

REPORT OF GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

REVIEW OF TEAM HACKNEY	Classification Public	Enclosures
	Ward(s) affected All	

1. CHAIRS FOREWORD

*'Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively'*¹

This review has had the widest scope and also the most far reaching potential significance of all of the reviews that the Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission has undertaken in recent years. The importance of partnership working and the role of our local strategic partnership (Team Hackney) was appreciated by all the members of the Commission at the outset. It is probably true to say that the full nature of its potential significance, within the new and developing Government regime of Local Area Agreements and Comprehensive Area assessments, only really became apparent as the review took evidence from those working in the midst of this transformation. This new environment will mean that the performance of the partnership as a team will in the future become the major way in which Government will measure the success of partner bodies in delivering services for and developing Hackney as a place.

The conclusions of our review will have important implications both for Team Hackney, the partner bodies including the Council, as well as the scrutiny process itself.

We were impressed throughout the review with the commitment and enthusiasm shown by the people and organisations that we saw who play a major part in Team Hackney. There is a clear

¹ <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=531>

recognition of the issues they face, and it has reviewed and remodelled itself, in response to both successes and difficulties, in the way one would expect of a new, dynamic body working in a background of rapid change.

The conclusions of our review concentrate on six areas, where we believe Team Hackney and/or its partner bodies need to develop further in order to be best placed to face the rigours of both the new Government agenda, as well as local pressures for change. These are set out in detail in the report, but in summary are:

Communication - We came to the conclusion that the public branding of Team Hackney as “Team Hackney” was not of crucial importance. We did however see a need to fill some gaps in communication between members of the partnership, and a more widespread need to increase the understanding of what Team Hackney is, and the potential importance of the strategic partnership among some members (including councillors) and staff of the bodies involved.

Leadership - We believe that the Mayor is in a natural position, because of the high profile and democratic legitimacy that his situation allows, to take a larger role in leading Team Hackney, helping to shape its agenda and giving it the public focus it needs. We make recommendations about an enhanced role for the Mayor

Accountability - We saw little evidence that the boards and members of partner bodies played as active a role as their officers. We believe that consideration should be made to facilitating a bigger role for them in setting the direction for and maintaining the accountability of Team Hackney. Throughout almost every section of the review there is a reoccurring theme that there exists a significant potential for wider Member engagement.

Alignment - We believe that the Council should make sure that the structure of its Scrutiny function reflects the organisational themes of Team Hackney. It will be able to operate more effectively if it echoes the structure of what will become the borough’s principle delivery organisation. In the longer term, the Council and other partners may also take on board this objective when considering any future restructuring exercises.

Locality or Neighbourhood Working - the work of the partnership should develop a stronger basis at a local or neighbourhood level. It could do this by building on the new Community Advisory Panels to provide an enhanced Ward/Neighbourhood aspect to its planning and management.

Commissioning - in line with our recommendations on accountability, the partnership should consider increased access to

scrutiny as a way of providing public accountability of expenditure decisions. In addition, we need to make a clearer basis for the representation of the voluntary sector, while allaying the fears expressed by some of them about the fairness of expenditure decisions.

In many ways this review can be seen as an introduction for Hackney's Scrutiny bodies, in this new environment, to the workings of Team Hackney. It is our hope, among our other objectives, that the review itself can be seen as a learning exercise for all of us who have been involved in it. It should be seen as part of the mutual process of understanding of, and engagement with the increasingly important arena of local strategic partnerships and the new planning and assessment processes that will have a huge impact on all those who aspire to deliver efficient and effective public services to the people of Hackney.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Why

Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) are increasingly central to the way local authorities operate. As the democratic hub for an area, local authorities have a natural interest in ensuring that public service delivery in their area is coordinated and provides the best possible value and outcomes for residents.

The Government's White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, and subsequent legislation set out a vision of revitalised local government which includes a central role for LSPs. Such a vision will, for example, see greater amounts of public money being allocated and managed through vehicles like the Local Area Agreement (LAA – see section 6.4.2), an evolution which this Commission believes makes it imperative for a wider group of Members to be informed and involved in the local approach to partnership working.

*“Working in partnership’ has become an important value within the public service, and is expressed in the willingness of managers to develop initiatives that cut across organisational boundaries and do things in new ways..... Trust plays a key role in such an environment. The individuals involved in a partnership or project need to trust each-other in order to put together an initiative that crosses organisational boundaries. And the democratic process needs to trust these ‘boundary spanners’ because sometimes they operate at the margins of the accepted procedures of government’.*²

² What Happens when Government, Business and Civil Society Work Together? School of Public Policy The University of Birmingham UK - 2005

At the outset of our review the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) drew our attention to many different forms and levels of accountability in public services and the NHS, arising from which comes a need for greater clarity around who is accountable for what, to whom and how. It has been suggested to us that it should be clearer to the public who is responsible, how decisions are influenced, and how to obtain redress should something go wrong.

