;
  5. Promoting better engagement and influence.
- 6.6 Significant progress is being made against delivery of these objectives with demonstrable positive outcomes for our local communities as set out in this section.
- 6.7 Overcrowding in Islington is a high priority for the Council. A local target is included in our 2008-2011 Local Area Agreement (LAA) to assist 415 severely overcrowded households over the three year period of the LAA to help improve physical and mental health and the educational attainment of children affected by severe overcrowding in the borough.
- 6.8 Islington is working in partnership with other social housing providers in the borough to tackle overcrowding. A high level action plan developed with our G15 relationship manager identifies areas of joint working on tackling overcrowding and levels of under occupation in order that we can make best use of existing affordable homes to meet housing need. Further LAA Reward grant

funding has been made available to build on partnership working capacity to help address overcrowding in all social housing stock across the borough.

6.9 As part of our approach to tackling overcrowding we are improving the living conditions of overcrowded households by:

- Working with HFI and other partners on a programme of de-conversions, with 37 having been completed or are in progress, and extensions or small works to maximise space in and round existing homes
- Increasing the supply of new family-sized affordable homes through our own new build programme and housing association schemes
- Using the private rented sector to access more larger properties.

6.10 Increasing the supply of larger homes is central to tackling overcrowding in the borough and a key part of our strategy is to make best use of existing social housing stock. We have been very successful with our under occupation scheme and have achieved our target of 130 moves for this year and have set ourselves a very ambitious target of 150 under occupation moves for next year. This has enabled much needed family-sized homes to be released for overcrowded and other families in housing need. An audit of council-owned homes is also being undertaken in 2010 to help assess the levels of under-occupation and how we can further increase the number of moves through a better understanding of our customers and their needs.

6.11 We have achieved a substantial reduction on the number of households who are severely overcrowded by the statutory definition used by Communities and Local Government (CLG). Our baseline figure, according to that standard, was 651 households as at April 2008. This has reduced to 401 severely overcrowded households as at December 2009 despite a doubling of applications registered for housing in the last year.

6.12 Our have already met the LAA target to assist 415 households, with 438 assisted between April 2008 and December 2009, and are now aiming to assist a total of 700 households over the three year period of the LAA, subject to confirmation from CLG that our bid for Tackling Overcrowding Pathfinder funding for 2010-11 has been successful.

6.13 Following on from our success at having been selected as Regional Champions in Homelessness for 2007/2008 by CLG, along with Hillingdon, Islington has been awarded Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer status. The proposals put forward aim to help prevent homelessness, reduce levels of worklessness, raise aspirations and increase choice for all members of the community through:

- Training our housing advice staff on how to sign post customers to achieve an additional 250 referrals for training and employment advice
- Working with our Choice Based Letting partners to develop the Homeconnections website to enable customers accessing the site for housing to receive information on employment and training opportunities
- Working with one of our social housing partners, Peabody, to provide a localised housing and employment outreach service to residents of the Kings Cross estate, one of our most deprived estates
- Increasing choice across tenures to help meet high levels of housing need by extending the CBL Homeconnections scheme to include private sector lettings

6.14 Islington is working to provide people with learning disabilities (PWL) with more choice in regard to their housing options allowing them to become part of their community and enjoy the opportunities this provides. In addition we wish to increase the number and range of supported housing options available. Our aim is to increase the number of people supported to live in their

own tenancy in the borough by 30 over the next three years. This has been made a priority in response to listening to Families and Carers in Islington and the requirements of Valuing People Now.

