

# Hackney Homes

## Self Assessment

SEPTEMBER 2008



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## Setting the scene

Hackney Homes (HH) is now in its third year of business and our commitment to providing excellent accessible services and quality homes for residents has only strengthened.

We have addressed the weaknesses identified by the Audit Commission in 2007 and have continued to work with residents to improve services. We look forward to this inspection and see it as a crucial part of our continued progress. This self assessment is an honest depiction of our organisation – our history, where we are now and where we see ourselves in the short and medium term future. It provides a candid summary of our strengths as well as the challenges we face and what we are doing to address them.

Some of the achievements in the past year of which we are most proud include:

- Continuing the Decent Homes programme so that 55% of stock is now decent. This is an increase from 25% in 2003/04.
- Providing residents with more reactive repairs. Following an extensive consultation process, residents can now access a wider range of repairs.
- Making estates safer for residents, achieved through new estate lighting, communal door entry systems and CCTV.
- Increasing the provision of youth activities on estates, including Kickz sports programme, Nemesis Street Dance, and new youth clubs and youth committees.
- Helping the traveller community to relocate to new sites due to Olympic redevelopment. We worked with the community and other agencies to achieve a positive outcome.
- Retaining the Charter Mark qualification for all front line services which has demonstrated a continued improvement in customer services.
- Involving residents in the procurement and management of partnering maintenance contracts.
- Continuing to drive down rent arrears while reducing the number of evictions.
- Overall tenant satisfaction has increased 9% since the last inspection. Although fieldwork for the 2008 survey is ongoing, the [initial top line results](#) from MORI show overall tenant satisfaction is 68%, an increase from 59% in 2007.

## Mission and values

Our mission is *“To deliver excellent, accessible services, and quality homes people want to live in.”*

Our four main business objectives are:

- Providing excellent, accessible services
- Delivering modern homes
- Running HH well
- Helping to improve neighbourhoods

Our values demonstrate our commitment to providing excellent customer service:

- SERVICE – Delivering services that meet the needs of tenants and leaseholders
- HONESTY – Being honest, open and informative with residents and stakeholders
- ACHIEVEMENT – Doing what we say we will while being conscious of costs
- RESPECT - Seeking and respecting the views of residents on ideas for improving services
- PRIDE – Knowing that HH is a good place to work and the borough is a good place to live

## Profile of the borough

[Hackney](#) is an inner London borough with a population of about 210,000 people. It is one of the most ethnically diverse and socially deprived boroughs in the United Kingdom. 57% of the population is from black and minority ethnic communities, mainly Black African, Black Caribbean and Turkish and the borough receives a high proportion of refugees and asylum seekers. The overall population increases by around 1% a year and population turnover is estimated at 15% every year, with a high demand for social housing.

Homelessness and the number of households in temporary accommodation are relatively high. Unemployment is higher than the London average and Hackney has the third lowest employment rate in the United Kingdom. There are also a higher percentage of people with mental health problems with the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health estimating the local need for Hackney mental health services to be 89% above the national average.

Hackney is one of the fastest improving boroughs in the country and social issues are being addressed: Crime is falling faster than any other borough, with a 35% reduction in gun crime and 26% reduction in knife crime in the last year alone; education is improving with 23% improvement in GCSE results in the past five years; and targeted health programmes have reduced teen pregnancy by 28% since 1998.

Hackney is also set to benefit from the 2012 Olympics, with improved public transport including the East London Line, jobs and training opportunities and sports facilities. Wide-scale regeneration programmes such as that at [Woodberry Down](#) are set to transform the housing stock and the community.

### Stock profile

HH is landlord to 30% of the boroughs residents, with an additional 20% living in housing association rented accommodation. HH provides housing services to:

- 19,588 (61.1%) tenanted properties
- 7,424 (23.2%) leasehold properties
- 5,016 (15.7%) properties run by [tenant management organisations](#), of which 3,676 are tenanted and 1,340 are leasehold properties. There are ten TMOs in Hackney and HH provides them with a range of services.

The stock profile is as follows:

1945-64 bungalows	Less than 1%		
1945-64 high rise flats	17%	Post-74 houses	5%
1945-64 medium rise flats	31%	Post-74 medium rise flats	8%
1945-64 other houses	Less than 1%	Post-45 low rise flats	3%
1965-74 bungalows	Less than 1%	Pre-45 high rise flats	2%
1965-74 high rise flats	12%	Pre-45 medium rise flats	7%
1965-74 houses	Less than 1%	Pre-45 other houses	2%
1965-74 medium rise flats	9%	Pre-45 Low rise flats	3%

### Resident profile

We are committed to knowing as much as possible about our residents to ensure our services meet their needs, and in the past year we have added to our profiling information so that we now have information on 58% of residents. We are using this information to provide a more personalised service for residents:

- 18% of Hackney residents report a long-term illness or disability, with hearing, speech and vision problems listed as the most common disabilities.
- We know that Turkish is the second language spoken after English.
- We know that only one quarter of residents say they are working in full or part-time employment
- The majority of customers are White (63%), just over a third (32%) is Black or Black British, and less than one in ten customers (5%) are from other ethnic groups.
- Almost 60% of respondents say they are Christian and just under one-fifth is Muslim (17%).

### Governance

HH is governed by 15 (of 16) [Board Members](#) comprising: six Resident Board Members, including a leaseholder (elected by constituency nominations and ballots including leaseholders); five Hackney Borough Councillor Board Members (nominated by Hackney Borough Council); and four Independent Board Members (appointed via an open recruitment process). Since September 2007 the HH Board has been led by the Chair, Rupert Tyson, a resident Board Member, and two Vice Chairs, Audrey Villas and Alice Burke who are also resident Board Members. The Hackney Homes Chair and Vice Chairs are all long standing residents within the local community.

Board members ensure that HH adheres to the principles of good corporate governance by holding regular Board Meetings (open to the public) and reporting back, in open forums, items discussed at Part B Meetings (closed to the public). All papers presented to the Board follow a [template](#) which covers 12 key points including equality and diversity considerations and financial implications. HH also holds regular [Resident Liaison Group Meetings](#) with tenants' representatives, community representatives and the deputy Mayor Jamie Carswell, at which Hackney borough wide issues are discussed and recommendations are submitted to the HH Board.

The Board's decision making structure is supplemented by the following Committees:

Board Committee	Meeting frequency	Topics discussed
Human Resources Committee	Quarterly	HR issues
Audit & Finance Committee	Monthly	Finance, audits, procurement, vfm, risk
Standards & Ethics Committee	Every six months	Code of conduct, attendance
HH Joint Committee	Quarterly	Trade union issues
Resident Liaison Group Meetings	Every two months	Borough-wide strategic issues
Service Improvement Committee	Monthly	Improvement issues and plans

HH also has Board Member Champions who monitor and challenge officers on their respective portfolios.

- Equality and Diversity Board Member Champions – Linda Kelly and Audrey Villas;
- Health and Safety Board Member Champions – Brian Marsh and Rupert Tyson;
- Tenant Participation Board Member Champions – David Larkin, Alice Burke and Terry Edwards.

### Partnerships

HH has a strong [relationship](#) with the London Borough of Hackney (LBH), which was recently assessed as a three-star authority (CPA Assessment). LBH has mechanisms that allow it to fulfil its dual roles of partner and client, including quarterly meetings that bring together the Mayor and key LBH and HH officers. Some of our other key partnerships include:

- HH has [outsourced its housing management](#) across five neighbourhood areas to three partners – Pinnacle, Mouchel and Pathmeads. This approach has yielded cost savings of £1.9m as well as the performance management expertise and commercial experience that each company provides.
- HH plays a role in Team Hackney, the local strategic partnership which brings together the main public service providers in the borough. HH has received grants through this partnership, including funds for community landscaping projects and improvements to community hall facilities, and has contributed to the borough wide [strategic plan](#).
- Through our excellent working relationships with contractors we have been able to add significant value for residents through such contracts. For example, our Decent Homes contractor partners have provided thousands of pounds of sponsorship for youth activities on estates.
- HH is committed to working in partnership with its representative resident groups, including the Resident Liaison Group, Neighbourhood Panels and Tenants and Residents Associations.
- We also work closely with a wide range of stakeholders, including the police, to address safety and crime issues; and providers of youth activities to attract more investment for young people.

### Financial position

[The HRA has been in surplus for the past two years](#). Our medium term financial plan is looking ahead to address the needs of the business aligned with income generation and stock management considerations.

Our [procurement strategy](#) and framework has successfully driven down costs and improved service delivery, and we have demonstrated an innovative approach to partnering through Decent Homes, maintenance contracts and the outsourcing of housing management.

We have focused on value for money and have re-invested efficiency savings to offer more for residents. For example, we re-invested savings from cleaning into the purchase of new machinery which is allowing us to deliver a better cleaning and grounds maintenance service. We have also reduced the cost of reactive repairs and are committed to comparing our costs with peers through HouseMark, CIPFA and other [benchmarking](#).

## Opportunities

Our immediate opportunity is to complete the [Decent Homes](#) programme. If we can secure the investment we need we have the contractors in place to accelerate the delivery of the programme, and we have a track record that demonstrates our ability to deliver high levels of resident satisfaction and value for money.

We have identified the need for and completed the procurement of a modern IT system as part of a programme known as 'Project Excellence'. Over the next 18 months we will have an integrated housing management system that delivers customer relationship management and electronic document management. The first module on anti-social behaviour module will be live by the end of September 2008. The project gives us the chance to transform our customer services for residents.

We have offered activities on estates for young people, including Kickz sports, Nemesis Street Dance and youth committees, but there is more that could be done to provide young people with meaningful recreational and educational opportunities.

## Challenges

[Regeneration](#) is needed on a number of estates which have been identified as requiring additional funding and as such are not suitable for the Decent Homes programme. We believe such regeneration can also assist in creating mixed and sustainable communities and providing good quality social housing. We have a number of success stories in this area, including [Woodberry Down](#) which has been selected as a National Demonstration Project by The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Good progress has also continued on Nightingale Estate and Holly Street.

Of the eight further estates/blocks selected for regeneration by LBH, two have been demolished. LBH is currently negotiating with developers, and in the meantime HH is responsible for maintaining the remaining estates. We have adopted a strategy for managing both the continued provision of services and the repairs on these estates. Although at this time LBH's timescale for the redevelopment of these assets is uncertain, we are investing prudently on these estates to meet landlord obligations and maintain the environment. In 2008/9 we will be spending £2.5m on maintenance on these estates, having worked with resident groups to identify the areas that most need interim investment.

We are also working in partnership with the police to ensure the estates are secure. We coordinate the residents' re-housing and quickly remove all valuable materials and screen empty properties. We hold regular surgeries on the estates to deal quickly with queries from remaining residents and update them on the progress of the Council's negotiations.

Additional challenges for the future include tackling [worklessness](#) and unemployment in the borough and addressing the need to ensure our housing stock is as environmentally friendly as possible.

- We have started to contribute to providing employment in the borough through initiatives including an [apprenticeship scheme](#), the [Woodberry Works](#) construction course and requiring local employment as part of Decent Homes contracts. It is clear however, that some residents require intensive support to obtain and retain a job, and how HH becomes part of this borough-wide effort is something we need to determine.
- We have started to look at our properties for their 'green' credentials. A key impetus for this is to help residents fight fuel poverty and reduce their overall fuel consumption and thus their bills. We are running a pilot programme this year to see how we can reduce carbon emission with a limited budget on a typical housing estate. Once the Decent Homes programme is completed this will be an area for HH to address in greater detail, although we are already making the most of opportunities to reduce CO2 emissions as part of our Decent Homes works.

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## Access and customer care

In the past year we have focused on improving consistency, using resident feedback to inform improvements and meeting the needs of vulnerable residents. Some of our achievements include:

- Overall tenant satisfaction has increased 9% since the last inspection. Although fieldwork for the 2008 survey is ongoing, the [initial top line results](#) from MORI show overall tenant satisfaction is 68%, an increase from 59% in 2007.
- The [Charter Mark](#) status has been retained for our five neighbourhood housing offices, Leasehold and Right to Buy and the Housing Contact Centre.
- The Customer Services Group has developed a [Customer Services Statement](#) and is bringing together staff from across the organisation to commission projects.
- Working with residents we have introduced a new suite of service [standards](#).
- [Outreach surgeries](#) are providing another way for residents to report repairs. From January to April, 253 tenants attended the surgeries resulting in 273 repairs jobs.
- 1000 residents attended an Open Day in February 2008 to provide feedback and learn more about the services provided by HH and partners.