Many of the issues we discussed with CfPS directly relate to the Government's expectation that Overview and Scrutiny will perform an enhanced role relating to the work of LSPs through, for example, delivering enhanced democratic oversight of its activities. During our report, we aim to discuss and offer some possible local responses to these and other issues; including

- How will Overview and Scrutiny appropriately hold partners and the executive to account for the delivery of targets associated with Local Area Agreements and should a wider group of Members be able to influence the development of such targets?
- The extent to which partners are aware and/or need to prepare for the Councillor Call for Action? ³
- How can and should partnerships maximise appropriate community involvement in the outcomes for the borough?

2.2 *Our Terms of Reference for this review*

This Overview and Scrutiny review of Team Hackney aimed to;

- Build wider Member understanding of the role and potential of LSPs and to create an environment where partner organisations may become more familiar with the nature and role of Overview and Scrutiny and how best to engage with it as a function.
- Consider current and any proposed changes to the governance arrangements of Team Hackney and the role and potential of elected representatives in these processes and consider to what extent the discussions and decisions taken are accessible and understood by local communities and/or those that represent them
- Establish the extent to which decisions made and those making decisions within the LSP structure are accountable both within and external to Team Hackney and the extent to which such accountability should be enhanced or promoted.

³ Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) is a trigger mechanism enabling Councillors to refer an issue to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee for fuller exploration when and if they believe the local authority or partners have not dealt with an issue, Member enquiry or complaint appropriately. The power relates to all local authority activity (including well-being) and Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) matters.

- Review funding and the way in which LAA commissioning is undertaken locally and the extent to which such decisions are scrutinised.
- Clarify the new direction and role of LSPs and extended powers of Overview and Scrutiny in relation to them and in so doing explore approaches for improved joint working, shared agendas and mutual two-way engagement, a role for Overview and Scrutiny in performance management
- Discussions may also take place on the nature and direction the Community Call for Action (a Scrutiny power) and the role of statutory partners.

2.3 *How*

Recognising the scale of the issues to be considered and the importance of the subject matter this review absorbed most of the 2007/8 municipal year. Our evidence was collected in a variety of ways including formal committee sessions but also visits, individual meetings, paper based research and telephone interviews.

We sought external input from the Centre for Public Scrutiny before we began our review on the national picture and their thinking around partnership working in general, we heard from them again toward the end of our review in order to capture national experiences in relation to the development of approaches to Councillor Call for Action.

Within the Council we heard from the Team Hackney support function who provided us with information relating to the partnership's current position (having been refreshed in 2006), local commissioning arrangements and the regulatory environment. We also spoke to a number of key actors within the partnership including Board Members and senior Council officers, some senior officers from external organisations who performed the role of Board Champion as well as a selection of Cabinet Members who perform the role of Chair of Team Hackney's Thematic Partnerships.

We also sought information from a number of other local authorities, including LB Tower Hamlets and LB Lewisham.

3. Summary and Recommendations

Local Strategic Partnerships bring together partners within an area and are led by Councils who commonly host and provide the democratic interface for an LSP's activity. While not exclusively public in their nature, such arrangements spend a substantial amount of public funds. When such partnerships operate, make decisions and spend money it is therefore important that they have, at their heart, clear and appropriate governance arrangements that allow interested parties to explore how and why decisions are made and to constructively engage in debates or consultation in advance of any decisions being taken.

The public should have the opportunity to know who makes the decisions that affect them and have opportunity to influence those in such positions of power - In essence to have clear and accountable decision making.

'Good, effective public governance helps to strengthen democracy and human rights, promote economic prosperity and social cohesion, reduce poverty, enhance environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources, and deepen confidence in government and public administration'.⁴

The Commission believes there is much to be gained through effectively working in partnership. Successful partnership working will make it more likely that a locality's unique challenges will be understood and appropriately addressed. In such a scenario new ideas or responses to an issue can be developed in a culture of pooled finance and resource, shared effort and both the ability and shared resolve to challenge existing ways of doing things.

The prominence and importance of local strategic partnerships to the way that public services are delivered in an area appears only likely to increase. Hackney will increasingly be assessed, audited and funded as a single entity. The Commission believes this is something to be broadly welcomed, however this proposition raises some interesting questions – how should we ensure that the benefits of Team Hackney activity are not only captured but also sustained beyond any period of pump-priming?

We make a number of recommendations;

Recommendation One - Communication

The Commission considers that appropriate, effective and timely communication within the partnership is important. We see less

⁴ http://www.oecd.org/topic/0,2686,en_2649_37405_1_1_1_1_37405,00.html

merit in promoting the partnership more generally to Hackney's public.

However some evidence points to an apparent communication gap existing among some Councillors, officers, Board members and officials of other partner bodies and the voluntary and community sector in relation to both the structure and purpose of Team Hackney. We therefore recommend the development of a specific communications strategy to address these areas among specific target audiences. Such an approach will necessarily seek to make clear the purpose and rationale of strategic commissioning and the LAA process - as distinct from the provision of grants or community development - as may be encompassed via a third sector commissioning strategy

With regard to Councillors, those members of the Cabinet involved in Team Hackney are well placed to identify ways of developing such wider Member awareness and appreciation of the future importance of Team Hackney, the Local Area Agreement and Comprehensive Area Assessment

Recommendation two - Leadership

Through the democratic mandate established by elections and because of the Government's intention that local authorities provide the leadership necessary for the effective operation of local strategic partnerships, the Commission recommends that the Council, with the support of its partners, pursue a higher profile leadership role across Team Hackney. This is something that may be best achieved through an enhanced profile for Hackney's directly elected Mayor.