- 6.15 An action plan has been produced (*Improving Housing Options and choice for People with Learning Disabilities*) and work has started on achieving the targets for change and we are taking part in the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) Housing and Social Exclusion Project.
- 6.16 In December 2009 we submitted a successful bid for Department of Health and Communities and Local Government funding to deliver our PSA 16 'Laying the Foundations' project. The proposal aims to help address social exclusion faced by (PWLD) through improving access to mainstream housing options and employment opportunities. The £100k funding will deliver better outcomes for PWLD across the borough and, those who wish to return to the area and will link in to the delivery of the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer and the NDTi project. The good practice developed will be shared across the North London sub-region and beyond.
- 6.17 Islington has continued to successfully prevent homelessness, is on course to meet government targets to halve the numbers of households in temporary accommodation by 2010 and homelessness acceptances have continued to reduce despite an increase in the number of applications.
- 6.18 We have been working with the London Delivery Board to help entrenched rough sleepers into settled accommodation and are currently working, with our sub-regional partners in North London, to develop a local action plan to help eliminate rough sleeping in the capital by 2012.
- 6.19 In recognition of the importance of partnership working, especially with voluntary and community – based organisations in prevention of homelessness and tackling rough sleeping in 2009 we re-launched the Islington Homelessness Forum. Membership has been actively sought from all sectors with an involvement in homelessness and homelessness prevention including housing, education, health, Supporting People, social care, and residents. The forum is open to all and representation reflects the diversity of the service providers and service users. The key objectives of the forum are:
- Influence and inform development of Islington policies and strategies to prevent homelessness and;
  - Influence the provision of services for the homeless and potentially homeless in Islington that offer choice, opportunity, quality and value for money.
- 6.20 The forum is currently looking at key themes for our new Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and how we can effectively engage all key stakeholders, including service users in its development during 2010. We also aim to develop a single homelessness strategy in 2010, with input from the forum, to ensure that we focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people in Islington.
- 6.21 We are also making use of the private sector to provide good quality accommodation for those in housing need, recognising that not everyone will be able to access social rented housing. In an audit carried out in late 2009 263 privately owned properties were found to be empty for longer than six months in Islington. We are, therefore, looking at what more we can do to bring empty homes in the private sector back into use in partnership with our Landlord's Forum and other key stakeholders. Our new Empty Homes Strategy, which builds on the success of our previous strategies, is expected to be launched in the Summer.
- 6.22 All Registered Providers (RPs) are aware that homelessness remains a pressing problem particularly in London. In Islington, the Council, Homes for Islington and local RPs are working in partnership to implement the G15 offer to tackle homelessness.
- 6.23 The Islington Housing Group (IHG) operated for some years as an open forum for housing organisations within Islington. The group met three times a year for exchange of information with and between Registered Providers (RPs) with stock in Islington, Homes for Islington (HFI) and council representatives.

- 6.24 Islington Council's Regeneration Review Committee had undertaken a comprehensive review of the performance of Registered Providers (RPs) in Islington in 2008 and recommended that the Council, HFI, RP partners and the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) work together to develop a shared set of management standards.
- 6.25 It is within this context and in recognition of the increasingly challenging regulatory and economic environment in which social housing is delivered in Islington, that in 2009 the IHG, took the decision to review its role, membership and governance arrangements.
- 6.26 The new Islington Housing Group at the first strategic meeting of the Executive in July 2009 took the decision to come together as operational partners to offer residents of Islington a 'local deal' to meet aspirations, focus the energy and skills of housing providers and hold them to account in delivery of mutually agreed actions to meet local priorities.
- 6.27 The IHG has established operational sub-groups to focus where joint working or shared expertise and best practice could be developed in particular areas as follows:
- Asset management
  - Community investment
  - Performance standards
  - Housing Needs and Supply
- 6.28 The bringing together of this range of housing providers in a common and strategic 'Local Deal' is ambitious and ground breaking in Islington and we look forward to reporting our progress to the TSA, the ISP and other partners and of course our residents. IHG will be consulting residents and other stakeholders widely in this exercise, with a tenants convention planned for this Summer to help shape the local deal. This should form a significant contribution in the identification and promotion of landlord and tenant partnership working, especially representing partnership working between multiple social housing providers in Islington.
- 6.29 For example, in response to the Government crack down on Fraud and Illegal Occupation of Social Housing to help make more homes available to those in housing need HFI have qualified for a £50k grant to develop innovative solutions. HFI been very successful over a number of years recovering an average of 100 properties per annum including some overturned sales under the Right to Buy Scheme. HFI are developing proposals with the IHG membership on how their experience and the CLG funding could be used to the benefit of the wider social housing sector in Islington.
- 6.30 Islington has consistently delivered housing growth above and beyond its housing targets, despite being the second smallest and one of the most densely populated boroughs in the capital.
- 6.31 The draft replacement London Plan sets out a proposed annual target of 1,170 new homes a year between 2011/12 and 2020/21. We have an identified five year supply of sites to deliver 5,762 new homes between 20010/11 and 2014/15 to meet LAA and London Plan targets. Our draft Core Strategy includes a target of 50% affordable housing in recognition of the high level of need for affordable homes in the borough.
- 6.32 We continue to build on our excellent track record of working with our housing association partners and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver our targets, especially for larger family-sized homes. Recent achievements include:
- Projected completions of around 450 new affordable homes in 2009/10 despite the economic downturn
  - Funding commitments of £73m from the HCA 2008-11 National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) to deliver over 1,200 affordable homes through housing association partners in the borough
  - Completion of phases of development on key stock transfer based regeneration schemes at the Market and Packington Estates. These regeneration schemes are delivering positive

