

CABINET

7.30 p.m.

**Wednesday
25 July 2007**

**Council Chamber
Town Hall**

Members 10: Quorum 5

Councillor Michael White

Leader of the Council (Chairman)

Councillor Steven Kelly (Deputy Leader)

Sustainable Communities & Health

Councillor Michael Armstrong

Housing & Regeneration

Councillor Peter Gardner

Public Safety

Councillor Andrew Curtin

Public Realm

Councillor Barry Tebbutt

StreetCare & Parking

Councillor Paul Rochford

Environmental & Technical Services

Councillor Eric Munday

Performance & Corporate

Councillor Roger Ramsey

Resources

Councillor Geoffrey Starns

Children's Services

***For information about the meeting please contact:
Ian Buckmaster (01708) 432431 ian.buckmaster@havering.gov.uk***



Cabinet, 25 July 2007

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Council is committed to protecting the health and safety of all who attend meetings of Cabinet.

At the beginning of the meeting, there will be an announcement about what you should do if there is an emergency during its course. For your own safety and that of others at the meeting, please comply with any instructions given to you about evacuation of the building, or any other safety related matters.

2. MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

Although mobile phones, pagers and other such devices are an essential part of many people's lives, their use during a meeting of the Cabinet can be disruptive and a nuisance. Everyone attending is asked therefore to ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off completely.

3. CONDUCT AT THE MEETING

Although members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet, they have no right to speak at them.

The Chairman has discretion, however, to invite members of the public to ask questions or to respond to points raised by Members. Those who wish to do that may find it helpful to advise the Committee Officer before the meeting so that the Chairman is aware that someone wishes to ask a question.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE CHAIRMAN MAY REQUIRE ANYONE WHO ACTS IN A DISRUPTIVE MANNER TO LEAVE THE MEETING AND THAT THE MEETING MAY BE ADJOURNED IF NECESSARY WHILE THAT IS ARRANGED.

If you need to leave the meeting before its end, please remember that others present have the right to listen to the proceedings without disruption. Please leave quietly and do not engage others in conversation until you have left the meeting room.

Cabinet, 25 July 2007

AGENDA

1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of the Chairman, there will be an announcement about the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (if any) - receive.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members are invited to declare any interests in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting. Members may still declare an interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

4 MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2007, and to authorise the Chairman to sign them

5 COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A REPORT OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE TOPIC GROUP

B CORPORATE COMPLAINTS – summary of views of Adjudication & Review Committee

These reports comprise a report to Cabinet by the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, concerning the outcome of a Topic Group investigation into the Council's complaints procedure, and a complementary report of the Chief Executive, summarising the views of the Adjudication & Review Committee on the Topic Group's findings and recommendations.

In accordance with para. 11(c) of the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Cabinet was to consider this report no later than 13 July 2007, 10 weeks from the day following the OSC meeting. It was not possible to submit the report within that timescale and this is the next practicable meeting after the due date.

6 NEW GROUND SHARING AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AT THE HORNCHURCH STADIUM

Cabinet, 25 July 2007

- 7 **A PLAY STRATEGY FOR HAVERING 2007-2012**
- 8 **CLOCKHOUSE INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS – proposed amalgamation from 1 September 2007.**
- 9 **IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR HAVERING - DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL’S CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS 2008 - 2011.**
- 10 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**
- To consider whether the public should now be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public were present during the following item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within the meaning of paragraphs 1-4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 which it is not in the public interest to publish; and, if it is decided to exclude the public on those grounds, Cabinet to resolve accordingly on the motion of the Chairman.
- 11 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Cheryl Coppel
Chief Executive



MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING
Havering Town Hall, Romford
Thursday, 5 July 2007 (6.30pm – 7pm)

Present:

Councillor Michael White, Leader of the Council, in the Chair

Cabinet Member responsibility:

Councillor Steven Kelly (Deputy Leader)	Sustainable Communities & Health
Councillor Michael Armstrong	Housing & Regeneration
Councillor Andrew Curtin	Public Realm
Councillor Peter Gardner	Public Safety
Councillor Roger Ramsey	Resources
Councillor Barry Tebbutt	StreetCare & Parking

Councillors June Alexander, Clarence Barrett, David Charles, John Clark, Keith Darvill, Gillian Ford, Linda Hawthorn, Fred Osborne and Jeffrey Tucker attended

A representative of the press was also present.

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Eric Munday, Paul Rochford and Geoffrey Starns.

All decisions were agreed with no vote against.

On behalf of the Chairman, those present were reminded of the action to be taken in the event of an emergency.

8 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2007 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

9 CONSIDERATION OF REPRESENTATIONS TO STAGE ONE OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED TRANSFER OF THE MARDYKE ESTATE

Councillor Michael Armstrong, Cabinet Member for Housing & Regeneration, introduced the report

Cabinet noted that Chairman of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been consulted and had agreed that the decisions should be treated as urgent and as an exception to the call-in procedure. The Chairman

had accepted that observance of the call-in could delay Stage Two of the Formal Consultation until early to mid- Autumn. It was necessary to complete the transfer of the estate (if approved in the ballot) by 31 March 2008 if a loss of £965,000 to the Housing Revenue Account in 2009/10 was to be avoided – a serious prejudice to the interests of the Council. If the start of the ballot were delayed beyond the middle of July then it would not be realistically possible to complete the subsequent transfer of the estate before 31 March 2008.

The report gave a detailed analysis of the representations received from Mardyke tenants during Stage One of the Formal Consultation on the proposed transfer of the Mardyke estate which ran for 28 days, ending 25 June 2007. The outcome of the consultation conducted concurrently with leaseholders was also presented.

Questionnaires, distributed with the Offer Document, were returned from 133 tenants(28%) and 8 leaseholders (13%). The analysis of their replies indicated strong overall support for the proposed transfer, with comments primarily seeking clarification of elements of the published Offer documents. Consequently, it did not appear that any significant changes were required to the offer that had already been made to tenants.

Approval was now sought to continuing to Stage Two of the Formal Consultation process, the final stage during which the ballot would need to take place, including approval of the question to be put to tenants in the ballot.

Reasons for the decision:

To enable the Council to demonstrate support for the proposed transfer in any future submission to the Department of Communities & Local Government for permission to transfer the Mardyke estate, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the prescribed elements of the Formal Consultation have been completed.

Though not a statutory requirement, the DCLG's guidance puts forward a ballot by an independent body as the way of seeking to establish tenants' views. This is recommended here.

Other options considered

In the circumstances, there were no other recommended options.

In response to enquiry, Members noted that the matter had been treated assurgent because the transfer timetable had been delayed by the DCLG taking longer to approve the process than had been expected.

Cabinet decided:

- 1. Having considered the responses received during the Stage One consultation with both tenants and leaseholders, that the proposal for the transfer of the Mardyke estate did not require significant amendment and should proceed to Stage Two of the Formal Consultation with tenants with secure or introductory tenancies and to the ballot.**

2. That the question, 'Are you in favour of the Council's proposal to transfer the ownership and management of your home to Old Ford Housing Association, part of the Circle Anglia group?', be approved for the ballot.
3. That concurrent with Stage Two of the Formal Consultation with tenants, an exercise to elicit leaseholders' views on the proposed transfer be conducted.
4. That minor changes for the purpose of clarifying any of the details of the proposal be delegated to the Head of Housing and Environmental Health.
5. That, as agreed by the Chairman of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the matter be considered collectively as urgent in that a delay likely to arise from applying the call in procedure would seriously prejudice the interests of the Council by probably incurring a revenue impact on the Housing Revenue Account in 2009/10 of around £1m owing to the workings of the housing subsidy system.

10 PROVISION OF MEALS ON WHEELS

Councillor Seven Kelly, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities & Health, introduced the report

The report sought approval to (i) extend the current Service Level Agreement between the Council's Adult Social Services and Catering Services; (ii) enter into another SLA for a period of 5 years; and (iii) enter into contracts with Appetito in order that greater efficiencies and improved services delivery of Meals on Wheels could be achieved.

The current meals on wheels arrangements dated from 1999, following a competitive tendering process won by the in-house Catering Services. The price of the current 'contract' with in-house Catering Services was based on assumed customer numbers of (i) 400 for hot meals between Monday and Friday and (ii) 250 for weekends and bank holidays but the service was providing, on average, between 252 and 380 daily hot meals, Monday to Friday and between 252 and 304 during the weekends.

Members had previously authorised officers to undertake a full competitive tendering process for a contract with effect from 1 April 2007 that was later abandoned as it had not led to bids that were consistent with the Council's commissioning requirements and agreed budget. It was agreed that certain aspects of the meals on wheels internal charging structure would need to be revisited before any long-term arrangements could be made for provision of the service.

Cabinet noted that, subsequently, discussions had taken place between Adult Social Services and the in-house Catering Services, during which consideration had been given to a range of customer contribution levels and changes in service delivery, including resultant impacts on demand of such

price increases, so as to arrive at the most favourable budgetary result for the Council.

The necessary reduction in cost would be obtained by entering into an agreement with Appetito for the provision of meals on wheels and the lease of delivery vans, which are able to regenerate the meals. With a 3 month lead-in period, the vans could only be introduced from October 2007.

Reasons for the decision:

To ensure that the Council receives best value, that there is service continuity and that vulnerable adults that are not capable of making their own hot meal receive at least one hot meal per day that meets their nutritional and dietary requirements.

Alternative options considered:

For the reason indicated above, the original tender process was abandoned. The only arrangement which will allow the, relevant, time frame to be met is for the Council's in-house Catering service to provide the meals on wheels, with new internal charging arrangements taking effect in October of this year. The new internal charging arrangements will be introduced because continuation of the current arrangement would produce a significant detrimental impact on the budget for Adult Social Services as the price per meal is higher and the proposed price increase would be difficult to justify with the current quality of the service.

Members expressed particular concern at the proposed increase in price, which was well-above inflation, and which they feared might lead to a further decrease in take-up, but were reminded that the price had not been raised for some time. User surveys had indicated support for the service, despite the higher price.

Cabinet decided:

1. **To agree that the in-house Catering Service should continue to provide Meals on Wheels to relevant clients of Adult Social Services, in accordance with existing arrangements, for six months until October 2007.**
2. **To agree that, for a period of five years with effect from October 2007, the in-house Catering Service be responsible for providing Meals on Wheels to relevant clients of Adult Social Services on different terms to those which currently apply, namely that Adult Social Services will pay the in-house Catering Service on the basis of meals actually delivered. A review of the service will be undertaken, during the final eighteen months of the five year period, to inform a decision on the future provision of Meals on Wheels to Council service users.**
3. **To authorise the Head of Adult Social Services to raise the price of a hot meal charged to service users from £3.10 to £3.65 per meal, this increase to take effect when the new arrangements, referred to in point 2 above, are implemented.**

4. To authorise the Head of Adult Social Services to increase the charge to service users, in April of each year of the five year term to incorporate any increase in charges payable to Appetito.
5. To authorise the waiver of Contract Procedure Rules 2, 7, 12 and Schedule G, to enable the Council's Catering Service to contract with Appetito, for the provision of Meals on Wheels, and the lease of vehicles without the need to submit a pre-tender report and to carry out a full 2-stage tender process.
6. To authorise officers to enter into contracts with Appetito for the provision of Meals on Wheels and the lease of vehicles for a period of five years, with effect from September , 2007.
7. To authorise officers to extend both (i) the internal arrangements between Adult Social Services and Catering Services; and (ii) the contracts with Appetito, for a period of up to two years in the event that, following the review referred to at point 2 above, officers consider that it would be in the interests of the Council so to do.



MEETING

DATE

ITEM

CABINET

25 JULY 2007

5A

Cabinet Members: Councillors Andrew Curtin and Peter Gardner

**REPORT OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE TOPIC GROUP**

In accordance with para. 11(c) of the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Cabinet was to consider this report no later than 13 July 2007, 10 weeks from the day following the OSC meeting. It was not possible to submit the report within that timescale and this is the next practicable meeting after the due date.

SUMMARY

There are clear improvements that the Council can make in its complaints handling arrangements to improve services for customers and to provide Members and customers with more information about the complaints received and the action taken. The use of technology needs to be improved and more training made available for staff. Better monitoring information needs to be produced for Councillors. Some proposals for improvement are made. Some of these do have financial implications.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. At its meeting on 26 September 2006, the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee approved the establishment of a topic group to examine the complaints handling and monitoring procedure in Havering Council.

1.2. The following Members formed the Topic Group at its outset: Councillors Clarence Barrett (Chairman), Robby Misir, Melvin Wallace, Ray Morgon and Robert Benham. The Topic Group was supported by Dylan Champion, Head of Customer Services.

1.3. The Topic Group met on four occasions and reviewed the current procedure for handling complaints in the Council. The Topic Group has now reached its recommendations and findings, which are detailed in this report.

2. THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

2.1. The Topic Group first met on 08 November 2006 and confirmed that the scope of the Scrutiny was:

- **To scrutinise the complaints handling and monitoring procedure in Havering Council.**
- **To seek to improve the production of complaints monitoring information for Councillors**
- **To aim to make the complaints process more visible and transparent through the use of new technology**

3. GOOD PRACTICE

3.1 The Topic Group has sought examples of good practice to include in the review. To this end it has drawn upon a broad range of information sources in order to enhance its understanding of current strategies and innovative approaches to improve the procedure for handling and monitoring complaints in the Council. This has included visits to London Borough of Barking & Dagenham and to Thurrock District Council in order to meet with officers and Members involved in their respective complaints processes.

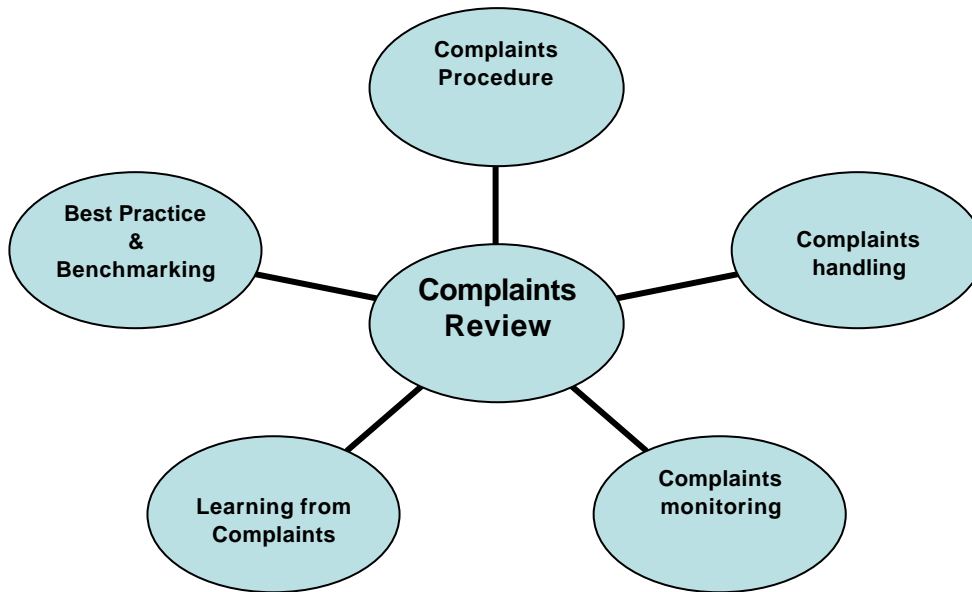
4. FINDINGS

Introduction

4.1 There are clear improvements that the Council can make in its complaints handling arrangements to improve services for customers and to provide Members and customers with more information about the complaints received and the action taken. The use of technology needs to be improved and more training made available for staff. Better monitoring information needs to be produced for councillors.

4.2 Set out below is the scope of the complaints handling review, key findings and recommended actions. The costs of implementing these recommendations are estimated at £60,000. In addition, additional resources are required for a Corporate Complaints Handling Team and it is anticipated that this will have an ongoing revenue cost of £60,000, though there may be an opportunity to combine resources within particular service areas.

Diagram1: Scope of complaints review



4.3 Set out below are the key findings in each area

- **Complaints Procedure.** There is presently a 3 stage complaints procedure in Havering and clear guidance as to how quickly complaints should be dealt with. There is some local variation in how the complaints procedure is publicised and applied. The number of telephone numbers that are published on the complaints leaflet should be reduced. For some services there is also a statutory complaints procedure and so separate guidance is produced. However, as far as possible this should be kept to a minimum.
- **Complaints handling.** In Havering responsibility for dealing with the complaints is largely decentralised and different arrangements are in place across the Council. In some areas there are specialist complaints staff but not in all others. Clear responsibilities and arrangements should be put in place to address this.
- **Complaints monitoring.** At present there is limited complaints monitoring information provided to Members. This needs to be addressed and a target of January 2008 set for production of a monthly monitoring report for Members.
- **Learning from Complaints.** There is a range of examples across the Council of how the organisation has learned from complaints. This good practice should be rolled out across the Council and a more systematic arrangement for learning from complaints put in place.

Best practice and benchmarking

4.4 An analysis of the number of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman was carried out. This indicated that the Council receives fewer

Ombudsman complaints than the average London Borough but that it is broadly in line with the number received by other Outer London Boroughs.

4.5 Information from the Residents Survey 2006 indicates that the Council performs poorly in managing complaints. Only 25% of residents are satisfied with how the Council deals with complaints. This compares to a London average of 31% and an Outer London Borough average of 31% also.

4.6 A desk top review of best practice in dealing with complaints was undertaken. This was supplemented with visits by the Panel to Thurrock Council and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. An officer also visited London Borough of Newham in order to see what could be learned from their complaints system. All visits were very helpful in identifying areas for improvement and good practice. Members were particularly impressed by the openness of the Thurrock system to both staff and customers and by the emphasis placed by that Council on learning from complaints.

4.7 This indicated that organisations that are recognised as good at dealing with complaints have the following characteristics

- ◆ A single organisation-wide approach to dealing with complaints
- ◆ A culture that recognises the value of learning from complaints and managing and dealing with them in a transparent and open way
- ◆ Dedicated complaints staff to log complaints and chase progress
- ◆ Large and ongoing training programmes to assist staff in dealing with complaints effectively
- ◆ Staff empowered to deal with complaints effectively, and clear procedures for agreeing compensation and other redress
- ◆ There is a single computer system which is used by all areas of the organisation to monitor and manage complaints. Key features include the ability to scan documents and attach them to electronic files, good management information and the use of escalation management technology
- ◆ Clear evidence of senior managers valuing effective complaints handling and the information that this generates
- ◆ Clear documentation for customers about the complaints procedure
- ◆ Established mechanism for feeding back to customers on the outcomes of complaints and for measuring customer satisfaction with how complaints are dealt with.

4.8 Organisations that are perceived as poor at dealing with complaints.

- ◆ Have local or decentralised arrangements for dealing with complaints.
- ◆ Do not use ICT effectively to deal with complaints.

- ◆ View complaints primarily as a criticism and the volume of complaints recorded as a measure of poor performance.
- ◆ Do not have clearly established mechanisms for learning from complaints or measuring customer satisfaction with complaints handling.
- ◆ Do not have effective mechanisms for monitoring complaints.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Improvements are required to the Council's complaints handling arrangements. While there are areas of good practice within the Council, a more structured and systematic approach is required if customer service is to be improved, Members are to receive the information they require and resident satisfaction with complaints handling is to increase.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1. it is noted that a detailed officer response to this report is being prepared.**
- 2. the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) functionality to deal with complaints is adapted to more closely replicate the Thurrock system and is rolled out across the Council by 31 October 2007. The group has noted that CRM is already part of the Council's preferred organisation-wide computer solution.**
- 3. detailed procedures for dealing with complaints are developed and these set out the different roles and expectations of those dealing with complaints. This should identify clearly within Groups who is responsible for dealing with complaints about particular services. This information should be made available to all members.**
- 4. A monthly complaints monitoring report is developed for members by 1 January 2008.**
- 5. A single centralised complaints team be established to receive, log and chase all telephone complaints from a single complaints number for the Council. The initial aim should be to achieve this via existing resources. Should this not be possible, a bid for appropriate additional funding should be made through the Medium Term Financial Strategy.**
- 6. A training programme to promote the better handling of complaints should be developed for all staff.**

7. **Formal procedures should be put in place to ensure that learning from complaints does occur.**
8. **For all recommendations adopted by Cabinet, the relevant head of service to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting after three months have elapsed since Cabinet adoption, giving an update on the implementation of these recommendations. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide if further updates are needed beyond this.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Topic Group wishes to place on record their thanks for the very positive approach displayed by officers that we have met during this review. This applies both to officers at Havering and to those colleagues the group met during their visits to Barking & Dagenham and Thurrock.

This report is presented by the Council Complaints Procedure Topic Group of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments are submitted by members of staff:

Financial Implications and Risks:

Rolling out CRM for complaints

External expertise will be required to develop and implement some of the technology available. In addition, if managers are to scan all complaints and correspondence received then additional desktop hardware will be required. A detailed project implementation document will be required to scope this work. However the likely indicative cost is in the region of £60,000 and capital to undertake this could be set aside as part of the ICT Capital Programme, subject to the production of an appropriate business case. The ICT Capital Programme is a programme of funding the Council has available for using IT to improve its current services. Approximately £260,000 of the original £300,000 available remains to be allocated. No resource exists to support any revenue expenditure associated with this proposal. In order to take forward this proposal therefore it would need to be presented and considered as part of the 2007/2008 MTFS process ideally as potential savings in existing resources or, if this were not possible, as potentially additional revenue funding.

The risk associated with this is that a source of revenue funding to support the proposed complaints team may not be identifiable. That being the case, no commitment should be made in respect of this proposal until the MTFS process has been concluded.

Reconstituting a Complaints Team

Even if a complaints team is re-established only to log telephone complaints, coordinate responses and monitor performance, additional resources will be required whether via internal savings or through additional revenue funding. Presently there is one post

identified to undertake this role and it is estimated at least three will be required. The annual additional cost is therefore likely to be in the region of £60,000. It should be noted that presently no resource exists to support this expenditure. In order to take forward this proposal it would need to be presented and considered as part of the 2007/2008 MTFS process ideally as potential savings in existing resources or, if this were not possible, as potentially additional revenue funding.

The risk associated with this is that a source of revenue funding to support the proposed complaints team may not be identifiable. That being the case, no commitment should be made in respect of this proposal until the MTFS process has been concluded.

Legal Implications and Risks:

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report

Human Resources Implications and Risks:

Any changes to staffing arrangements would need to be managed in accordance with the Council's HR procedures.

Environmental Implications and Risks:

There are no environmental risks and implications arising directly from this report.

Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and Risks:

An effective complaints procedure plays an important role in ensuring equal access to Council services. Monitoring complaints also provides valuable information about whether the Council is dealing with all of its customers appropriately and in a consistent manner.

ICT Implications and Risks:

When an agreed business model for complaints handling is established a piece of work for will be needed to capture all requirements in a comprehensive requirements document setting out the development required to the Oracle LG45 CRM system, any requirements for additional hardware such as scanners as well as additional system support resource requirements.

Once all requirements are captured then Oracle and other recognised specialist developers and implementers can be approached to provide costs of development and hardware. These costs will then be fed into the development of a business case for approval from the Information Technology Strategy & Programme Board (ISPB) before the project can progress by awarding a contract for the development work, producing a Project Initiation Document (PID), appointing a Project Board and Manager. The project will need to encompass development, user acceptance testing, training and implementation and hand over of support.

There are a number of risks with this development. The costs may be higher than currently indicated in this report and may not provide sufficient business benefits to

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make the business case viable. The amount of development required may not be possible to achieve before the 31st October 2007 date due to a) its complexity and/or b) the demands on resources both internally and from any selected supplier of development and implementation services. The business case should include more detail on risks.



MEETING	DATE	ITEM
CABINET	25 JULY 2007	5B

Cabinet Member: Councillors Andrew Curtin and Peter Gardner

**Corporate Overview & Scrutiny and
Adjudication and Review Committees**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**SUBJECT: CORPORATE COMPLAINTS – summary of views of Adjudication
& Review Committee**

SUMMARY

The Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee “Corporate Complaints” topic group has submitted its report to the Adjudication and Review Committee, seeking its endorsement.

The Adjudication and Review Committee has considered and has wholeheartedly endorsed the topic group’s report and commend it to Cabinet.

The Adjudication and Review Committee wishes to add its own observations to those contained within the report, for Cabinet’s consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet, having considered the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee topic group's report, approves the recommendations contained therein.
2. That Cabinet accepts the endorsement of the Adjudication and Review Committee as further evidence of the strength of feeling that funding should be made available for the implementation of the report.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Background

- 1.1. The Adjudication and Review Committee (as the Committee responsible for the operation of the Council's complaints procedures) has carefully considered the recommendations of the topic group report and considers that it has argued cogently for the upgrading and unifying of the Council's complaints processes and the mechanism by which complaints received, recorded and recalled for resolution.
- 1.2. In particular, Members noted para. 4.7 of its findings concerning feedback and also para. 6.6 of the recommendations that relates to training. The Committee, whilst accepting the spirit in which the report was drafted, would suggest a change in the wording of this clause to read: "Formal procedures **will** be put in place to ensure that learning from complaints does occur."
- 1.3. The Adjudication & Review Committee welcomed the Topic Group report as a useful contribution to its own plans to improve the Council's handling of complaints and to make Services more responsive to customers' needs. The Committee will be considering a number of changes in process in the autumn, and the greater availability of CRM and the more focussed approach to handling complaints through a central team will greatly assist the Committee in implementing the extensive changes that it has in mind. It is the Committee's intention that the first of the changes will be in place by the time of the next Council meeting, in October.

2. Legal Implications and risks:

- 2.1 Any award of, or changes to a contract in respect of an external provider will be subject to a separate a Cabinet Report.

3. Human Resources Implications and risks:

- 3.1 Recommendations as outlined would have direct implications for staff within all services across the Council.
- 3.2 Managers will ensure changes affecting staff are dealt with in line with the Council's policy. During the period of upgrade, services will need to embark on planned training programmes.

4. Financial Implications and risks

- 4.1 The Topic Group report sets out in the financial implications the risks associated with the proposals. Before any commitments are made these issues will need to be addressed.
- 4.2 The training and production of information etc. will be undertaken by the Corporate Complaints Handling Team and therefore, funded as part of the £60k resource required to establish this unit.
- 4.3 The resource requirements as set out in the Topic Group report will need to be considered against other priorities in the 2008/09 MTFS, unless the recommendations can be implemented at no extra direct cost in the current year.

5. Equalities and Social Inclusion implications:

- 5.1 None

6. Reasons for the decision:

- 6.1 The proposals contained within the topic group's report, in the opinion of the members of the Adjudication and Review Committee, represent a real prospect of integrating the various complaints procedures operated by various services and departments into one universal - and universally accessible – complaints management process that is properly “corporate”.
- 6.2 The Council already has the basic software package and the system would be delivered through the Metaframe portal that is already available. This would mean that the expenditure necessary for upgrading the package would be for enhancement rather than initial investment. It is economic, efficient and effective.

7. Alternative options considered:

- 7.1 The alternative to adapting and upgrading the present CRM system would involve reinventing the wheel and require present Council systems to be

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realigned as well as committing the Council to heavy expenditure not only for new software, but also considerable re-training as well as on-going costs to ensure that any new system was thoroughly embedded.

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**Cheryl Coppel
Chief Executive**

Background Papers List

None



MEETING

DATE

ITEM

CABINET

25 July 2007

6

Cabinet Member: Councillor Andrew Curtin

Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Culture and Regeneration

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: New ground sharing and management arrangements at the Hornchurch Stadium

SUMMARY

To maximise usage of the Hornchurch stadium and to establish new management arrangements that will benefit both the users of the facility and the Council as the landlord. The new management arrangements will ensure that the Council retains over control of the stadium site.

RECOMMENDATION

1. To proceed with implementing ground share arrangements at the Hornchurch Stadium, involving shared use of the football facilities for the 2008/09 football season, by AFC Hornchurch and Romford FC.
2. To note that Havering Mayesbrook Athletic Club's use of the Hornchurch Stadium is not directly affected by the proposed football related ground sharing arrangements.

3. To set up a not for profit Trust, to manage the Hornchurch Stadium under a lease arrangement with the Council, to involve involving representatives of user clubs, the local community, the Council and other stakeholders.
4. To agree that the Council retains overall control of the stadium site.
5. To agree that all outstanding issues associated with the current use of the site need to be resolved before parties are eligible to be part of the Trust.
6. To agree that if either of the football clubs chooses not to be part of the Trust they will not be allowed to use the stadium facilities and that the Council will look to find alternative partners to use the Stadium.
7. To delegate to the Lead members for Culture and Resources agreements to finalise financial and legal issues as necessary and where possible.

REPORT DETAIL

1. In 2006 Havering Council commissioned a report from consultants, Ploszasjki Lynch Consulting Ltd, on future management options for the Hornchurch Stadium. Their report is attached as Appendix 1.
2. On January 8th 2007 members informally considered the consultants report and agreed to a ground sharing arrangement in the short term, resulting in AFC Hornchurch and Romford FC sharing the football facilities during the 2007/08 football season; and the creation of a not for profit Trust to manage Hornchurch Stadium in the medium term.
3. Officers subsequently had a series of meetings with representatives of AFC Hornchurch, Romford FC and Havering Mayesbrook Athletic Club.
4. At an early stage AFC Hornchurch representatives advised Council officers that they were opposed to the ground share arrangement with Romford FC. They were and remain concerned it will affect the quality of the pitch; undermine the investment and improvements that they believe they have made at the stadium; undermine their youth activities (which would have to move to another venue) and put at risk the new management arrangements they have put in place in recent years. Although Council officers stressed that Romford FC would have limited use of the facilities under the ground share proposals and that their business would not be affected by Romford FC playing first team matches there, AFC Hornchurch remained opposed to the ground share proposals throughout the negotiations.
5. In May 2007 AFC Hornchurch received a letter from the Ryman Football League stating that the League would not allow a ground share at the Hornchurch Stadium which involved three parties (ie two football clubs and one athletics club). Although the League had not informed the consultants employed by Havering of

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this position in late 2006 and although there is nothing to prevent such a ground share in the League's own rule book, they nevertheless confirmed their opposition to the ground share in May 2007.

6. The leader of the Council and officers met with representatives of the Ryman Football League on May 24th 2007 to discuss the ground share proposals further. It was apparent that the Ryman Football league would only consider reviewing their position if AFC Hornchurch changed their position and supported the proposals. The leader and officers subsequently met with representatives of AFC Hornchurch and Romford FC on May 30th 2007 to see if agreement could be reached. At this meeting it became clear that AFC Hornchurch were still opposed to the ground share and with time running out it was decided to focus on the 2008/09 season instead.
7. At the meeting on May 30th 2007 it was agreed that a Trust should be set up to manage the Hornchurch Stadium facility as soon as it was feasible to do so and that there should be ground sharing of the Hornchurch Stadium as from the 2008/09 season. It was also agreed that a "road map" would be produced to highlight how this would be achieved. A draft road map is attached as Appendix 2.
8. Hornchurch representatives have had initial discussions with Council officers about the development of a new stadium at another site in Havering. The detail of this proposal is not covered in this report as it will be subject to a separate planning process, assuming that it is progressed. It is worth noting that during the recent negotiations AFC Hornchurch have said that Romford FC could move to the Hornchurch Stadium (and become the sole football club to be based there), once AFC Hornchurch have moved to their own stadium. Although this could materialise ahead of the 2008/09 season, there is no guarantee that this will happen as there is no certainty that AFC Hornchurch could develop a new stadium in Havering, either in the short term or the medium / longer term.
9. Romford FC have welcomed the opportunity to ground share at the Hornchurch Stadium and are disappointed that this was not confirmed for the 2008/09 season. They have managed to secure one more year at their existing ground but it is not clear whether they will be able to continue to use this venue beyond the next season. Romford FC therefore view the ground share and the possibility of permanently being based at the Hornchurch stadium as a very positive outcome for the club. Romford FC have confirmed that they can successfully ground share the site even if they are not given access to the main clubhouse facility (the restaurant / bar area).
10. Havering Mayesbrook Athletics Club were initially opposed to the ground sharing arrangement as it would put at risk the effective partnership arrangements that had developed between themselves and AFC Hornchurch (which had seen an improvement in management arrangements in recent years). The athletics club are now waiting for more clarity on how the new management arrangements would work in the light of the ground share proposals.
11. It is hoped that the current negotiations with the three clubs can be successfully concluded, but there is no guarantee of this given AFC Hornchurch's opposition to

the ground-share proposal for the 2007/08 football season. Subject to Cabinet approval to this Report, Officers intend to continue negotiations with the clubs involved with a view to confirming the ground-share arrangements as soon as possible. If this is not the case, then the Council will continue with proposed arrangements for the Trust, terminate any existing arrangements if necessary, and seek alternative partners if appropriate.

12. In view of the history of the two football clubs who will be involved in the ground share, it is proposed that the Council retains control of the stadium site, whatever Trust arrangement is put in place. It is also proposed that all outstanding issues associated with AFC Hornchurch's current use of the site are resolved before they are allowed to become involved in the proposed Trust. Finally, it is proposed that if one of the football clubs refuses to participate in the Trust they should not be allowed to use the Stadium facilities.

Financial Implications and risks:

13. This report contains two recommendations:-

- **To proceed with implementing ground share arrangements from the 2008/09 football season**

By way of background, current rent is running at £5,807 pa (2007/08) - £4,650 from AFC Hornchurch, and £1,157 from Havering Mayesbrook .

The ground share proposal would generate additional income estimated at £4,650 pa. However, with a ground share, greater security would be required, and costs would exceed this income:-

- A permanent management presence is estimated to cost up to £40k pa (based on a quotation from Sports and Leisure Management Ltd), with a net cost of c£35k pa ongoing
- The preferred option is "on call" security, estimated by officers to cost £10k-£20k, with a net cost of £5k - £15k ongoing.

There is currently a base budget problem within the sports service; the additional cost above could not be contained within budget, and thus additional funding would be required from the 2008/09 MTFS process.

There are potential legal costs from the threatened legal action from AFC Hornchurch, though the legal advice is noted – that the Council is in a strong legal position to proceed with the ground share arrangement.

- **To set up a not for profit trust to manage the Stadium**

A trust is being recommended to provide a mechanism to represent all interested parties. The costs of setting up a Trust are estimated to be £10k; this would be cost to the Council, but funds for this have been agreed, from a corporate consultancy budget.

Legal Implications and risks:

14.AFC Hornchurch currently use the Hornchurch Stadium under a Tenancy at Will Agreement, which has been signed by both the club and the Council. Under this Agreement AFC Hornchurch are entitled to shared use of the facilities at the Hornchurch Stadium, apart from the main clubhouse facility (the restaurant / bar area) which they have sole use of under the Agreement.

AFC Hornchurch are claiming that they own various facilities and equipment at the Hornchurch Stadium, which is linked to their position that they will not let Romford FC share what they perceive to be their facilities / equipment. A list of these facilities and equipment has been provided to the Council. The validity of AFC Hornchurch's ownership claim have not yet been assessed.

The new arrangements for the use of the stadium and the involvement of the proposed trust will require the termination of the current tenancies at will and the offer of new agreements. It would then be for AFC Hornchurch to decide if they wanted to stay or not. On a practical level unless all parties are willing to enter into the ground sharing the likelihood of the arrangements succeeding in the long-term is limited.

AFC Hornchurch have threatened to take legal action to prevent the ground share going ahead.

The formation of a trust to run the stadium is not particularly complex in itself. The difficulties are likely to be in agreeing with such a trust the terms on which they run the stadium, in particular the split between their responsibilities/liabilities and those that remain with the Council. Until more details are known it is not possible to give more accurate advice.

Human Resources Implications and risks:

15.The Council does not have any dedicated staffing resource or budgets to manage the Hornchurch Stadium site, so unless additional budgets / resources are found, the work required to manage the proposed new ground share arrangements will put additional pressures on existing Cultural and Leisure Services staff. There is a risk that other work could be adversely affected as a result.

It is envisaged that the work required to set up the proposed not for profit Trust will be undertaken by an external consultant, with the cost to be met from central consultancy budgets.

Reasons for the decision:

16.To maximise usage of the Hornchurch stadium and to establish new management arrangements that will benefit both the users of the facility and the Council as the landlord.

Alternative options considered:

17. The following alternative options have been considered:

- a) Allow the existing management and usage arrangements to continue – this has been rejected because it will not maximise usage of the site, it will result in less rental income being achieved by the Council, it will allow the unsatisfactory management arrangements to continue (in terms of the Council's role as landlord) and it could put the future of Romford FC in doubt as they do not currently have a permanent home ground.
- b) Curtail AFC Hornchurch's use of the Hornchurch Stadium – this has been rejected because the Council would not wish to undermine the success that AFC Hornchurch have achieved, nor the youth activities that they manage. It is recognised that AFC Hornchurch have improved the facilities and improved management arrangements at the Hornchurch Stadium in recent years. Also, they do not currently have an alternative venue to play home matches if their use of the Hornchurch Stadium was curtailed. However if AFC Hornchurch actively seek to obstruct the proposed ground-share arrangement this option may have to be reconsidered.
- c) Not progress the proposal to set up a not for profit Trust to manage the Hornchurch Stadium – this has been rejected because it is the option that is most likely to achieve the Council's objectives and protect the interests of all the clubs based at the Hornchurch Stadium, in the medium / longer term.

Equalities and Social Inclusion implications:

18. One of the main aims of introducing the proposed new ground sharing and management arrangements is to maximise usage of the Hornchurch Stadium by all sections of the local community. The existing clubs based at the Hornchurch Stadium run extensive youth development programmes, as do Romford FC.

There is a risk that AFC Hornchurch's programmes may be adversely affected by the ground share proposals, unless these programmes can be run at an alternative venue.

There is a risk that Romford FC.'s programmes could be lost if the club does not find a permanent home ground.

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**Cheryl Coppell
Chief Executive**

Cabinet, 25 July 2007

Background Papers List

Notes of meeting between LBH, AFC Hornchurch representatives and Romford FC representatives dated 30th May 2007

Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd.



London Borough of Havering

**Hornchurch Stadium
Management Options Review**

November 2006

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8. INTRODUCTION

PLC Appointed in August 2006

In August 2006 the London Borough of Havering (LBH) appointed leisure management consultants Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd (PLC) to carry out a review of the management of Hornchurch Stadium. The brief for this study is set out in full in Appendix 1. Our objective as defined by the Council was to

“carry out a Management Options Appraisal for Hornchurch Stadium; leading to recommendations for the future management of the Stadium, financial implications and a project plan to enable the chosen option to be realised.”

We were also asked to examine the case for and against the possible use of the stadium by Romford Football Club as their home venue under a ground share arrangement.

9. BACKGROUND

A Valuable Football and Athletics Venue

Hornchurch Stadium is owned by the Council and is one of the borough's most important sports venues. It provides valuable training and competitive facilities for football and athletics. It is the home of the senior, non-league football club AFC Hornchurch who play in Division One North of the Ryman Isthmian League as well as running a reserve side in the Capital League and junior teams at Under 18 and Under 13 age groups.

The stadium is also the base for Havering Mayesbrook Athletics Club (HMAC) one of the most successful clubs in the south of England with over 600 members. HMAC's women compete in Division 2 of the UK Women's League whilst the men are in Division 1 of the Southern League. Junior age groups compete in the National League and Essex Young League.

The athletics track, which was the first “tartan” track in the UK, was recently refurbished under the Community Athletics Refurbishment Programme (CARP) scheme. In addition to club programmes, it is also used by local schools for classes and the District Sports competitions.

Cabinet,***Current Use of the Stadium*****i. Football**

AFC Hornchurch's first team play in Division One North of the Ryman Isthmian League. This league comprises 22 teams giving a total of 21 home games. In addition, the club plays friendly games at the start of the season and a number of cup ties in the FA Cup, FA Vase, League Cup and Essex Senior Cup. This gives a total of around 35 home games per year. Home crowds are averaging 410 at the time of writing.

In addition AFC Hornchurch's reserves play some 10 or 12 home league games and cup ties per season. This gives a total of around 45 senior games per year.

In addition the football pitch is occasionally used for training and junior games by AFC Hornchurch and for 3 or 4 local schools cup finals.

ii. Athletics

The athletics track is used for training by the 600 members of HMAAC every Monday and Wednesday throughout the year. Attendance varies from session to session but is typically around 200 of whom 170 are juniors.

iii. Schools

During the school summer term the track is regularly used for curriculum purposes by local schools and as the venue for school sports days. The largest events both in terms of scope and attendance are the five or six annual competitions held in connection with the District Sports Competitions.

Ownership and Management Arrangements**iv. Present Occupancy Arrangements**

The two clubs currently resident at Hornchurch Stadium have the following access entitlements under the terms of their tenancy.

- **AFC Hornchurch** – use of the stadium football pitch and changing rooms on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon. There are no limits on the number of games allowed.
- **Havering & Mayesbrook Athletics Club** – use of the stadium track and changing rooms on Monday and Wednesday evenings, and Sunday mornings. The club has the right to stage up to 10 athletics meetings per year.

The stadium is only opened when used by the clubs or the track is booked by schools. It does not offer any casual use of the track or host any coaching and

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developmental programmes outside of club sessions. The only non football events currently taking place at the stadium are the District Sports days and school sport days.

These current occupancy arrangements reflect the patterns of use that have been in place for many years. These were agreed between the Council and the clubs many years ago under leases which have since expired. The current formal bases of occupancy are one year “Tenancy at Will” agreements between each club and the Council. This is a most basic legal agreement. They were put in place in early 2005 as a short term expedient when a ten year lease and sub-lease arrangement fell through because of the liquidation of the former Hornchurch FC.

Under these proposals which were agreed by the Council’s Cabinet in May 2004, the Council was to grant a 10 year lease to the football club, who were then to grant a sub-lease to Havering and Mayesbrook AC. (A copy of the report to Cabinet is included as Appendix 2.) This arrangement was to grant access to the stadium on the basis outlined above and also to transfer responsibility for maintenance of the stadium to Hornchurch FC. It further looked to regularise the position with regards to buildings erected at the stadium without the necessary permissions.

At the time of the liquidation of Hornchurch FC, the Council wished to ensure that HMAc continued to use the stadium and to support the development of the new football club; hence the move to the present Tenancy at Will arrangements.

v. **Maintenance & Security Arrangements**

However, the collapse of the lease and sub-lease arrangements means that there remain many loose ends to be tied up with regards to the maintenance arrangements at the stadium and ownership and access to buildings.

The Council as landlord still has overall responsibility for maintenance but, as has been the case for many years does not undertake more than minimal cleaning and maintenance. Havering has no regular site presence.

AFC Hornchurch requested to take over the management of the pitch in order to produce a higher standard than provided previously. The club also carries out repairs to the built facilities including the stands, social club and restaurant. The football club also has a permanent, night time security presence on the site.

HMAc undertake maintenance and cleaning of the track as required by the CARP grant. The club receives an annual grant of £7,500 from the Council to fund this work.

Finance

vi. **Havering Budget**

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The council's original budgeted spending for the stadium for the financial year 2006/07 was some £75,600. This has subsequently been amended by a reduction in some cost headings and can now be summarised as follows:-

Operating Costs

	£
Utilities & phone	11,320
Rates	20,350
Cleaning	7,310
Grounds Maintenance	20,700
Building Maintenance	11,910
Miscellaneous	1,860

TOTAL	73,450
Less Income	54,730
NET OPERATING COST	18,720

In addition, there is a sum of £52,960 designated by the Council as "non-controllable" including £42,300 of asset depreciation.

Thus the amended budgeted cost for 2006/07 is £71,680

However, this budget does not reflect the true cost to the Council. Whilst the budgeted expenditure appears to be correct PLC have not been able to discover the basis on which the income estimates have been produced. It may be that projected savings to the Council arising from the lease and sub-lease arrangements which transferred maintenance responsibilities to Hornchurch FC have been included in budgets as "real" income

Actual income for the last three years has been: -

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Rent	10,343	3,628	2,916
Hire Fees	5,807	0	3,949
TOTAL	16,150	3,628	6,865

Assuming that income in the current financial year will be at 2005/06 levels, i.e some £6,900 the actual operating cost is likely to be in the region of £66,500

When the £53,000 non-controllable costs are added, the full cost to the Council of operating the stadium in the financial year 2006/07 is estimated to be some £119,500.

10. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR THE FUTURE

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In looking at the future of Hornchurch Stadium it is essential to understand the strategic context in which it operates. This is provided both by the Council's own policies and the strategies for sport and physical activity in London.

Game Plan

In December 2002 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published 'Game Plan', a national strategy for delivering the Government's sport and physical activity objectives. The most important strategic aim to apply to Hornchurch Stadium is: -

To encourage a mass participation culture: The target is for 70% of the population to be reasonably active (30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week) by 2020. To achieve this, a target of an annual 1% increase has been adopted nationwide. The initial results¹ from Sport England's Active People survey shows that Havering's current participation rate is 18.5% putting it below the national average.