### Resident access to services

Allowing residents to contact us easily in a way that best suits them is an ongoing priority and we offer a variety of ways for residents to access services:

- [Repairs](#): The Housing Contact Centre is open 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays 9am to 1pm. The same phone number 020 8356 3691 can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. On average the centre receives 1500 calls and 1000 emails each week.
- [Tenancy and Estate Management](#): The five Neighbourhood Offices are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and have piloted evening and weekend opening to test demand locally. For example, extended service hours in the Shoreditch office have proved popular, and as a result services are offered on the last Saturday of the month.
- A specialist section deals with leaseholder queries and Right to Buy applications and is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
- The website offers information on services and the facility to report repairs, register complaints, and pay rent or service charges and in the past year there have been more than 50,000 [visits to the site](#).
- [Kiosk machines](#) at each Neighbourhood Office allow customers to explore information including Choice Based Lettings in a number of languages. In the past year there have been 110,000 sessions on the kiosks, a third of these to look at Choice Based Lettings, but also high usage of Decent Homes and repairs (2,000 sessions) and the information translated in Turkish (2,500 sessions).
- Home visits are widely available to those who cannot travel to the office.

### Customer care training

Training has been an important way in which we have improved customer services and many of our training programmes have been informed by resident feedback. This is evidenced by:

- Induction programme for all new HH staff, which includes customer services.
- A wide range of targeted training including complaints handling training for all senior and chief officers and customer care and repairs diagnostics training for staff in the Contact Centre.
- A customer services manual has been developed to help staff with [frequently asked questions](#)
- A comprehensive [staff communication strategy](#) is in place which includes [weekly bulletins](#) (email and hard copy); [Top Storey magazine](#); and events including the [2008 Staff Conference](#).
- A staff intranet provides a wide range of information, including a document library.

### Service standards

In the past year we have developed a number of new [service standards](#). This was achieved with an extensive resident consultation process and to ensure that residents have a clearer understanding of what they can expect from all HH services. The comprehensive standards now cover all service areas and have been widely publicised to staff and residents.

Selections of the standards are reported within the monthly performance digest and a smaller sample is reported in HH News. We recognised that not all of the standards could currently be monitored, but [further systems](#) are being incorporated as part of 'Project Excellence', for example monitoring the speed of email responses.

## Providing accurate information

We provide residents with a range of written information which includes:

- **Newsletters:** [HH News](#) is produced monthly for tenants and leaseholders and a resident reader panel provides quarterly feedback; the [Leaseholder and Freeholder newsletter](#) is produced twice a year; and an annual [rent newsletter](#) for tenants.
- **Handbooks:** [New tenants](#) and [leaseholders](#) receive a handbook that provides a wide range of information. This is available in a number of languages.
- **Leaflets:** These cover a wide range of services and are available at the neighbourhood offices and on the website.
- **Website:** The website contains a broad range of information about all services and includes translated material and Browse Aloud options.

## Complaints

HH has a [complaints procedure](#) that focuses on fixing the problem and continuous learning:

- The system is open and transparent and we offer residents a number of ways to make a complaint including website, in person, on the phone, and in writing.
- Response time performance for the initial stages of both complaints and Members Enquiries is at 90 per cent plus at the start of the 2008/09 financial year.
- Regular surveys and focus groups test satisfaction with the complaints service.
- A [compensation procedure](#) has been drafted in accordance with Local Government Ombudsman Guidelines and provides advice to staff about providing compensation.
- There have been no findings of maladministration against HH.
- Complaints are classified by service area and issue type that allows us to analyse themes and learn from complaints and there is a procedure for service based audits. We have recently conducted service audits in two areas. We have produced a procedure to deal more effectively with leaks from one property to another, particularly where gaining access is difficult, and we have implemented a round of training and inter departmental initiatives with regards to domestic violence.
- We have used complaints to identify training needs, for example, providing gas engineers with electrical fault finding training as this was identified as a weakness through the complaints system.

## Feedback

HH offers residents a range of ways to provide feedback including exit surveys, satisfaction surveys, call backs, focus groups and forums. This feedback is used to improve services. In the past year we have standardised the design of many of our surveys and have worked to improve the [analysis of results](#).

## Further improvements

This is an area where we are investing in technology to provide a better service:

- 'Project Excellence' will deliver new tools comprising a new [integrated housing management system](#), customer relationship management and electronic document management. This new system will ensure that however they choose to contact us, whether it is by phone, in person, or via the internet, customers are offered a consistently high quality and informed service. The first module is about to go live and the remainder of the project will be completed by 2010.
- Our response time to Stage two complaints can be improved and we are working to reduce the number of stage 2 complaints. We have put in place additional training for staff and focused on improving our response to stage 1 complaints to ensure they are adequately addressed.
- Call recording has just been procured for the Contact Centre which will help inform staff training and deal with any complaints or disputes.
- We have started to use text messaging as a way to communicate with residents and will expand this in the coming year, including pilots for rent arrears and repairs appointment reminders.
- The website will be developed to offer facilities such as repairs tracking, customer accounts, and estate based information on services.

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## Diversity

Hackney is an extremely diverse borough and to effectively deliver housing services we have to take account of diversity on a daily basis. We can demonstrate our corporate commitment to diversity by:

- Delivering and monitoring an Equality and Diversity work [programme and strategy](#). This is overseen by the Equality and Diversity Group which is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes representatives from all HH directorates and our housing management partners. This group also works with our two Board diversity champions to share good practice and inspire innovation.
- Complying with the [CRE Code of Practice for Racial Equality in Housing](#) (now Commission for Equality and Human Rights).
- Working with LBH we have achieved the Equality Standard at level three and are now working towards level four.
- Delivering a rolling [programme of EIAs](#) which is prioritised and monitored by the E&D group and the Executive Team. These assessments are having an [impact](#) on services for residents.

### Our performance on diversity

We have an equalities action plan which is monitored and reviewed by the E&D group. Examples of completed actions include:

- Achieving DDA compliance of all neighbourhood offices.
- Accomplishing increased satisfaction amongst BME tenants, so that is now only 2% less than non-BME tenants.
- Ensuring both the [Board and HH staff](#) and partners are broadly reflective of the community, although we are aware of the need to do more to ensure better representation at senior management level.
- Developing a register of vulnerable tenants which is used by frontline staff, for example to offer home visits or apply the vulnerable repairs policy.

### Translations, interpretations and accessibility

Residents with different needs are able to access services more easily because we have listened to what they have said would help them to do so. We offer:

- [On-demand translation](#) for the majority of HH documents. The newsletter and other documents are routinely [translated into Turkish](#) as this is the largest community group and the most requested language for translation. Large print and alternative formats are available. The website and kiosks include translated material and the tenant's handbook and sign up DVD are available in 10 languages.
- We have induction loops at all our customer access points and main meeting rooms.
- We offer [Language Line](#) facility for on-demand translation at our neighbourhoods, leasehold team and through the Contact Centre and we have many [bi-lingual staff](#).
- At key events such as open days, we provide interpreting facilities for residents and crèche facilities for parents with children.

### Training

The majority of staff has attended equality and diversity training, with plans in place to ensure all staff attends this training by the end of 2008. In addition, staff have attended the following courses:

- Neighbourhood staff have attended courses on: domestic violence awareness; welfare benefit support; and use of Language Line.
- 50 managers and staff have had training in conducting Equality Impact Assessments.
- Frontline staff have the chance to attend various cultural awareness training sessions.

### Understanding our customers

- HH has collected profiling data on six strands of equalities (age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and faith). This is a key objective within our Equality and Diversity Strategy. Currently we have 58% profiling information on all strands, an increase of 25% in the past year. We are working hard to increase this level, with targets to have this information for at least 70% of our residents by the end of October 2008 and 90% by 2010. This will be achieved through phone surveys, at events and a targeted door knocking campaign.
- We hold BME and disability focus groups who have helped us understand specific needs with a view to improving services. For example:
  - New procurement taking place for a specialist adaptations contractor following disability focus group feedback that the quality of some work needed to improve.

- Information about planned and capital programmes has been included in the newsletter in response to the Asian women's group who said they had little awareness of this work.
- We support vulnerable tenants by working closely with our partners in the Council and other agencies as part of the [Working Better Together](#) framework. [Supporting People contracts](#) with Single Homeless Project (SHP) and Family Mosaic are in place to help vulnerable tenants remain in their homes.
- We have changed services to meet our customer needs, for example, some door entry systems are switched off on the Jewish Sabbath.

### **Tailoring services to meet diverse needs**

We use diversity information about residents to tailor services to meet their needs, including:

- Helping vulnerable tenants to access repairs faster is facilitated through the [Vulnerable Tenants Repairs Policy](#) which identifies the nature of repairs support available.
- Providing tenants with translated material or alternative formats on an ongoing basis.
- Offering home visits to individuals not able to attend neighbourhood offices.
- Analysing the take up of key services according to ethnicity and other characteristics. An [example of findings](#) has shown a correlation between low take up of housing and other benefits and rent arrears amongst residents in the African Caribbean group.
- Working with our partners and the [Traveller community](#) in the borough to ensure this community was successfully relocated to new sites as a result of Olympic development.
- Providing English language classes to the Bangladeshi community in conjunction with our partners.
- Giving tenants the option to select dual sink kitchens to meet kosher food requirements as part of the Decent Homes programme.

### **Engaging with hard to reach groups**

We have expanded the way in which residents can get involved through our alternative forms of engagement. We hold quarterly meetings with the African Forum, Turkish Focus Group, Asian Women Group, Disability Focus Group and Youth Committees. We have consulted these groups on our Service Standards, Rent Strategy, Planned Maintenance and Decent Homes programmes.

Through our African Forum we have developed a working relationship with Central Africa's Rights and AIDS (CARA) Society. We plan to work closely with this group to address the issue of high rent arrears and low housing benefit applications from their target group.

### **Harassment and domestic violence**

HH has well established policies and procedures on [anti social behaviour](#), [domestic violence](#) and [hate crime](#). Staff receive training in this sensitive area of work to ensure that they have sound legal knowledge and can refer residents to suitable support from key partner agencies including the Police, Re-housing Service and Domestic Violence and Hate Crime (DVHC) Service.

[Domestic Violence](#) and [Hate Crime](#) leaflets for residents clearly explain our commitment and include contact details of key partner agencies. Our leaflets are supplemented by information on ours and HH and LBH websites, as well as posters that are displayed in our neighbourhood offices.

In the last year we have taken legal action on the grounds of domestic violence or hate crime in 25 cases. The current volume of domestic violence reporting for quarter one shows that 24 Hackney Homes residents approached LBH's Domestic Violence team and three residents approached one of our neighbourhood offices. Currently, the HH quarterly performance figures do not report the composite figures due to data collation issues; however we anticipate this will be resolved when our quarter two report is produced.

### **Further improvements**

- We realise that the groups least likely to offer personal information may also be those in greatest need. We are aiming to increase our resident profiling and our efforts will focus on members of the community who are vulnerable or are fearful of sharing personal information.
- Through TP Tracker we are recording equality data for residents involved in participation activities. In the past year more than 1000 residents have expressed an interest to be more involved: 45% from a BME background, 55% women and 21% under 35. The next stage is to set challenging targets.
- Our staff survey shows that our [workforce is broadly representative of the community we serve](#). Currently, BME and women are under-represented at senior levels within the organisation and we are in the process of assessing specific options to improve our performance in this area.

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## Stock investment and asset management

### Capital improvement, planned and cyclical maintenance, major repairs

This area has continued to improve and we have responded to the previous inspection by:

- Revising our original Asset Management Strategy which was developed in 2006. The [new strategy](#) was approved by the HH Board in March 2008.
- Launching a comprehensive Asset Management Database, based on Codeman software, which helps HH to link, plan and coordinate future Decent Homes, Planned Maintenance and Cyclical programmes. The system includes an asbestos database and can also produce Energy Performance Certificates. Further stock condition data has been gathered since 2003, with over 20% of the rented stock being surveyed internally for our Decent Homes Programme and over 40% has been surveyed externally.
- Producing a [30-year Asset Management Plan](#) derived from the Asset Management database. This has been used in preparation of the Council's Medium Term Planning Forecast. The plan indicates the potential funding gap for the period up to 2037 and resources needed.
- Creating a [sustainability matrix](#), using the Asset Management database as a source of information to identify the potential resource requirements and specific challenges present on the estate. This information can be used to make decisions concerning economic and environmental sustainability.
- Achieving [Charter Client](#) status for our major works programmes.
- Establishing partnering term contracts for maintenance and involving residents in the management of them.