outcomes not only for residents of the estates but for the wider local communities who have been fully engaged in the development and implementation of proposals, including provision of community, youth and other facilities.

- 6.33 Islington was also one of the first local authorities to start delivering new council homes, in partnership with HFI, taking advantage of new rules allowing for new homes to be funded outside the HRA ring-fence, using our own resources. We have also been able to secure funding commitments from the HCA for 51 new affordable homes through rounds 1 and 2 of the Local Authority New Build (LANB) programme.
- 6.34 In terms of outcomes the new build programme has seen 14 new homes, including 11 family-sized units, become available for local people in housing need in 2009/10. These new homes have been built to at least Sustainable Homes Code 3 making them more energy and water efficient and produce less carbon emissions.
- 6.35 A fully funded pipeline of 54 more council homes, of which 29 (57%) will be at least 3 beds or more, will be completed by March 2011. All new HCA funded affordable homes will be high quality in terms of design, be built to meet at least Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 and Lifetime Homes standards. HFI has accessed external match funding from BERR to install micro energy generation measures in some of these properties such as ground source heat pumps and solar thermal panels.
- 6.36 This programme is being delivered through identification of in-fill sites and underutilised areas on our council estates, to make best use of our resources and add value to the work of our housing association and other partners.
- 6.37 As part of the Single Conversation with the HCA we submitted a draft Borough Investment Plan (BIP) in December 2009 that sets out the key investment and regeneration priorities for the borough. Once the BIP has been completed this will lead to the development of a Borough Investment Agreement (BIA) that will set out the contribution, both investment and other support, we will make with other partners to help deliver the changes for areas. We are working with the HCA to adopt a BIA by the end of this year that will outline the priorities and commitments of partners to delivery from 2011/12.
- 6.38 Since the Audit Commission (AC) awarded our ALMO Homes for Islington (HFI) a 3 star (excellent) rating with excellent prospects for further improvement in 2008 good progress has been made with delivering the continuous improvement action plan. Their excellent track record has also enabled further responsibilities to be delegated to HFI and to broadening their role as a key strategic delivery partner for the Islington Sustainable Community Strategy. The HFI Resident Involvement register has 850 members and the bi-annual STATUS survey has shown consistent improvement in satisfaction with housing support services. The HFI Chief Executive is a member of the ISP Executive and Board and of the Council's Regeneration and Communities' Boards.
- 6.39 By the end of 2009/10 95% of homes managed by Homes for Islington (HFI) will be decent and we are on track to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) for all council owned by the target date of December 2010. This means that by April 2010 at least 95% of HFI-managed homes are warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities. During the programme of Decent Homes improvements HFI have replaced thousands of kitchens, bathrooms, windows and roofs. Residents have also benefited from works to improve estate security, such as installing door entry systems and improvements to communal areas, such as lift replacements.
- 6.40 The mixed options approach to delivery of the DHS that combined establishing an ALMO, securing investment through a Private Finance Initiative (Partners for Islington) and estate-based stock transfers, including the Market and Packington Estates has driven significant improvements not only to homes and neighbourhoods but quality of life for council tenants, who make up around 45% of residents in the borough.
- 6.41 An options appraisal to secure sustainable investment in council housing is ongoing and is being informed by proposed HRA reforms in order that we are in a position to respond to an

announcement on proposals for dismantling the current housing subsidy system, and involve and consult tenants on the way forward in 2010/11.