The Commission recommends that Team Hackney would benefit from an enhanced appreciation and recognition of the elected Mayor's legitimacy to lead and shape the agenda for the whole of Hackney. We believe that the role of the Mayor provides a unique opportunity to push and lobby for Hackney's shared interests which, when realised, will necessarily benefit the whole community. We suggest that such political leadership is distinct from the equally important necessities of operational management and delivery.

Recommendation three - Accountability

The Commission recommends that those holding accountable positions and roles associated with strategic leadership (e.g. Chairs, Governors and non-executive Directors) in our local public sector organisations assume a more prominent position within Team Hackney's partnership arrangements and structures. The Commission is mindful that different organisations have different accountability arrangements, with some ultimately held to account

by Members of Parliament and some to regional bodies such as the Metropolitan Police Authority. However we believe such arrangements will not always adequately capture and reflect the needs of circumstances particular to Hackney.

We believe that there also needs to be an increased appreciation within Team Hackney of the political accountability that the Mayor and elected Councillors have in respect of the success or otherwise of the Local Strategic Partnership. While all partner bodies of Team Hackney have their own arrangements to ensure accountability, they are not directly accountable to the citizens of Hackney in the same way.

Recommendation four - Alignment

The Commission recommends that, where appropriate, the Council's democratic structures are aligned with Team Hackney's structures so as to maximise enhanced understanding and the facilitation of democratic input and oversight.

We believe that our current approach in conducting Overview and Scrutiny reflects the nature and importance of partnership working, as captured through our reviews. However with an expanded role set out in new legislation we argue that such arrangements will become increasingly two way in their nature and more mutually interdependent. To promote such an approach the Commission proposes that the Overview and Scrutiny Board reviews its formation so as to better align itself with the structures of Team Hackney. Such proposals will also need to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny is well placed to assume its powers of democratic oversight over LAA expenditure and Hackney's Community Strategy. We recommend that the Team Hackney Board, its Thematic Partnerships and their Chairs should also familiarise themselves with the new role for Scrutiny and the chosen way forward.

The Commission endorses the general principle of elected Cabinet Members leading Team Hackney's Thematic Partnerships. We envisage such Partnerships and their Chairs will increasingly champion the whole of Hackney's engagement and response to appropriate Scrutiny reviews.

The Commission also proposes that the Council may, over time, wish to consider its own structure and whether there are any alternative models for leading and supporting the Local Strategic Partnership that might, as the process develops, work better for the partnership, service delivery and accountability.

Recommendation five - **Locality or neighbourhood working**

This Commission is guided by its firm belief that Councillors are and should be supported and empowered to both inform and represent their constituents and their communities. Indeed we consider that local Councillors represent the best and most appropriate mechanism to achieve this – this is sometimes called community engagement.

We recognise that it is not the role of Team Hackney to influence the shape or nature of our democratic institutions or to create parallel structures to those already existing within organisations. However there are currently no real political structures that facilitate engagement with Team Hackney at either a Neighbourhood or Ward level, and inadequate arrangements for non-executive Councillors to participate in this process. We are aware that other structures exist, such as the relatively new arrangements for Community Advisory Panels (CAPs⁵), where innovative solutions might be applied. Structures, such as Overview and Scrutiny, also exist which might be used in different and new ways to improve and expand the engagement of Councillors and the communities they represent in the workings of partners and therefore Team Hackney.

We believe that Hackney would benefit from a model of working, encountered on visits to a number of our peers, where partnership arrangements, delivery of services, consultation, Councillor and resident interaction and local priority setting is stronger when and if they are supported by discussions that take place in a devolved setting.

We recommend OSB should be offered a report detailing options for how these challenges might be tackled by no later than November 2008.

Recommendation six - **Commissioning**

We believe the Strategic Commissioning process to be sound and sufficiently transparent as to move beyond the debates surrounding the NRF era.

However we conclude that decisions relating to expenditure of Hackney's public funding should reflect the priorities of those in elected office and that those bodies responsible for spending public money in pursuit of agreed Team Hackney priorities should be subject to oversight of such spending by those holding public office as it is only these individuals that can be and are held to account for their actions by our residents. To facilitate this aim Scrutiny by

⁵ A community interface for the Safer Neighbourhood (policing) Teams

elected Members will inevitably have an enhanced role (see recommendation two).

The Commission would welcome receipt of a report from the Director of Partnerships which sets out how the local LAA indicator on supporting a strong local environment for a thriving third sector and a 'fit for purpose' sector, will be met. This will include an update on the implementation of the COMPACT, how representation and advocacy will be taken forward and details of how the 3rd sector commissioning framework currently in development will be taken forward.

We also recommend that this Commission receive a report by November 2008 detailing the extent to which one-off funding for projects have been subsequently included or excluded from mainstream programmes. In receiving such a report we hope to allow for improved awareness and tracking of which areas prove successful, why and what lessons have been learnt as a result.