Havering Strategic Partnership

Havering Community Strategy, drafted by the HSP, sets out a guiding vision for Havering: -

To create a safe, welcoming, healthier and more prosperous place where people choose to live, work and visit.

The Council's Guiding Policies

The Vision for Havering, set out in the Community Strategy, is shared and supported by the Council. The Havering Corporate Plan looks to deliver this vision through several elements including: -

".. A strong cultural life with the excellence of its cultural facilities recognized."

Havering Physical Activity Strategy

As part of its work to improve health in Havering, the Council has worked with the local Primary Care Trust (Havering PCT) to develop its draft strategy for physical activity.

This draft strategy makes specific mention of Hornchurch Stadium under the heading of Action in Schools. It looks to: -

¹ Based on the results from the first six months of the year long survey

² In this context cultural facilities include sports and leisure

Cabinet,

“Expand schools usage of athletics facilities at Hornchurch Stadium... Ensure Hornchurch Stadium is staffed to allow school sports days and training sessions to take place”

Havering Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

The Council’s own draft strategy for sport also makes direct reference to Hornchurch Stadium. It states: -

“A management structure needs to be in place... to maximise usage ... should be expanded to cater for: -

- *Regular school bookings*
- *Opportunities for individuals to train*
- *Holiday activities*
- *Sports development programmes*

Football usage should include an opportunity for local junior leagues to play cup finals”

Athletics Development

The redevelopment of the athletics facilities at Hornchurch Stadium was underpinned by the Athletics Development Plan drafted by the Council in partnership with Havering Mayesbrook Athletics Club and local schools.

As the main athletics facility in the borough, the stadium is crucial to delivery of the plan.

London Plan for Sport and London 2012

Two further strategy documents are worthy of brief mention namely the “London Plan for Sport” and the Mayor of London’s response to London winning the right to host the Olympic Games in 2012.

The London Plan for Sport looks at how “Game Plan” and the “National Framework for Sport” can be delivered in London. It has, therefore, the same themes and is linked to the national participation target of a 1% annual increase in participation.

The Mayor’s five themes include: -

Club 2012: To develop a quality assured club network across London providing accessible opportunities for people to take part in sport.

Fit 4 2012: To actively promote and utilise sport and physical activity to increase activity levels in those most at risk of ill health and to reduce levels of obesity in London

Skills 2012: To develop the capacity of the sport and physical activity workforce, paid and unpaid, to underpin the increased demand created by more people taking part in sport as a direct legacy benefit.

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There are clear opportunities for these themes to be delivered at the stadium.

Key Strategic Issues

In summary, the key strategic documents have recurring themes of increasing participation in sport and physical activity, developing and promoting the health benefits of exercise and encouraging the involvement of local communities in delivery and planning of services and not just as passive consumers. The main goal in Havering is to provide opportunities to increase participation towards the national target of 70% by 2020.

The following sections look at how management of Hornchurch Stadium and be improved to deliver these themes through increased access and better site management.

Cabinet,**11. BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES**

The brief for this project required us to look at examples of good practice in the management of combined athletics and football stadia and at alternative management arrangements which could be used at Hornchurch Stadium. Our researches have identified two sites with particular relevance namely the Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre and The Hub in the London Borough of Merton.

Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre,

There has been an athletics track at Melbourne Park, Chelmsford since 1934. In 1999 Chelmsford Borough Council began a multi phase redevelopment to provide a regional athletic facility. Phase 1 was a floodlit, 8 lane synthetic surface track, full field facilities and three multi-use games areas. Phase 2 of the project saw the opening in 2002 of an indoor athletics training centre and a 270 seat stand. This was built with the assistance of £2.2m Sport England Lottery Funding. The facilities also included a community sports hall, fitness suite and an activity room.

The Council then resolved to use Melbourne Park to meet a commitment to provide a home in the borough for Chelmsford City FC who play in the Premier Division of the Ryman League. They had been playing outside Chelmsford at Billericay and elsewhere for some eight years. As a result, Phase 3 further improved the facilities with the Council investing in a 1,000 seat covered spectators stand, toilets, turnstiles, ancillary facilities and a new pitch inside the perimeter of the athletics track. Completed in January 2006, these enable the centre to host major athletics events and allowed it to become the home of the football club. The football club met the costs of changing and social facilities within a new clubhouse.

The stadium has a current capacity of 3,500 people.

i. Programming

The football pitch is used only by Chelmsford City FC.

The fitness gym at the site is open from 9am to 10 pm each day.

The athletics facilities are available to both clubs and individual users. Runners can use the track and jumping pits on a casual basis or purchase monthly season tickets. The athletics development team run after school and school holiday programmes, birthday parties with an athletics theme and specialised coaching programmes.

There is a wide range of fitness and exercise classes for both adults and young people.

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The Centre was selected by UK Athletics as one of only 15 Women and Girls Athletic Centres throughout the country. This scheme sponsored by Aqua-Pura aims to encourage greater female participation in athletics. Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre specialises in forging links between girls at local secondary schools and Chelmsford Athletics Club by using the schools as satellite centres offering coaching during school lessons and forming after school clubs.

ii. Tenure

The centre is the home to Chelmsford Athletics Club and Chelmsford City Football Club. Both clubs have their own, separate changing rooms and clubhouses which they rent from the Council on 25 year leases. These leases have associated rights to use the stadium as a whole including playing facilities, stands and car parking. The athletics club pay a simple, annual rent to the Council whilst the football club's rent is linked to their attendances.

The football club has the right to use the pitch for between 25 and 28 games per season dependant on cup draws. They do not use the site for training or for reserve team matches.

The athletics club has the right to run its training sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings using both indoor and outdoor facilities and to host indoor and outdoor events and competitions. Other clubs can hire the facilities when they are not being used by Chelmsford AC and the stadium is also used for elite training including the UK Decathlon squad.

There is a popular programme of one off and regular schools bookings.

iii. Management

Chelmsford Borough Council manages the centre on a day to day basis and has a small on-site team. They are responsible for the stadium's bookings, for general repairs and maintenance and for running the athletics development programme.

There is a stadium management group which includes representatives of the resident clubs and the Council. This meets regularly to discuss operational issues, to co-ordinate programming and to provide a channel of communication with the Council.

Some aspects of the operation have been devolved to the site clubs. For instance: -

- Chelmsford City FC maintain the football pitch during the football season
- CCFC are responsible for litter, cleaning and crowd control during and after their matches
- Small temporary stands are erected behind each goal for football matches. These are removed after each game. CCFC have responsibility for erecting and removing these stands.

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- CAC are responsible for preparing the facilities for competitions e.g. placing hurdles and high jumps
- Each club is responsible for maintenance and cleaning of their clubhouses

Chelmsford Council report that the stadium is functioning well and there is close co-operation between all parties. This has required some compromises by both football and athletics clubs including an agreement that the track infield cannot be used for hammer throwing and the restriction on the use of the football pitch to first team games.

iv. Operating Costs

The cost to Chelmsford Borough Council of operating the athletics centre for the past three years can be summarised as follows: -

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	Actual	Actual	Budget
	£	£	£
Operating Costs	163,000	228,000	209,000
Capital Charges	362,000	389,000	408,000
TOTAL	525,000	617,000	617,000

v. Application at Hornchurch Stadium

Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre provides an example of good cooperation between football and athletics clubs and the local authority. It also provides examples of imaginative income generation e.g. athletics birthday parties and of enabling casual access to local people.

Tooting and Mitcham Hub

The London Plan for Sport places great emphasis on the development of “multi-sport hubs, combining provision for fitness and sports activities alongside social and community facilities.” These hubs are a key priority and are eligible for significant lottery funding.

vi. Corporate Structure

South London football club Tooting and Mitcham United FC have been involved in the establishment of one of the first of this type of centres called The Hub³. This is a charity, run as a joint venture between the football club who play in the Ryman League, Division One South and Sport England with support from the London Borough of Merton. The charity is eligible for rate relief

³ <http://www.visitthehub.com/>

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The facilities are owned by a specially created company Tooting and Mitcham Sport and Leisure Ltd.

vii. Management

The Hub is operated by a dedicated management team employed directly by the charity.

viii. Facilities

The main football stadium has a capacity of 3,500 including 600 seats. It is used exclusively by the football club for senior and reserve team matches.

All-weather pitches are available for football, hockey, touch rugby and Kwik Cricket. This also hosts a six-a-side football league and Football in the Community programmes. A second training pitch is planned.

Indoor facilities include: -

- A fitness gym which is fully accessible to people with disabilities
- A play centre with facilities catering for the Under 4, 4-12 and 12-15 years age ranges
- “The Village Hall” a multi purpose room offering activities including Scouts and Guides, after-school and homework clubs, adult education, health and rehabilitation courses, dance and martial arts classes. There are plans for a student support centre with IT facilities.
- A “Function Room” providing space for club dinners, weddings, parties, corporate training days and other large social and business gatherings.

ix. Links with Education

“Playing for Success” is a partnership between Tooting & Mitcham Utd FC, the London Boroughs of Merton and Sutton, The Hub, the Football Foundation and the Department for Education and Skills. Links with primary and secondary schools in both authorities extend this partnership into the local community. The Hub operates a Study Support Centre where young people at risk of exclusion from school are given support with key skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT.

x. Finance

In 2005, Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund awarded the club £1.45 million to develop stadium buildings and outdoor facilities for the benefit of the local community. This includes revenue support funding for the first three years of operation in addition to its income from programmes, hiring fees, functions and event. Thereafter The Hub will be required to generate sufficient income to meet costs or to seek revenue support from the local authority in Merton and/or neighbouring Sutton.

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The revenue support built into the lottery award was £180,000 in year 1

xi. [Application at Hornchurch Stadium](#)

This provides a model for how Hornchurch Stadium could develop in future with the charitable model providing a management mechanism which enables a range of interests to be involved.

12. CONSULTATIONS

Wide Ranging Consultations

In carrying out our research for this project we have consulted a wide range of individuals and organisations that are involved with or use Hornchurch Stadium. Whilst there are different, and sometimes conflicting, views on the best way forward at the stadium, all concerned wish to see improvements in management and access to the site.

These consultations are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Cabinet,***The Council***

The Council owns and has ultimate responsibility for Hornchurch Stadium which is a major leisure asset and one that should be used more than at present by both clubs and individuals.

Current management arrangements are less than satisfactory and day to day operations suffer from no staff being based permanently at the stadium.

This year's income is likely to fall well below target. The Council's overall financial position means that there is further pressure to reduce the cost to the Council of the stadium.

The Council has a commitment to finding a home ground for Romford Football Club within the borough. A number of possible sites have been explored but have not proved practical. The stadium was used by both Hornchurch FC and Romford FC in the 1990s and the Council wishes to re-visit this sharing, albeit on a different contractual basis.

The Council wishes to be more involved in a strategic role at the stadium. However, existing resources limits its ability to have a wider and more effective day to day involvement.

Football***i. AFC Hornchurch***

AFCH are a company limited by shares trading as Hornchurch Football Club (2005) Ltd. This company was formed when the former football club was liquidated.

The club wishes to progress towards the Nationwide Conference. The club aspires to be an FA Charter Standard Club and to do more football development aiming to have teams at all ages from U10 to U18 and to develop girls' football.

AFCH is concerned about the short term nature of its current tenure. The club would like a lease of at least 20 years to develop both the club's playing performance and the facilities at the stadium. The club's current ground grading is proving difficult because of the lack of long term security.

AFCH has an excellent relationship with Havering and Mayesbrook Athletics Club.

AFCH are very concerned about increased, unsupervised public access to the athletics track. There is no regular on-site management presence from LB Havering or the athletics club. AFCH state that by employment of a full time groundsman they have filled this vacuum to safeguard their interests and assets

Cabinet,

and would not wish these to be compromised. Hence, any additional usage could come about only with better site management.

The club suffers from a lack of training facilities at Hornchurch Stadium. The back site at Gaynes Park is inadequate and training on the pitch is impractical because of wear and tear.

AFCH, when asked, state that they are opposed to proposals for a football ground share for a number of reasons: -

- They believe that the playing surface could not cope with additional use.
- It would not be commercially worthwhile opening up the bar and social facilities for Romford due to the small crowds this club attracts.
- Fixture congestion and confusion could occur in such areas as cup replays and re-arrangement of postponed fixtures

AFC Hornchurch would wish to be involved in future structures for management of the stadium in a more proactive manner than simply tenants. In any future management arrangement there is a need for clear responsibilities to be set out and a permanent management presence on the site.

ii. **Romford Football Club**

Romford Football Club re-formed in 1992 after a break of 14 years. It is a not for profit organisation being a company limited by guarantee. Since re-forming they have occupied a number of grounds and are now based at Ford Social Club, Rush Green on a one year, rolling arrangement. The club has a good and active Football in the Community Scheme including working with primary schools in Havering.

RFC now need a permanent, good quality ground in order to progress from the Essex Senior League to a higher level. The next step in the FA's pyramid system is the Ryman Isthmian League Division One North. This league requires a club either to own their own ground or have security of tenure of at least two years. This is not possible at Ford Social Club. Without the prospect of improvement the club's directors believe that the club will fold in its present form. The club's last published accounts (to the year end May 2005) show that pitch hire and catering costs payments to Ford Social Club totalled £14,000 out of a total turnover of £33,000.

Romford FC proposals for ground share arrangements at Hornchurch Stadium can be summarised as follows: -

- A lease of a minimum of 20 years
- The right to stage around 25 1st team games at the stadium each season on alternate Saturdays and some Tuesdays. The club would not expect to train or have reserve team games at the stadium
- Access to a boardroom to offer hospitality to visiting teams' players and officials

Cabinet,

- The right to sell perimeter advertising.
- An agreement in place for occupancy of Hornchurch Stadium by 1st January 2007 to be able to lodge a formal expression of interest with the Ryman Isthmian League

iii. The Governing Bodies

Consultation took place with both the Football Association and the Essex County Football Association with regards to the stadium itself and the possibility of a three way ground share between AFC Hornchurch, Romford FC and HMAAC.

The Clubs

Both AFC Hornchurch and Romford FC are in good standing with the governing body. Romford FC is a Charter Standard Club with excellent community links

The Stadium

Hornchurch Stadium is recognised as an important leisure asset in Havering and south Essex. As the stadium is one of the better grounds in south Essex, the County FA were keen to see more use for representative youth matches.

The stadium currently meets the requirements of the Ryman Isthmian League but would need improvements in capacity and crowd segregation arrangements for the Nationwide Conference. Some funding could be available from the Football Foundation under their Stadia Improvement Fund up to a maximum of £150,000 over a three year period.

Cabinet,**Ground Share Proposals**

The FA at both national and county level was uneasy about the proposals for AFC Hornchurch and Romford FC to share the stadium. Whilst there were no objections in principle concerns were expressed about: -

- Pitch wear and tear
- Fixture congestion, especially around cup replays
- Loss of a club culture if only senior teams were allowed to play on the main pitch and reserve and junior required to play elsewhere
- Reaching agreement on practicalities such as sharing of the clubhouse and paying for maintenance work
- The ability of Romford FC to offer the required levels of hospitality for visiting players and officials.

iv. **The Ryman Isthmian League**

The league has recently changed its tenure requirements. They no longer require clubs either to own their own ground or to have a ten year lease. They have adopted a lower requirement of security of tenure for 2 seasons only.

The league will not accept ground share proposals intended solely to allow a team from a lower league to achieve promotion. Ideally, sharing arrangements should be in place for 12 months prior to a club winning its league and applying to promotion to the Isthmian League.

There are concerns about a ground sharing arrangement that involved two football clubs and an athletics club. There are sometimes problems involved in fixture arrangement where one football club shares with an athletics club – this situation would be exacerbated with two clubs involved.

The league expressed a worry about the quality of the playing surface being used by two teams. However, Romford FC's proposal to stage only First XI games at Hornchurch would reduce this risk.

There are examples of successful ground sharing arrangements including that between Erith and Welling football clubs in south London. One of the success factors was that the two clubs had separate facilities such as social clubs.

To sanction the ground share proposal the league would need to be convinced that all parties were keen to proceed in this manner and that they were willing to put in place arrangements to make the proposal work in practice addressing the issues raised above.

Athleticsv. **Havering Mayesbrook Athletics Club**

Cabinet,

Havering Mayesbrook Athletics Club (HMAC) is a long established club “owned” by its 600 members. It operates out of both Hornchurch Stadium and Mayesbrook Park in the borough of Barking and Dagenham.

The club and the Council worked very closely together to raise funds for the £257,000 project to refurbish the track and field event facilities. This included a successful bid to the National Lottery’s Community Athletics Refurbishment Programme (CARP).

Although the this work was substantially completed in 2004 the stadium does not yet have a competition certificate due to minor modifications to the throwing cage not having been carried out. As a result, all competitive athletics takes place at Mayesbrook Park. The club is keen for this certificate to be granted as soon as possible. They would like to hold competitive meetings at Hornchurch Stadium particularly multi-event (decathlon and heptathlon) and young athlete competitions.

The athletics club would like to have a long (20+) year lease at the site. It does not wish to have a sub-lease. This would mean that the athletic club’s future was secure irrespective of any future changes to the football activities on site. This long lease would, ideally, also include access on a Friday evening to enable the club to run a youth only session.

HMAC reports excellent relations at present with AFC Hornchurch whose on site staff often help with the operational aspects of athletics meetings and schools use. There is an unofficial agreement in place between the two clubs to protect the football pitch with HMAC agreeing not to allow hammer throwing.

HMAC are closely involved in promoting athletics through local schools. This is seen to best effect in the organisation of the primary and secondary school events in the District Sports.

HMAC reports some operational difficulties on the site. These include: -

- The lack of site staff means that schools are reliant on the football club to open the site and do not have access to equipment such as hurdles. However, historically the council did provide a service through the grounds maintenance function, but as the football staff were already on site it was agreed that this was a duplicated service
- The siting of the equipment store at the rear of the changing rooms means that equipment has to be carried a considerable distance across the car park and into the stadium.
- The lack of site staff means that the stadium cannot be opened to casual users such as lunchtime joggers

For the future the club is committed to delivering their aspects of the athletics development plan drafted to provide the foundation for the CARP bid.

Cabinet,**vi. Havering Schools**

Consultation took place during the study with to Havering schools via representatives of the Primary Schools Sports Association, the Secondary Schools Sports Association and the Partnership Development Manager based at Coopers Coburn School.

There is very little use of Hornchurch Stadium by local schools for football. The consultations concentrated, therefore, on athletics.

Athletics is one of Havering's sporting strengths and the stadium is seen as a major sporting asset in the borough. It allows pupils of primary school age to "get the bug" for athletics by using a stadium rather than a school field and then to progress to the London Youth Games and/or HMAAC.

All schools are keen to see greater access and more use of the stadium by young people. This would require improved operational management at the stadium. Problems have been experienced in the past with the sports events in such areas as risk assessment procedures, track marking and the availability of equipment. All of these could be overcome by the appointment of a dedicated stadium staff team who had knowledge of athletics and sufficient managerial expertise and responsibility to put proper event planning and delivery arrangements in place.

Havering schools through the district wide associations would like to be represented in any future management structures at the stadium.

vii. UK Athletics

PLC consulted the national governing body for athletics, UK Athletics. They were complimentary about the work of HMAAC and the partnership with the Council that had led to the successful CARP application and refurbishment of the athletics facilities. UKA were, however, concerned that no competition certificate had yet been granted and urged that the throwing cage modifications were completed in the near future to allow this to happen.

UKA were content that the current ground sharing arrangement between the athletics and football clubs was working smoothly. They commented on the "exemplary relationship between football and athletics". They were concerned, however, about any additional wear and tear to the track which might come about through the involvement of another football club being based at the stadium. The key factors are seen to be the number of football games played and the extent to which track covering arrangements are observed.

Future athletics development at the stadium should concentrate on coaching development linked to the Star Track programme for young athletes.

Conclusions

Cabinet,

There is common consent that the stadium is a valued and valuable leisure asset for the borough. There is also agreement that it has the potential to play a greater role in local sporting life, particularly for athletics, especially in respect to schools' involvement. To achieve this there needs to be an improved management system at the venue including employment of permanent stadium staff. The key roles of staff would be to improve liaison with resident clubs, to improve event management and provide event planning and operational support to local schools and to market the site more effectively to the wider community.

With regards to the proposed involvement of Romford FC at the site, it is clear that there are a number of obstacles to be overcome and a number of organisations to be convinced of the desirability and practicality of the proposal. PLC believes that these hurdles can be cleared given goodwill on behalf of all concerned and the creation of a suitable management vehicle to involve all parties in the day to day operation of the site.

13. MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Five Possible Options

Hornchurch Stadium should play a much more active role in the sporting life of Havering. It has the potential to attract a greater range of users, to gain more income and to help achieve the target of an annual 1% growth in participation in sport and physical activity.

To improve access and opportunities will require better management at the site to put in place both improved operational arrangements and to develop long term programming and marketing. We see five possible management options as being available

- 1 **Status Quo** – continuing with the present ad hoc arrangements between the Council and the tenant clubs
- 2 **Direct Council Management** – the Council re-establishing itself as the main management organisation at the stadium
- 3 **Lease and Sub Lease** – the arrangements proposed in 2004 with the new football club as the main leaseholder
- 4 **Community Sports Trust** – establishing a purpose made management vehicle for the stadium using the principles and advantages of a not for profit organisation
- 5 **Leisure Management Contactor** – employing a third party organisation to manage the stadium on the Council's behalf

Each of these systems is a practical possibility at Hornchurch Stadium and each has its pros and cons. These are as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Status Quo

Cabinet,**Pros**

PLC does not believe that there are any advantages to the present system of management except for the limiting the cost to the council to shown contained within the existing budget.

Cons

There is a lack of strategic and operational management which should be carried out by the Council both as landlord and as the body responsible for sporting development in the borough.

There is no public access to the stadium.

Responsibilities have become blurred, lines of communication become confused and matters such as the ownership of assets become unclear.

Continuation would simply perpetuate the current poor management.

The centre is under performing financially with little attention being paid to income generation

The Council's commitment to Romford FC is not being met

i. Costs

The costs of this option would be as estimated in section 2.4 namely some £119,500.

Increased Direct Council Management

Direct management by the Council would involve the Council meeting all of the responsibilities it currently has as landlord and furthermore taking an active role in day to day management. This would include employing staff to be based at the stadium. These staff would be responsible for opening and securing the stadium, for repairs and maintenance, for co-ordination of bookings and for planning and organisation of major events.