- 6.42 Where high levels of investment are known to be required we are proactively looking at a more local level on how we can ensure current and future tenants can access decent and affordable homes. For example, with the assistance of an HCA grant of £60k we are carrying out feasibility and master-planning studies for the regeneration of the Bemerton estate, fully involving residents and other key stakeholders in the process.
- 6.43 In 2009/10 HFI and Partners for Improvement (PFI) carried out 'green' improvements to 3,319 council homes. These improvements range from cavity wall insulation to ground source heat pumps and green roofs. These measures will:
- reduce heating and lighting bills for residents, helping to tackle levels of fuel poverty and
  - help achieve our target of reducing carbon emissions by 15% by 2010.

## 7. Recession Response

- 7.1 We have responded to the global financial crisis by putting in place a package of measures to support those residents and businesses affected by the recession. This is part of the broader commitment to tackling poverty as well as to ensure that the longer term ambitions for the borough are not jeopardised.
- 7.2 As a result of this, we have made provision for a £1 Million Life Line Fund to be delivered across the partnership. We have profiled those at greatest risk and with the greatest potential to benefit and have targeted resources appropriately to these groups including ensuring a balance of provision. These groups include low earners, young people, the elderly, those on middle incomes, the self-employed, benefit dependent and businesses. These groups are targeted through a wide range of measures.

### Tackling Worklessness

- 7.3 We are committed, through our Sustainable Community Strategy to leading by example as employers. This is evidenced through a pledge to tackle worklessness within the borough as part of our HR Strategies and has been achieved through schemes such as:
- Apprenticeships employing over 60 local residents over the last year, including those targeted towards those with learning disabilities and lone parents
  - Career Start for Looked After Children and Young People. Career start has seen 117 young people appointed to different opportunities since the scheme's inception.
  - Presenting Yourself Workshops in schools.
- 7.4 In 2009/10 191 residents so far have been helped into work including apprenticeships, 48 into work placements and 650 new clients were engaged through the Islington Working programme to continue to support residents back into work.
- 7.5 Following its success with getting ex Woolworth employees into employment in January 2009, City & Islington College and its consortium of colleges have engaged over 800 people affected by redundancy and unemployment since June 2009, with interventions aimed at supporting them into sustainable employment, further studies or self employment.
- 7.6 HFI worklessness activities have included:
- NVQ Childcare
  - Security training and vocational training

- Event at the Emirates with Delaware, Arsenal's sub contractors - 47 jobs created and over 200 trained

### **Supporting Local Businesses**

- 7.7 A Shop Local campaign has been established to support local businesses including advertising, free parking on local high streets as well as the development of a Time Out Islington guide. In addition the council is providing a Business Turnaround Service, as well as events to support businesses through the Islington Business Partnership. The business support Supply Chain Project has further assisted 92 Islington businesses and awarded 36 contracts to Islington business.

### **Beating the Credit Crunch**

- 7.8 We have established a Credit Crunch Hotline to provide advice and tips to residents as well as holding a series of open Credit Crunch Roadshows providing guidance, support and access to advice for those affected by the downturn. This included information on training and jobs, reducing bills and advice on debt, savings and loans, housing and benefit entitlements with representation from local organisations. The council also gave away goody bags including vouchers for free benefits checks, CD/DVD loans from Islington libraries, Streetcar vouchers, free sports sessions during school holidays, free eye tests etc.
- 7.9 In addition, measures to encourage energy saving have been developed including the recruitment of Energy Doctors and the establishment of energy saving events in order to provide in depth advice on fuel poverty issues and refer residents to relevant schemes.

### **Providing Support and Advice**

- 7.10 We have provided £100,000 to boost the capacity of existing advice services provided by Islington Law Centre to deal with more cases including supporting a valuable drop-in service. This has funded 2 additional advice workers and a reception worker to increase significantly the number of enquiries and cases that the Centre is able to address.
- 7.11 HFI have welfare advice services available at all area housing offices with welfare benefits check offered to all new residents. A set aside policy is also in place to target economically excluded residents.
- 7.12 We have also established the Islington Debt Coalition made up of a variety of organisations from across the statutory and voluntary sectors, which has used detailed analyses of debt in Islington to align existing pieces of work and develop new joint initiatives to look at debt from a resident-focused perspective going beyond the remit of individual organisations to tackle the borough wide issue.
- 7.13 This is being achieved through prevention, mitigation, good corporate practice and communication. This includes the training of both staff and community groups to provide helpful information to residents, improving access to affordable credit via a £250,000 grant to the Islington Credit Union to provide low interest loans to local residents and with over 1300 members to date, developing a holistic approach to debt including a joined up approach to multiple debtors, assessing the ability to pay in order to mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups and encouraging a 'talk to us' culture with residents.
- 7.14 We have continued to support work by a council and Age Concern team to improve uptake of benefits and which has to date secured over £6 million in additional benefits for residents. The Council has now extended its scope beyond the 65+ age group to capture all age groups with a particular focus on supporting child poverty and worklessness objectives.