### Decent Homes and capital works

In 2003/04, only 25% of LBH's stock met the Decent Homes standard. By the start of 2008/09, 55% of the stock was decent. £190m has been spent on the Decent Homes programme and our achievements include:

- Completing the majority of external work, with only around 700 homes still to be made decent externally. In response to resident consultation, the programme is weighted so that external elements are completed first.
- Replacing windows in 10,500 homes, replacing roofs for 8,700 homes and installing new kitchens and bathrooms in 1,900 homes. We are in the process of giving tenants the choice of kitchen and bathroom manufacturer for the next phase of kitchen and bathroom. A total of 7,000 properties will need new kitchens and bathrooms in the next phase of Decent Homes works.
- Ensuring the Decent Homes Delivery Teams are in place and that we are in a strong position to deliver the Decent Homes programme for the final quarter of 2008/09 and 2009/10. We have been able to prepare Agreed Maximum Prices for our 09/10 programmes in advance and will be in a position to proceed as soon as additional resources are released.
- Consistently getting high levels of [resident satisfaction](#), with an average satisfaction level of 96%, based on tenant surveys.

### Planned and cyclical programme

A significant proportion of the revenue repairs and maintenance budget is allocated for planned and cyclical maintenance including: external repairs and decorations; gas, lift, electrical, water tanks inspection and servicing programmes; roads and footpaths; drainage; and CCTV.

Also, £20m a year is invested in the stock through the capital [Planned Maintenance programme](#). Outputs from 2007/08 included installing 1,200 high security front entrance doors and upgrading external lighting on 48 blocks. The programme also renews individual building elements, such as lifts, boilers and CCTV systems on a planned basis. For 2008/09 our target ratio of planned maintenance to responsive revenue funded repairs is 60:40.

Programmes are developed at high level using the Asset Management database and in line with the asset strategy. A range of partnering contracts has been established, with benefits to service delivery and direct savings of £400,000. Resident consultation has been aligned with the Decent Homes process and residents are now involved in contract meetings and the overarching Steering Group.

## Managing asbestos

A significant removal programme in previous years has taken away the most dangerous asbestos in our buildings and greatly reduced the risk. We further developed this area by:

- Creating a [system for identifying, recording and managing asbestos](#) within the Asset Management database.
- Carrying out type 2 sample inspections of our stock, based upon established archetypes within the Asset Management database and have trained operational staff to carry out type 1 Inspections. By November 2008 we will have surveyed the communal areas of over 500 blocks, representing 20% of the stock and around 10% of the stock internally.
- Providing information on asbestos on operative job tickets. All staff trained to use Codeman can also see whether asbestos is likely to be found in a building.
- Informing residents of the asbestos service and hotline and providing information about asbestos and how to avoid this danger in their homes.

## Innovation and partnerships

This is an area where partnerships and innovation are helping us achieve positive outcomes, including:

- Excellent value for money has been achieved through modern, well managed partnering contracts.
- The development of a new and innovative partnering model, which we are sharing with other Local Authorities, ALMOs and Housing Associations. The HH-led Supply Chain Management Consortium is being considered for Efficiency Challenge funding by Communities and Local Government.
- Evaluation and selection of tenders for Decent Homes and Planned Maintenance programmes is achieved working in partnership with residents, who are also involved in Neighbourhood Investment Boards (NIBs) to monitor performance at contract reviews and provide input to planning programmes.
- Budgetary control and monitoring of outputs has been made possible through robust operational systems for assessing Capital expenditure, including Monthly Operation Boards.
- Consistent information and communication to residents is provided through newsletters, information packs, publicity campaigns and Resident Liaison Officers.

## Our approach to the green agenda

The average SAP rating for Hackney's stock is 72, an increase of two points from the previous year (BVPI 72). We are also addressing the green agenda by:

- Employing a specialist contractor to recycle waste on the Decent Homes programme. As at May 2008, we recycled 97% of timber, 100% of metal and concrete, and 99% of plastic.
- Launching the "[Greening Our Estates](#)" initiative with a pilot scheme at Whiston and Goldsmith Estate. The project includes portable digital meters that show exactly how much fuel is being consumed at each moment, with the aim of helping residents to use less energy and to avoid fuel poverty.

## Further improvements

- HH has developed an interim repairs programme to address the needs of estates awaiting regeneration. In 2008/9 we will be spending £2.5m on maintenance on these estates, having worked with resident groups to identify the areas that most need interim investment.
- We will continue to bid for additional resources, both to the Council and to others where possible. We have bid for Energy Efficiency funding from utilities and for Consortium funding to National Change Agent and CLG.
- We have trialled Estate Plans and plan to further develop these as part of the Asset Management Strategy to facilitate long-term investment beyond Decent Homes for each estate.
- We are taking advantage of a window of opportunity which occurs in 2010 to implement the procurement of major works, cyclical and responsive contracts at the same time, as these contracts all expire in that year.
- A more structured approach is required for identifying planned maintenance work through the delivery of responsive repairs needs to be developed.

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## Responsive repairs

Since the last inspection a significant programme of change has been implemented. In response to the recommendations of the previous inspection we have:

- Implemented a [Revised Repairs Policy](#) which has increased the [number of repairs](#) offered to our tenants. This includes repairs to tap washers, internal glazing and replacement of kitchen units beyond economic repair.
- Ensured that all glazing repairs, including glass to internal doors, are completed by HH in accordance with British Standards.
- Embedded multi-skilling to facilitate our repairs first time strategy and improve resident satisfaction. This is also incentivised as a result of the revised Fair Pay scheme.
- Improved the repair first time performance by reminding tenants about their appointment, the no access policy which requires operatives to phone the call centre first if the tenant is not there, and cancelling the repair if the tenant is not there at the scheduled appointment time. This has led to an improved performance of more than 90% of repairs carried out first time.
- Benchmarked costs (SOR) and quality of responsive repairs.
- Introduced a [Vulnerable Tenants Repairs Policy](#) which clarifies the level of support available to vulnerable residents and the procedure to follow to ensure consistency of provision.
- Introduced a [Tenants Recharge Policy](#) in support of HH's aim of encouraging good tenant behaviour. We have identified the [charges](#) and we are in the process of invoicing and collecting this money.
- Reduced the level of variations, following the implementation of the Fair Pay scheme. The percentage of job tickets varied from original order was 71% in 2006/7, 17% in 2007/8 and current performance is 8%.
- Provided tenants with more appointment slots in early morning, early evening and Saturdays. This has been advertised extensively and we have examined whether residents are using these [additional appointment slots](#).
- Monitored resident satisfaction using a variety of methods. Each month we call 200-300 tenants who have had a repair to test their satisfaction with the service. This is supplemented by customer service cards, focus groups and post inspection reports. [Current feedback](#) shows significant improvements in tenant satisfaction in regard to our repairs service.

### Improving value for money

We have improved efficiency and value for money concerns. This has been addressed through an independent analysis of baseline information on our repairs performance and comparison with other sources from HQN, APSE, Checkmate and House Mark. The findings of the benchmarking activity are contained in the ['Just Housing'](#) report, which concluded that considerable improvement can be seen across the vast majority of indicators from former years and the DLO compares well with the local market. The average cost of a repair, as delivered by the in house team, has reduced from £102.54 in 2006, down to £90.37 per ticket.

### Current performance

We can demonstrate continued improvement in repairs performance and a [positive direction of travel](#). The interim results of the [2008 MORI survey](#) show that satisfaction with the repairs service has improved and 71% of tenants are either very or fairly satisfied with the service. Satisfaction with the attitude of workers is 90%; speed of work is 83%; and overall quality of completed jobs is 78%.

### Improving the way we work

We are ensuring the delivery of quality repairs to residents by:

- Completing a significant repairs procurement exercise which has resulted in awarding three major contracts to the private sector as back-up contractors to the main in-house repairs service. These contracts will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.
- Completing a major procurement exercise for our materials and forming a partnering contract with five major suppliers (reduction from 100 suppliers). The expected benefits are the control of materials costs over a two year period, a reduction in administration costs and ensuring operatives have the right materials to complete repairs first time.
- Reviewing the Fair Pay scheme to link pay incentives with quality and customer satisfaction. This has resulted in increased productivity (more appointments met/ repairs completed) and tenant satisfaction.
- Carrying out an extensive programme of post work inspections, including 3000 repairs inspections undertaken by the Technical Audit Team.

- Improving the accuracy and ease with which repairs are specified by reducing the schedule rates from 1500 items to 130 composite rates.

### Listening to our residents

The repairs service receives a wide range of feedback from residents which is analysed and reported to Executive Team to inform service improvement. Examples of resident-led improvements are:

- Extended Appointment Slots and appointment reminders.
- Our complaints analysis showed there were many complaints about leaks. As a result we have implemented a comprehensive [Leaks Protocol](#) which formalises our approach to addressing this issue. This involved the Contact Centre, Leasehold and Right to Buy and Housing management and is showing improved results in gaining access and reduced complaints.
- The criteria for our Out of Hours (emergency) Repairs Service has been reviewed and changed, in consultation with residents. The improvement means that an operative is required to complete the repair, where possible, rather than merely make safe, thus reducing the necessity to arrange follow on repairs.

### Legal disrepair

The caseload of legal claims of housing disrepair has declined from 430 in 2004/05 to 209 for the end of 2007/08 with the numbers of new claims declining by almost 20 per cent. HH uses the widest possible definition of legal disrepair as there are no current recognised regional or national benchmarking criteria. The number of cases in Hackney where [proceedings have been issued](#) is very small. There has been a steady decline in the number of cases where damages have been paid, illustrating the absence of long periods of historical disrepair for which damages might be payable.

Year	Total case closures	No closed with damages paid	No closed without damages paid
05/06	337	149 (44 %)	188 (56%)
06/07	242	94 (39%)	148 (61 %)
07/08	160	60 (37%)	100 (63%)

HH manages its legal disrepair work through a central staff team and a dedicated maintenance team. Analysis of new claims is regularly undertaken, with common issues communicated to our main reactive repairs service. An example of this was the leaks protocol drafted in conjunction with both Complaints and Maintenance staff.

We seek alternatives to litigation including the Housing Disrepair Arbitration Scheme, which is offered in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators for tenants who request it. HH covers limited legal costs involved in arbitration preparation.

### Further improvements

- We have piloted Imprest stock in all HH vehicles and are currently rolling this out to the reactive repairs fleet. This will allow operatives to go straight to their first appointment in the morning and improve the efficiency of the service. Vehicle will also have a tracking device to allow jobs to be better scheduled and to respond faster to emergencies.
- We are aiming to increase billing and collection rates related to the recharge policy.
- Continued roll out of revised Fair Pay Scheme.
- Using new technology to support 'right first time' initiatives through improved diagnostics, job allocation system (Opti-time) for faster response, mobile working and better stock control.

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## Repairing and re-letting empty homes

HH's performance on [re-letting empty properties](#) has improved year on year. Performance is top quartile (BVPI 212), averaging 21 days turnaround in 2007/8. To continue this trend a comprehensive evaluation of the voids process has taken place to review the [letting standard](#) and related processes. In the past year we have responded to the previous Audit Commission recommendations by:

- Reducing the cost of voids through piloting the use of basket rates for works. The pilot basket rate for 'core' void works was around £1,300 per property. This cost reflects best value market rates and is the target against which all future works will be benchmarked. We now intend to implement the basket for 'core' works across all voids.
- Classifying all routine voids as either, 3, 5, 10, 15 working days voids depending on the level of works required to meet the letting standard. It allows us to know how much each void will cost in total, including non-core opportunity works such as kitchen, bathroom or wiring replacement. The total average unit cost of core works for basic re-servicing of voids has reduced from £1962 in 2007-08 to £1350 in 2008-09.
- Implementing a revised and fully monitorable 'key to key' void process.
- Making enhancements to the 'Voids Module' in the current ICT system, facilitating better management and monitoring of voids by providing relevant progress information through the stages of re-servicing.
- Using customer satisfaction monitoring to inform service improvement processes.
- Learning from complaints of new tenants has led to a new system for ensuring outstanding repairs are quickly dealt with after the tenant collects their keys. This is dealt with as part of the new [tenancy visit](#).
- Clarifying the lettings standard to reflect what our tenants expect from properties on offer.
- Introducing a [Voids Re-chargeable Repairs Policy](#) that is part of the overall voids repairs service. This results in departing tenants being automatically re-charged for repairs to their home, which have been caused by vandalism or neglect. We have [identified charges](#) and are in the process of invoicing and collecting this money.