4. Financial Comments

- 4.1 In 2008/09 the Council is due to receive circa £29.1m of Area Based Grant (ABG) - the 2007/08 Local Area Agreement (LAA) grant was £23.2m. Since the Local Government Finance Settlement was announced in January 2008 the total figure has changed as additional grants are being included and continue to be added to ABG. This is due to rise significantly in 2009/10 if Supporting People Grant transfers in, to circa £52m.
- 4.2 A significant change with the introduction of ABG is that the Council is the accountable body for the ABG, and has the discretion to utilise it as it sees appropriate and in line with its own corporate priorities as the grant is no longer ring fenced to specific activities.
- 4.3 In 2008/09 in agreement with the Team Hackney Partnership the Council secured the continued use of many of the former specific grant funding streams towards the activities they had previously funded as these line up with the 35 indicators that will make up the LAA. This is not guaranteed to continue and will currently require annual negotiation. This is therefore a major potential financial risk for the Council. As set out above the Council could use its powers as the accountable body to apply all sources of funding to the expenditure it considers appropriate. However, this would be at odds to the spirit behind ABG and may compromise delivery of the LAA and 35 local indicators.
- 4.4 Moving forwards it is therefore important that the commissioning process for the LAA and the Councils Medium Term Financial Planning processes continue to align closely to ensure that the

financial risks related to ABG are mitigated. The July report to Cabinet updating the Medium Term planning forecast (MTPF) will include further details in relation to the management of ABG overtime and ensuring that both processes continue to align.

- 4.5 The staffing and running costs associated with the Local Strategic Partnership is £1.8m for 2008/09 (which includes £0.33m from the Councils base revenue budget), an increase of £0.48m from 2007/08.
- 4.6 The report makes a number of recommendations on a range of issues including improving communications, leadership and accountability, aligning democratic structures and giving consideration to amending the Councils overall structure. Prior to the implementation of the scrutiny commissions recommendations by the Council the financial implications for the Council will need to be considered in detail to assess affordability, VFM and the adequacy of existing budgets. In the event that additional resources are required proposals as part of the Councils annual budget setting process may be required.

5. Legal Comments

The review of the Hackney LSP is a timely one as the ability of local authorities to effectively lead partner agencies to improve services borough wide is a key component of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment. The Council is the lead member of the LSP and the report makes useful recommendations as to how arrangements could be more effective. There are no other comments.

6. Findings

6.1 WHAT ARE PARTNERSHIPS

Local Strategic Partnerships are non statutory, multi-agency bodies which bring together the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors in an area. Their precise nature and role is changing as detailed in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Such changes make it clearer that the Council plays a key leadership role as well as being a major partner in its own right within an area.

The Government expect Local Strategic Partnerships to inform the strategic direction for an area through the development of the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy and a Local Area Agreement. This makes intuitive sense as Local Strategic Partnerships are an area's single over-arching partnership, setting strategy and priorities, with delivery coming from individual partners and supported through oversight and coordination by Thematic Partnerships. It is therefore essential that Members are fully engaged with these areas of work because such arrangements will become increasingly pivotal in delivering services and improvements across localities.

The Commission began its review by hearing from the CfPS who advised us that partnerships are key to delivering LAA outcomes (see section 6.4.2). They can have considerable strength: flexibility, ability to innovate, stakeholder engagement, and a focus on delivery and outcomes. But also weaknesses which may include: blurred accountability, lack of transparency, weak systems of governance, they can be dominated by managers, and operate in parallel to local democratic political structures. Further to such observations research carried out by the Audit Commission in 2004 found:

- Most public bodies are involved in partnerships and 25% had problems, nearly 40% relating to poor financial controls and governance processes
- Only 41% of councils had formal agreements for partnership, setting out roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- Those without agreements were almost twice as likely to suffer problems
- 45% of PCTs without formal agreements had problems compared with 27% with formal agreements (from auditors' returns)

As referred to elsewhere in this report issues such as these matter because increasing sums of public money are going through

partnerships: £500m was directed through LAA pooled budgets in 87 council areas as of 2007 - the extension of LAAs will increase this figure to £4.7bn. In Hackney the 2007/08 LAA Grant totalled £23.2m. From 2008/9 such funding will be referred to as Area-Based Grants (which sees a number of former grants pooled into one grant), in Hackney's this totals £29.1m, rising to £52m in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

6.1.2 What is Hackney's LSP (Team Hackney) – *structure*

Team Hackney is LBH's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) assuming its current form in February 2006⁶ and describes its focus since this time as delivering a Hackney appropriate partnership with a focus on governance, accountability and performance. The Commission also heard that an additional aim of the refresh had been to deliver better use of the neighbourhood renewal fund and other funding streams. Such changes should result in a better understanding of what works, what doesn't and mechanisms for changing what's delivered as a result, meaning an overall improvement in what is delivered for the people of Hackney.

Team Hackney's structure is broadly comparable to that of the Overview and Scrutiny function with a Board which provides oversight, direction and co-ordination as well as assessing performance. Below this sit five Thematic Partnerships which seek to respond to a shared borough wide agenda. The Partnerships and their remits are detailed below;



- **Better Homes** - Better Homes, better places, better lives.
- **Children and Young People** - Empowering children and young people to stay healthy and safe, achieve well and contribute positively.