## Tackling Child Poverty

- 7.15 One of the commitments in our Sustainable Community Strategy is to break the cycle of poverty and so we have maintained a focus on ensuring that our work today will have a long term impact beyond the recession. We are committed to supporting both children in workless households and those in low income working households in order to tackle child poverty.
- 7.16 Our Child Poverty Innovation Pilot (CPIP) aims to offer tailored support to families in need, through an intelligence led approach that builds casework capacity and embeds organisational change in family based service provision across Islington, including third sector organisations and private sector nurseries. We are:
- **Using detailed data about individual children and families** to identify 2,300 and engage 800 families in support to get jobs, and to then monitor their progress. For example families will receive “better off” calculations so that they can make informed decisions about how their benefits would be affected by working ;
  - **Building the capacity to support parents with our new Islington Working for Parents team** leading. E.g. We are in the process of recruiting parent champions and they will engage with parents at school gates and direct them to tailored support and we have identified 6 schools to start with in 2010;
  - **Using a “customer journey” approach to redesign services** so that they deliver for parents rather than for organisational convenience. This includes breaking down the barriers between different organisations and childcare and family information service are examples of services that will be redesigned in 2010.
  - **Training and developing the council workforce and those of partner organisation** to encourage staff to ‘think family’ and provide a more integrated, tailored and where possible one-stop service to families. This will ensure that changes are embedded and can be sustained in the longer term.
- 7.17 By the conclusion of the pilot we will have offered benefit checks to all working households with children where income is below the 60% median and all those with earned income but no working tax credit. From the data analysed at the time of the bid submission, this amounts to almost 2,300 households. The success of the pilot will be measured by capturing improvements in employability and household income.

## 8. Community Engagement

- 8.1 ‘Listening to Islington’ has been a cross-cutting priority of our One Islington vision since 2006. This has placed community engagement and empowerment at the heart of everything we have done in order that:
- Residents feel that their interests are championed and that services meet their needs and aspirations
  - Choices and decisions are shared with local people, empowering them to influence decisions
  - Services are shaped by the community and seen as excellent by residents
- 8.2 Our Consultation and Engagement Strategy provides a framework for engaging with the diverse range of communities who live and work in the borough, including seldom heard groups and third sector organisations and is translated into a wide spectrum of activity across the council and its partners.
- 8.3 In response to feedback of “consultation fatigue” we have trialled different approaches to engagement, including standing panels, open-ended consultation/engagement, arts-based events, DVDs, referenda and participatory budgeting. Our engagement and empowerment audit carried out in October 2009 showed that there have been some very positive outcomes for seldom heard groups and other results ranging from park entrances nearer bus stops, improved ranking from 77<sup>th</sup>

to 11<sup>th</sup> on the Stonewall Workplace Index, through to less tangible outcomes such as community buy-in. We are using the audit findings to further our drive for excellence in engagement which will involve improving the impact and cost effectiveness by segmenting our audiences, working even more closely with partners and continuing to trial innovative approaches.



S:\ \\Islington\Service  
Corporate\_Strategy\Areas\Corporate\_Str.

- 8.4 Previous sections in this document provide some examples of how general and specific engagement continues to shape key strategies such as regeneration and health inequality, and has also resulted in positive outcomes relating to safety, environmental sustainability, housing and poverty. The sections below highlight the extent to which our engagement with seldom heard groups really has improved community cohesion and changed lives in Islington.