Clubs based at the centre would have security of tenure through leases, licences or simple hiring agreements with the site staff acting as the landlord's representative on site. Rent or hiring fees would be paid to the Council. These clubs would continue to run their own affairs independently of the Council being responsible for training, playing and ancillary operations such as catering.

Pros

This system has the advantages of simplicity and clarity and recognises the Council's ownership of the site.

Cabinet,

The public would have a single, easily recognisable organisation in charge of the stadium

There would be improved sports development activity at the stadium. Links with the local community, schools and colleges would be improved thereby generating additional use in line with guiding strategies.

Staff would be able to concentrate on improving use of the stadium and, thereby, generate additional income. We estimate that additional use of the athletics track could build to £30,000 in three years (Appendix 3) which would more than offset additional staff costs.

Cons

Additional costs. A part time member of staff could incur additional costs of between £15,000 and £20,000 including oncosts. This would not be offset by income in the first year.

The Council would be required to undertake the maintenance responsibilities which it has not honoured in recent years.

ii. Costs

Appendix 3 shows projections of increased income and the associated additional costs that could be generated by good on-site management. There would be a requirement for an additional subsidy of £5,400 in year one but costs would be reduced by £7,500 and £11,900 in the following years. Should the Council meet the expenditure estimated in the current year's budget, this would mean operational costs at today's prices of: -

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Budget costs	73,450	73,450	73,450
Additional costs/ Savings (-)	5,474	-7,524	-11,935
2006/07 Projected income (-)	-6,900	-6,900	-6,900
NET	72,024	59,026	54,615
Non-controllable costs	53,000	53,000	53,000
TOTAL COSTS	125,024	112,026	107,615

Lease and Sub Lease

Before the collapse in early 2005 of Hornchurch FC, the Council had been about to enter into an agreement to lease the stadium in its entirety to the football club.

Cabinet,

Hornchurch FC was to have full responsibility for site management and operation and was to grant a sub-lease to HMAc.

It would be possible to enter into a similar lease and sub-lease arrangement with AFC Hornchurch and HMAc. In this scheme the football club could enter into a further sub-lease with Romford FC in order to progress the ground share proposal.

AFC Hornchurch are working hard to establish the new club and do not wish to be distracted by landlord responsibilities: HMAc have seen their tenure put into doubt by the failure of Hornchurch FC and do not wish to be in this position again; Romford FC wish to have a direct lease and do not wish to be in the position that HMAc currently find themselves in.

Pros

This would achieve the managerial and financial improvements anticipated in May 2004.

All site responsibilities would be passed to the football club and the Council would be able to concentrate on strategic aspects of the site rather than operational matters.

All users would have a single point of contact.

Cons

None of the parties involved in the consultations has expressed a wish to take this path again.

It would require the Council to enter into a long term arrangement with an organisation Hornchurch FC (2005) which does not yet have a track record in either operational or financial terms.

It would place site management in the hands of AFC Hornchurch who are opposed to a ground share with Romford FC. This would create difficulties in meeting the Council's commitment to this club

It is unlikely that further sports development would take place under this arrangement.

iii. Costs

The May 2004 report estimated net savings in running costs of £54,000. Should this be achieved this would reduce the total cost to the Council from the current estimated £119,000 including non-controllable costs to some £65,000.

Community Sports Trust

Cabinet,

This option draws on the experience and best practice model of sports organisations such as The Hub in Tooting and Mitcham and looks to create a community sports trust at Hornchurch Stadium. Under this proposal a number of bodies would come together to create a not for profit body (which may or may not be a registered, charitable trust) with the objective of managing the stadium for the benefit of the local community. This would fall under the provisions of the Recreational Charities Act 1958 which makes it charitable to “provide or help to provide facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation” as long as the facilities are provided “in the interests of social welfare”.

Trustees would be drawn from the local community and those having an interest in the site for example LB Havering Councillors, representatives of the clubs resident on the site, local schools and local community representatives. Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council’s representation would have to be limited to no more than 20% of trustees. (See diagram overleaf.)

The trust system would have the following features: -

- The Council would grant a long lease to the trust
- The trust would grant separate leases to the football and athletics clubs
- Each club would be responsible for running its own affairs including playing, training and ancillary operations such as catering with the trust having responsibility for management of the stadium.
- The trust would co-ordinate booking and programming of the stadium, repairs and maintenance, security and so on and would employ staff to carry out this work
- The trust would generate income from its rental from the clubs, casual booking fees, funding raising and grant aid from sources such as the Football Foundation
- The trust would be eligible for rate relief to reduce running costs

Pros

All site responsibilities would be passed to a single body and the Council would be able to concentrate on strategic aspects of the site rather than operational matters.

All users would have a single point of contact.

There would be a strong community and sports development ethos.

Financial efficiency - eligibility for rate relief will reduce running costs. Not for profit organisations are able to attract funds which are not available to local authorities and individuals are often more willing to donate to a local organisation. Gift Aid can generate additional funds from this giving

Cabinet,

Volunteering and Community Commitment - Local people will often give time to a not for profit operation where they would not become involved with the local council.

Opportunities for partnerships with similar organisations

Flexibility – the collapse or withdrawal of one organisation would not mean the collapse of the trust.

TRUST DIAGRAM TO BE INSERTED

Cabinet,

Any financial surpluses will be invested in facilities or used for the benefit of the local community

Cons

Starting from Scratch - it will take some time and expense to set up

Financial Stability – the trust will not be able to borrow money nor to trade at a loss. It will need a subsidy in early years.

Trustee Commitment – all involved in the management of the organisation will be responsible for its running and ultimately for any debts incurred. Finding the right people is critical.

Creation of such a trust at Hornchurch Stadium has the risk of conflict between parties who are unwilling partners in a ground sharing arrangement. This could be to the detriment of the scheme as a whole.

iv. Costs

The projections set out in Appendix 3 can be achieved through good site management including that of the potential trust. In addition such a trust would be eligible for rate relief. Assuming that this body was granted 100% relief the running costs of the stadium could be reduced as follows:-

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Budget costs	73,450	73,450	73,450
Additional costs/ Savings (-)	5,474	-7,524	-11,935
2006/07 Projected income (-)	-6,900	-6,900	-6,900
Rate relief (-)	-20,350	-20,350	-20,350
NET	51,674	38,676	34,265

These sums could be passed as annual grants to the trust. In addition, it may be possible to reduce the costs of annual maintenance below those incurred by the Council by the use of volunteers by the stadium's clubs.

In addition, the Council would still be required to meet the ongoing, non-controllable costs of the stadium which are currently some £53,000. This would give a total cost to the Council as follows: -

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
---------------	---------------	---------------

Cabinet,

NET	51,674	38,676	34,265
Non-controllable costs	53,000	53,000	53,000
TOTAL COST	104,674	91,676	87,265

v. Catering

It could be possible to transfer responsibility for catering and refreshments at the stadium to a central operation run by the proposed trust. This could increase the income to the trust and hence reduce the rents charged to individual clubs. Should this study be concerned with development of a stadium from scratch we would favour this approach.

However, having considered this in detail, we believe that catering should remain as at present. We have three main reasons for this: -

- 1 There is a great difference between the scale of the operations of HMA who offer a “coke, coffee and crisps” service used by large numbers of children and AFC Hornchurch who have a fully licenced bar and restaurant catering for adults. It makes sense, therefore, that these remain separate.
- 2 It would be very difficult to agree a formula which equitably translated loss of revenue from catering into a reduction in rent. If the ground share arrangements were to begin immediately, the crowds and hence the income from catering would vary greatly between Romford FC and AFC Hornchurch. As the club providing the lion’s share of use AFCH could reasonably argue that they were entitled to the largest slice of income/rent reduction. Given this, it makes sense for them to retain overall control and risk of the catering operation.
- 3 Creation of a single catering operation with a common clubhouse would dilute the concept of a “home” ground.

Leisure Management Contactor

The final option involves negotiating a contract for the management of the stadium with an external contractor in a similar manner to that now in place at the Council’s indoor leisure facilities. Under this arrangement the Council would draft a specification for the works it required at the stadium e.g. maintenance, bookings, security and contractors would prepare bids against these requirements. These costs would be offset by income from fees and charges. Clubs resident on site would liaise with the contractor on a day to day basis but would have no involvement in long term management arrangements.

Pros

All site responsibilities would be passed to a single body and the Council would be able to concentrate on strategic aspects of the site rather than operational matters.

All users would have a single point of contact.

Cabinet,

There could be a good community and sports development ethos if the right contractor was chosen.

Cons

A contractor would have no long term interest in the site

Lines of communication between the council, the contractor, site clubs and external hirers could be complicate with potential for confusion.

A contractor would wish to have rights over catering and advertising.

It would be difficult to attract a new operator to such a small site. Use of the existing contractor could mean that the main focus would be on the larger, more popular facilities with the stadium being neglected.

vi. Costs

Costs would increase as the contractor would require a profit margin and could have significant headquarter costs. We estimate this would be between £25,000 and £30,000 per year. Assuming that a not for profit operator was appointed which was able to claim rate relief and that income through this operator was as estimated for the community trust, the total cost to the Council based on the projections in 6.5.1 would be: -

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
NET	51,674	38,676	34,265
Non-controllable costs	53,000	53,000	53,000
Profit requirement	30,000	30,000	30,000
TOTAL COST	134,674	121,676	117,265

Cabinet,***Summary of Pros and Cons***

The following table summarises the pros and cons of each option.

Option		Pros	Cons	Yr 1 Costs
Status Quo		none	Continuation of current poor management Lack of public access	£119,500
Direct Management	Council	Simplicity. Easier public communication. Improved sports and community development. Potential for increased income. Delivery of ground share.	Against policy direction.	£125,000
Lease and Sub-Lease		Simplicity. Easier public communication. Financially attractive.	Would require arrangement with a body lacking a track record. Ground share unlikely. No community and sports development.	£65,000
Community Trust	Sports	Simplicity. Easier public communication. Financially efficient including rate relief. Involvement of LBH, community and all parties on site. Commitment to sports and community development. Facilitates ground share.	Starting from scratch. Need to identify trustees with expertise and commitment. Need financial support in early years. Potential for conflict between parties forming the trust.	£104,700
Management Contractor		Frees all parties from operational management. Easier public communication. Sports development if right contractor.	Complex lines of communication. Expensive due to profit and management fee. Danger of lack of focus in larger contract.	£135,000

Increased Cost to the Council under all Options

With the exception of the lease and sub-lease arrangement, which none of the parties involved wish to consider further, the estimated costs to the Council of the options set out above are in excess of current real spending. This reflects the current over optimistic income projections and the need to fund a proper management presence on the site. The economics of athletics stadium operation

Cabinet,

mean that if Hornchurch Stadium is to play a greater role in the sporting life of Havering there will be an increased cost to the Council. This must be borne in mind in all future discussions of the stadium's future.

14. FOOTBALL GROUND SHARE

It is clear from our consultations that the issue of a football ground share between AFC Hornchurch and Romford FC is highly emotive. AFC Hornchurch are opposed, believing that it would have an adverse effect on the playing surface and their performances at "their" ground whilst Romford FC believe that such a move is the only way to ensure their long term survival.

Setting aside such emotional views, it must be recognised that ground sharing is, at best, a compromise. Ideally, both football clubs would have their own stadiums which act as playing venues, as headquarters and as spiritual homes for players and fans alike. In addition, at a wholly owned ground clubs are free to organise activities and modify facilities without reference to a third party. This freedom of action is a key part of a home ground.

At Hornchurch, the situation is made more complicated by the dual athletics/football nature of the stadium and the involvement of HMAAC. All consultees have identified the pitfalls and practical difficulties arising from this. These include fixture congestion and clashes, difficulties in protecting the track and the need to find alternative venues for hammer throwers.

On the other hand there are a number of factors in favour of the ground share proposals. Firstly, ground sharing would generate additional income. Secondly, it would produce a more efficient and effective use of one of the borough's most important leisure assets which as been provided at public expense. Thirdly, it would enable the Council to meet its commitment to Romford FC and finally, the process of ageing the ground sharing arrangements would allow such issues of leases and ownership of assets to be finalised after a period of uncertainty.

PLC believes that on balance and without overlooking the practical difficulties to be resolved, it is possible for the proposed three way ground share to take place successfully. This should include the following: -

- The ground is used only for AFC Hornchurch First XI and Reserve matches and for Romford FC First XI games. The ground is not used for training and youth football.
- Agreement is reached between the parties to allow Romford FC to provide the hospitality required by their current and possible future leagues for players and officials. In the short term this would require either AFC Hornchurch or HMAAC to "host" Romford FC fixtures. In the long term Romford could provide/build a separate clubhouse and bar.
- Proper arrangements are agreed and adhered to with regards to safeguarding the athletics track.

Cabinet,

- Further independent advice is sought on the rentals payable by the two football clubs. The May 2004 valuation of £20,000 per year payable by Hornchurch FC was in respect of sole occupancy rather than a ground share – AFC Hornchurch will argue that this figure should be reduced. The current pitch hire fees for Romford at Ford Social Club may provide a benchmark for this club's rent.

i. **Protecting the Pitch**

PLC has not carried out any surveys into the condition of the football pitch at Hornchurch Stadium. We have been informed by AFC Hornchurch that the quality of both the pitch and its drainage have been improved by the Hornchurch football clubs in recent years. We understand that it is very uncommon for matches to be postponed because of waterlogging.

Therefore, we are confident that under the proposals set out above the ground sharing arrangements will not result in a deterioration of the quality of the playing surface, always assuming continuation of good grounds maintenance.

In addition, it would be prudent for the Council or proposed trust to carry out a regular survey of the football pitch through a body such as the Sports Turf Institute to ensure that no deterioration was taking place and to advise on any remedial action if necessary.

Should improvements be required to the pitch surface or drainage, funding could be available from the Football Foundation through their Football Stadium Improvement Fund⁴.

The Foundation would provide up to 50% of the cost of any works. It would expect the club(s) resident at the stadium to contribute significantly rather than relying on the Council as landlord to meet the other 50%.

Any works required would need to be specified by an independent agency such as the Sports Turf Institute and then costed by approaches to contractors under a competitive tendering process.

PLC recommend that such an inspection be carried out as part of the negotiations around a ground sharing arrangement to establish an objective benchmark of ground condition.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information, research and consultations described above PLC make the following recommendations

⁴ <http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/seeking-funding/football-stadia>

Cabinet,

Recommendation 1

That the Council adopt the principle of trust or not for profit management at Hornchurch Stadium

Recommendation 2

That the Council adopt the principle of football ground sharing at Hornchurch Stadium and begin immediate negotiations to reach agreement in principle by December 2006. This to include an external assessment of pitch condition.

Cabinet,**Appendix 2**

**“ROAD MAP” TO SETTING UP
A TRUST TO MANAGE
HORNCHURCH STADIUM**

		Timescale
1.	LBH Cabinet approve the creation of a Trust to manage the Hornchurch Stadium.	25/07/07
2.	Shadow Board members for the New Trust to be set up.	By 31/08/07
3.	Shadow Board to meet with LBH officers to produce a detailed plan to cover process of transferring the day do day management of the Stadium to the Trust.	By 30/09/07
4.	Shadow Board to determine most appropriate Trust model and begin process of legally establishing the Trust.	From 01/10/07
5.	Negotiations on a Lease, Transfer Agreement and annual Funding Agreement to begin.	From 01/10/07
6.	Trust to be legally established.	By 31/03/08
7.	Lease, Transfer Agreement and Annual Funding Agreement to be signed.	By 31/03/08



MEETING

DATE

ITEM

CABINET

25 July 2007

7

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Andrew Curtin
Councillor Paul Rochford**

Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Culture and Regeneration

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: A Play Strategy for Havering 2007-2012

SUMMARY

This report brings forward a draft Play Strategy for Havering. The Strategy, which is attached in Appendix A will provide a context and focus for Play in the borough and will also provide the means of accessing Havering's Big Lottery Fund allocation of £467,627.

The Play Strategy will be set within the overall strategic framework for Culture in Havering i.e. the Cultural Strategy and its component sub-strategies.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the Play Strategy for Havering subject to final sign off by the Lead Member Public Realm and the Lead Member Environmental and Technical Services following final consultation with stakeholders

2. Agree that an application and portfolio of projects arising from the Play Strategy is submitted to the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) by September 2007 in order to access the council's allocation of £467,627

REPORT DETAIL

1. Background Information

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed a number of strategies that provide a strategic framework for the development of culture and leisure within the borough including the Cultural Strategy and a range of sub strategies at its meeting of 17 January 2007. The Play Strategy for Havering, attached as Appendix A, complements that strategic framework.
- 1.2 The Strategy will provide a context and focus for Play in the borough and will also provide the means of accessing Havering's Big Lottery Fund allocation of £467,627 by September 2007
- 1.3 This report brings forward the draft Play Strategy which has been developed following wide ranging consultation with children, stakeholders and the newly formed Havering Play Partnership. The Partnership comprises a range of council and voluntary sector stakeholders and is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration. The Champion for Play is the Cabinet Member for Public Realm. The role of the Partnership is to oversee the development of the Strategy, to identify the projects that will be submitted to the Big Lottery Fund to access the council's allocation and to guide and review the implementation of the Play Strategy.
- 1.4 Once agreed by Cabinet the draft strategy will be subject to final consultation with all stakeholders and sign off by the Lead Member Public Realm and the Lead Member Environmental and Technical Services to enable its submission to the Big Lottery Fund by September 2007.

2. The Benefits of Play

Every child needs to play, and every child has a right to play. It is vital that the importance of children's play is recognised and supported in everything that the council and its partner organisations do. Play provides opportunities for children and young people to exercise and relax, to meet others, to develop and feel confident and to improve their health and well-being.

The benefits of Play include:

- Play being a learning experience - good quality play provision supports children's work and achievement in schools by allowing them to experience things talked about in lessons, learning about their natural world and developing skills and talents in sports and cultural activities

- Play increasing children's independence and self-esteem through opportunities to enjoy freedom and to exercise choice and control over their actions
- Play helping the development of emotional intelligence through friendships and understanding with their peers, empathy and respect for others fostering social inclusion

3. The Play Strategy

3.1 The purpose of preparing and implementing a play strategy is to enable the council and its partners to establish clear policies on play as a basis for a range of activities that will create and improve access and opportunity for all children and young people to enjoy a range of quality play and recreation opportunities. In doing so it will also contribute to achieving the Every Child Matters outcomes for children i.e. being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

3.2 The strategy conveys a vision of what the council wants to achieve, setting out aims, objectives and commitments. It is based on a clear understanding of the supply, distribution, quality and use of current provision and the present and future needs of children. A five year Action Plan with SMART targets is included

3.3 It is hoped that the strategy will expand the areas of the public realm where children will feel safe and welcomed. It will also help to improve the quality of life for the community by engaging with children and young people to challenge negative perceptions and engender shared ownership of, and responsibility for open space and the whole environment. Better children's play will benefit the whole community and can make both children and adults feel more secure in the public realm.

3.4 The Vision for Play in Havering is that:

'The Havering Play Partnership believes creative play for children and young people should be at the heart of our towns, the lives of children and young people, cohesive communities and our future.'

3.5 The Aims of the Play Strategy are to:

- Provide a strategic framework for the provision and management of Play in Havering for the next five years
- Provide a vehicle for the ongoing consultation with and decision making by children and young people
- Establish a clear sense of direction and provide a focus for resource allocation and action on the ground

- Maximise support for and advocate the benefits of Play within and outside the council
- Encourage continuing community and stakeholder involvement and partnership
- Contribute to the Havering Community Strategy 2002-2007 'Putting People First.'
- Underpin the future development of play and Havering's submission to the Big Lottery Fund and other partnership funding opportunities

4. Strategy Themes

The Strategy has the following themes:

- **An Assessment of Need** in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
- **Consultation** by making contact with a wide range of stakeholders, particularly the Havering Play Partnership, and including council officers, children and young people and other play providers
- **Promotion and Partnerships** by continuing to consult and work with key stakeholders promoting the benefits of play and ensuring that adequate funding from in side and outside of the council is secured for the development of play opportunities
- **Equality and Access** by developing policies, ways of working and facilities that will engender a feeling of safety and easy access to play opportunities in Havering
- **The Way Forward** setting out how we will measure our performance by means of performance monitoring and a comprehensive Action Plan

5. Financial Implications and risks

5.1 The Play Strategy is a requirement, along with a portfolio of projects, of BIG to allow the council to access its allocation of £467,627 following the submission of the Strategy by September 2007. Once released the funds need to be spent within a 3 year period, although it is anticipated that Havering will expend its allocation before this.

5.2 It is intended that the majority of initiatives and projects arising from the Strategy will be funded from the Big Lottery Fund allocation however some may require a reprioritisation of existing resources. If costs cannot be contained within existing budgets the initiatives in question may only proceed if another source of funding can be identified possibly by way of a specific budget virement or by inclusion in the MTFS. Other external funding

opportunities and partnership working will also be explored where ever possible.

5.3 As the Strategy is implemented and the action plan developed, the financial implications will be refined. Funding sources for each new initiative can then be specifically identified.

5.4 Any increase in budget would have to be considered alongside other priorities for the 2008/9 MTFS process.

6. Legal Implications and risks

6.1 There are no direct legal implications from adopting this Strategy. The implementation of some proposals may have legal implications which will be addressed at the appropriate time.

7. Human Resources Implications and risks

There are no Human Resource implications contained within the Play Strategy.

8. Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and risks

8.1 The Play Strategy addresses both equalities and social inclusion issues and adoption of the Strategy should have positive effects.

8.2 The Strategy will undergo an equalities impact assessment before it is finalised

9. Reasons for the decision

The approval and formal adoption of the Play Strategy will provide a context and focus for the play opportunities within Havering. Successful strategies not only provide strategic direction for council services, but also provide a framework for development of other agencies and the private and voluntary sectors. They also highlight opportunities for partnership working ensuring that the best use is made of available resources. The Strategy also demonstrates to external funding agencies the key priorities for the community.

10. Alternative options considered

No alternatives have been considered. Without this Strategy the Council will not have a clear focus and agreed plan for improving the opportunity for play, nor will it be able to access the council's allocation from the Big Lottery Fund.

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Background Papers List

Putting People First Community Strategy 2002-2007

Havering's Equality and Diversity Strategy 2003-2006

Havering's Local Development Framework

Guide to Preparing Play Strategies – Mayor of London 2005

Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation – Mayor of London 2006

Various Play Council, Play England and Big Lottery publications

Havering Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009

Havering Cultural Strategy and sub strategies

A PLAY STRATEGY FOR HAVERING

2007-2012

Draft

July 2007

A PLAY STRATEGY FOR HAVERING 2007-2012

FOREWORD

In Havering, we see the opportunities that creative play offers children and young people as being very important for our society in the future. We see it as being important to having beautiful, civilised towns, opportunities for children and young people and cohesive communities for us to live in. Over the last few years Havering Council has made significant investment in play provision for all age ranges of young people throughout the borough.