⁶ A refreshed version of the Hackney Strategic Partnership which began operation in April 2002.

- **Economic Development** - Developing opportunity through skills, employment and enterprise.
- **Safer Cleaner** - Reducing crime and the fear of crime to create a safer, cleaner and greener Hackney.
- **Thriving Healthy** - Improving access to health care and promoting good health and independent living for all adults.

We have appended to this report (appendix two) further information as to the remit, priorities and focus for each partnership. It should also be noted that each are Chaired by a Cabinet Member (aside from Safer Cleaner which is also LBH's CDRP⁷).

These partnerships have a role in determining activity and outcome priorities and therefore strategic commissioning which is referred to in more detail in a later section.

A number of sub groups exist below each partnership (appendix 2) which may undertake specific areas of work. The Commission would not contest the potential benefits realised through the existence of such sub groups (for example allowing for specific or detailed pieces of work to be undertaken), providing that all such outcomes are reported in a documented way back to the Thematic Partnerships. The Commission also believes that membership and remit of any such groups should be endorsed by each Thematic Partnership thereby ensuring that sub groups recognise the existing hierarchy of participation and accountability and that those specifically selected to be members of a Thematic Partnership retain the potential to influence and shape the direction of its work.

Perhaps the most important task group or sub group is the *Performance, Intelligence and Equalities Steering Group* (PIE) which sits below the Team Hackney Board, and is charged with scrutinising performance both in terms of outputs and spend on behalf of the board. It also acts as an executive of the main board, and will make key decisions as well as acting as sounding board on major issues.

PIE is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council, and membership includes the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Police Borough Commander, Chief Executive of the PCT, Chief Executive of The Learning Trust, Principle of the Community College and representatives from the third sector including RSL, VCS and the Shoreditch NDC. The group brings together a core group of partners, in a small enough group to be truly strategic in its decision making; and membership is senior enough to be directly accountable for delivery – the size of the group also allows for members to talk frankly about issues effecting performance.

⁷ CDRP – Statutorily required Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

A core part of the membership of PIE are the thematic links (officers), who sit on both the Main Board and the Thematic Partnership Boards who through their attendance at Team Hackney Board, PIE and Thematic Partnership provide an established communications route, and a consistency of message. The Commission recognises the level of partnership commitment and time that this link role asks for.

The PIE remit includes operational oversight of financial and performance management information and reporting from LAAs and Themed Partnerships. Such an operational focus appears helpful and it is welcome that the partnership has developed such a capacity. However the current arrangements appear to potentially allow many of the same individuals to set the strategic objectives of the partnership, commission each other to deliver against these objectives and report to one another on how well they are delivering. Such an entwined arrangement has the potential to raise questions relating to probity and good governance (see *section 6.2.1*) which is why we welcome the Government's proposals to involve a greater number of Members (through Overview and Scrutiny) in the oversight of the LSP and the delivery of the LAA.

There are currently no Overview and Scrutiny Members or observers at thematic partnerships and the Commission considers this to be something that should be given appropriate consideration as a means of fostering improved linkages and enhanced mutual understanding (see Conclusion section 7.5). A limited number of Overview and Scrutiny Councillors performing such a role would ensure increased Member participation in the work of the LSP. Participation could be used to ensure improved communication and awareness for a wider group of Councillors, with Overview and Scrutiny Councillors acting as a catalyst for improved communication from the partnerships to a wider group of Members and onward to their communities and vice versa. Furthermore as the roles of the Partnerships and Overview and Scrutiny become more enmeshed Councillors would be able to enhance mutual awareness of each group's priorities and seek to minimise duplication.

6.1.3 What is Hackney's LSP (Team Hackney) – ***purpose***

Throughout our review we encountered much agreement about the purpose, rationale and relative successes delivered by the partnership amongst those already integrally involved – Cabinet Members and Chief Officers etc. This can be compared to a relative lack of clarity amongst those currently at the periphery of involvement, such a non executive Councillors or our residents who are most likely unaware about the existence of Team Hackney and

may only be concerned about access to and the quality of public services.

The Commission believes that Team Hackney and the LAA represent a significant part of the way Hackney's residents will, now and in the future, receive better and more accessible public services. However if Councillors are to continue as an effective interlocker between the communities we represent, the Council and its partners, and to champion residents' interests, we will as a group have to be far more aware and comfortable with the way Team Hackney operates, how to get things done within partnership structures, how to influence its direction and strategy, be able to guide our constituents and effectively champion their needs.

With such improved understanding we will also be better placed to perform our important role of holding the Council and its partners to account (with the new powers for Overview and Scrutiny and LSPs) on behalf of our residents through our existing statutory role and duties including performance management duties.

Until relatively recently LSPs' principle focus have been on developing, organising and managing the delivery of additional activity funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (see section 6.4.1). This often meant that LSPs were seen as distinct bodies sitting to the side of established structures. In such circumstances a number of partnerships also began to develop their own branding and came to be seen as unrelated to existing Council or democratic structures and with such a situation came the potential for confusion relating to accountability and governance.