### Children and Young People

- 8.5 Listen Up! is the overarching approach for engaging children and young people in Islington, and providing advice and tools on best practice to council services and partners. Over the last few years Listen Up has developed a range of “intelligent” ways of engaging young people, including those from seldom heard groups.
- 8.6 The Youth Opportunity Fund in which young people bid for funding for projects in their local area, targeted towards areas of greatest need and the five Every Child Matters Outcomes, demonstrating the commitment to involve young people in decision making. 3,500 young people have been engaged, taking the lead in projects that they have devised and won funding for.
- 8.7 Participatory budgeting events were held in Finsbury Park where residents selected a youth church group and Muslim community group to lead on targeting local Somali men involved in anti-social behaviour on the estates. The joint youth project includes reports of drug dealing and minor ASB. Local Somali families are being encouraged to speak to the project regarding concerns about their youths and workshops on drugs, gang prevention and extreme radicalism are being held. The local Safer Neighbourhood Team Police feedback is that this has reduced youth disorder on both estates in the area.
- 8.8 Similarly, Young Muslim Voices is an award winning scheme which aims to work with young people to discover how the council can build better relationships with young people and improve the awareness of decision makers of the issues facing young Muslims. The program includes youth-led conferences as part of Local Democracy Week, Kick Islamophobia community football tournaments and a Young Refugee Voices programme. The programme has engaged over 2,500 young people. The programme has also benefitted from a developing use of social media and Web 2.0 such as a facebook page and blog to more actively engage young people. Other positive results of the scheme are:
- 16 young people went on to gain 'youth work' qualification.
  - Young girls from the BME communities predominantly Muslim set up a regular engagement group. They have participated in the making of 'shades of Grey' DVD which highlights issues for refugee girls and the impact on society.
- 8.9 Islington's £3.5m My Place project (at the site of the former Hornsey Road Baths) is part of a £7.5m investment to develop six 'youth hubs' across the borough to provide positive activities and support services from a range of partners including health, the faith sector, the creative, visual and performing arts sectors, leisure, housing, the police, schools and businesses to provide a range of services and opportunities to young people. The development of this project involved the recruitment of 14 young advisors who were empowered to take a lead role and ownership in the design of the youth centre including disseminating information to and consulting with the wider community through an arts consultation delivered in conjunction with the All Change arts charity.

- 8.10 The Career Start Scheme was developed by our Corporate Parenting Board in 2005 in recognition of the fact that many young people leaving care failed to obtain and sustain employment and training compared with their peers. The scheme engages with care leavers and employers to provide access to a range of opportunities that are ring fenced for looked after children, including both paid work and work experience and has been recognised and shared both nationally and internationally as good practice. The scheme has been extremely successful and by 2009 over 165 opportunities had been offered by the council's departments, partners and contractors in work shadowing, work experience, part time work, apprenticeships or permanent employment. Over 85% of the opportunities have been successfully completed. Over 95 young people have accessed opportunities with 38 progressing from one opportunity to another, for example from work experience to paid work. 16 young people have completed qualifications at level 2 or above as part of their job or work experience placement and a number are currently undertaking qualifications.
- 8.11 The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service run by Cambridge Education @ Islington is a multi-agency team of education consultants and multilingual teaching assistants and parental support advisers. It uses data to identify issues, develops projects to tackle issues and works successfully with a range partners, particularly in the voluntary sector. Pupil voice continues to be central to EMAS' approach. The Ambassadors programme, for instance, has successfully developed leadership skills in African Caribbean 14 and 15 year olds. Among the focused interventions are a project for Somali primary pupils, which involves additional tuition and parental and community engagement. The pupils attending the project significantly outperform other Somali pupils in national tests at the age of 11 and are four times more likely to attain the highest possible test level. In 2009 pupils of African and Caribbean descent significantly outperformed other pupils, with 77% achievement of 5 or more A to C grades at GCSE. The national and international reputation of the service enables it to draw additional funding into Islington, which is then invested in new targeted programmes.

### Disabled People

- 8.12 Consultation and engagement were central to the development of our first Disability Equality Scheme (DES) in 2006 and proved to be a powerful driver for organisational and culture change. We subsequently established a number of standing groups for consulting and involving disabled people, many of which have grown into delivery partners.
- 8.13 Disability Action in Islington facilitates the Disability Reference Group (DRG) and over the last year it has scrutinised the key council policies and practices that impact on disabled people such as consultation, complaints, provision of information, transforming social care and equality impact assessments. Formal reports are the prepared for the Disability Equality Performance Group (DEPG) which is attended by directors from all departments as well as representatives from the disability network. DEPG is a forum for constructive criticism and honest dialogue which over the past year has resulted in changes to our complaints, EIA procedures and the disabled children's strategy. It has also led to the relocation of staff from St Albans Place and the publication of a new accessible information policy and guidance. An example of a DRG report to DEPG is attached.