### Pre-termination visits

The recently revised [voids policy and procedure](#) emphasises the importance of the pre-termination visit and inspection. It is at this stage that vacating tenants are informed of incentives for leaving their flat clean and tidy as well as charges they may incur for repairs which are their responsibility.

### Dealing with low demand

We do not have a [low demand](#) problem, however, the refusal rate is higher than is acceptable and is being addressed by accompanied viewings, which provide an opportunity for potential tenants to have their queries dealt with on the spot. The quality and presentation of empty properties has been improved to further encourage residents to accept properties on offer. Analysis of refusal data indicates that refusals due to property conditions are low (below 2%). We are continuing our analysis of refusals, including 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> round refusals to better understand the reasons why tenants refuse properties.

### The approach to safety inspections and reconnections of utilities

All required safety certificates are provided to new tenants during the letting interview. New tenants are provided with written information as well as advice on how to arrange commissioning of their heating and electrical systems at their letting interview.

### Recycling of adapted homes

Systems have been put in place to identify and reuse adapted dwellings and mobile equipment. [Guidance for staff](#) in identification of adaptations and equipment is now provided.

### Further improvements

- Improved value achieved in the basket rates pilot have been developed and fed into the procurement process for the new repairs contract which will be available from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

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## Gas Safety

Performance in this area has been one of strength for HH, with the team consistently achieving top quartile performance for gas servicing. For [2007/08](#) 99.1% of gas services and associated safety certificates were achieved. In the current year we have moved from annual to anniversary management of safety certificates. We communicate the important gas safety message to residents by:

- Conducting estate road-shows and [awareness campaigns](#).
- Presenting information to Housing Partners and Residents Panels to help us gain access to properties.
- Publishing gas safety awareness articles in [HH News](#) and the website.
- Using our operative vehicles to advertise important safety messages.

### Dealing with access

In response to feedback from the last inspection, we have revised our no access procedure, providing clearer information about the importance of access. High access rates have been maintained by:

- Offering additional appointment slots for tenants including early morning, early evening and Saturday appointments.
- Introducing a three letter notice procedure to remind tenants of the gas servicing visit.
- Working closely with neighbourhood staff, including the secondment of an enforcement officer.
- Improving our access procedure, with the option of court action taken only as a last resort.

### Quality of service

We are continually auditing our processes and procedures to ensure this important function is carried out with the resident's safety in mind: This is evidenced by:

- A quality control programme which monitors gas works with particular reference to quality, customer focus and professionalism.
- ACS-level Corgi certification for the Client Quality Control team.
- Corgi Blue Badge accreditation which is a quality accreditation awarded to organisations that demonstrate a commitment to quality, customers and continuously improving efficiencies.
- Verification that we have exceeded required standards through a [Corgi audit](#).
- Compliance with keeping gas records in accordance with statutory requirements.
- A training course which has improved the gas servicing and breakdown skills of operatives.
- Technical briefings for Contact Centre staff about diagnosing gas repairs.

### Further improvements

- A reduction in the level of repeat visits is an important aspect of service improvement in this area. Available breakdown information will be used to help focus resources.
- Better fault diagnosis is being addressed through bespoke training and will ultimately aid in improving our repairs first time performance.
- Imprest stock has been piloted and is now being rolled out across the organisation which allows vans to be stocked with frequently used items.

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## Equipment and adaptations

The annual budget for the Adaptations Service is £1.5m, which is sufficient for current demand. We work closely with LBH's Community Services (CS) to provide a service that enables residents to live independently. To address the recommendations of the previous inspection we have:

- Implemented a comprehensive [Service Level Agreement](#) (SLA), between HH and LBH, which clarifies roles and responsibilities. Regular meetings take place at strategic and operational levels to plan and implement service improvements.
- Improved [performance management](#) arrangements are in place, including agreed end to end performance targets and monitoring arrangements.
- Developed customer satisfaction monitoring where all service users are asked to provide written feedback using a standard reply card. Overall satisfaction (January-June 08) with this service is 77%.
- Published service standards in a [service leaflet](#) and on the website.
- Recorded all adapted properties on the Asset Management Database, with new adaptations recorded on Saffron.

To further improve this service for our residents we have:

- Established an Equipment and Adaptation Residents' Focus Group (across tenures). We also gain feedback from the Disability Focus Group.
- Ensured adaptation works are specified accurately, with a HH Surveyor working with CS staff.
- Matched adapted properties to known residents' needs and advertised via the CBL scheme.
- Collected and re-used equipment that is no longer needed e.g. stair lifts and freestanding equipment.
- Briefed staff at the neighbourhood offices and Contact Centre about how the service can be accessed.

### Further improvements

- As part of the service improvement process we are moving away from one off contracts for major works. The tendering process will result in a term contract, (December 08) that will improve service delivery and provide cost benefits.
- We have procured a minor adaptations contract to provide a turnaround of such works in 7 working days. We are currently working on an action plan that will address reduction of pre-order time scales.
- We are employing more resources to continually improve data quality which is affected by the large number of agencies.

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## Housing income management

In the past year we have tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and as a result we have increased rent collection and reduced arrears. This has been achieved through stronger case management and better adherence to the arrears policy and procedure. Our other key achievements include:

- Encouraging 5000 tenants to pay rent by direct debit or standing order
- Reducing the percentage of tenants in arrears from 53% to 35%
- Reducing the level of current tenant arrears from £16m in 2004 to £5.3m in 2008
- [Reducing the level of debt](#) per tenant from an average of £680 in 2004 to £240 in 2008

### Performance

HH has significantly reduced tenant arrears while reducing evictions. Our emphasis on supporting tenants and providing information about rents has embedded a culture of payment, which has led to top quartile BVPI66a performance of 98.13%. A payment culture has been established through consistent actions and publicity. We offer tenants a variety of payment methods, offer support and debt advice and set challenging targets with our housing management partners who carry out this function.

### Rent payment options

Tenants have a wide range of choice for how to pay rent including:

- Direct debit and standing order
- Card payment
- Cash or cheque
- Post Office
- On-line
- PayPoint outlets
- Telephone using a 24-hour payment line

We have extensively promoted [direct debit](#) as the most reliable and cost effective method of rent collection and nearly 5000 (21%) of tenants pay by direct debit or standing order. In the past year we have warned tenants about the dangers of using credit cards as a high-interest loan, although only a small number of tenants (2.7%) use this payment method.

### Customer information

Tenants receive a wide variety of information about rents to ensure they know how they can pay, how their rents fund essential services and how to access help if it is needed. This is achieved by:

- Sending quarterly rent statements and an [annual rent newsletter](#) to tenants.
- Providing specialist rent teams at each neighbourhood. These teams meet with new tenants and have increased housing benefit take up from 53% in 2003/04 to 60% in 2007/08.
- More than 1,000 residents responded to the [2007/08 consultation about rent levels and payment options](#).
- Providing home visits to residents who are unable to come to the office. .
- Referring tenants to other services, including a dedicated tenancy support service commissioned from Family Mosaic and the Single Homeless Project which provides support to vulnerable tenants.
- Conducting targeted publicity and incentive campaigns at Christmas time and [summer holidays](#). This is when tenants are most likely to miss rent payments.
- Encouraging good money management through the Pride of Place scheme.
- Restricting discretionary services such as parking permits to tenants who are up to date with their rent.

## Arrears prevention

Our approach is to intervene early and help tenants to pay their rent by maximising their income. Seeking eviction is our last option as we see tenancy sustainment as our core role and good value for money in terms of the financial and social costs related homelessness and social service provision. This is achieved by:

- Having comprehensive [rent arrears recovery procedures](#) in place that comply with the latest good practice and the Court Protocol and emphasise prevention rather than enforcement.
- Working with the Council's Housing Needs and Children & Young Families departments to support tenants and minimise arrears. This approach is formalised through the '[Working Together Protocol](#)'.
- Informing new tenants about their rental obligations at sign up. They are given benefit advice and help with completing benefit applications. Rent payment options are provided and payment of the first weeks rent is required at sign up.
- Monitoring accounts and sending automated letters informing tenants when their account is falling in arrears. We are also starting to use text messages to notify of arrears.
- Seeking eviction only as our last resort and we strictly follow the pre-Court protocol. Throughout this process we try to reach an agreement with tenants and secure payments to minimise the need for eviction. We also make use of alternative legal remedies to eviction.

## Arrears recovery

We have a process in place for [recovering former tenant arrears](#) and a good track record in taking effective possession action. In 2007/08 we secured 420 possession orders against tenants who repeatedly failed to keep to repayment agreements. We have also:

- Steadily reduced the number of evictions from 193 in 2005/06 to 111 in 2007/08.
- Analysed the customer profile for debtors, showing the age groups and ethnic communities most likely to fall into debt. Rent arrears are highest with African Caribbean tenants and we are taking action to address this, including boosting [Housing Benefit take up](#).
- Traced former tenants using Experian online system and we have set and achieved annual collection targets for former tenant arrears for the last four years. Hackney has had a large amount of old debt (over 6 years old) and we have undertaken an extensive write-off programme with £4.4 million of FTA debt being written that could not be collected.
- Recognised that many vulnerable tenants accrued large amounts of historic arrears dating back to a period when there were difficulties with the housing benefit service, we collaborated with Hackney Council on a revised write-off policy and procedure.

## Debt advice

We have an SLA with Hackney Community Law Centre that provides specialist debt advice. This came about following a review of services undertaken by the Council in 2006 which showed we needed to boost services for HH tenants. [The service](#) now includes a half day surgery at each neighbourhood office targeting tenants in arrears and is good value for HH. We regularly publicise debt advice through the newsletter and website and have produced a leaflet to signpost tenants to services.

Because two thirds of our tenants are in receipt of housing benefit, we have developed a close working relationship with the Council's Housing Benefits (HB) service. We have an [SLA](#) that sets out timescales for assessing applications and awarding benefits, responses to enquiries and issues such as Court attendance by HB staff. This SLA has been recently reviewed and our neighbourhood offices have verification status that enables us to take completed applications and verify key documents. We also have an online benefits calculator and tenants can submit HB forms online.

## Further improvements

We are working to further improve this service by:

- Ensuring the consistency of case files. This has significantly improved through regular audits of case files and training for staff and this is a continued focus in our service plans.
- We have started to use our profiling information to understand who is most likely to be in arrears. We need to do further work to know why this is the case and develop actions to address this.
- We are replacing our current IT system through the 'Project Excellence' project. This is happening in the next year and will allow us greater functionality and more effective workflow management.

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## Resident involvement

Historically HH has focused on a formal structure for resident involvement and has now come to acknowledge the need and benefits of involving a wider group of residents in our decision making. Our strategy therefore is to continue the formal structure of involvement but at the same time to develop a wider range of options for residents to get involved.

HH has made real progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Some of these initiatives are relatively new and we are currently assessing their effectiveness and value for money. However, we can demonstrate that we are reaching a wider group of residents.

### **We have expanded the ways we engage with residents to offer more choice**

In the past year more than 1000 residents have expressed an interest in becoming more involved, with 45% from a BME background, 55% women and 21% under 35. When residents express an interest in getting involved we ask them what topics they are interested in and record their preferences on a system called TP Tracker. This allows us to track how often they get involved and will allow us to benchmark resident involvement against other ALMOs and housing authorities. We have provided a range of schemes for residents to get involved:

- 15 focus groups have been held in the past year to address specific issues including repairs, new tenancies and complaints.
- A number of surveys have been conducted to address specific issues, including rent increase and satellite dishes. These can be postal, telephone and web based.
- Specialist forums including African Forum, Turkish Focus Group, Asian Women Group and Disability Focus Group. These have met quarterly in the past year.
- A Street Property Sounding Board has met three times to address specific issues for residents of street properties.
- A Reader Panel for tenants and leaseholders has been in operation for more than two years and has provided quarterly feedback about newsletters and has reviewed other printed information.
- Resident inspectors were recruited at the beginning of 2008 and underwent a training programme. They have undertaken an inspection of voids, with the next exercise on communal repairs.
- Walkabouts with local residents and panel representatives have identified works to improve the communal areas on their estates, which is funded through dedicated budgets.