However more recently with the advent and expansion of the LAA (section 6.4.2) the role of Team Hackney, like all LSPs, is about influencing, steering and therefore increasing the efficiency of mainstream activity. Such results may be delivered through better coordination of already existent services, meaning Team Hackney facilitates the delivery of outcomes or interventions and not the provision of dedicated services. The Council and its partners will achieve this by setting out its vision for the borough in the Community Strategy (see appendix 3) incorporating 10 year priority outcomes, aligned with LAA targets which, in effect, become three year milestones.

The Commission therefore suggests it is imperative that Team Hackney activity is itself part of, and should be seen as, the mainstream. That its support structures do not sit outside of Council structures and therefore that communication of the partnership's profile to the public should not be a priority. Whereas strong and clear communication within the partnership and to certain target audiences is and will remain imperative. Partners and on occasion the partnership will of course wish to publicise the outputs and

outcomes brought about through partnership activity however we believe this could be best delivered, where possible, through existing mechanisms, branding and distribution channels.

This Commission believes that the great majority of Hackney's residents are not concerned about who delivers a service or how such provision came to be but rather that the service exists, they find it appropriately accessible and that it makes best use of the area's resources.

6.1.4 Recommendation One - **Communication**

The Commission considers that appropriate, effective and timely communication within the partnership is important. We see less merit in promoting the partnership more generally to Hackney's public.

However some evidence points to an apparent communication gap existing among some Councillors, officers, Board members and officials of other partner bodies and the voluntary and community sector in relation to both the structure and purpose of Team Hackney. We therefore recommend the development of a specific communications strategy to address these areas among specific target audiences. Such an approach will necessarily seek to make clear the purpose and rationale of strategic commissioning and the LAA process - as distinct from the provision of grants or community development – as may be encompassed via a third sector commissioning strategy

With regard to Councillors, those members of the Cabinet involved in Team Hackney are well placed to identify ways of developing such wider Member awareness and appreciation of the future importance of Team Hackney, the Local Area Agreement and Comprehensive Area Assessment

6.1.5 What other local authorities do

No perfect model for partnerships exists. Priorities will differ from location to location, appropriate models and roles will change depending upon the composition of a partnership and the needs of their communities. The Commission nevertheless recognised it was important to consider the approach to partnership adopted by some of our peers. We are grateful to Tower Hamlets and Lewisham for accommodating such visits;

Tower Hamlets

The Tower Hamlets Partnership has existed since 2000 and aims to deliver the area's community strategy. When described to us we

were advised it is aligned with and enhances an already established way of neighbourhood or local working.

The approach appeared intuitive to us as the narrative presented clearly described how the Council and its partners' mainstream activities are structured and aligned with the focus of the LSP and locally influenced service delivery and priorities.



3 strands of the Partnership exist. When we met with representatives of the partnership we were advised all stands played a full role;

- 1) The **Partnership Management Group** drives strategy, is chaired by the leader and involves the Chief Executive, partners and voluntary sector as well as business and resident representatives.
- 2) The five **Community Plan Action Groups** are equivalent to Hackney's thematic partnerships and shaped around the four LAA blocks but also include an area on providing Excellent Public Services
- 3) **Local Area Partnerships** cover an average of two wards, with eight in total, and provide a forum where residents and the providers of public services can meet to discuss local issues, priorities and the delivery of service. These forums appear to provide a means for a group of Councillors and residents to jointly be involved in, shape and be aware of the operation of partnership activities in specific neighbourhoods and to assist Tower Hamlets in demonstrating community engagement – the Commission believes that there are certain attractions to this approach, particularly the way in which the community and Councillors have an opportunity to provide input and shape

locally determined responses which are framed though a relationship with wider partnership objectives, such as, reducing crime through an improved environment or delivering improved services for young people.

We also learnt that Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets shares a comparable structure to the partnership making its awareness and oversight of partnership activity more intuitive, though a review of available documentation makes establishing a demonstrable and consistent link challenging. This is an issue which has yet to be fully addressed within LB Hackney but which is currently under review by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Lewisham

Like Hackney, Lewisham has also chosen to establish the role of a directly elected Mayor. The Commission was therefore both particularly keen and fortunate to hear from their Mayor (Sir Steve Bullock) and LSP team about how they approach the management and operation of Lewisham's LSP.

Sir Steve advised the Commission that he views the position of Mayor of Lewisham as being Mayor of the whole borough and not just of the Council. This means the Mayor has chaired the LSP since being elected as Mayor and believes this approach has strengthened his status with LSP partners and their responsiveness to his leadership. Support for the partnership is based in the Mayor's Office and is therefore separated from the Council's own structures. Communication of partnership activity focuses on distributing the message among those that need to know, meaning less attention is given to promotion of a partnership brand.

Lewisham's LSP operates a single tier partnership having one Board with the establishment of each board position supported by a specific rationale. The Board aspires to a membership reflecting its strategic nature and is therefore light on officer representation, though we established differing organisational governance arrangements can create complications for this aspiration e.g local police representation. A total of 19 members include the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, one Cabinet Member and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny⁸.