S:\  
Corporate\_Strategy\

- 8.14 In order to ensure the greatest response rate and engagement of seldom heard groups the Your Neighbourhood, Your Islington (core strategy) consultation included a young advisors project as well as a disability consultation workshop run in collaboration with Disability Action Islington. 20 residents from across the 6 main disability strands were engaged. The issues raised focused on how housing and population growth could potentially further marginalise the access needs of disabled people within the borough. The feedback was shared internally and specific practical alterations were made a result of feedback including alterations to benches to allow greater access and production of information in more accessible formats.
- 8.15 HFI formed its disability panel in August 2007. The panel consists of 12 residents from the six different impairment strands, such as a visual impairment and audio impairment. The group is co-ordinated by Disability Action Islington. The panel reviews polices and procedures to ensure they

do not have any negative impacts, taking account of disabled customers' experiences of accessing services. So far the group has improved services by helping to develop an entry-phone policy that considers the needs of disabled people, contributing to the development of a discretionary repairs policy, and feeding into customer focus training for HFI staff. The forum is well regarded amongst residents with disabilities who would like the forum to be rolled out to other social housing providers in the borough.

- 8.16 As part of the council's commitment to Transforming Social Care, a User and Carer Engagement Stream ensures that residents' views are heard in order that the transformation process is undertaken with the full input of users, empowering them to take up individual budgets. The group has so far inputted into highlighting key challenges such as accessibility and eligibility issues. One of the key actions we are taking forward is to formalise our plans for a formal user led organisation (ULO). We are in discussion with a consortium of local groups who between them meet all the criteria for user –led organisations, regarding the development of a user led centre for independent living (CIL). Developments will be driven by what the wider service user and carer networks want from a CIL.
- 8.17 The Citizen's Academy Events are designed for service users and carers to encourage and enable them to make the most of personal budgets. In March we ran three support planning events, where service users and carers who are developing their support plans came together, with their social workers, to undertake collaborative support planning. These support planning 'circles' have been run in some other areas where the feedback is that they are encouraging, inspiring and help people identify creative ways to meet their needs. We are also planning other types of events: a user-led introductory training session and specific sessions for people before their care plan review.
- 8.18 The disabled children 'Customer Journey' project was established to identify problems or difficulties faced by disabled children and young people who live and visit the borough as well as those of their families. Ten families were engaged in the project. Following feedback a detailed report of findings and action plan was produced and shared within the organisation. As a result of the feedback the project team are leading on how to improve processes to make them more accessible and tailored to families needs, such as the availability of adapted properties for tenants and transport for after school clubs. As a result of the issue being raised of lack of available transport for after school clubs we consulted on a number of different options for how capital money could be spent to improve the facility.
- 8.19 Cambrigde Education recently carried out a dummy run of the survey replicating the questions for NI 54: parents experience of services for disabled children. As a result of both of these activities and feedback received we are planning a new 'front door' service for getting information, advice and accessing services for parents and children and young people with disabilities, to be in place by end of the summer.

## **Faith Communities**

- 8.20 The Islington Strategic Partnership agreed an Equality and Cohesion Charter in 2007, which made a number of commitments relating to all equality strands including faith. The Charter has been embedded in the third sector Compact and during 2009/10 over 200 contractors signed up to it. The council's 2009/10 Corporate Plan committed to work with Islington Faiths Forum (IFF) to promote understanding and tolerance amongst people of different faiths and beliefs, including those with no faith. In addition to the IFF being allocated places within the ISP structures and on the Refugee Strategic Planning Board, engagement has led to a number of other positive developments over the last year to take forward these commitments.
- 8.21 We have consulted the council's staff faiths forum, faith-based organisations, individuals and groups involved in interfaith dialogue to obtain their views on religion and belief equality. The result is the first draft of a Religion and Belief Equality Scheme which seeks to understand the range of complex issues. We have used this to further engage people and produce some guiding principles which will be the basis for specific action points for the council and partners. .



S:\



S:\

Corporate\_Strategy\Corporate\_Strategy\