By offering opportunities for children and young people to play in the heart of our towns, we help our towns to be well-balanced places that reflect all of our interests in the best way - as well as our interest in shopping. By offering creative opportunities for children and young people to play in our towns, we help make our towns places to socialise and meet in as well as to work and trade. Ironically, by offering a more balanced image of what our towns are, we probably help give more support to the economic possibilities that they offer, as they become more attractive places for people to visit and to live in.

By offering creative opportunities for children and young people to play, we help support their educational attainment, mental and physical health, employment prospects, and help tackle anti-social behaviour.

Creative play provision helps stimulate an enquiring, problem-solving attitude to life. This supports mental well-being and encourages physical activity, as well as supporting educational attainment. It helps give people the skills that will make them good business people, employers or employees, and stimulates the sort of self esteem and sense of belonging that are at the heart of a cohesive society with low anti-social behaviour levels.

Finally, children and young people's play brings communities together. Along with a sense of history, opportunities in the arts and sport and the inspiration provided by our beautiful parks and green spaces, it is one of the things that helps turn houses into homes and streets into communities, bringing families together to visit a play site, and different age groups and backgrounds together in a way which creates the sense of togetherness without which a community does not exist.

Most importantly of course, challenging play opportunities can help children to push boundaries, manage risks and develop confidence.

But how much more do children and young people get out of a play scheme if they have worked with artists, actors, musicians, writers, story tellers and designers to produce it and develop it. How much more do they and we get out of it if they have taken their imagination, our history, our environment, the plants, animals, insects and natural surroundings that we live in as their inspiration.

Havering is committed to being in the vanguard of creative play provision for children and young people, and this strategy establishes the groundwork from which we will do just that.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

“Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practise skills. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills.

Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen by the child. Children's play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious.”

Children's Play Council

Every child needs to play, and every child has a right to play. It is vital that the importance of children's play is recognised and supported in everything that the council and its partner organisations do.

Play provides opportunities for children and young people to exercise and relax, to meet others, to develop and feel confident and to improve their health and well-being.

The benefits of Play include:

- Play being a learning experience - good quality play provision supports children's work and achievement in schools by allowing them to experience things talked about in lessons, learning about their natural world and developing skills and talents in sports and cultural activities
- Play increasing children's independence and self-esteem through opportunities to enjoy freedom and to exercise choice and control over their actions
- Play helping the development of emotional intelligence through friendships and understanding with their peers, empathy and respect for others fostering social inclusion

Although Havering provides many high quality opportunities a strategic approach by the Council and its partners is needed to deliver the benefits mentioned above. This Strategy sets out our vision and action for play in Havering so that all children and young people up to 18 years old can experience the benefits that play and 'free time' provides in an accessible way.

1.2 What is Play?

'Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages a child.'

'Play is the space and opportunity to run, climb, skip, hide, play with ropes, jump, practise cartwheels, throw and kick balls, make friends, fall out, grow things, tell stories, climb trees, take risks, get wet, explore nature, build dens, get dirty, dress up, pretend, keep animals, dig holes, swing on tyres, shout, fight, invent games, make things, paint pictures, talk with friends, or just sit.'

Children's Play Council

The Services will engage and work with those young people who would like to become active citizens. The services will provide a real opportunity for young people's voices to be heard by adults in power and those in community positions.

Havering Youth Operational Plan

Play itself can be considered from a number of perspectives. It can be seen as an essential component of education, or from the health perspective as a mechanism to promote physical and mental health. Socially it teaches children how to behave with their peers, how to share and work in teams and make their opinions known. It can also be seen as cultural behaviour. Perhaps it has been a disadvantage for Play that it is so universally relevant to almost every aspect of life: yet it has rarely had a high profile champion, and has never been treated or resourced as its importance might suggest. Even 'Every Child Matters' rarely mentions play as a specific activity, although play quite clearly contributes to four of its five priority outcomes: 'Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve and Make a Contribution.'

It is important that local authorities and others avoid the temptation to see children's play as simply a hardware issue. Play provision is essentially about space – which includes equipment, but it incorporates so much more than that. Children are sophisticated judges of their surroundings and are naturally curious about the places they visit and use, therefore design of all aspects of space used by children is an important function of planning, urban design, building and landscape design,

Buildings that are primarily used by children can and should be designed in a way that enables them to have a variety of spatial experiences. The streets, canals and riversides, parks and open spaces – as well as designated playgrounds – are places where children must be seen, heard and given opportunities to play. This will require giving sensitive attention to, for example:

- Street design and landscaping
- Policing and traffic control

- Public art and the possibility of physical engagement with it.

This Play Strategy will recognise the wider cultural rights of children and young people and look further than swings, slides and roundabouts, valuable though they are to local communities.

Play allows children to test boundaries and learn about themselves, their peers and the world about them. It fosters independence and self-esteem and fosters children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction. It also fosters the child's physical and mental well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

It can happen everywhere that imagination leads!

1.3 Barriers to Play

Barriers to Play often include:

Anti-social behaviour - this negative stereotyping of children out to play is a concern. Parents may be reluctant to let their children play out because of the bad reputation of other older children in the neighbourhood. Public perception may then categorise children out playing as inherently anti-social. We must not lose sight of the fact that the majority of children may already suffer social exclusion from public space because of the anti-social behaviour of a small minority.

Parental anxiety prevents playing out - the question of it being too dangerous today to let children out to play is often raised. Indeed many parents feel obliged by peer pressure from other parents and neighbours to keep their children in, for fear of being labelled irresponsible or negligent. Despite media coverage of child abductions and murders by strangers, this is statistically less likely than winning the lottery. Research for the Children's Play Council in 2003 ("*Grumpy Grown-ups*") revealed that half of them had been shouted at for playing out, that a quarter of 7 – 10 year olds were sometimes stopped from playing by adults, and that one in ten could not play out because of the attitude from neighbours.

The need for supervision of public space - in previous generations, park keepers, estate caretakers and bus conductors were just some of the uniformed presence that ensured safety and respect for children to play out. In Havering uniformed Grounds Maintenance operatives, Safer Neighbourhood teams and Mobile Patrols regularly visit and patrol parks and open spaces helping to ensure that children can play safely in the public realm. The issue of open-access play sessions supervised by trained staff in school holidays is discussed later in this strategy.

The danger from traffic - another important consideration is the implementation of Home Zones, and other traffic calming and limiting arrangements. This issue is looked at in this strategy in due course.

Risk - it is the job of all those responsible for children at play to assess and manage the level of risk, so that children are given the chance to stretch themselves, test and develop their abilities without exposing them to unacceptable risks. This is part of a wider adult social responsibility to children. If we do not provide controlled opportunities for children to encounter and manage risk themselves they may be denied a chance to learn these skills.

However safety in play provision is not absolute and cannot be addressed in isolation. Play provision is first and foremost for children and young people and if it is not exciting and attractive to them, then it will fail, no matter how 'safe' it is. Designers, managers and providers will need to reach compromises in meeting these sometimes conflicting goals. The judgements required for this balance should be rooted firmly in objectives concerned with children's enjoyment and benefit.

Disability – disability in all its forms can provide a barrier to play opportunity. Havering's approach to equal opportunity and equality and diversity is well developed and the council is committed to provide opportunity to all children and young people whether this be by the provision of accessible play equipment in parks and open spaces or by other means.

1.4 Vision for Play in Havering – Havering Play Partnership

‘The Havering Play Partnership believes creative play for children and young people should be at the heart of our towns, the lives of children and young people, cohesive communities and our future.’

1.5 Aims of the Strategy

The Strategy aims to maximise the benefit that Play in Havering provides to local children and young people. In particular the Strategy aims to:

- Provide a strategic framework for the provision and management of Play in Havering for the next five years
- Provide a vehicle for the ongoing consultation with and decision making by children and young people
- Establish a clear sense of direction and provide a focus for resource allocation and action on the ground
- Maximise support for and advocate the benefits of Play within and outside the council
- Encourage continuing community and stakeholder involvement and partnership
- Contribute to the Havering Community Strategy 2002-2007 ‘Putting People First.’
- Underpin the future development of play and Havering’s submission to the Big Lottery Fund and other partnership funding opportunities

1.6 Scope of the Strategy

The Strategy encompasses the following types of Creative Play for those children and young people up to 18 years old:

- Play in parks and open spaces, the countryside and housing developments
- Adventure playgrounds
- Play in schools, libraries, nurseries and the private sector
- Young people’s ‘free time’ activities

- Creative Play in our town centres

1.7 The Strategic Framework for Play

The following diagram represents how the Strategy fits within Havering's overall strategic framework as follows:



Figure 1.4

1.8 Strategy Themes

The Strategy has the following themes:

- **Play – an Assessment of Need** by assessing the quality, quantity and accessibility of play facilities and opportunity
- **Consultation and Community Needs** by making contact with a wide range of stakeholders, particularly the Havering Play Partnership, council officers, children and young people, other play providers, and 'hard to reach' groups

- **Promotion and Partnerships** by continuing to consult and work with key stakeholders promoting the benefits of play and ensuring that adequate funding from inside and outside of the council is secured for the development of play opportunities and facilities
- **Access** by developing policies, ways of working and facilities that will engender a feeling of safety and easy access to play opportunities in Havering
- **Resources in the Right Places** through the allocation of resources to provide the most effective and efficient mechanisms for meeting the needs and expectations of children and young people
- **The Way Forward** setting out how we will measure our performance by means of performance monitoring and a comprehensive Action Plan

2. CONTEXT

2.1 The National Context

The following legislation, reports and other initiatives summarise the context and importance of play in that play helps self-motivated development and enquiry among children and young people.

2.1.1 Children's Act 2004

The Children's Act 2004 sets out five key outcomes within the 'Every Child Matters' framework where play can contribute:

Being healthy - play supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, growth and development

Staying safe - through play children are supported to explore physical and emotional risk and challenge safely

Enjoying and achieving - play fosters children's self esteem by extending their choice and control, and hence the satisfaction they gain from it

Making a positive contribution - children's play is naturally participative and inclusive. It fosters a respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction.

Economic well-being - through play, healthy, confident children and young adults will have a greater capacity to engage with life-long learning and development.

The services that reach every child and young person have a crucial role to play in shifting the focus from dealing with the consequences of difficulties in children's lives to preventing things going wrong in the first place. The transformation that we need can only be delivered through local leaders working together in strong partnerships with local communities on a programme of change.

'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' 2004

2.1.2 Children's Trusts

Their remit covers nearly every aspect of a child's life, but especially those traditionally managed by education and social services departments.

2.1.3 'Getting Serious About Play' 2003

This report, led by Frank Dobson was written specifically to advocate and raise the profile of Play across Government departments. The report prompted the

funding scheme for Play from the Big Lottery Fund in England and Wales. One of the key criteria for gaining access to the allocation is that the projects put forward for funding must have a basis in a Play Strategy such as this.

2.1.4 The Children's Play Council

The Council is probably the most authoritative voice for children's play in the UK. It is a campaigning and research organisation that promotes children's play.

Established in 1988, the CPC is an alliance of national and regional voluntary organisations, local authorities and partnerships with an interest in children's play. This includes play associations and networks, playwork training organisations, local play services, Early Years Development & Childcare Partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships as well as many national children's charities

2.1.5 The Big Lottery

While local authorities are, and will remain by far the largest funders of play in England, The Big Lottery is investing heavily in play development in England. Based on the recommendations of the report 'Getting Serious about Play', the Fund is investing £155 million in England over three years in the establishment of a strategic fund to create and improve local children's play spaces in areas of greatest need.

2.1.6 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sports and Recreation (PPG 17)

This Government guidance aims to safeguard open spaces and playing fields and requires local authorities to undertake audits of existing provision and assessments of future need for open space, sports and recreation facilities including children's play spaces). Havering undertook its PPG17 assessment in 2005.

2.2 The Regional Context

2.2.1 GLA Guide to Preparing Play Strategies 2006

This document shows that children and young people want better and safer places to play. The guide promotes the preparation of Play Strategies for London boroughs which will in turn allow Havering to access its allocation for play from the Big Lottery Fund.

2.2.2 The GLA London Plan February 2004

This plan is the Greater London Authority's spatial development strategy for London which sets the strategic context for planning and also contains measures to protect and improve open spaces, including children's play spaces. The GLA will be preparing separate Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on children's spatial needs.

2.2.3 GLA Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies 2004

In line with PPG17, the London Plan also requires boroughs to undertake an audit and assessment of open space as part of an Open Space Strategy and has prepared a Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies (March 2004). This guidance sets the context for the production of open space strategies by London Boroughs and identifies the need to address children's play issues in assessing and planning for open space needs

2.3 The Havering Context

The London Borough of Havering is London's third largest borough. The north and east boundaries border the rolling Essex countryside and the south covers three miles of River Thames frontage. To the west Havering is bordered by the boroughs of Redbridge and Barking and Dagenham.

The name 'Havering' originates from the Royal Liberty of Havering, to which Edward IV granted a charter in 1465. The area's history stretches back to Roman times with early settlements at Rainham and Collier Row. The London Borough of Havering was created in 1965 by the merger of Romford and Hornchurch Urban District Councils.

- The 2001 Census found 224,248 people resident in the borough
- There are over 50,000 children and young people up to the age of 18 in Havering comprising over 22% of the population. This is on par with the average for England
- Havering covers 11,227 hectares
- The area of green belt in Havering is 6,000 hectares which is almost half of the borough
- Havering is one of only 2 boroughs in London to have more than 60 square kilometres of green space
- Havering has one of the lowest unemployment rates in London of 3%

- In Havering the top six things that residents think are most important in making somewhere a good place to live are a low level of crime, clean streets, health services, education provision, public transport and parks and open spaces (36%)
- In 2002 4.8% of the population was of an ethnic minority background

The following table sets out the Havering demographic profile.

Age Cohort	Total in Age Cohort	% Havering	% London	% England
0 – 4	12,429	5.5	6.7	6
5 – 7	8,588	3.8	3.8	3.7
8 – 9	5,965	2.7	2.5	2.6
10 – 14	14,655	6.5	6.1	6.6
15	2,813	1.3	1.2	1.3
16 – 17	5,626	2.5	2.4	2.5
18 – 19	5,038	2.2	2.3	2.4
20 – 24	11,735	5.2	6	6
25 – 29	13,173	5.9	6.7	6.7
30 – 44	49,414	22.0	22.6	22.6
45 – 59	43,977	19.6	18.9	18.9
60 – 64	11,162	5.0	4.9	4.9
65 – 74	21,198	9.5	8.3	8.3
75 – 84	14,258	6.4	5.6	5.6
85 – 89	2,911	1.3	1.3	1.3
90 & Over	1,306	0.6	0.6	0.6
Total	224,248	100	100	100

Source: 2001 census

The 2006/7 Ipsos MORI survey of residents' priorities demonstrated the value of a coherent Play Strategy. The analysis of the survey states 'the greatest priorities for improvement in Havering are activities for teenagers and the level of crime. In each case, 53% of residents see them as important issues.' (Ipsos MORI 2006/7, P47). Facilities for children were also in residents' top ten list of priorities. It is important that these priorities are addressed in this Strategy and that a coordinated approach to play is developed.

Play services in Havering have not been traditionally placed within a single service area. Outdoor play provision is led by the Parks Service; staffed indoor play is focused within Children's Services, the voluntary and private sectors whilst services such as libraries and sports development have also traditionally provided play opportunity as part of their mainstream activity. This Strategy provides the opportunity for this wide-ranging provision to be assessed and focused upon in a coordinated way.

2.3.1 Havering Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009

The Council's Vision for children and young people as expressed in the Plan is as follows:

'Havering is a place where all children and young people are valued and safe, feel good about themselves and each other, enjoy life to the full and are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential, and encouraged to contribute positively to their community.'

Further the council is taking every opportunity to ensure that this vision aligns with the Community Strategy. A key theme "Every Child and Young Person in Havering Matters" has been identified for the 2005 strategy revision, with the following key objectives:

- give all children and young people the best possible start in life and ensure their on-going physical, emotional and mental health;
- ensuring children are, and feel, safe from abuse, domestic violence, bullying, crime, or environmental dangers;
- help all children and young people to enjoy their education and maximise their potential;
- encourage all children to make a positive contribution to society, and make informed decisions about their own lives;
- provide targeted support for priority groups with specific needs;
- provide advice and practical and emotional support for parents and carers from pre-conception to young adult stages; and
- maximise opportunities to ensure economic well-being for children, young people and young adults; and
- empower children, young people (and adults) to have access to the democratic process

We will ensure that the commitments and actions arising from this Play Strategy are embedded within the Children's and Young People's Plan.

2.3.2 Havering Community Strategy 2002-2007 'Putting People First'

The Community Strategy has as its main themes:

- Increased Community Participation

- Better Health and Welfare
- A More Prosperous Community
- Improved Lifelong Learning
- A Safer Community
- A High Quality Environment

2.3.3 Havering Early Years Operation Plan

The Plan, linked to the Children and Young People's Plan, has the following key targets:

- Parents and carers receive support to keep their children healthy
- Children are ready for school
- Make sure that all young children can play and learn before starting school
- Children and young people live in safe secure families

2.3.4 Youth Operation Plan

The Plan expresses the vision for the Youth Services as follows:

'The services will create a planned framework of interventions and learning opportunity for young people and are committed to the delivery of formal and informal measures to support them through their transition from teenage years into adulthood.'

2.3.5 Culture Strategy 2007-2011

The Culture Strategy is driven by a vision of Havering as:

'A place where our culture is at the heart of our towns, the lives of our children and young people, a cohesive community and our future'

As a high level strategy, the Culture Strategy seeks to bring together the more detailed strategies for the cultural sector (ie the Libraries, Arts, Sports and Physical Activity, Parks and Open Spaces, Play, and Historic Buildings and Landscapes and Buildings strategies) It will also help ensure that cultural development links with urban policy, plans for regeneration, tourism, the environment, children's, young people's and older people's services, lifelong

learning, healthy living, community safety and work to develop community cohesion – all of which contribute significantly towards providing a good quality of life for the residents of the borough.

The strategic aim for the Culture Strategy, therefore, is to:

‘Provide focus and add value to the efforts of everyone involved in the planning and provision of cultural facilities and activities.’

The document aims to:

- capture the ambition and set out the direction for culture in Havering
- promote and celebrate culture in Havering, its diversity, and the diversity of the Havering community
- provide a framework for the establishment and development of the Havering Culture Forum, which will form a key sub group of the Havering Strategic Partnership
- set out clear linkages to the themes of the Community and Corporate Strategies, including the Local Development Framework
- set out the roles of the Council and its partners in supporting culture in Havering
- establish priorities which cultural organisations can work towards achieving, in partnership and for the benefit of all.

2.3.6 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2007-2012

The vision for parks and open spaces is as follows:

‘The London Borough of Havering wants it’s Parks and Open Spaces to be recognised as:

- Being high quality, well maintained and beautiful places to visit
- Providing all sections of the community with opportunities to enjoy Sports, Play, the Arts and Heritage
- Being accessible and safe places to visit
- Including protected and well maintained Historic Landscapes and Buildings

- Supporting a wide range of plant and animal species
- Contributing to a more civilised urban environment'

2.3.7 Havering's Local Area Agreement

Like all local authorities Havering has entered into an agreement with central government known as the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Havering's LAA comprises a series of stretch and non-stretch target to be achieved which provide local solutions to local circumstances. These targets are built around a series of themes or blocks such as:

- Children And Young People
- Safer And Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities And Older People

It can be seen that the issues relating to play and 'free time' for children and young people can be contributory factors in terms of Havering being successful in achieving its LAA targets.

We will therefore:

- Ensure that the contributory aims, objectives and targets within this Strategy are embedded in the council's Local Area Agreement

2.3.8 Housing Strategy Update 2007-2010.

In June 2007 Cabinet approved a revised set of objectives for the Housing Strategy. These ensure that the ambition and direction for Culture in Havering, the significant emphasis placed on Culture within the Local Development Framework and the key role of Culture in turning houses into homes and streets into communities are reflected in the new Housing Strategy. We must ensure that this emphasis is also be mirrored in the Play Strategy.

3. PLAY IN HAVERING – AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED

This chapter looks at places where children and young people play and spend free time in Havering and assesses the quantity, quality and accessibility of these opportunities. Where it is deemed that gaps exist commitments are made to address these shortfalls.

3.1 Parks and Open Spaces

Parks are very important for play, and unlike some inner London areas, Havering is well provided with many good quality parks and open spaces. Our research shows that parks, open spaces and the countryside are by far the most popular play areas apart from home and friends houses. In addition to the improvement in these valuable assets demonstrated by a raising of public satisfaction from 58% to 67% in the most recent MORI poll, equipped play facilities and teen zones are improving following recent investment by the council and its partners. These increasingly feature inclusive equipment suitable for all children and young people.

The PPG17 Assessment of Play in parks and open spaces is set out in Appendix 1.

In summary the assessment shows that:

- Although much has recently been achieved some of Havering's play areas require upgrading to meet the NPFA LEAP and NEAP standards.
- There are some areas within Havering which are deficient in access to dedicated children's play areas. In order to ameliorate those deficiencies, it is recommended that additional opportunities for both formal and informal children's play are brought forward by either providing new facilities or enhancing existing provision
- Residents should ideally have access to 0.8 ha per 1,000 population of children's play provision consistent with the NPFA play area size standards. Provision could take the form of dedicated open space provision or form part of an other type of publicly accessible open space (e.g. public park, natural or semi-natural greenspace)
- All residents within the Borough should have access to areas of formal and informal play provision for children and teenagers within a reasonable walking distance from home.
- Proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve children's play provision. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional play provision needs generated as a result of the proposed development. The exact form of play provision

should be identified following consultation with the local community to identify local priorities.

- If the proposed development is located within an identified area of deficiency for children's play provision it will be necessary for additional land to be brought into use for the purposes of children's play. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the provision for children and teenagers. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the curtilage of the proposed development. Alternatively, a contribution to off-site provision may be appropriate.
- If the proposed development is not located within an area which is deficient in access to formal children's play provision then consideration should be given to any deficiency in quality or value of existing children's play provision. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of existing provision which may include improving the range facilities for particular age groups not well served at present and improving the condition of facilities provided.