### **Promoting resident involvement**

We have worked with residents to agree a new [Resident Participation Compact](#). This was launched in April 2008 and sets out how we will work with residents. We have also:

- Publicised the Compact and resident involvement in general, with a [new leaflet](#), information on the website, two pages of involvement news in each edition of [HH News](#) and the resident participation team attending summer fun days at which we have recruited 100 new residents to get involved.
- Held the 2007 [Active Residents Awards](#) to highlight the efforts of residents who volunteer their time and help develop their local communities.
- Produced a [resident impact insert](#) for the August HH News which has been well received. This will be produced twice a year to demonstrate how we are taking account of resident's views.

### **We have provided representative groups with involvement in strategic decision-making.**

- Six residents are on the Board and while they are there as Non-Executive Directors rather than representatives they carry residents' concerns with them. In the past year a new Chair and two Vice Chairs have been elected, all of whom are tenants and leaseholders, demonstrating that the organisation is truly resident led.
- The [Resident Liaison Group](#) is consulted on key strategies and policies. In the past year this has included the repairs policy, service standards, the delivery plan and strategic plan, policy on satellite dishes and the Resident Participation Compact.
- Residents have been integral in choosing housing management partners and Decent Homes contractors, and have been part of selection panels for these contracts.

### **Impact of involvement in shaping the service**

All of this effort is leading to service improvements and we have recently analysed the full [impact on services](#). Some major improvements in the last year include:

- Tenants were at the heart of the decision to offer more repairs, with residents asked about which additional repairs they would like carried out by HH.
- The procurement of a specialist adaptations contractor is being undertaken as a direct result of feedback from the Disability Focus Group.
- As a direct result of input from the Street Property Sounding Board, repairs operatives have a new procedure to phone the call centre before they leave a property. Feedback indicated that some operatives were not giving residents enough time to answer their door.
- Resident feedback was one of the key factors in the decision to bring all cleaning services back in house.
- The new Lettings Standard has incorporated direct feedback from residents.
- Improvements have been made to ensure progress at each stage is available for residents who are having equipment or adaptations in their home due to feedback from the Disability Focus Group.
- Steps taken to complete repairs at first visit are partly due to feedback from repairs focus groups that highlighted this as their major concern.
- The Street Property Sounding Board has impacted on Decent Homes programming, with plans to ring fence a certain amount of future funding for Decent Homes works to street properties.

### **We have introduced new opportunities for residents to be involved in performance monitoring**

- We have continued to involve residents in Decent Homes Neighbourhood Investment Boards. The NIBS discuss and agree prioritisation and project management arrangements for Decent Homes.
- In the past year residents have been involved in steering groups and contract review meetings for capital works.
- We have trained 25 residents as part of the 'Resident Inspector' programme and they are undertaking different inspections and mystery shopping exercises every 6 weeks.

### **We implemented a [new formal involvement structure](#) in September 2007**

Since the previous inspection, HH completed its review of resident participation and introduced a new formal structure that has reduced the cost of this service by over £200,000 per annum and streamlined the structure. A proportion of the savings made have been reinvested into developing alternative forms of engagement (detailed above). The new structure has three formal levels of engagement:

1. **Enhanced Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA)** which focus on estate/local issues. There are 86 registered associations. They are required to hold four meetings a year and officers (usually estate managers) and councillors attend these meetings.
2. **Neighbourhood Panels** which address neighbourhood-wide issues. There are five panels, with the largest neighbourhood divided into two sub-panels. Members are elected from TRA membership and the meetings are held every month, with senior officers attending these meetings. The Borough-wide Leaseholder and Freeholder Forum is at the same level as the Panels.
3. **Resident Liaison Group** which provides strategic advice about housing in Hackney. It includes membership from Panels, the Borough-wide Leaseholder and Freeholder Forum and special interest groups (including BME groups). The group meets every two months and is chaired by Deputy Mayor Jamie Carswell and HH Chair Rupert Tyson.

Panels and registered TRAs receive [core funding](#) for day to day administration. Additional funding is available through the [Tenant's Levy](#) which funds general running costs, training, capacity building and local events.

### **We are monitoring and evaluating resident participation activity**

The current resident participation arrangements have been in place a year and we are currently reviewing the impact of these changes particularly the alternative forms of engagement and the enhanced TRA meetings. We are also:

- Monitoring resident participation activity through the Compact on a six monthly basis and an annual meeting of the review panel will formally meet to discuss and recommend any changes.
- Developing the analysis on the costs and benefits from each form of engagement.
- Working with Croydon Council as part of the [Beacon Mentoring Scheme](#) and one of the areas they are helping us with is evaluation of resident participation.

## **Involving youth and hard-to-reach groups**

We have used events including fun days, open days and conferences to encourage residents to get involved, especially younger residents, and these are recorded on TP Tracker. We have engaged:

- African, Turkish and Asian Women through regular forum and focus groups.
- Residents with disabilities through the quarterly Disability Focus Group.
- Young people, with HH leading the organisation of the newly formed Youth Engagement Project, which follows on from the Youth Involvement Project 2006-2008. This includes nine estate based youth committees that will feed into the four area based youth forums and youth parliament.
- We support residents who want to get involved by offering interpreters or staff who speak other languages, hearing loops and allowances for child care and travel costs.

## **Working with TMOs**

We provide [support to TMOs](#) that currently manage defined functions for 16% of our stock. We have:

- Facilitated an effective quarterly TMO forum that involves senior HH staff.
- Contributed £50k to the Section 16 Development Grant, bringing in £150k from DCLG.
- Implemented a programme of audits to improve governance, probity and service delivery.
- Worked in partnership with Clapton Park TMO to undertake a service review which resulted in improvements in service delivery and efficiency savings of £500k p.a.
- Helped three new TMO's form in the last two years, with prospects for one more in the next year and two others in the pipeline.
- Provided management support to a number of TMO's experiencing difficulties including Tower TMO and Lordship South TMO.

## **Community cohesion**

We have a key role to play in building community cohesion through resident involvement. We do this by:

- Working with partner agencies and young people to bring services for young people on to our estates. This includes [Nemesis](#) Dance Project and [Kickz](#) Sports Programme.
- Supporting community projects through our housing management partners. This includes youth work and outreach with the Turkish community.
- Offering the [Woodberry Works Training Scheme](#) to give local people in the Woodberry Down and Stamford Hill area the chance to gain a qualification in construction.
- Supporting TRAs to undertake projects to improve their estates, particularly through the [Tenants Levy Special Projects Fund](#).

## **Further improvements**

- Some TRAs have raised concerns about the new formal resident involvement structure, especially the enhanced TRA meetings. Some concerns are around the structure itself, while others have been in relation to the consistency of response to their queries and administrative support. Where these concerns are addressable we are developing a plan to improve satisfaction for those TRAs not finding the structure successful. We are also boosting staff training and using the complaints Respond system to ensure all issues are dealt with quickly.
- We are currently undertaking a [skills audit of TRAs](#) and will be developing a programme of training for 2009 to address any skills shortages.
- We need to do more to make sure that the views of residents expressed through new ways of engagement are considered by Panels and Resident Liaison Group who have a more strategic role. This is starting to happen and will be a focus for the coming year.
- We are currently part of the Beacon programme and are receiving free mentoring from Croydon Council. They are working with staff and residents to identify further improvements.

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## **Allocations and lettings**

### **Transfers, housing advice and new tenants**

Responsibility for the Housing Register, Homelessness and Allocations Services is held by LBH, which implemented the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system in 2006. We support them by: making kiosks available at housing offices; promoting initiatives to address housing need and under-occupation; and providing housing advice to and assistance with CBL for existing tenants.

A simplified [lettings standard](#) is providing clear and concise information to new tenants about what to expect in their new home. The letting standard is used by staff to ensure consistent quality on all re-let properties. Using the standard, joint inspections (neighbourhood staff and re-let supervisors) are undertaken to make sure the standard is achieved. Tenants reviewed the document and helped us to simplify the information. Tenants receive a copy of the standard when they are invited to inspect.

### **Tenancy agreements, induction and handbook**

It is important that our tenants know right from the start what is expected of them in terms of their tenancy. To achieve this we explain the tenancy agreement using a structured sign up procedure, show new tenants an induction DVD, and issue a tenants' handbook and issue keys once we have received the first rent payment. We collect profiling information to help us deliver services which meet their needs. New tenants receive a decoration pack which is delivered to their home.

All first time tenants are given one-year introductory tenancies.

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## **Tenancy and estate management and anti-social behaviour**

Effective partnering has transformed housing management and led to improved performance (**see performance information**). All five neighbourhood housing management areas have been outsourced, with residents involved in the tendering process for each contract. HH works closely with the partners to ensure consistency, including through regular monitoring. Following the Audit Commission's inspection last year the following improvements were made:

- Case management procedures have improved. All cases of domestic violence, hate crime and ASB have been logged on a shared spreadsheet to allow for effective local monitoring. The new workflow and document management ASB system will go live in September, further improving the management of cases. Customer reports by phone and in person will be recorded on a central system enabling significant customer service improvements. Automatic acknowledgement letters with a case reference, appointment and case officer details are generated at initial contact and case records will be improved by use of standard letters and forms.
- Satisfaction monitoring of residents who have complained has been introduced.
- A revised ASB [policy](#) and [procedures](#) have been drafted and will be considered by the Board in October.
- An ASB and Respect Agenda consultation with residents started in June and will conclude in October. We have asked residents for their input on the ASB policy and [Respect plan](#). This was in addition to extensive consultation with partners and service user focus groups which took place earlier in the year.
- We aim to visit all new tenants within 20 days of them moving into their new home.
- As part of the general review of [service standards](#) a number of new tenancy management standards were introduced. For example transfers, succession and ASB.

### **Tenancy management policies and procedures**

A revised Anti-Social Behaviour policy will be considered by the Board in October, which will complement existing policies on [Domestic Violence](#) and [Hate Crime](#). New procedures and recording mechanisms have also been developed in support of this policy.

### **Providing floating support and sustaining tenancies**

[The Working Better Together](#) protocol provides a framework for providing additional help to tenants through partnerships with Housing Needs, Children's Services, Adult Social Care and the Mental Health Team. Tenancy support for vulnerable adults is provided by [Single Homeless Project and Family Mosaic](#), based in neighbourhood offices. HH makes referrals to these agencies, who work with tenants so that they can successfully maintain their tenancy and meet any of their support needs.

### **Auditing tenancies**

We audit [10% of our tenancies annually](#). We target those tenants who we believe are at higher risk of sub-letting. We also undertake new home visits and our estate safety team do specific audits in regard to illegal sub-letting. In 2007/08 we repossessed/terminated 140 tenancies. Many of these cases were already going through the procedures for rent arrears however some of the cases were for illegal occupation or for family members moving into the property instead of the tenant.

### **Incentives**

We have introduced a number of incentives to promote responsible tenant behaviour.

- [Pride of Place](#) is a tenant's reward scheme introduced to reinforce 'good tenancy behaviour'.

- We have reviewed and simplified the incentive scheme for residents ending their tenancy. The new HH [Cash Incentive Scheme](#) is paid automatically to tenants who leave their home in a clean and tidy state as specified in the policy.

### **Our approach to achieving the Respect Standard**

We have signed up to the Respect Standard and have produced an [action plan](#) which is reviewed at Executive Team and Board level. The action plan was widely consulted on (partners, police, Community Safety) and significant progress has been made.

### **Using enforcement action and tackling abuse**

We use a range of enforcement methods to tackle anti-social behaviour including:

- We communicate with residents openly and work with them where possible to resolve the issue. This can include home visits, interviews and reminding them of their obligations as tenants.
- Using Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) as we have done in 13 cases last year (2007/08).
- In serious cases where enforcement is needed we have worked with the Police and Council to apply to the courts for Anti Social Behaviour Orders and injunctions. In 2007/08, 2 ASBOs were issued.
- We will also serve notices and seek possession when this is required.
- Multi-agency case panels at each neighbourhood meet regularly to review case work and actions.
- The [Estate Safety](#) team deal with high level criminal related ASB and fraud. The team is trained in investigative work and fraud detection and are RIPA qualified in terms of CCTV use. They have been particularly successful in combating drugs and gang activity.