Officers participate fully in 4 existing partnerships⁹ which are chaired by Cabinet Members and focus on delivery of objectives and initiatives derived from the Board's strategy. The partnerships are;

⁸ A position originally earmarked for the Leader of the Opposition but altered following their request

⁹ Discussions are ongoing about the need for a fifth partnership covering sustainable development.

- Children and Young People Strategic Partnership
- Adult Strategic Partnership
- Economic Development and Enterprise Board
- Safer Lewisham Partnership

A Public Service Board manages implementation and includes Lewisham's Chief Executive who does not sit on the Partnership Board. A Sustainable Community Strategy Development Group also exists outside of the formal LSP structure.

Overview and Scrutiny structures in Lewisham are not aligned to the partnership though this option has been suggested as a means of potentially securing greater levels of Member involvement but has not to date been pursued.

Lewisham operates a Local Assembly approach to community engagement with one assembly in each of the Borough's wards. The assemblies are open to all with a steering group involving relevant local stakeholders but all three local Councillors. The assemblies link to the LSP by providing evidence of community priorities thereby influencing its strategic decision.

Birmingham

We did not visit Birmingham but have reviewed a number of publications from their Overview and Scrutiny team which have considered, in great depth, the issues of partnership working, Local Area Agreements and community engagement structures. Our observations do not claim to be exhaustive but rather to capture what we found to be some of the most interesting and relevant aspects of their partnerships operation for Hackney's situation.

In common with most LSPs a Partnership Board sets objectives and the strategy for the partnership however sitting below this Board;

A *Programme Board* providing oversight and a co-ordination role specifically in relation to the development of the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

An *Operational Group* which leads on the detailed preparation and development of the LAA with its membership derived from the Membership of the LAA aligned Thematic Partnerships

A *Programme Board Performance Group* which meets quarterly, with its Membership derived from the Programme Board which solely reviews performance management issues in a targeted way.

Birmingham has sought to improve and rationalise the way its community empowerment network and neighbourhood forums are

supported to provide better support and the potential for closer engagement with the area's LSP through the establishment of ward committees that can allocate and spend funds delegated to it by the executive, and to influence the LSP through the identification of local community priorities.

Birmingham has over ten Scrutiny Committees some of which cover LAA activity though its Committees are not explicitly aligned with the structure of the partnership.

We also obtained views from a number of other local authorities, though meetings were not always possible. A lack of Member involvement emerged as a common theme amongst those we were able to speak to.

6.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Institute of Local Government suggests that '*governance systems should be proportional to the responsibilities and risks of the partnership*'¹⁰. As we have already identified, greater levels of funding are being directed through partnerships (see also section 6.4). It therefore seems appropriate to consider Team Hackney's governance arrangements and how they impact upon the partnership's arrangements for and their ability to secure accountability.

*'Partners need to bring clarity to the governance of their collaboration. This requires agreement among them about purpose, membership and accountability. Partners should be clear whose interests they represent and how they will handle disputes'*¹¹.

Local authorities represent and host an area's political and accountable leadership. The Commission therefore welcomes the fact that local authorities are the accountable body for the delivery of the LAA and are also responsible for capturing and developing responses to an area's priorities through its Community Strategy. The Commission believes that clarification of such leading responsibilities is not only to be welcomed but was needed, as it could be suggested the Government's model for LAAs (one example of partnership working) initially appeared to give little consideration for how accountability of such decision making and spending might be achieved.

¹⁰ What Happens when Government, Business and Civil Society Work Together? School of Public Policy The University of Birmingham UK - 2005

¹¹ Governing Partnerships - Bridging the accountability gap, Audit Commission 2005

When we began our review the Centre for Public Scrutiny advised us that a variety of models for the operation of partnerships could be proposed, as summarised below;

1. *Political and Strategic Leadership*

Political and strategic leadership of the LSP should be vested in the Leader / Mayor, possibly some executive Councillors, and the Chairs of, for example, the PCT Board, local hospital board, police authority, local voluntary sector body and RSL trustees, key school or college governing bodies etc i.e. the elected or “lay” leaders who have guardianship of the strategic direction and aims of these key local partners.

Such individuals are the people who should be responsible for setting the strategic direction of the LSP, agreeing the LAA targets on professional advice and following consultation and engagement.

2. *Operational responsibility for delivery*

Operational, professional and managerial delivery responsibility should be with a delivery group of the Chief Executives or other senior officers of the local partners. These people will have authority to commit resources within the strategic parameters set by the leaders / chairs and responsibility for advising on and then delivering targets. This group would report to (and be held to account by) the strategic board of leaders / chairs.

3. *Community engagement and accountability*

Accountability to and engagement with the local community should be overseen and led by the key non-executive and community representatives e.g. scrutiny Councillors, user groups, (in the case of Foundation Trusts) foundation governors, tenant representatives, parent governors at schools, community forums etc. Such people shouldn't act as gatekeepers to consultation with the community but as facilitators holding the partnership to account for its responsibility to consult and involve the public (delivering the proposed new duty to ensure participation).

Responsibility for ethical conduct, openness and good governance could also be vested in this arm of the partnership, ensuring adherence to the public service accountability standard.

If partnerships are to prove effective, stay relevant and their decisions in the longer term to remain beyond repute it will be necessary for all LSPs to ensure they provide clarity and transparency to the public about who makes decisions, who is accountable should something go wrong and where information relating to decisions can be obtained or even influenced.