Accordingly we will:

- Continue to provide new or enhanced play and teenage provision in parks and open spaces in line with identified deficiency in terms of quality or quantity and recognised standards
- Ensure that standards for play are considered when using the Local Development Framework
- Ensure that developer contributions to play are negotiated as part of any new appropriate development and that contributions are directed to play facilities in the vicinity of any development

3.2 Parks as 'Whole Play Environments'

Many Havering parks offer good quality natural environments for play with fallen trees left to climb on, woods to play 'hide and seek' in, streams to bridge, swing across and paddle in, and hills to roll down. Some Havering parks offer 'trip destination' activities including mini-golf, skateboarding and boating e.g. Harrow Lodge Park, Upminster mini golf, Bedfords Park and Raphaels Park.

We will:

- Recognise 'whole play environments' within parks and manage these assets accordingly by integrating the concept into management plans and design guides to encourage informal play in particular

- Continue to provide 'destination' play facilities within appropriate sites

3.3 Younger Children

For younger children it is important that good facilities for parents, childminders and grandparents, such as comfortable seating, picnic benches, water fountains, toilets and cafes are available to encourage them to take their children out to play in the park. Consideration should be given to siting play and sports areas close to entrances and cafes so that children feel they have informal supervision from adults.

We will:

- Take account of the needs of young children and their carers and families when designing and maintaining parks and open spaces

3.4 Older Children

As older children and young people can use the park unaccompanied, they need a wide range of different types of play and sports facilities, so that one group does not dominate the scene. Shelters, ballcourts and places to 'hang out' are highly valued by older children.

Therefore we will:

- Continue the successful provision of teen zones within our parks and open spaces in accordance with demonstrated need

3.5 Staffed Play Provision in Parks

In Havering a wide range of play provision in parks is provided by means of school holiday environmental play in the form of the 'Wacky About Wildlife' events, 'Reading in the Park' events hosted by the Library Service, events promoted by Essex Wildlife Trust and other partners and children and young people's sessions organised as part of the summer Sports Festival and the Football in the Community project.

Accordingly we will:

- Continue to provide and enhance the programme of accessible staffed play provision in parks in line with community need

3.6 Play in the Natural Environment

Children naturally enjoy exploring and playing in the natural world. In 'No particular Place to Go' by Ken Worpole for Groundwork UK 2003, a survey of

1000 children in Leicester found that 94% of children wanted to spend more time out of the house. Another survey of young people in Northamptonshire found that the vast majority described themselves as 'outdoor people', with 80% of 9 - 16 year-olds saying they preferred being out and about rather than staying in.

The Demos/Green Alliance 2004 report 'A Child's Place: Why Environment Matters to Children' shows children have a strong sense of the natural environment as a social space they enjoy playing in, yet many urban children have poor access to natural environments.

Children in Havering are fortunate to live in a borough rich in open space, countryside and the natural environment managed by the council and a range of partners organisations e.g. Essex Wildlife Trust and Thames Chase.

We will:

- Work with partner land managers to continue and enhance the provision of play opportunities in the natural environment

3.7 Play and Housing

Homes in Havering, the Arms Length Management Organisation responsible for the management of social housing in Havering provide a range of play and teen areas across the borough on housing amenity areas. As such they can play an important role in developing and improving children's play provision in the borough.

Therefore we will:

- Work with Homes in Havering and their tenants representatives to ensure that play provision is provided to complement that provided elsewhere in the borough

3.8 Childcare, School Play Centres and Extended Schools

Childcare is a service aimed at parents, play provision is a service for children, however childcare without play would be very poor childcare. Most of what is described as staffed play provision in Havering is childcare, in that children are kept at a club paid for by parents until collected by them. It is vital for working parents to know they can rely on good quality childcare provision, and so childcare is high on the agenda of both national and local government as a way of alleviating child poverty. There is currently a strong demand for this type of service in Havering, with emphasis on meeting parent's needs for the provision to be close to home or school.

The government's Extended Schools Initiative is currently being targeted for expansion. The extended schools agenda is beneficial for children and families,

providing interesting and purposeful activities for children that are tailored to meet their needs.

3.9 Play and Early Years

Practitioners are well aware of the value of play in promoting learning and motivation in Nurseries and Early Years Education. Commentators have suggested that some children, who do not attend any pre school provision, first arrive at school under-stimulated by parents in their play abilities and requirements.

There are a wide variety of Parent and Toddler Groups in Havering, with the Children's Information Service listing many different projects. These are well placed to provide good quality social play and the "messy" play with paint, sand, water and the natural environment which parents find difficult, especially in a small flat,

The Elm Park Early Years Centre ran a summer holiday scheme in 2006 for 4 to 11 year olds for a 4 week period. This proved to be very successful and efforts are ongoing to expand this valuable programme.

We will:

- Continue to support parents, carers and children in terms of nurseries, Early Years provision and parent and toddler provision
- Work with all stakeholders to promote available play opportunities throughout Havering
- Investigate support for the development of expanded school holiday schemes provided by a range of providers including Early Years Centres by means of this strategy

3.10 Adventure Playgrounds

Adventure Playgrounds are children's own spaces, where they can meet friends, build and make dens, swing and climb, dig, care for pets and have fun. Unlike many other public play areas in school grounds and parks, which adults feel should be kept "nice and tidy", adventure playgrounds allow children to be messy and manipulate the play environment by providing "loose parts" – things like old tyres, pieces of wood and furniture for children to use in their play and to make believe. They are staffed by trained and qualified playworkers, and many now also offer optional childcare for younger children. There are thought to be eighty Adventure Playgrounds across London with the nearest being the ELHAP Adventure Playground in Woodford Bridge, Redbridge.

Nevertheless there is an opportunity to provide a creative destination play area within Hornchurch Country Park in the south of the borough and in other sites including Rainham. Hornchurch Country Park is steeped in heritage, being a former World War II airfield and a site of nature conservation interest. The council and its partners are undertaking a feasibility study into the provision of a visitor centre within the site and during the consultation phase of this study many people have expressed the need for an exciting play area themed around the parks heritage and its biodiversity interest. Such a development would provide an opportunity to meet the under provision of play in this area of the borough and to involve children and young people creatively in the design of a destination facility

We will therefore:

- Commit to talking to the community around Hornchurch Country Park regarding a prestige play area to reflect the heritage and nature conservation value of the site. We will also involve local children creatively in any project that emerges

3.11 Private Sector Commercial Provision

In recent years there has been a significant growth in “pay-per-session” private sector play provision, usually for under 8’s, often branded as jungle gyms or indoor adventure playgrounds, and typically consisting of multi-level soft play, ball pool, climbing and slide equipment with a café and seating area attached. While popular with children from families who can afford the charges, children from the poorest families are unlikely to be able to use them. In Havering facilities include Kidspace in Romford, Timbuk2 in Upminster and Go Wild in Rainham.

We will:

- Use our influence to ensure that commercial play provision continues to be provided in appropriate locations by working with planners and the private sector

3.12 Play and Planning Policy

Significant changes to the planning system have recently been made through the introduction of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004. The new Act has resulted in the replacement of Unitary Development Plans with Local Development Frameworks. The LDF contains contain new policies on open space, sports and recreation prepared in line with national and regional guidance. These new policies will continue to provide a mechanism for delivering the aims of the Play Strategy. For example the council has recently provided a range of new play facilities both for children and young people arising from section 106 funds e.g. Forest Lodge play area and multi use games area and a new Artificial Turf Pitch at Brettons Open Space.

By means of the LDF this Play Strategy will seek to ensure that developers provide space for facilities for play, recreation and sports for children and young people in all new residential developments.

In addition Government is currently consulting on a range of new standards for the provision of play facilities. The council will respond to these and seek to meet the standards once finalised.

Accordingly we will:

- Work with planners to gain the maximum benefit for play, sports and recreation facilities for children and young people from Section 106 agreements
- Consider whether the proportion of s106 monies available for Education should be reworked to specifically include an allocation for Play
- Ensure that the aims and objectives of the Play Strategy are reflected within the Local Development Framework and any Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted by the council
- Seek to adopt the emerging national standards for the provision of play facilities in due course

3.13 Play, Young People and the Youth Service

The council's Youth Service provides a range of services targeted at young people. This strategy deals with facilities and opportunities that young people wish to do in their free time. To this end the Youth Service feels that:

- Young people require facilities and opportunities that are adventurous such as wheeled and urban sports
- Whilst spending their spare time in the public realm they wish to feel welcomed and safe accompanied by friends. Further to this, the Service organises a Summer University programme in 6 locations across Havering
- There are emerging needs in terms of venues for local musicians to perform including outdoors
- Urban art and other creative opportunities should be explored e.g. graffiti walls and other visual and performing arts initiatives

We will therefore:

continue to work with the Youth Service and local young people to provide opportunities facilities and suitable for their needs.

3.14 Play and Transport Policy

Surveys have shown that one of parents' greatest fears about their children playing out is the danger from motor traffic. One starting point must be the recognition that traffic in purely residential streets does not need to go fast.

Home Zones for example aim for an improvement to overall quality of life for all people in residential streets through a redistribution of the rights and responsibilities of all road users. Evidence from Holland points to Home Zones being effective in ensuring shared public space, with potential benefits to community cohesion and quality of life.

In Havering the Traffic & Engineering Section of Technical Services is responsible for the design and implementation of new traffic management, road safety and sustainable transport schemes. Additionally, the section performs the Council's statutory highway authority functions for any changes or additions to the highway resulting from planning consents (new developments) and major projects.

The section has a duty to balance the needs of all road users, but pay special attention to vulnerable road users. There are certainly places in Havering where busy roads are barriers to people wishing to access leisure facilities.

In terms of new developments, the policy is to insist that they be designed for very low speeds (less than 15mph), backed up with 20mph Zone Orders. Home Zones have discussed with several developers, but a Zone has yet to be firmly proposed. Nevertheless a Home Zone would be adopted if designed properly and it served the wider community and traveling public.

Good pedestrian and cycle safety training is crucial. Walk to School programmes can improve children's social play, they meet their friends instead of seeing them through the car window, and ensure they get healthy exercise, while reducing pollution and freeing-up roads for essential journeys. As a by product, parents can appreciate that such walking teaches children road safety and road sense, and so children are more likely to be allowed to play out safely in their neighbourhood.

3.15 Play and Sport and Physical Activity

It is well known that creative play supports the development of physical literacy and coordination and prepares young children to participate in sport and physical activity later in life.

Sport and physical activity provide a wealth of opportunity for Play in Havering. These opportunities range from playing pitches, multi-use games areas and spaces for events and development programmes. The Havering Sports and

Physical Activity strategy raises a series of opportunities relating to Play relevant to this strategy.

For example the Havering Community Football Project started in August 2005 in partnership with the Football Foundation, West Ham United FC and a range of other partners including the Youth Offending Team, The Drug Action Team and the Youth Service. This scheme and others like it provide high quality coaching for young people from all backgrounds to develop their skills and get fit.

In addition the Sports Team is organising a series of 'Parties in the Park' as part of the 2007 Summer Sports Programme whereby young children and families can informally take part in sporting and creative activities for free.

Lastly the Parks Service is in the process of installing Teen Zones in key parks and open spaces around the borough. These facilities enable young people to 'hang out' in their own space. The Zones comprise basketball, football, netball and skate facilities complete with teen shelters. Further Zones are planned for installation in 2007 and 2008.

We will therefore:

- Continue to provide the Havering Community Football Project
- Provide further Teen Zones in parks and open spaces by consulting young people as to their needs
- Continue to provide play opportunity for children and young people by means of the annual Sports events programme

3.16 Play and the Arts

The Arts provide a wide range of opportunities for creative play whether by children and young people being creative in a playful way or by attending suitable events.

In order to develop further arts activities with Play content the Parks and Arts teams will work with a wide range of partners, including the Queens Theatre and Studio 3 Arts to:

- Provide and promote a wide ranging events and activities programme for children and young people with an arts content across the borough

- Ensure that the delivery of the Havering Arts and Entertainments Strategy and the Culture Strategy provide suitable opportunity for Play and advocate the importance of Play

3.17 Play and Historic Buildings and Landscapes

The surroundings of a locality have an important role in providing a supporting environment to play. Historic buildings and landscapes have the potential to enrich this environment and to offer inspiration to play activities. It is therefore essential that we promote opportunities for children to engage with heritage through a range of activities and events.

We will:

- Develop a wider events programme to encourage younger visitors to engage with and enjoy the many historic buildings and landscapes the Borough has to offer.
- Develop specific educational programmes related to historic buildings and landscapes to celebrate historical themes, characters and anniversaries.

3.18 Play and our Towns

The town centres within Havering borough include Romford, Hornchurch, Rainham and Upminster. In order to promote social cohesion and integrated communities the council wishes to encourage cultural opportunity and social regeneration as well as physical regeneration initiatives. Children's play and 'free time' opportunities for young people are as important in this respect as, for example, open space and other cultural buildings and facilities.

Therefore we will:

- Seek to provide and encourage play and 'free time' opportunities for children and young people as an integral part of Havering's town centre regeneration strategies

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Children

Children and Young People have been actively involved in the preparation of this Strategy.

A questionnaire was developed with children in mind and was circulated to schools across the borough. The questionnaire and its full analysis are shown in Appendix 2.

Nearly 3000 responses were received from over 20 borough schools giving a clear and representative indication of children's views and attitudes to play in Havering. Following analysis the main outcomes of the questionnaire are as follows:

- 45% play with friends and 32% play with adults
- 53% go out to play everyday, 36% go out to play twice a week whereas 6% only go out to play on special occasions
- 23% play in their garden, whilst 32% play in a park or playground
- 43% walk to their preferred play space
- given a choice as to where to play 23% (the most popular choice) said they would like to play in a park and 21% (second most popular) on exciting playground equipment
- when asked what prevents them from playing outside 25% (the highest) said that grown-ups won't let them, 20% mentioned 'strangers' and 10% mentioned 'unexciting play equipment'
- when asked what would make them want to play outside more often 33% (highest) referred to more exciting playgrounds
- when asked what equipment they would like to see in playgrounds 33% mentioned climbing activity (the highest), 15% wanted swings matched by 15% who wanted 'water features'
- 48% of responses came from girls and 52% from boys

4.2 Young People

In their many initiatives to consult and listen to young people in Havering the council's youth service find that:

- the majority of young people want places to spend their ‘free-time’ and to ‘hang-out’ with friends
- they require adventurous and creative opportunities including urban and wheeled sports opportunities in key locations within the borough.

In recent years the council has built a range of teen zones in parks and open spaces across the borough. These feature ball courts, shelters and small scale skate equipment. This programme should continue in consultation with young people. Regarding skate equipment in particular there is a proven need for more adventurous purpose built facilities at key destinations across the borough. Accordingly in the north of the borough plans are emerging for such a facility close to Harold Hill and Collier Row. This facility is likely to be funded from Section 106 funding. In central Havering plans are being developed to extend an existing facility in Cottons Park in partnership with the Young Friends of Cottons Park and local funders.

However there is no current facility or plans to provide exciting wheeled sports opportunity in the south of the borough. It is therefore felt that this lack of provision should be further investigated given the opportunity of the Big Lottery funding.

4.3 The Havering Play Partnership

In association with Play England the Havering Play Partnership was developed. The membership of the Partnership is shown in Appendix 4. This new organisation helped in the planning of this Strategy and several workshop sessions were organised to steer the process.

Accordingly we will ensure that:

- The views of children and young people as expressed in our research are taken full account of in the development of this strategy and the portfolio of projects submitted to the Big Lottery Fund
- In particular we will use the Big Lottery Fund allocation to provide a high profile destination play area close to a town centre which features exciting play equipment including creative water play in line with the wishes of those children consulted
- We will continue to provide specific facilities for young people across the borough and investigate the provision of a purpose built wheeled sports facility in the south of Havering

- The Havering Play Partnership continues to operate and will review the implementation of this Strategy on a regular basis
- Children and Young People will be regularly consulted during the implementation of the Strategy and during the project phase arising from the council's Big Lottery Fund allocation

5. PROMOTION AND PARTNERSHIPS

5.1 Promotion

We recognise that effective promotion is a key factor in getting as many local children and young people as possible to use Havering's play spaces and other opportunities. Recent successes include the phased installation of high quality notice boards in parks and open spaces, an effective website, and the publication of the Parks Pledge (Service Standards).

However consultation with local children and young people has told us that significant numbers of them are not aware of every opportunity.

'Playday' is the annual celebration of children's right to play. 'Playday' is a national campaign, now in its 20th year, where thousands of children and young people get out and play at locally organised events. 'Playday' events range from small-scale neighborhood get-togethers to large-scale public events organised by local authorities and national organisations. 'Playday' is usually held in August. 'Playday' would provide an opportunity to celebrate play opportunities in Havering by organising a large scale, two-week long event during the school summer holidays. The event could encompass play activities already in place around the borough but include some high profile activities as well e.g. a Festival of Play in town centres and parks attracting many thousands of children and young people. Other attractions could be a conference or seminars featuring play issues to include training opportunities for play workers.

In order to significantly increase awareness and usage of Play, play spaces and opportunities within Havering, and interest in the implementation of the Strategy, we will:

- Enhance current promotional material in partnership with the Children's Information Service
- Complete the process of installing new signage at parks and open spaces entrances throughout the borough by the end of the Strategy period
- Work with other Play providers in the borough to develop joint campaigns and initiatives via the Havering Play Partnership
- Consider the production of a Play 'annual report.'
- Further develop and publicise an annual events programme in Havering suitable for children and young people by working

together with a range of partners including Children's Services, the Sports, Parks and Arts Development teams, the Youth Service, the Library Service, private and voluntary sector play providers, Thames Chase and Essex Wildlife Trust, the Queens Theatre and Studio 3 Arts

- Investigate the feasibility of arranging a two-week long festival of play in Havering encompassing national 'Playday'

5.2 Partnerships

We believe that strong and sustainable partnerships are the key to improving service planning and delivery and ultimately improvements to Havering's play opportunities. Partnerships with the community and other agencies are at the heart of planning and achieving better and more accessible facilities. Partnerships with external agencies, for example Play England, offer significant benefits in terms of attracting and coordinating external funding.

Furthermore given the fact that some children and young people are reluctant to use play spaces due to perceptions about crime and their safety we feel that partnership working with agencies such as the Metropolitan Police, the Community Safety Partnership and other landowners/managers such as Thames Chase is the way forward.

We have formed a variety of partnerships to date that have proved to be successful. These include the creation of a significant number of 'Friends of Parks' groups. The benefits of such groups include working in partnership with the community, commitment from local people, pride and involvement in their local open space and the development and sustainability of additional resources.

However we recognise that for Friends groups to flourish and succeed they need to be fully representative of the local community. We will therefore work with schools and other youth organisations to form 'Young Friends' groups for open spaces with a view to such groups merging with existing groups after a period of time, thus continuing to make such groups more representative.

Nevertheless we appreciate that we need to do more. We will therefore:

- Develop partnerships with external agencies such as the Government Office for London, London Play, Green Space, Thames Chase and the Essex Wildlife Trust,

- Develop relationships with local schools and community groups in order to develop open spaces as a learning resource and to develop 'Young Friends' groups for parks and open spaces
- Continue to meet the Metropolitan Police, the Mobile Patrol, the Community Safety Partnership and other land owners on a regular basis in order to work jointly to solve crime and disorder issues within parks and open spaces
- Develop relationships with local business partnerships and individual businesses and identify appropriate investment and development opportunities for Play

6. EQUALITY AND ACCESS

This chapter looks at the role that Play opportunity can play in meeting the council's aims for equality of opportunity and access for all.

6.1 Equality

Havering has a diverse population and the council believes that everyone should be able to enjoy places for Play in Havering. However we know from experience and our wide-ranging consultation that tensions sometimes exist between different social groups and that these tensions can be a barrier to frequent participation.

We will therefore:

- Continue to talk to children and young people on a regular basis in order to understand their views and needs
- Monitor the use of places for play on a regular and systematic basis by means of postal and on site surveys
- Ensure that 'Friends of Parks groups' are representative of their local community and take into account the needs of children and young people
- Make information about Play available in formats accessible to all
- Seek to provide opportunity and facilities required by all children and young people
- Work with all sections of the community to hold events that reflect the needs of the community
- Provide a staffing presence in key parks and other play spaces trained to foster equity and diversity
- Consider all of the above when researching, drafting and implementing management plans and other policy statements

6.2 Access

We believe that safe, easy and free access to play spaces and opportunities should be available to all children and young people.

The council has continuing obligations in order to meet the requirements of Disability Discrimination legislation.

Needless to say there is much we can do to ensure equality of access to our play spaces including the setting of affordable fees and charges for some activities.

Accordingly we will:

- Undertake an annual audit of all play space facilities and develop actions in order to ensure that they meet our obligations under the Disability Discrimination legislation
- Undertake risk assessments of all play spaces in a systematic manner
- Develop a programme of installation of play equipment suitable for children with disabilities at key facilities in accordance with 'Developing Accessible Play Spaces – A Best Practice Guide' (ODPM 2003) and provide easy access to them
- Whilst most opportunities will be free of charge we will set affordable fees and charges for some activities where appropriate

6.3 Community Safety and Security

Arising from our consultation with local children and young people we know that the majority of them who regularly use play spaces generally feel safe when visiting them. However we recognise that there are some, particularly those who aren't frequent users who perceive play spaces to be unsafe places for a variety of reasons. This is clearly a barrier to increased use.

Security in Havering's outdoor play spaces is managed in a variety of ways:

- Park attendants are in place in many parks including Raphael Park, Lodge Farm Park, Gidea Park Sports Ground, Upminster Park, Bedford's Park and others. Their role is mainly one of improving the fabric of the sites rather than that of community safety. Park rangers are in place in Havering and Hornchurch Country Parks.
- The Mobile Patrol is based in the Community Safety Unit. Their role, as it applies to parks and open spaces is one of responding to incidents when they are able to, and the locking and unlocking of parks gates. Clearly with their responsibilities to provide response services to housing, schools and other council service areas, they are not able to devote all of their time to parks and open spaces.
- The newly formed Safer Neighbourhood Teams in each of the boroughs wards are very useful regarding anti-social behaviour in parks and overall community cohesion.

In conclusion, and given the importance that play space users and non-users place on community safety and anti-social behaviour we will undertake a review of such issues as soon as possible and make recommendations for improvement. Accordingly we will:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of community safety management in play spaces and make recommendations for improvement
- Undertake a review of all enforcement issues in Havering's parks and open spaces including dog fouling, responsible dog ownership, parks bylaws and make recommendations for change

7. THE WAY FORWARD

7.1 Introduction

Throughout this Strategy we have emphasised the benefit, value and importance of Play to the local community, children and young people in particular, and to the corporate aims and objectives of the Council.