### **Diversions activities and prevention**

- Diversions initiatives are in place to provide young people with activities on estates. These include: the Bike Project; Nemesis Dance; Kickz (football); a British army youth programme; and a Bike Project which teaches young people to renovate bicycles.
- In 2007/8 we delivered a wide range of security improvements to our estates, including installing 1200 multi-locking steel doors; new door entry systems on 80 blocks; upgrading lighting on 48 blocks; and networking 44 sites to the wireless CCTV network. This work has been in consultation with residents and police and has made estates safer and less prone to burglary.
- We have a steady flow of ASB news which is communicated through our tenant newsletter. This is highlighting our efforts to tackle ASB and informing residents about how to report ASB.

### **Working in partnership**

[We work closely with colleagues](#) in Team Hackney (the local strategic partnership), the Police, Hackney Council and Community Safety to deliver effective prevention, intervention, diversion and enforcement. Other examples include:

- At our Homerton Neighbourhood Office where housing management staff, the SHP tenancy support team and the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team are co-located and work closely together.
- We currently have a Crime Prevention Design Advisor, seconded from the Metropolitan Police Service, whose role is to 'design out' crime and fear of crime amongst residents and to 'design in' community safety measures on new builds, refurbishments and existing estates.
- We work with LBH's Environmental Health to deal with noise nuisance.
- We have appointed an independent mediation service to replace Hackney Mediation which closed this year. The replacement service will start taking referrals in October.

### **Recording ASB for management purposes**

All ASB complaints and responses are recorded. This data is analysed and mapped along with that from the Council and police to identify patterns which are used for service planning across HH. [Regular case review](#) panels at the neighbourhood and borough level are also held to discuss individual cases, review trends and take action where required.

### **Measuring performance**

Our performance against service standards for ASB, nuisance and housing management services is measured and reported to Executive Team. Customer satisfaction with case handling and outcomes is analysed by an independent market research organisation and reported quarterly to the Board and Executive Team. We record our [performance](#) in regards to ASB using HouseMark benchmarking criteria.

### **Support for perpetrators**

The Crackdown project, works with the drug action team to help people get off drugs. The [Family Intensive Support Project](#) targets the 20 most problematic families from across the borough, with a view to providing support to reduce the risk of their children entering into crime or serious ASB activity.

### **Support for victims and witnesses**

We work closely with re-housing to provide temporary accommodation where witnesses or victims are threatened. Professional witnesses have been used to assist in ASB investigations. For example, a professional witness was used to ascertain the extent of alleged noise nuisance experienced by a resident in Queensbridge. Combined with the use of scientific equipment to measure the level of noise, this proved to be an extremely useful method for determining an appropriate course of action.

### **Further improvements**

In order to improve the service further we have prioritised the following activities during 2008/09:

- The terms of the current Council tenancy agreement will be updated and rephrased in plain English.
- We will be completing the Respect consultation and publishing the results later this year, along with an action plan and staff training about working with communities in tackling ASB, hate crime and nuisance.
- Further witness and victims support schemes are being developed.

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## **Estate services (cleaning and grounds maintenance)**

The previous inspection recognised that the provision of Estate Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance services had significantly improved. HH identified inconsistencies between the improved in-house provision and the performance of external contractors. This led to the decision to undertake a [BVR of these services](#).

The review found that the in-house provision and its approach to service delivery (when compared on quality and cost) represented value for money. It was on this basis that residents, the Board and Councillors made the decision to bring externalised areas of the [service back in house](#). The BVR also recommended the adoption of an improvement plan which would facilitate the improvement of externalised areas over a three year period.

### **Service standards**

The service standards for these services have been published and they mirror the grading system described within the Environmental Protection Act. [All grades \(A-D\) are illustrated pictorially](#), which helps residents and officers undertaking regular inspections with rating service delivery on estates. Grades A and B are pass rated and C and D are fail grades. Every block on an estate displays a schedule of the services to be provided and the frequency of provision.

### **Estate inspections and performance monitoring**

We monitor performance and can demonstrate improvements:

- The interim MORI survey results show that 70% of tenants are either very or fairly satisfied with the cleanliness of their estate.
- We work closely with residents in inspecting the performance of estate cleaning and grounds maintenance. Neighbourhood staff undertake programmed inspections on every estate each month using an inspection checklist. This information is included in the monthly performance digest. Current pass rate [performance](#) has Estate Cleaning at 94% and Grounds Maintenance at 92%. We recognise there is some inconsistency in marking rates across the neighbourhoods but we are taking action to address this.
- We also conduct monthly call back surveys to help improve the service. 200-300 residents who have had a repair are surveyed by the HH Contact Centre regarding their satisfaction with EC and GM. Currently [satisfaction](#) is at 92% for Estate Cleaning and 97% Grounds Maintenance.

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships have been formed to improve the service for residents. We are working with:

- The Probation Service and Youth Offenders Teams to provide supervised work experience on estates. This is allowing us to provide free gardening services for residents.
- The East London Business Association to renovate our [community halls](#).
- The Council's waste management team to improve and maximise recycling on estates, to introduce new storage arrangements and to implement enforcement proposals.

## Local budgets and improvements to communal areas

Estate Improvement Budgets (EIB) and [Communal Works Budgets](#) are both resident led. EIB budgets are allocated to TRAs and the Communal Works Budget is allocated at a neighbourhood level with residents and the neighbourhood partners determining how they want to spend their budgets.

## Grounds maintenance (gardening)

HH runs a planned programme to ensure grounds are maintained to a good standard. In addition to regular lawn mowing and a winter maintenance programme, we have also secured additional funding to improve gardens on estates. Funding of £500k for 2008/09 has been secured from London In Bloom, Team Hackney Olympic funds, REAP, and the Learning Trust to undertake specific improvement projects.

[Estate Local Environmental Quality Surveys](#) are being undertaken by fully trained members of staff, the aim of which is to provide an estate wide picture of local environmental conditions, which will help inform decisions about where resources should be focused.

## Further improvements

We believe we can continue to improve this service for residents by:

- Using anti-graffiti paint on communal walls and ceilings, and refreshing communal surfaces by floor painting.
- Developing the concept of multi-skilling operatives who will be able to a range of EC and GM activities.
- We have joined up to ENCAMS inspections and staff have been trained to undertake these assessments, which will be used to further improve the service.

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## Leasehold management

At present 27% of HH residents are either leaseholders or freeholders who pay service charges. This means that on our estates:

- There is a widening tenure mix, with over 7,400 leaseholders and 1,270 service charge paying freeholders. In the last five years approximately 3,000 properties have been resold on the open market,
- [Service charge](#) payers in the financial year for 2007/08, contributed £8.7m in service charges and £6.4m in terms of invoiced major works.

## Clear and accurate information

We have improved the accessibility, clarity and accuracy of information for leaseholders. The following are examples of how we have achieved this:

- Dedicated telephone lines and generic email addresses that direct residents to specialist teams who can answer queries.
- Each neighbourhood office has a dedicated leasehold officer to answer leasehold queries.
- Twice yearly [leaseholder newsletters](#), the website, [leaflets](#) and [handbooks](#) provide regular information and have been developed with feedback from leaseholders.
- Accurate, timely and [clear bills](#) with detailed information.
- Providing a breakdown of service charge accounts and statements on request.
- Providing a wide range of flexible payment options including direct debit, which 15% of leaseholders use, cash payments, standing orders, telephone payments, and web based payments on-line.
- Provision of welcome packs and sellers' information packs to all new leaseholders.
- First annual [Leaseholders and Freeholders Conference](#) in January 2008 which was generally welcomed by 150 attendees.
- [Annual Financial Advice Day](#) which provided payment advice and financing options.
- [Major Works Advice Day](#) which informed residents about what is planned in the way of major works, how the works are carried out and what they can expect to pay.
- [Lease schedules](#) which are clearly explained in plain language in the handbook.
- Training of neighbourhood, Contact Centre and technical staff on leasehold management.
- A flexible range of repayment options for major works including, a 5% prompt payment discount, 12, 24, and 36 month repayment periods, a discretionary mortgage from the Council, and the option for leaseholders over 60 years of age to place a charge on the property becoming payable when the property is sold.

## Leaseholder engagement

Strong engagement with leaseholders has been achieved through:

- An allocated place for a Leaseholder representative on the HH Board.
- A Borough-wide [Leaseholder and Freeholder Forum](#) established in 2006, together with support to our major local Leaseholder Association.
- An enhanced web site with web pages for the Borough-wide Forum and local leaseholder Association.
- Leaseholder consultation contributing to the development of service standards, more user friendly Section 20 notices and the [decision on a sinking fund](#).
- Leaseholders having a significant role in service planning and decision making, e.g. the tender evaluation process for a wide range of major contracts, including the housing management contracts, and the repair contracts. The Borough-wide Forum was consulted on the HH Delivery Plan 2008. The impact of this involvement has seen a leasehold officer in each Neighbourhood Office, additional training for staff on leasehold management, more customer focused FAQ's for Section 20 consultation Notices, and more Major works and Financial Advice events.
- Leaseholder consultation on a costed five year investment plan for both Decent Homes and planned maintenance which has led to [Consultation Plus](#), our strategy for communicating asset plans to leaseholders.
- Commissioning a second leaseholder-only survey. Field work is almost completed, with interim results indicating overall leaseholder satisfaction of 26%, a small increase of 2% from the first leaseholder survey in 2007. We recognise this is low, with the main factors being the doubling of service charges as more services are billed and the major works bills issued for external Decent Homes works.

## Service charge collection

To maintain our performance for service charge collection, currently at 103% for 2007/08, as benchmarked against members of the Association of London Government (now London Councils), and the [London and Southern ALMO Benchmarking Group](#). We have:

- Reduced overall service charge arrears from 32% in 2006 to 28% in 2008
- Increased income through better performance management and interim billing for major works.
- Sent estimated and actual invoices on time and that are accurate and easy to understand. We also send additional statements twice a year.
- Provided welfare advice, debt advice and a wide range of repayment options that are publicised.
- Effectively managed debt recovery through the creation of a single recovery team.
- Undertaken robust enforcement action, including forfeiture of a lease for anti-social behaviour.
- Provided direct debit for service charges and now over 1,200 home owners use this facility.
- Introduced a formal [Disputes Resolution Service](#) in 2007 to enable leaseholders/freeholders to have the opportunity for their dispute to be resolved by an independently chaired Panel.

## Further improvements

We believe that we can further enhance this service and provide even better value by:

- Developing leaseholder engagement in a way that recognises an increasing percentage of homeowners have bought on the open market and may have different expectations to original RTB owners.
- Assisting leaseholders with managing service charge and major works bills during the current financial difficulties and credit restrictions.
- Improving the way we measure satisfaction of leaseholders regarding communal repairs to estates.
- Provision to request service charge accounts, statements and breakdowns on-line and to be automatically emailed to leaseholders/freeholders within minutes.
- Introducing gas servicing for leaseholders.
- Ensuring leaseholders are more comprehensively notified of estate inspections which drive many communal works programmes.

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## Right to Buy management

Hackney continues to have the best performance in London in responding to [Right to Buy applications](#) and a strong focus on customer views, opinions and [satisfaction levels](#) is at the core of our service.

The Home Owners Welcome Pack addresses our customers demand for high quality information about home ownership and homeowner responsibilities. In addition to this we:

- Offer “Awareness of customer responsibility” interviews to 100% of RTB applicants at the “Offer” stage.
- Provide multilingual versions of booklets also available in large print, Braille and on CD.
- Offer home visits where needed.
- Offer a texting service that provides applicants with updates about their application.
- Attend events for hard to reach groups.
- Ensure [information](#) is available on the RTB through local neighbourhood offices.

### Managing Right to Buy applications

Good practice initiatives and compliance is well evidenced and benchmarked across London. This includes:

- All S125 data provided, including costed plans for future works.
- 100% of RTB2s served within time and 99% Offer Notices within time.
- A database of cases that proceed to valuation, enabling effective monitoring of progress and compliance with statutory and SLA time limits and identification of properties that refuse entry to the Borough Valuer.
- No financial penalties incurred, nor any Delay Notices.
- Records for anti-social behaviour and demolition notices for suspended Right to Buy.
- Easy identification of applications under varying legislation.