Local children and young people have told us how they value their play opportunities and have indicated what improvements they see as important. We have taken account of this whilst developing this Strategy.

7.2 Performance Monitoring

The Strategy is very much a live document with clear objectives and will be a foundation upon which Havering's play facilities and opportunities for play develop and continue to improve for the next five years. Clearly we need to monitor the improvements made. To this end the Havering Play Partnership will:

- Review the implementation of the Strategy on an annual basis
- Organise an annual Play conference including all community stakeholders
- Monitor progress by means of the Key Performance Indicators within the Action Plan

7.3 Commitments and Action Plan

We have made a series of commitments to the provision and improvement of Play in Havering throughout this Strategy.

The Five Year Action Plan that follows develops these commitments further.

ACTION PLAN 2007 – 2012						
Item Number	Strategy Ref	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Timescale
Section 2 Context						
1	2.1.5	Develop a portfolio of projects and submit to the Big Lottery Fund along with this Strategy	Parks and Open Spaces (P&OS)	Havering Play Partnership	Contained in current P&OS budget	September 2007
2	2.3	Continue to ensure that Play is acknowledged as contributing to and adding value to the council's corporate aims and objectives and to the Community and Cultural Strategies	Parks and Open Spaces (P&OS)	Senior officers, Elected Members, the community	Contained in current P&OS budget	Ongoing
3	2.3	Ensure that the commitments and actions arising from this Strategy are encompassed in future revisions of the Local Development Framework by undertaking six-monthly meetings with officers from the Planning department	Planning Section	P&OS	Contained in current P&OS budget	February/July annually
4	2.3	Ensure that the policies relating to Play in the LDF are robustly implemented. To be assessed at the six-monthly meetings with officers from the Planning department	Planning Section	P&OS	Contained in current P&OS budget	February/July annually
5	2.3	Ensure that the commitments and actions arising from this Strategy are encompassed in future revisions of the Children's and Young People's Plan by undertaking regular meetings with officers from Children's Services	P&OS/Havering Play Partnership (HPP)	Children's Services	Contained in current P&OS budget	Ongoing
6	2.3.7	Ensure that the commitments and actions arising from this Strategy are taken account of within Havering Local Area Agreement	P&OS/Havering Play Partnership (HPP)	Havering Strategic Partnership (HSP)	Contained in current P&OS budget	Ongoing
Section 3 Play in Havering – An Assessment of Need						
7	3.1	Ensure that the recommendations of the PPG17 assessment regarding play are implemented during the life of this Strategy	P&OS	HPP	Capital allocations/external funding	Ongoing
8	3.1	Continue to provide new and enhanced play and teenage provision in parks and open spaces in line with identified deficiency and recognised standards	P&OS	HPP	Capital allocations and external funding	Ongoing

Item Number	Strategy Ref	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Timescale
9	3.1	Investigate the ways in which the emerging national standards for play can be built into the LDF	Planners	P&OS/HPP	Current budgets	ASAP
10	3.1	Ensure that developer contributions to play are negotiated as part of any new appropriate development and that contributions are directed to play facilities in the vicinity of any development	Planners	P&OS/HPP	Current budgets	Ongoing
11	3.2	Involve children and young people in the design and siting of play and teen areas	P&OS	HPP	Capital allocations and external funding	Ongoing
12	3.5	Continue to work with internal and external partners in the provision and enhancement of accessible staffed play provision in parks and open spaces	P&OS	Sports team, Essex Wildlife Trust, Library service	Current budgets	Ongoing
13	3.7	Work with Homes in Havering, leaseholder representatives and tenants representatives to ensure that play provision on housing estates is provided to complement that provided elsewhere in the borough	P&OS	Homes in Havering	Current budgets	Ongoing
14	3.7/3.15	Ensure the place of play in Health Service strategies and in the revision of the Housing Strategy	P&OS/Havering Play Partnership (HPP)	Havering Primary Care Trust (PCT) Homes in Havering	Contained in current P&OS budget	Ongoing
15	3.9	Continue to support parents, carers and children in terms of nurseries, Early Years provision and parent and toddler provision	P&OS	Children's Services	Current budgets	Ongoing
16	3.9	Work with all stakeholders to promote available play opportunities throughout Havering	P&OS	All	Current budgets	Ongoing
17	3.9	Investigate support for the development of expanded school holiday schemes provided by a range of providers including Early Years Centres by means of this strategy	P&OS	Children's Services	Current budgets	Ongoing

Item Number	Strategy Ref	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Timescale
18	3.10	talk to the community around Hornchurch Country Park regarding a prestige play area to reflect the heritage and nature conservation value of the site and involve local children creatively in any project that emerges	P&OS	Local children and young people, environmental strategy, Essex Wildlife Trust	Big Lottery Funding	September 2007
19	3.12	Investigate whether the proportion of s106 monies available for Education should be reworked to specifically include an allocation for Play	P&OS	Planners	Current budgets	September 2007
20	3.14	Work with the Traffic and Engineering team to ensure that play is considered as an integral part of traffic management, road safety and sustainable transport schemes	Traffic and Engineering team	Planners, P&OS	Current budgets	Ongoing
21	3.16	Provide and promote a wide ranging events and activities programme for children and young people with an arts content across the borough	Culture and Leisure services	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
22	3.16	Ensure that the delivery of the Havering Arts and Entertainments Strategy and the Culture Strategy provide suitable opportunity for Play and advocate the importance of Play	Culture and Leisure services	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
23	3.17	Seek to provide and encourage play and 'free time' opportunities for children and young people as an integral part of Havering's town centre regeneration strategies	Culture and Leisure services	Children's Services, Library Service, Regeneration team	Current budgets, Section 106	Ongoing
Section 4 Consultation						
24	4.3	Provide a high profile destination play area close to Romford town centre which features exciting play equipment including creative water play in line with the wishes of those children consulted	P&OS	HPP, Children and Young People	Big Lottery Funding	September 2007

Item Number	Strategy Ref	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Timescale
25	4.3	Investigate the provision of a purpose built wheeled sports facility in Havering	P&OS	Young People, Youth Service, Regeneration	Big Lottery Funding	September 2007
26	4.3	Ensure that the Havering Play Partnership continues to operate and reviews the implementation of this Strategy on an regular basis	HPP	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
27	4.3	Consult with Children and Young People regularly during the implementation of the Strategy and during the project phase arising from the council's Big Lottery Fund allocation	P&OS	HPP	Current budgets	Ongoing
Section 5 Promotions and Partnerships						
28	5.1	Enhance current promotional material in partnership with the Children's Information Service	CIS	HPP	Current budgets	Ongoing
29	5.1	Complete the process of installing new signage at parks and open spaces entrances throughout the borough by the end of the Strategy period	P&OS	HPP	Capital budgets	Ongoing
30	5.1	Work with other Play providers in the borough to develop joint campaigns and initiatives via the Havering Play Partnership	HPP	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
31	5.1	Consider the production of a Play 'annual report.'	HPP	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
32	5.1	Investigate the feasibility of arranging a two-week long festival of play in Havering encompassing national 'Playday'	HPP	All stakeholders	Big Lottery Funding	September 2007
33	5.2	Develop partnerships with external agencies such as the Government Office for London, London Play, Green Space, Thames Chase and the Essex Wildlife Trust,	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
34	5.2	Build relationships with schools and community groups to develop open spaces as a learning resource. Develop 'Young Friends' groups for parks.	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing

Item Number	Strategy Ref	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Timescale
35	5.2	Continue to meet the Metropolitan Police, the Mobile Patrol, the Community Safety Partnership and other land owners on a regular basis in order to work jointly to solve crime and disorder issues within parks and open spaces	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
36	5.2	Develop relationships with local business partnerships and individual businesses and identify appropriate investment and development opportunities for Play	HPP	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
Section 6 Equality and Access						
37	6.2	Undertake an annual audit of all play space facilities and develop actions in order to ensure that they meet obligations under the Disability Discrimination legislation	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
38	6.2	Undertake risk assessments of all play spaces in a systematic manner	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
39	6.2	Develop a programme of installation of play equipment suitable for children with disabilities at key facilities in accordance with 'Developing Accessible Play Spaces – A Best Practice Guide' (ODPM 2003)	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
40	6.2	Whilst most opportunities will be free of charge we will set affordable fees and charges for some activities where appropriate	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
41	6.3	Undertake a comprehensive review of community safety management in play spaces and make recommendations for improvement	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing
42	6.3	Undertake a review of all enforcement issues in Havering's parks and open spaces including dog fouling, responsible dog ownership, parks bylaws and make recommendations for change	P&OS	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing

Item Number	Strategy Ref	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Timescale
Section 7 The Way Forward						
43	7.2	Review the implementation of the Strategy on an annual basis	HPP	All stakeholders	Current budgets	March annually
44	7.2	Organise an annual Play conference including all community stakeholders	HPP	All stakeholders	Big Lottery Funding	TBC
45	7.2	Monitor progress by means of the Key Performance Indicators within the Action Plan	HPP	All stakeholders	Current budgets	Ongoing

Appendix 1

An PPG17 Assessment of Children's Play

PLANNING CHILDRENS PLAY PROVISION

- 1.1 Open space provides an important role in serving Children's play needs. It is widely acknowledged that the importance of children's play extends far beyond the activity itself but contributes towards child development through the development of a wide range of physical, social and emotional skills and abilities. The key issues relating to children's play are the nature and location of play, the influence of age and gender, safety and risk issues and consideration of the types of play environments needed to meet play needs.
- 1.2 Location of play – The outdoor environment is a key environment for children's play particularly during summer months. Play takes place in a range of environments many of which are not planned play environments it can include the street, back gardens and 'natural/wild' areas such as woods, areas of wasteland, disused buildings, back alleys and garage areas in addition to conventional planned play areas. All of these spaces afford opportunities for play and a range of different experiences which are likely to appeal to particular groups of children. Studies of children's play have emphasised the appeal and use of unofficial play areas in addition to planned children's play areas.
- 1.3 Age and gender – Age and gender strongly influence the nature and type of play. Coffin and Williams (1989)¹ suggest a five fold evolution of play over the course of childhood:
- Toddlers aged 1-3 tend to play alongside rather than with other children. Activity focuses upon experimentation with new found abilities and role play;
 - Pre-school children show higher levels of inquisitiveness, practice new physical skills, enjoy constructional play and begin to acquire skills in social play;
 - Primary school children (aged 5-10) commonly develop interests in the environment (animals and plants in particular) and explore environments more widely. They continue enjoy constructional play and play involving movement, ball play and wheeled objects. This age group is highly sociable.
 - Older children (aged 10-13) are more competitive, show wider incidence of sexes playing apart and roam further from home. Playing games and organised activities is important for this group and more time may be spent in conversational and social activity. Constructional and movement play continues to be important; and

¹ Coffin, G. and Williams, M. (1989) Children's Outdoor Play in the Built Environment, London: National Children's Play and Recreation Unit.

- Adolescents (aged 14-16) display more focused patterns of activity, including interests in hobbies, music and dance; greater independence which may be reflected in informal street based groups, and some return to mixed group activity. It is debatable whether this group actually recognise their actions as 'play'.
- 1.4 Parkinson (1987)² notes the influence of gender both on locations of play and the distance from home. Females are more likely to go on organised outings and play in the garden at home. In comparison boys are more likely to play in the street or at a friend's house. Both sexes utilised planned playgrounds although boys tended to patronise facilities located further from home. As children get older there is a greater desire for more adventurous, risk taking activities outside of controlled environments which may include negotiation and testing boundaries. Parkinson notes that these activities are part of growing up and are necessary in order to provide a degree of challenge and excitement for older children.
- 1.5 Safety and risk – parental perceptions of risk and safety influence patterns of play including when and where children may play and with whom, although parental influences decreases with age. The need for parental supervision (perceived or actual) is particularly strong in relation to toddlers and pre-school children, although supervision of primary and older is increasingly common. Behaviour patterns of parents with children have altered significantly in response to growing fears over safety of children particularly relating to car and cycle accidents, assaults, and abductions, accidents whilst at play, drug taking and substance abuse and anti social behaviour. Despite the fact that the risk of accidents is relatively small, parents seek to place restrictions on their children's mobility and independence in response to these concerns and anxieties which leads to more localised patterns of play or a greater degree of supervised play including parents transporting children from a to b.
- 1.6 Within the context of the issues identified above traditional forms of children's play provision have been criticised. Some forms of equipped play areas can be almost valueless in meeting the developmental needs of children. The design of play areas has also been criticised for taking the needs and concerns of adults such as noise and disturbance more seriously than children's play needs. Williams (1995)³ notes several problems with existing patterns of children's play provision including:

² Parkinson, C.E. (1987) *Where Children Play: An Analysis of Interviews About Where Children Aged 5-14 Normally Play and their Preference for Out of School Activities*, Birmingham. Association for Children's Play and Recreation.

³ Williams (1995) *Outdoor Recreation and the Urban Environment*, Routledge, London.

- An over-emphasis on unsupervised play areas containing fixed equipment rather than informal play opportunities;
 - The pre-occupation with safety surfaces resulting in the creation of unchallenging environments directed primarily at younger children; and
 - A strong emphasis on the 'containment' of children within dedicated 'play' areas to discourage young people congregating in other areas.
- 1.7 To overcome these problems Williams identifies the need to engage children and young people in the identification and design of play opportunities as part of the planning process in order that play environments meet local needs and priorities.

Standards of Play Provision

- 1.8 There are currently no adopted national standards relating to children's play provision although these are now emerging. However, a structured approach to the planning and provision of children's play areas has been developed by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA). The standards of provision recommended by the NPFA were revised in 2001 and reflect changing views towards children's play provision. In particular the guidelines emphasise the need to provide both designated areas and casual play opportunities which respond to the needs of different age groups and which are of value to the development of children and young people.
- 1.9 The NPFA recommends a minimum standard of outdoor space for children's play of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people by:
- Providing Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) in locations based upon walking time; and
 - Providing the balance as casual playing space within areas of amenity open space.
- 1.10 This study has identified provision for children's play in Havering. It has also included an assessment of the role of open space for informal children's play as well as dedicated play provision in the form of dedicated play areas. Dedicated children's play provision was assessed against the NPFA criteria for classification as a LEAP or NEAP however the assessment included consideration of the number and range of types of activities/opportunities were provided, provision of informal and hard surface play areas, safety issues and consideration of other amenities (seating, bins etc).

Table 1.10 – Formal Children’s Play Provision

Type of Children’s Play Provision (excl. 71 School Sites)	No Open Spaces with Provision	% Open Spaces
LEAP or NEAP	38	15.5
Other Children's Play Provision	28	11.4
Housing Play sites*	19	N/A
No Children's Play Provision	179	73.1
Total (excluding housing play sites and school sites)	245	100.0

*Housing Play Sites are found on sites smaller than 0.4ha and do not form part of the main assessment.

- 1.11 Of a sample of 245 open spaces, which did not include school sites, Table 1.10 demonstrates that 66 sites have some kind of children’s play provision. 28 children’s play areas do not meet all of the criteria set by the NPFA for a LEAP or a NEAP. There are 38 open spaces that have play areas which fulfil the criteria associated with a LEAP or NEAP criteria. However, a number of open spaces with ‘Other children’s play provision’ fulfil some of the criteria for a LEAP and could be classified as such if minor improvements were made to the play space. Similarly, some spaces which are classified as a LEAP could be reclassified to a NEAP if minor improvements are made.
- 1.12 In addition, there are 19 ‘Housing Play Sites’ within the London Borough of Havering. These sites do not form part of the main assessment as they are under 0.4ha in size and therefore do not meet the criteria for the study. It has been assumed that these play areas do not currently satisfy the criteria for a LEAP or a NEAP, as they typically consist of little more than one or two items of play equipment, and may not conform to modern safety standards.
- 1.13 The condition of children’s play provision in Havering was scored according to the range and type of play equipment and other facilities including provision of seating, skateboarding facility, rebound wall, hard playing surface, informal games area, absorbing safety surface and play area boundary. This score was used to classify the condition of children’s play, as shown in Table 1.13.

Table 1.13 – Condition of Children’s Play Provision

General Condition of Play Equipment	Number	%
Good	35	52
Fair	18	27
Poor	14	21

- 1.14 Just over a fifth of children’s play areas in Havering are considered to be in a ‘poor’ condition (21%). The remainder are mostly in a ‘good’ condition (52%) or a ‘Fair’ condition (27%). To improve the quality of individual play spaces,

existing spaces should aim to fulfil the criteria set out by the NPFA to qualify as a LEAP.

Access to Children's Play Provision

- 1.15 The distribution of play areas was assessed in each ward according to accessibility and some wards had better accessibility than others. It is recommended that the Council works to address these inequalities in accessibility over time.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.16 This study has identified provision for children's play in Havering. 38 open spaces out of a sample of 245 open spaces have play areas which fully fulfil the criteria associated with the NPFA LEAP and NEAP criteria. However, a number of open spaces with 'Other children's play provision' fulfil some of the criteria for a LEAP and could meet this quality standard if minor improvements were made to the play space. Similarly, some spaces currently categorised as a LEAP could be reclassified as a NEAP with minor improvements.
- 1.17 The assessment identifies the areas deficient in access to formally provided children's play provision but also identifies other publicly accessible open spaces which have the potential to meet children's play needs.

Quantity and Accessibility Component

- 1.18 There are some areas within Havering which are deficient in access to dedicated Children's play areas. In order to ameliorate those deficiencies, it is recommended that additional opportunities for both formal and informal children's play are brought forward.
- 1.19 The emerging GLA access standards are recommended for adoption.

Qualitative Component

- 1.20 Children's play provision within the Borough should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with the size of the facility.
- 1.21 Proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve children's play provision. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional play provision needs generated as a result of the proposed development. The exact form of play provision should be identified following consultation with the local community to identify local priorities.

- 1.22 If the proposed development is located within an identified area of deficiency for children's play provision it will be necessary for additional land to be brought into use for the purposes of children's play. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the provision for children and teenagers. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the curtilage of the proposed development. Alternatively, a contribution to off-site provision may be appropriate.
- 1.23 If the proposed development is not located within an area which is deficient in access to formal children's play provision then consideration should be given to any deficiency in quality or value of existing children's play provision. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of existing provision which may include improving the range facilities for particular age groups not well served at present and improving the condition of facilities provided.

Appendix 2

Children's Questionnaire and Analysis

Appendix 3

Consultees

To be reviewed following July cabinet

Residents of Havering via Summary Brochure and website

Havering Play Partnership

Internal Council Departments

Havering Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations

Veola Havering Riverside Trust

Havering Wildlife Partnership

Essex Wildlife Trust

Metropolitan Police

Thames Chase

Havering Sports Council

Barking and Dagenham Council

Redbridge Council

Brentwood Council

Thurrock Council

Havering Strategic Partnership

Sport England

Play England

Groundwork East London

Suttons Primary

James Oglethorpe

Crowlands Jnr

Dycourts Special School

Dunningford Primary

Ayloff Primary

Corbets Tey

Clockhouse Jnr

Branfil Infant School

Pyrgo Priory

Nelmes

Scotts Primary

Ardleigh Green Infants

RJ Mitchell Primary
Upminster Jnr
Parklands Jnr
Newtons Primary
St Albans Catholic Primary
Upminster Infants
St Patricks

Appendix 4

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals who contributed to the preparation of this Strategy and in particular the Havering Play Partnership members below:

Cllr Andrew Curtin	Cabinet Member for Public Realm
Cllr Michael Armstrong	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Cllr Robert Benham	Chair, Culture and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Countillor Paul Rochford	Lead Member for Environment and Technical Services
Simon Parkinson	Head of Culture and Leisure
Don Stewart	Interim Parks Manager/Integra Leisure Ltd
Clive Evenden	Havering Youth Service
James Rose	Parks Development Officer
Janice Kirk	Customer Services Officer
Roger Savage	W. S. Atkins Ltd.
Margaret Campbell	Sports Development Officer
Guy Selfe	Leisure Services Manager
Anne Gajewska	Havering Children's Services
Ruth Gedalovitch	Havering Library Service
Jo Griffiths	Children's Services
Kim Guest	Havering Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations
Ruth Jenkins	Children's Services
Gurdi Kaur	Havering Children's Information Services
David Lawn	Havering Planning Service
Mark Philpotts	Havering Traffic and Engineering Service
Steve Power	Havering Youth Service
Sarah Teather	Early Years Services
Peter Garretty-Crane	Havering Children's Centres

All consultees listed in Appendix 3

Appendix 5

Bibliography

Bibliography

The following documents have been used during the development of the Strategy:

National

'Getting Serious About Play' 2003

'Every Child Matters' 2004

Greater London Authority – Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies 2003

Greater London Authority – Guide to Preparing Play Strategies 2006

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG17): Planning for Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation ODPM (July 2002)

Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17, ODPM (2002)

Green Spaces, Better Places, Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, DTLR (2002)

Living Places – Cleaner, Safer, Greener ODPM (October, 2002)
Community Strategy

Urban White Paper, Our Towns and Cities; The Future (2000)

National Playing Fields Association (2001) The Six Acre Standard: Minimum standards for outdoor playing space

Regional

The Mayor's London Plan (2004)

The Mayor's London Biodiversity Action Plan (2001)

LGA Guide to Open Space Strategies

Local

'Putting People First' – Havering's Community Strategy 2002-2007

Havering's Local Area Agreement

Havering Local Development Framework

Havering Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009

Havering Early Years Operation Plan
Havering Youth Operation Plan

Havering's Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005

Havering's Equality and Diversity Strategy 2003-2006

Havering's Local Agenda 21

Havering Culture Strategy 2007-2011

Havering Sports and Physical Activity Strategy 2007-2009

Havering Library Strategy 2007-2009

Havering Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2007-2012

Havering Arts Strategy 2007-2012

Havering Parks Service Customer Surveys 2005

Havering's Demographic Profile – Census 2002

Havering Green Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study (The Atkins Report)
2005



MEETING

DATE

ITEM

CABINET

25 JULY 2007

8

Cabinet Member: Councillor Geoff Starns

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Children's Services

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: CLOCKHOUSE INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS – proposed amalgamation from 1st September 2007.

SUMMARY

The Council has been through a staged process of consultation about its proposal to amalgamate the current Clockhouse Infant and Junior Schools. A full report to Cabinet in May 2007 set out the process and result of the consultation. Cabinet agreed to proceed with the proposal and to move to the next stage of issuing formal public notices. That process has now been concluded and no objections have been received. Cabinet are able to make a final decision to proceed with the implementation of the proposal and create the single school from 1st September 2007.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet approves:

- 1 The discontinuation of Clockhouse Junior School from 31st August 2007, and;
- 2 The prescribed alterations to Clockhouse Infant School so that from 1st September 2007 it becomes a 3 -11 Primary School admitting 90 part time children at age 3 into the nursery and 90 full time pupils at age 4 to 11.