### Neighbourhood sustainability and home ownership

We ensure that mixed tenure is sustained across Hackney through promoting the Right to Buy for tenants through:

- Handbooks and offer stage interviews so that applicants are aware of their legal and contractual responsibilities and mortgage guidance is provided.
- Collaboration with Hackney Council, for strategic sustainable, mixed communities.

### Further improvements

We believe that we can further enhance this service and provide even more added value by:

- Benchmarking our service costs and options for delivering services.
- Using reduction in demand for Right to Buy to review use of resources.
- Providing on-line Right to Buy services including applications as part of ‘Project Excellence’.

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## Value for money

Our [value for money strategy](#) is to ensure all HH services are provided in a cost-effective and efficient manner and that our resources are focused on what residents most need. Some of our major achievements in this area include:

- HH has reduced costs through Gershon savings, restructuring and procurement. The total saving for 2007/08 was £3.2m (see savings table below).
- HH has contributed to year-end HRA surpluses for the past two years.
- [Service costs](#) are similar to those for other inner London Housing organisations.
- Tendering of several major contracts covering housing management, capital works and repairs and maintenance has brought cost savings and significant value added features. The housing management contracts have saved £1.9m in 2007/08 and £640k in 2008/09 as a result of building in Gershon savings and stock reduction adjustments into the contracts.
- Staffing cost savings in property services directorate have been re-invested into improvement projects in this area.
- The Decent Homes programme has shown a [cost saving of 10%](#) due to innovative partnering which has been re-invested into the programme.
- Partnered maintenance contracts have made direct savings of £400k as well as additional value and efficiencies.

- Tackling poor performance in key areas such as arrears and voids turnaround which has led to increased income from rents.
- Best Value Reviews of [Estate Cleaning and Grounds maintenance](#) and [Housing Repairs and Maintenance](#) services.

### Focus on value for money

There is a strong corporate focus on providing value for money. One of our key business objectives is 'Running HH well' and one of our key values is 'achieving our service promises while remaining cost conscious'. The strategic focus for value for money improvements is provided by the three-year VFM strategy which was approved by the Board in April 2006. All service area managers are involved in the budget setting process and for developing cost and efficiency savings as part of their annual service plans.

Budget year	Savings achieved as part of budget setting (new savings each year)
2008/09	£4.5m (HH and delegated budgets)
2007/08	£4.1m (HH and delegated budgets)
2006/07	£3.2m (HH and delegated budgets)

### Budget planning and monitoring

HH has the responsibility for monitoring for its own budgets (£41m) and delegated budget (£74m revenue expenditure, £47m capital expenditure and £111m income). Revenue and Capital monitoring is carried out monthly and reported at summary level to the Audit & Finance Committee and Board. Robust financial planning and monitoring processes include:

- Ensuring that managers monitor and control their budgets through a system of monthly reporting through the Executive Team, Audit and Finance Committee and Board. Each manager is allocated a service accountant to assist with budget management.
- Inclusion of value for money as a key consideration in annual service planning, with all teams required to show how they can save money, increase efficiency and how they will benchmark their service.
- Inclusion of annual 3% Gershon savings built into the Management Agreement with Hackney Council, equating to £2m in the past year. The same Gershon savings are built into the housing management partner contracts.
- HH prepares both the annual [HRA budget report](#) and the [HRA Business Plan](#) for approval by the Council. This ensures that spending plans are subject to the scrutiny and approval of the Board and Council.

### Our costs and benchmarking

Understanding the costs of our services has been weak in the past, but we have used benchmarking to drive cost reduction and match peer performance to ensure we continue to improve. The benefits achieved are shown by the improvement in the costs involved in managing the housing management and maintenance functions as detailed in House Mark's benchmarking returns for 2006/7 and 2007/8. They evidence a continuous reduction in the total "[Core Housing Management Costs](#)" from **£769** per property in 2005/6; **£771** per property in 2006/7; to **£665** per property in the draft 2007/08 report.

### Service level agreements

HH has Service Level Agreements (SLA) totalling £2.6 million incorporated in its Management Fee with LBH for provision of HR, Financial and ICT services. In addition there are a number of agreements for service provision funded from delegated budgets and subject to the same degree of scrutiny for best value. Some of the key changes in the past year include:

- Development of new SLAs for the [Equipment and Adaptation Service](#) and [Fleet Management Unit](#).
- Terminating an SLA on asbestos management.
- Revising and updating the Domestic Violence and Hate Crime SLA and improving the [Legal SLA](#).
- Working with LBH on major procurement exercises for providers of IT and payroll services.

Within its VFM Strategy HH has an approved methodology for undertaking service reviews which is based on the best value review process thus ensuring that all the right questions are asked, all necessary areas of review are covered and the outcomes of the review are meaningful and usable. This approach is adopted for consistency both for internal service reviews and for SLA reviews.

All of the SLAs have been reviewed for operational efficiency, and the Legal, CCTV, Property Services and Asbestos SLAs were subject to reported full best value challenge and review in 2006-07. Currently the Fleet SLA is undergoing challenge, and best value reviews of the Finance, Legal and Property Services SLAs are included in the VFM Plan 2008-09, with the remaining services to be scheduled for review in 2009-10.

## Procurement

HH has a [procurement strategy](#) and guidance for staff and a transparent process for procurement. We have used procurement as a driver for achieving best value as evidenced by:

- HH now has 17 specialist planned maintenance contracts in place following two rounds of European Union Procurement in 2005 and 2007. We have achieved significant value added benefits and residents are involved in monitoring the contracts.
- HH has established robust and sustainable partnering arrangements, which have yielded cost savings and valued added benefits. Some examples include: savings of 10% for Decent Homes; and savings of £1.9m in 06/07 for re-tendering housing management contracts in two neighbourhoods.
- In February 2008, the organisation procured a new Integrated Housing Management IT System, as part of [Project Excellence](#). This followed a comprehensive process that involved the new Competitive Dialogue process which facilitated the selection of the solution which was both cost effective and contained all required functionality.
- Following a further review by key Council and HH officers in June 2008, the LBH Cabinet Procurement Committee (CPC) agreed a framework for HH to move towards taking on full responsibility for Medium and High Risk projects, subject to HH meeting a range of set performance criteria.

## Track record in re-allocating resources

We understand the need to be flexible and have been able to demonstrate allocating resources to where they are most needed:

- [Resourcing our Priorities](#) bids are accepted annually to fund special work programmes, to divert extra funds and to fund innovative pilot programmes.
- An additional £210k (each year) has been invested to fund the new repairs policy.
- The cleaning and grounds maintenance best value review has delivered cash savings of £100k and £600k has been re-invested in the service, including the purchase of new equipment.

## Further improvements

There are a number of areas where we are furthering our value for money focus:

- Reviewing the value for money strategy for 2009-2013 in line with the strategic business plan and continuing to set challenging savings and efficiency targets.
- Realising the efficiency savings that will result from 'Project Excellence' and using this new system to its full potential to offer residents a better service.
- Further efficiency savings as a result of the repairs improvement plan. This will be brought about due to Imprest stock management, vehicle tracking and increased productivity.

## Prospects for improvement

### TRACK RECORD

#### Direction of travel

The direction of travel for our performance is extremely positive, and we have achieved top quartile performance for a number of important performance measures.

We have developed a [performance management framework](#) and produce monthly [performance information](#) which is communicated to staff and residents and regularly reviewed by the Board. We have 152 performance indicators which are reported regularly. From the entire range of indicators, 24 have been selected as the business critical set of indicators to assist in focussing on the aspects of the service most important for service improvement.

Performance indicator	Council	Council	ALMO	ALMO	2006/07 - Comparisons			ALMO
	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	Top Quartile	Median	Bottom Quartile	Q1 (July) 2008/9
Average SAP rating	68	69	70	72	LB 70	LB 69	LB 69	Reported Annually
Rent collection (BV66a)	92.9%	95.1%	95.6%	98.1%	LB 97.6%	LB 97.05%	LB 96.57%	98.30%
Arrears as % of rent roll	11.6%	9.9%	7.5%	5.5%	HM 3.30%	HM 3.61%	HM 4.98%	4.94%%
Service charges billed and collected	103.9% (of £4.7m)	112.3% (of £5.1m)	104% (of £7.0m)	102.6% (of £8.5m)	N/A	N/A	N/A	99% (of £2.9m)
Repairs appointments made and kept	92.4%	94.1%	98.2%	98.0%	HM 98.1%	HM 96.0%	HM 93.0%	91.83%
% urgent repairs done within Gov't time limits	N/A	95.2%	97.5%	97.6%	HM 99.0%	HM 97.0%	HM 92.4%	98.8%
Average time to do non-urgent repairs	7.6 days	6.9 days	6.0 days	7.6 days	HM 7.15	HM 8.95	HM 10.20	7.98 days
Average time to relet	35 days	24 days	26 days	21 days	LB 26	LB 33	LB 39	25 days
Customer satisfaction	51%	N/A	59%	N/A	LB 73%	LB 68%	LB 64%	68% (Interim results)
Satisfaction with involvement opportunities	45%	N/A	53%	N/A	LB 62%	LB 56%	LB 53%	54% (Interim results)
House Mark core housing management costs	£749	£769	£771	£665	£495	£607	£875	Reported Annually

KEY: LB – London Borough, HM – House Mark National ALMO club

#### Improvements for residents

Feedback from residents is taken into account to inform service development and delivery and to assist in our priority setting. We have made improvements to our service in response to resident needs:

- We offer four repairs appointment slots during the day for residents, including an early morning and early evening slot, and we now offer Saturday morning repairs.
- We have improved our repairs first time rate. This has been achieved through multi-skilling of operatives and a new pay structure which rewards operatives who complete the job in one visit.

- Weekend cleaning delivered on 'hot spot' estates where it is most needed.
- Installing 1200 multi-locking steel doors; new door entry systems on 80 blocks; upgrading lighting on 48 blocks; and networking 44 sites to the wireless CCTV network has made estates safer.
- New forms of advice and support are available for leaseholders who are experiencing financial problems, including advice days and payment options.
- The standard of empty (void) properties has improved through the implementation of a new Lettings Standard.

Following the Audit Commission inspection report of August 2007, HH established a detailed [Service Improvement Programme 2007-08](#). This not only addressed the main six sets of recommendations, but also identified the many recommendations within the main body of the inspection report. Of the 518 specific improvements identified the vast majority are completed, with those not yet fully completed and longer-term projects incorporated into 2008/09 Service Plans.

We have used other external feedback to improve services:

- Benchmarking with House Mark data has helped us to reduce costs in areas including voids and reactive repairs.
- Croydon Council are helping us to improve resident participation as part of the Beacon mentoring programme.
- Expert consultants have assessed, challenged and advised us on the best way to restructure and reorganise the repairs service.

## **PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

### **Setting our vision, strategic objectives and priorities**

In the past year we have improved our planning and performance management systems. HH's vision is set out in its [Strategic Plan](#) which provides a broad framework for priorities over the next five years and our key values. The Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with staff and residents and approved by the Board. There are four main business objectives:

- Delivering excellent, accessible services
- Delivering modern homes
- Running HH well
- Improving neighbourhoods

There is a more short term [Delivery Plan](#) agreed with the Council which sets out plans on major areas such as the Decent Homes programme and a range of performance targets across all services.

### **How we determine our priorities**

We have listened to and acted upon feedback from a variety of sources, demonstrating our ability to learn from others and helping us deliver a better service for residents. Our main drivers for improvement are:

- Addressing specific areas identified by external assessments
- Responding to residents' views
- Annual setting of targets as part of service planning
- Benchmarking, peer review and value for money

### **Our service and improvement plans**

Each service area has an annual [Service Plan](#) which looks at the priority service aims and planned service improvements in the light of strategic objectives. Each service plan covers diversity, customer focus and value for money. Progress in the improvement process is monitored at the corporate level in an annual Service Improvement Plan.

### **The performance management framework and managing risk**

The performance management framework ensures performance is regularly reviewed and action is taken where necessary to address poor performance. Features of the framework include:

- Quarterly Performance Review reports go to the Board, who have helped drive up performance. For example, the Board has scrutinised performance on void property standards and sickness. The Board is also involved in reviewing high level targets annually.
- The Chief Executive and Executive Team are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of performance information, linking performance indicators to corporate and service plans, reviewing monthly performance and using performance as a tool for learning.

- This cycle of reporting, reviewing and taking necessary action is mirrored with the Council through monthly and higher level quarterly liaison meetings at which performance issues are considered. As part of this process HH agrees with the Council a summary of key points in the Delivery Plan. There is also a risk register agreed annually with the Council and regularly considered by the Executive Team. HH has a [Business Continuity Policy](#) and a Business Continuity Plan to ensure that business can continue in the event of any emergency.
- Each member of staff has annual goals which are set in line with their service area's Service Plan. This is formalised in the [annual appraisal process](#) with its six monthly reviews. Arising from that process there are personal development plans including training requirements and there is an organisational [Learning and Development Policy](#).

### **Involving our customers in planning**

Our priorities are influenced by residents in a number of ways. For example, options for estate improvements and communal repairs works are identified directly by resident representatives at the estate level and prioritised by Neighbourhood Panel representatives within budget limits at neighbourhood level.

Residents have also been involved in service reviews e.g. estate services, contract reviews for procurement of Decent Homes contractors and the identification of the key service standards.

There is also annual input from the residents on the Neighbourhood Investment Boards on the phasing of the location of Decent Homes work. This is in addition to the involvement of residents on a specific estate on the pre-works options for programmes such as the kitchens and bathrooms.

On programmes such as the entry phone installation programme, residents' views on the urgency of entry phones for their block play a major part of the prioritisation of the programme.

We have also involved resident Panels and liaison groups in the development of over-arching planning documents such as the Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan.

## **CAPACITY**

### **Leadership**

The HH Board represents the local community in terms of diversity and members have a wide range of skills, supplemented by an [annual training plan](#), an annual Skills Audit Review Process and a 360 degree appraisal process. New Board members are assigned a Board member buddy and are invited to a HH new Board member induction.

The [HH Executive Team](#), chaired by Chief Executive Charlotte Graves, has expanded in the past year to 11 members and includes directors or heads of service from all service areas and membership from housing partner organisations. The team meets fortnightly to review performance.

There has been an emphasis on improving staff communication in the past year, with an [annual conference](#), bi-monthly [staff newsletter](#), team meetings, [weekly email bulletins](#) and [monthly manager's briefings](#). We are also focusing on strengthening communications for non-office based staff. As a result, we have produced an [internal communications strategy](#), which has been devised in consultation with managers and staff across all service areas and PCs have been installed in one of the depot canteens for internet access.

We also aim to involve staff in decision making, including asking for [feedback on the mission and values](#) which led to a simplification of the values. Managers are involved developing ideas for improvement, such as how we can better manage performance.

### **Human Resources and training**

HH recognises staff are its most valuable resource as reflected in the [HR Strategy](#). HH offers a training and development programme which responds to the needs of staff and their managers rather than offering a pre-set menu of courses. There is [core training](#) offered in equality and diversity and customer care training has been prioritised for frontline staff. [Customised](#) training is widely offered and individuals are encouraged to develop their qualifications through the [post entry qualification scheme](#). There is a continuous process of review of feedback from the attendees to assess the efficiency and value for money of the courses offered.

[Staff surveys](#) are used to take the views of staff on central issues. For instance some elements of the initial Strategic Plan were confusing to staff and were consequently simplified.

We are rigorously enforcing the sickness review process to drive down in particular the level of long term sickness. Our overall sickness level was 10.3 days for 2007/08. Although, benchmarking indicates it is not out of line with other ALMOs we want to bring these figures down to 8.4 days. In the first quarter we reduced the sickness level to an annualised rate of 8.5 days per person.

### **Value for money and financial capacity**

HH gives high priority to its strategy for achieving improved value for money. It has been reviewed by the Board in addition to the regular budgetary reports and capital programme updates. We are committed to achieving year on year savings in excess of the Gershon savings level as agreed with the Council and regularly monitored as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Planning process. Progress is formally reviewed twice a year as well as in regular liaison. As part of its strategy there are a set of Value for Money reviews. These have involved extensive comparisons with other like agencies and have already delivered significant savings.

The HRA in Hackney has £25m million revenue reserves but like other organisations operating within this framework, there are serious long-term concerns as Government allowances are reduced. We are addressing this as demonstrated in the series of savings in the Medium Term Planning Forecast.

### **Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

[Our ICT Strategy](#) is updated annually and informed by a [regular user survey](#). We have embarked on a major project 'Project Excellence' to replace our IT system. The primary contractor has been appointed and the first module is about to go live. The complete system will be in place in 2010 and will deliver an Integrated Housing Management system, Customer Relationship Management and Electronic Document Management to ensure that customers can be offered the very best and consistent service however they choose to contact us.

In readiness for the new systems an exercise of mapping current business processes has been completed, and work is underway to baseline current services to allow us to measure efficiency and cost savings. To make the most of the new tools an ICT Skills Audit has been conducted and a training programme is in place to make sure that all staff has up to date ICT skills.

### **Partnerships**

The core relationship is with residents and we have many important partnerships that help us deliver services to them. We work with:

- Three housing management partners (Mouchel, Pinnacle and Pathmeads) to deliver frontline housing services. These partners add value by supporting community projects and by bringing a range of skills.
- Decent Homes partners and building maintenance partners. The benefits have been quality assurance systems, cost savings and major value adds, such as support for community programmes
- The Council, not only in the service wide monitoring and planning arrangements, but also across the delivery of public services such as street cleaning, recycling and service areas such as anti-social behaviour. There is also detailed joint working on important service areas such as regeneration and maximising the use and availability of stock in tackling poverty.
- The Local Strategic Partnership (Team Hackney) to develop borough-wide priorities.
- HH is a founding member of a new best practice and benchmarking group, the Asset Management Improvement Partnership. This has already built a membership of social housing providers and allows for best practice to be shared across the diverse membership.
- Hackney Homes has strong operational links with other key agencies in the borough such as the police, probation service as well as strategic links to agencies like Job Centre Plus involved in critical Local Strategic Partnership objectives such as tackling worklessness.

## Action plan

Each service area has an annual Service Plan which looks at the priority service aims and planned service improvements in light of objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. The top improvement priorities for 2008/09 as referenced throughout this document are summarised here.

Project Aims	Targets (Selection)	Timeline	Reference
<b>Project Excellence</b> To implement Universal Housing integrated housing management solution and associated systems, including customer relationship management and electronic document management, repairs contractor systems and mobile working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Customer contact satisfaction to improve by 20%</li> <li>▪ Staff satisfaction to improve by 20%</li> <li>▪ Staff productivity to increase by 30%</li> <li>▪ Cash savings of up to £1 million per annum</li> </ul>	Completion by 2010, with quick wins phase in 2008.	<a href="#">Project Excellence</a>  <a href="#">Project Plan</a>
<b>Interim Repairs Programme: Regeneration Estates</b> To address the short-medium term repairs and maintenance needs on estates identified as part of LBH's regeneration programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify health &amp; safety repairs</li> <li>▪ Identify monies (Capital) to meet repairs and maintenance requirements</li> <li>▪ Consult/ inform affected residents</li> </ul>	Programme of works by November 08	<a href="#">Asset Management Strategy</a>
<b>Increasing housing benefit take up</b> To conduct targeted campaigns for tenants not receiving housing benefits. This includes letters to pension service credit customers not receiving HB and working with community groups to identify reasons for lower take up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertake targeted take-up campaigns at groups where there are low take-up levels</li> <li>▪ Joint event with the African community and Housing Benefits to raise HB awareness and take-up.</li> </ul>	2008/09 plan in place.	<a href="#">Take Up Report</a>  <a href="#">Service Plan</a>
<b>Call Recording in Housing Contact Centre</b> To facilitate the improvement of customer service, quality of information and problem resolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify calls recording requirements for repairs reporting service</li> <li>▪ Finalise and agree calls recording protocol</li> <li>▪ Introduce call recording into HCC by Oct 08</li> </ul>	October 2008	<a href="#">Repairs Service Plan</a>
<b>Improving Stage 2 complaints performance</b> Improve Stage 2 responses through training, learning from complaints reviews and providing support to staff through complaints team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 training days provided by LG Ombudsman</li> <li>▪ Post inspection all stage 1 repairs complaints</li> <li>▪ Less than 30% stage 2 complaints upheld</li> </ul>	Achieved by 2010 / 11	<a href="#">Complaints Procedure Service Plan</a>
<b>Resident involvement structure review</b> To work with residents to review the changes made to the structure of resident involvement last year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are currently working with Panels and TRAs to develop a timeline and plan for undertaking this review.</li> </ul>	Early 2009	<a href="#">Strategy</a>  <a href="#">Service Plan</a>
<b>Increased collection of re-charges for tenants</b> To increase collection of voids and repairs re-charges for tenants. This will be achieved with a collection agency, who have been procured and will work on an incentive rate for all collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Procure collection agency to increase collection rates</li> <li>▪ Set initial collection performance target of agency at 20% (subject to 6-month review)</li> </ul>	By end of 2008	<a href="#">Service Plan</a>
<b>Estate Plans</b> Estate Plans will provide the vehicle for enhanced resident involvement regarding the prioritising of all asset management works on estates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifying resource and implementation strategy for estate plan pilot estates</li> <li>▪ Using sustainability matrix, prioritise estates to go through estate plan process</li> </ul>	By April 2009	<a href="#">Asset Management Strategy</a>

<p><b>Respect Action Plan</b> To work with residents to address the need to tackle ASB; to reduce fear of crime; to raise community standards; to empower residents to respond to ASB; and to involve residents in respecting their local environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Run focus groups with BME and hard to reach groups and public meetings on estates where ASB has been prevalent</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of court orders obtained in ASB case to 50 per annum</li> </ul>	<p>Oct 08 –Apr 09  2009/10</p>	<p><a href="#">Respect Action Plan</a></p>
<p><b>Training programme for TRAs and Panels</b> To provide residents with training that meets their needs and allows them to develop in their role as resident representatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training courses commenced Sept/ Oct 08. I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Committee training</li> <li>○ Accounting and Book Keeping</li> <li>○ Equalities &amp; Diversity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Early 2009</p>	<p><a href="#">Compact Training</a></p>
<p><b>Witness and Victim Support Scheme</b> To provide additional support for residents who report ASB.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase publicity to encourage reporting of ASB, emphasising confidentiality &amp; support</li> <li>▪ Develop a scheme which supports witnesses and victims before, during and after giving evidence in court - links to increasing the number of cases taken to court to 50</li> </ul>	<p>2009/10  April 2009</p>	<p><a href="#">Respect Action Plan</a></p>
<p><b>Embedding new staff in Estate Services</b> Ensure that newly assimilated staff from formerly externalised contracts are inducted and trained to ensure consistency of Estate Services provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Induction of new staff September 08</li> <li>▪ On the job training of staff in Estate Standards and delivery</li> </ul>	<p>To be confirmed (Sept-Nov 08)</p>	<p><a href="#">Service Plan</a></p>
<p><b>Online accounts for leaseholders</b> Provide web facilities to allow customers to access service charge and major works accounts, balances and information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce e-facility for l-holders to access statements of accounts, invoices &amp; breakdowns</li> <li>▪ Develop on-line availability as part of Project Excellence</li> </ul>	<p>Sept 08  June 2010</p>	<p><a href="#">Service Plan Project Excellence Plan</a></p>
<p><b>Measuring the impact of ASB initiatives</b> Measuring the impact of door entry and CCTV programmes and diversionary activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis of the impact of safety/ security planned maintenance initiatives on estates</li> <li>▪ Development of crime hot spot maps to inform ASB reduction initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>2009/10</p>	<p><a href="#">Respect Action Plan</a></p>
<p><b>Increasing % of women and BME staff in management positions</b> To increase representation of women and BME staff at senior management level. A workshop has been held with managers to develop ideas and this paper will be progressed through Executive Team and HR Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addendum to HR strategy highlighting key strategies to address issue</li> <li>▪ Identify short to medium term recruitment, training and opportunities to provide appropriate experience for senior positions</li> </ul>	<p>December 08</p>	<p><a href="#">Strategic leadership group briefing HR Service Plan</a></p>
<p><b>Developing the VFM strategy beyond 2009</b> Strategy to focus on income maximisation and the review of SLAs. Benchmarking to be used to drive forward Vfm benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve VFM in services across HH</li> <li>▪ Fairer apportionment of charges to residents.</li> </ul>	<p>Strategy approved by April 2009</p>	<p><a href="#">VFM Blueprint HRA Strategy MTFP</a></p>