Cabinet, 25 July 2007**REPORT DETAIL****1.0 Background**

- 1.1 In line with the Council's policy, upon notification of the intended retirement of the head teacher of Clockhouse Junior School, the possibility of forming an amalgamated primary school was considered. That initial consideration resulted in a Council decision to consult fully with the school governors, staff, parents and other education stakeholders on the proposal to create a single school.
- 1.2 During March and April 2007 full consultation took place with stakeholders. The outcome of that process, which indicated very wide support for the proposal, was reported in detail to the Cabinet on the May 16th. Cabinet agreed to proceed with the issue of formal public notices. The process of creating the single school by changing the age range and enlarging the Infant School and closing the Junior School, was explained and agreed at that time.

2.0 The Public Notice and Decision Making Process

- 2.1 At the time of preparing the May 2007 Cabinet report it was not certain that new school organisation regulations proposed by Government would be in place by the time a decision on this matter would be made. In the intervening period it was confirmed that expected changes would be implemented, which came into effect from May 2007 .
- 2.2 Those changes resulted in the abolition of the independent School Organisation Committees and the transfer of most of the decision making powers to the Council. Those new Council decision making powers cover the type of proposals that are the subject of this report. The exception in this case would be if a formal objection had been received from a Diocesan body. That would result in the decision passing to the Government's independently appointed Schools' Adjudicator.
- 2.3 The Public Notice process on the Clockhouse proposal has followed the requirements of the new guidance and framework associated with the changes in regulations. That included:

Cabinet, 25 July 2007

- A public notice being placed in the local press – see Appendix A attached.
- Copies of that public notice being placed in prominent locations in the vicinity of the schools on public notice boards etc.
- Copies of the public notice being sent to the school governing bodies, the diocese of CE and RC education boards, other local authorities
- A max period of 6 weeks was provided for comments or formal objections as required in the regulations.

3.0 The Outcome of the Public Notice Process

- 3.1 The period for comments or objections ended on the 13th July 2007. *[No comments or objections were received].*

Expand if required according to any responses

- 3.2 The Cabinet is able to make a decision on whether or not to implement the proposal.

4.0 Implementation Steps

- 4.1 Given the level of support for this proposal the school staffs and the governing bodies have been planning and working towards probable change.
- 4.2 A temporary shadow governing body has been established and will be able to determine the critical issues that will enable the single school to come into being from 1st September 2007. Those matters include making the formal headship appointment and determining the name of the new school. The new governing body would be in place at the start of the new school. Further change and development proposals will follow those actions.

5.0 Financial Implications and Risks

- 5.1 These were set out in the May 2007 report. In summary
- the amalgamating school will receive funding protection for an initial period of 12 months from the date of amalgamation based on the two school model
 - after the period of protection the difference in funding two rather than one school is returned to the Individual Schools Budget for re-allocation across all primary schools

Cabinet, 25 July 2007

- the new school will have the opportunity to reduce costs through changes in its staffing structure and operational costs with a net overall benefit, although such decisions rest with the new governing body
- in the second year the newly amalgamated school would receive an additional sum of £50,000 to assist with a capital improvement project designed to assist the amalgamation

Risks

The governors of a newly formed primary school would need to manage a budget that would be less than the combined budget of separate infant and junior schools. The risks of overspending, however, are considered to be low because of reductions in costs (e.g. the salary costs of one head teacher) and robust budget monitoring arrangements both at the school itself and through the Children's Services Schools Support Team.

Human Resource Implications and Risks

- 5.2 The May 2007 cabinet report highlighted the way in which appointments to the single school could be handled specifically in relation to the Headteacher and Deputy head teacher posts.

The impact on all other staff will need to be determined once the new staffing structure for the amalgamated school is agreed by the Governing Body. This process would be managed in accordance with the agreed local Guidance on Managing Organisational Change for School Based staff.

- 5.3 Appropriate consultation with staff and the trade unions will take place at all stages in the process.

7.0 Legal Implications and Risks

- 7.1 The Council has followed genuine and correct consultation and public notice processes in line with guidance and regulations. The opportunity for legal challenge on those aspects is a very low risk.

- 7.2 The Council has the power to make a decision to implement the proposal on which it has consulted under the Education and Inspections 2006 Act.

8.0 Alternative Options Considered

Cabinet, 25 July 2007

- 8.1 These were set out and considered in the May 2007 report and remain essentially to retain two separate schools. That would be both contrary to the declared local policy and the consensus view about the benefits of creating a single school.

Staff Contacts: Gordon Allen Children's Services Research & Development Manager

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**CHERYL COPPELL
Chief Executive**

Background Papers

Council Form A (Executive Decision) signed 17 January 2007

Appendix

Appendix A: Clockhouse Infant and Junior Schools – Public Notice

Cabinet, 25 July 2007**Appendix A** |

[Text Copy of Formally Published Notice]

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING**CLOCKHOUSE INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS PROPOSED AMALGAMATION TO CREATE A PRIMARY SCHOOL BY DISCONTINUANCE OF THE JUNIOR SCHOOL AND ALTERATION OF THE AGE-RANGE PROVISION AND ENLARGEMENT OF THE INFANT SCHOOL****Part 1**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that the London Borough of Havering intends to make the following prescribed alterations to Clockhouse Infant School, Clockhouse Lane, Collier Row, Romford, Essex, RM5 3QR, on 1st September 2007, by;

- a. Changing the age range, and;
- b. Enlargement.

The current age range of the school is 3 years to 7 years. The proposed age range will be 3 years to 11 years.

The current capacity of the school is 270 and the proposed capacity will be 630. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 262. The proposed admission number for the school will be 90.

Part 2

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that the London Borough of Havering intends to discontinue Clockhouse Junior School, Clockhouse Lane, Collier Row, Romford, Essex, RM5 3QR on 31st August 2007.

It is proposed that pupils will transfer to Clockhouse Infant School where the Authority proposes to extend the provision as described above in Part 1.

Consultation with all stakeholders took place during March and April 2007.

A meeting was held with the Governing Bodies of both schools, another with staff members of both schools, and two meetings with parents of both schools to enable Council Officers to explain the proposal, and answer any questions. A briefing document was distributed at the meetings to explain the proposal and the consultation process.

Governing Bodies of both schools carried out their own consultation with all staff.

A letter to all parents, incorporating a response form and including the background document, was sent to the head teachers of both schools for distribution to all parents.

Cabinet, 25 July 2007

In practice current pupils will be unaffected by the proposed changes, as they will be accommodated by the proposed expansion and change of age-range of Clockhouse Infant School. However, pupils may apply to other schools in the area.

There are no transport implications for pupils. The Local Authority's transport policy will pertain.

Any person may object to or make comments on Parts 1a and 2 of this notice within 6 weeks, and on Part 1b within 4* weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, to;

Gordon Allen, Research & Development, Children's Services, 23 Eastern Road, Romford RM1 3NH.

Explanatory Notes

It is Council policy to consult on the feasibility of amalgamation when a head teacher post in an infant or junior school becomes vacant for any reason. Having considered the preliminary case for the Clockhouse Schools the Council decided that it would be beneficial to proceed to formal consultation on amalgamation. Amalgamation is proposed to be accomplished by discontinuing the Junior School and changing the character of the Infant School so that it becomes an all through 3-11 primary school with 3 forms of entry.

* under legislation, excepted expansions have a shortened representation period.

Signed Date: 1 June 2007
Cheryl Coppell, Chief Executive
London Borough of Havering



MEETING

DATE

ITEM

CABINET

25 JULY 2007

9

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR HAVERING - DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS 2008 - 2011

Cabinet Member: Councillor Michael White

Overview and Scrutiny Committee: All

SUMMARY

Havering Council is committed to working with partners to improve the quality of life for all residents. The Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement, Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy provide the means by which this is achieved. This report initiates the development of the Council's strategy to further improve quality of life from 2008 - 2011.

It sets out the Council's overall vision, objectives and priorities which will be refined and developed over the coming months in the light of consultation with the public and key local organisations.

Council services will also be business planning to deliver these within the financial resources set through the Medium Term Financial Strategy process.

The paper also identifies the supporting strategies which will be reviewed to ensure that all the Council's resources and assets are supporting the priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the vision, ambitions and priorities be reviewed.
2. That the Council's strategies reflect these.
3. That services continue business planning to deliver these objectives and priorities.

4. That the financial position and prospects be noted.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Background

- 1.1 Havering's corporate planning process sets the strategic direction for the Council and ensures that it is meeting local and national priorities. The corporate planning process makes sure that the Council's resources – human, financial and physical – are working effectively in support of these priorities. Service Plans, at Head of Service level, and individual action plans and appraisals ensure that the priorities are cascaded throughout and delivered at the front line – 'the golden thread'. The Council's performance monitoring processes track implementation and identify any areas where additional activity is necessary.
- 1.2 This integrated approach to setting priorities, allocating resources and managing performance enables the Council to continue to deliver improving, value for money services and a better quality of life for Havering's residents.

2. Ambitions & Priorities

- 2.1 The Council has a good understanding of Havering and the demographic, and other, challenges it faces. There is a wealth of data at borough and sub-borough level about Havering's quality of life. The Council works with other agencies to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area through the Havering Community Strategy and the Havering Strategic Partnership. The Council is also well informed of resident's priorities through its regular public survey work.
- 2.2 The Council's vision, priorities and long-term ambitions to address these challenges are set in the Corporate Plan. This will be updated over the coming months to reflect local developments, the results of consultation and feedback from external bodies such as the Audit Commission.
- 2.3 The Leader of the Council, Michael White, set out the Administration's ambitious vision to work with others to shape the development of Havering over the next thirty years at Council. He expressed the Administration's commitment to the people of Havering to renew and up grade the quality of life for people in their local communities across the Borough. That commitment recognises that clean, safe streets, well maintained parks and local community facilities for the use and enjoyment of local people are central to people's quiet enjoyment of their lives. It also noted that the needs of some groups – notably young and old people - needed particular attention.
- 2.4 He also recognised that there are some areas of the Borough where local people may need more help to reach their full potential and to reach the quality of life enjoyed by residents throughout the Borough.

2.5 The Leader identified eleven projects – with varying timescales of up to 25 years - that would help ensure this ambition was realised:

1. To equip Havering with a modern depot for its transport and operations fleet
2. To develop a network of community hall provision that is fully utilised by a range of community users
3. To have schools for communities that deliver first class education, from modern buildings, that meet both schools and communities' expectations
4. To develop a range of services that meet the aspirations of young people whilst establishing methods to help us engage some of those hard to reach young people
5. To continue to develop our libraries, which are integral to modern society and the improvement of our community
6. To build a modern leisure facility in Romford that meets the needs of the residents of Havering
7. To improve the overall performance rating of Culture, Adult Services and Housing
8. To work with local residents to create a Harold Hill which meets the aspirations of both the Community and the Council.
9. To enhance Hornchurch as the cultural and communal centre for Havering, whilst ensuring that future developments maximise and achieve its full potential
10. To develop green spaces that the community wants, that the Council can afford and that are well maintained
11. To create a clean and safe street scene that complements Havering and enhances community pride in Havering

3. Financing improvements to the quality of life

In order to be able to deliver the Council's vision we need to understand its current and likely future financial position and to work over the coming months to deliver a medium term strategy and budget which helps the Council meet its priorities.

3.1 The 2007/08 Revenue Budget

The Council's gross revenue spend, including levies and contingencies, totals £436 million, with a net spend of £290 million. The precept on the Collection Fund (the amount the Council collects through Council tax), after taking into account external finance, was £99 million. These figures exclude the GLA precept. The figures in more detail, with a comparison against the preceding year, are as follows:

	2007- 08 £000	2006 - 07 £000
Havering's Expenditure:		
Gross Spend	423,962	412,266
Contingency Provisions	3,021	2,998
Gross Income	-145,966	-147,038
Net Spend	281,017	268,226
Levies	9,242	8,717
Total Expenditure	290,259	276,943
Less Government Grant	-191,143	-181,957

Collection Fund Precept	99,116	94,986
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The change in the Council's budget requirement totalled £13.4 million. The reasons for this change is analysed in the table below:

Reasons for Changes	£m
Dedicated Schools Budget	7.8
Pressures	8.0
Increase in Levies/Other Issues	0.6
Havering Inflation	2.7
Sub-Total	19.1
Efficiencies & Savings	-5.7
	13.4

For the 2007-08 budget, Havering's expenditure is broken down over the following service headings:

Service	Gross Exp £000	Income £000	Net Exp £000	% of Net Exp
Planning & Economic Development	6,289	3,039	3,250	1.2%
Highways & Car Parking	11,887	4,085	7,802	2.8%
Education	181,801	22,503	159,298	56.7%
Refuse Collection & Waste Disposal	4,574	1,893	2,681	1.0%
Environmental Health	7,475	373	7,102	2.5%
Housing General Fund	55,573	55,593	-20	0.0%
Leisure & Recreation	11,280	1,387	9,893	3.5%
Social Services	87,075	26,774	60,301	21.5%
Other Services	58,008	30,319	27,689	9.9%
Total All Services	423,962	145,966	277,996	
Contingency & Provisions			3,021	1.1%
Havering's Net Expenditure			281,017	

Over the next year the Council will be spending some £290m inclusive of levies on key services for local people. The majority of the money for local services comes from central government. If this support is not enough to meet local needs either Council Tax and/or charges have to go up, or services have to be reduced, or both.

3.2 Government Grant

The provisional Local Government Financial Settlement announced in November 2006 provided Havering with a Government grant for 2007-08 of nearly £49m for non-schools services, an increase of about 2.4% or, in cash terms, £1.1m. The Council also received a grant allocation of £142m for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), an increase of nearly £8m or about 6%; these funds can only be utilised for schools' purposes.

Before adjustments and the application of the general and education floors, Havering would have received a reduction in grant of 5.43% or £2.581m in cash terms. Havering

was one of 20 “floored” authorities in London who received the minimum increase in grant for 2007-08. Our grant increase was third lowest of all London boroughs.

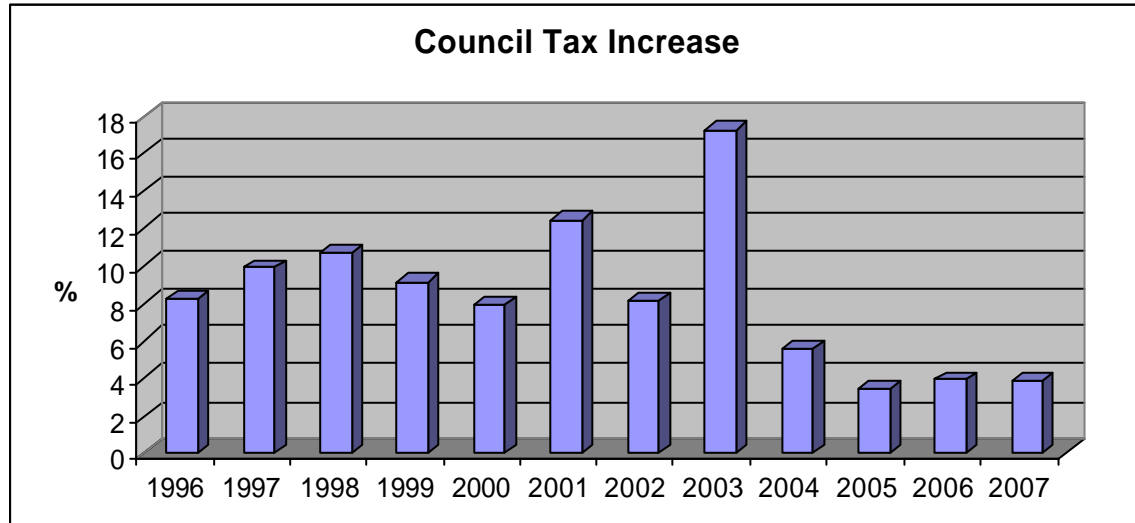
3.3 Council Tax

The 2007-08 Budget agreed by the Council produced a Council Tax for a Band D property of £1,433, including the GLA precept. This represented an increase of 3.8% over the level for the preceding year (when the increase had been 3.9%). A comparison against increases nationally and regionally is shown in the table below:

Band D Averages	2007-08	2006-07
Increase in England	4.2%	4.5%
Council Tax in England	£1,321	£1,268
Increase in outer London	4.1%	4.9%
Increase in inner London	2.9%	3.9%
Council Tax in outer London	£1,361	£1,308
Council Tax in inner London	£1,091	£1,059
These statistics are inclusive of the GLA precept and exclude the City of London		

As the table shows, Havering’s increases for both 2007-08 and 2006-07 were below both the national and outer London averages.

Overall Council Tax increases (including the GLA) over the last 12 years are shown in the bar chart below:



3.4 Overall Summary 2007-08

Havering has a low net spend per head of population, and is generally a low spender in comparison to other London boroughs. The level of Council Tax within Havering is historically a product of the local government funding system, which sees a very low level of grant being received by Havering relative to its spend. A comparison of Havering’s spend per head of population against other local London boroughs is shown in the table on the next page:

Authority	Spend per Head 2006-07	Spend per Head 2007-08	% Increase 2006-07 to 2007-08	% Increase 2004-05 to 2007-08
Havering	£1,233	£1,266	2.7%	12.8%
Barking & Dagenham	£1,496	£1,541	3.0%	15.0%
Redbridge	£1,273	£1,341	5.3%	13.8%
Waltham Forest	£1,489	£1,559	4.7%	12.9%
Newham	£1,786	£1,947	9.0%	14.3%

3.5 Budget Prospects 2008-09

The Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR07) is a major review of public sector funding being undertaken by the Government. This is expected to include a cashable savings target of 3% - currently this is only 1.25%. It is therefore highly possible that the grant increase in cash terms will be nil. The Council's financial planning is therefore being based on this assumption.

Based on the 2007-10 MTFS, the rolling year's figures would produce Council Tax rises marginally above 4%. This includes major increases in costs arising from the concessionary fares scheme, pensions, and the ELWA levy. There are however several material factors which will affect this:

- Adult Social Care
- Landfill Tax
- Pensions actuarial revaluation
- Single Status
- Changes to the concessionary fares scheme

The aspiration of the Administration is to achieve increases in Havering's element of Council Tax of no more than 3.5%, in line with both the current increase and increases in the three preceding years. Such an increase equates to a net cash increase in spending of around £3.5m. This increase will need to cover both inflationary rises and the costs resulting from externally-set levies, such as ELWA.

Indicative figures for the next 2 years, with a comparison against the current year, based on this aspiration are shown in the table below:

	2007-08 £m	2008-09 £m	2009-10 £m
Spend net of DSG	139	142	144
Levies	9	10	11
Total	148	152	155
Less Government Grant	49	49	49
Council Tax Requirement	99	103	106
Indicative Council Tax Increase		3.5%	3.5%

Achievement of this aspiration will mean that careful consideration will have to be given to service growth proposals and budgetary pressures arising from demand. However, the aim continues to be to establish a stable financial position, to adopt a prudent approach to the continuing development of the Council's MTFS, and to reflect the views of our local community on the impact of budgetary pressures and Council Tax

increases subject to any changes in national priorities that are outside of the Council's control.

4. **Capacity to Delivery**

The Council's service planning process, which begins with the publication of this high level statement of objectives, will ensure that all services and individuals are working to this challenging agenda. Services will begin planning service improvements in dialogue with lead Members, staff and stakeholders. In the Autumn, once the national financial position is clear, detailed proposals for 2008/09 and the subsequent two years will be available for consultation with stakeholders. The Council's overall budget and Corporate Plan will then be set in February 2008 and service plans agreed in March 2008.

This year will require particularly tough decisions to support the Council's priorities and the Council will conduct a rigorous review of all its activity looking for efficiencies especially to:

- Deliver value for money services through reducing unnecessary duplication. By looking at ways we can share services with other councils and partners and by doing things differently
- Procure services in the most effective manner
- Ensure our staff resources are being best utilised to support the Council's priorities

To deliver this vision all of the Council's resources must be working towards these priorities. The Council is a billion pound business with extensive assets and employing some 7,500 staff, including teachers. The challenge is to ensure clarity about what is to be achieved, re-prioritise resources and then empower the Council overall in support. This will be achieved through the continuing realignment of the following core documents and strategies.

- **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)**

The MTFS summarises the Council's budget and identifies resource requirements for the next three years. It sets out the issues facing the Council. It aims to ensure financial stability, that resources are directed to priorities, that the Council adopts to the prevailing financial climate and that stakeholders and the wider community can see our plans for resources.

- **Capital Strategy**

This sets out the Council's approach to capital investment in the medium term and ensures that its capital resources are carefully planned and help the achievement of its priorities. The strategy is supported by the Capital Asset Management Plan which sets out the overall approach to the maintenance of the Council's assets.

- **ICT Strategy**

This) ensures that the Council is making best use of strategic technology to deliver its business needs. It builds on the good progress the Council has made towards electronic service delivery and ensures that required progress is

maintained towards meeting the Governments Priority Service Outcomes and BVPI 157.

▪ **Workforce Plan**

This plan identifies the key challenges facing the Council over the next three years in recruiting and retaining the workforce it requires to meet its priorities.

▪ **Risk Management Strategy**

The Council's well respected Risk Management Strategy is regularly reviewed by the Audit Committee. It includes outward, as well as inward, looking key risks. The risks are not an exhaustive listing, but those seen as being the highest priority to consider/address within corporate planning.

▪ **Other Supporting Plans and Strategies**

The Council has to complete a number of other plans and strategies to meet government requirements and local circumstances. These reflect the ambitions, priorities and objectives set out in the corporate planning process. They may need to be revisited as this process moves forward.

5 Financial Implications and risks:

The MTFs and Star Chamber process will ensure that financial implications and risks are fully met.

6 Legal Implications and risks:

The Council's corporate planning process enables it to meet the challenges of any new legislation.

7 Human Resources Implications and risks:

Plan addresses on-going implications and risks.

8 Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and risks:

As part of the service planning process these will need to be assessed.

9 Reasons for the decision

This enables the Council to develop its corporate plan and budget as set out in the constitution.

10 Alternative options considered

None. The constitution requires this as a step towards setting its budget.

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Cabinet, 25 July 2007

**Cheryl Coppel
Chief Executive**

Background Papers List: None

(There are published works available via the Council's website, www.havering.gov.uk)