If these arguments can be accepted, as they are by the Commission, it appears logical to next question whether greater but proportionate levels of accountable representation might be achieved. Partnership should involve all partners but should and could the structures and governance arrangements reflect the fact that Councillors are often the only locally directly accountable individuals who might hope to shape the direction of a partnership and assess the appropriateness of its decision making. The Commission makes a number of proposals for Hackney in response to what we found to be an intuitively accessible model as follows;

6.2.1 Political and Strategic Leadership

Partnership working will by necessity increasingly have a shared statutory purpose as it seeks to influence the Community Strategy (see appendix 3) and what is essentially one of its delivery vehicles the LAA. Such a shared purpose should inevitably also increase as the nature and expectation to work in partnership increases in the future through, for example, the evolution of Comprehensive Area Assessment.

From April 2009, the Government intends for the CAA to replace the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This represents a significant change to the current assessment regime as CPA focused on services provided by local authorities, whereas CAA will look at the prospects for local areas and the quality of life of people living there.

The Government expects the CAA to provide assurance about how well-run local public services are, and how effectively they use taxpayers' money. But it also aims to be more relevant to local people by focusing on issues that are important to their community. It will develop a shared view about the challenges facing an area, such as crime, community cohesion, a sustainable environment or public health issues such as obesity, and sets out to create a more joined up and proportionate approach to public service regulation.

Such an approach seems inherently sensible and attractive to the Commission but a number of significant challenges remain with the adoption of such an approach in the main because the governance and accountability arrangements for the partners involved in the CAA are not the same.

For example Primary Care Trusts (health) are assessed by the Healthcare Commission and Foundation Trusts by an organisation called Monitor, all are subjected to Government targets and initiatives as will emerge from the Department of Health. Borough Commanders and therefore the local police are answerable to the Home Office, the Metropolitan Police Service (who itself is scrutinised by the Metropolitan Police Authority) and Her Majesty's

Inspectorate of Constabulary. The list could continue for other partners.

It is therefore clear that partners are likely to have many competing masters, assessors and auditors and to be judged in sometimes conflicting and/or duplicitous ways - what is less clear is how an area might seek to minimise any such competing pressures and maximise a sense of shared purpose, but this is not to say we should not seek a solution. Accordingly the Commission believes that a demonstrable statement of democratically accountable leadership for Team Hackney would assist.

The Commission considers it to be important and welcomes the fact that Cabinet Members Chair appropriate Thematic Partnerships and where appropriate that they, as elected Members, are clearly required to present, and are accountable for, the funding decisions taken by Team Hackney and its Thematic Partnerships (see section 6.4).

6.2.2 Recommendation two - **Leadership**

Through the democratic mandate established by elections and because of the Government's intention that local authorities provide the leadership necessary for the effective operation of local strategic partnerships, the Commission recommends that the Council, with the support of its partners, pursue a higher profile leadership role across Team Hackney. This is something that may be best achieved through an enhanced profile for Hackney's directly elected Mayor.

The Commission recommends that Team Hackney would benefit from an enhanced appreciation and recognition of the elected Mayor's legitimacy to lead and shape the agenda for the whole of Hackney. We believe that the role of the Mayor provides a unique opportunity to push and lobby for Hackney's shared interests which, when realised, will necessarily benefit the whole community. We suggest that such political leadership is distinct from the equally important necessities of operational management and delivery.

Our proposal to establish a clearer political and therefore accountable leadership for Team Hackney (Recommendation two above) comes from our belief that a Partnership Board will be most effective when it focuses on providing political and strategic leadership as distinct from operational delivery and implementation (which we have learnt tends to be the preserve of officers in other places). The Commission was unable to conclude that such a distinction is always clear cut in the way that Team Hackney operates which led us to question whether the current membership

of the Team Hackney Board appropriately reflects such a wider interpretation of Hackney's political and strategic leaders.

The Commission recognises that not all organisations will have elected representatives, at a local level, but they may have equivalents referred to by a variety of different titles including non executive directors, governors or trustees etc, that are often independently appointed and have responsibility for assessing performance and strategy¹². These are roles that the Commission considers in their broadest terms can be described as and assumed to be the custodians of the governance processes within their organisations. It could therefore be questioned why such individuals should not perform a comparable role within a local strategic partnership? Indeed we heard (as outlined in section 6.1.4) such aspirations are held by some other local authorities.

6.2.3 Recommendation three - Accountability

The Commission recommends that those holding accountable positions and roles associated with strategic leadership (e.g. Chairs, Governors and non-executive Directors) in our local public sector organisations assume a more prominent position within Team Hackney's partnership arrangements and structures. The Commission is mindful that different organisations have different accountability arrangements, with some ultimately held to account by Members of Parliament and some to regional bodies such as the Metropolitan Police Authority. However we believe such arrangements will not always adequately capture and reflect the needs of circumstances particular to Hackney.

We believe that there also needs to be an increased appreciation within Team Hackney of the political accountability that the Mayor and elected Councillors have in respect of the success or otherwise of the Local Strategic Partnership. While all partner bodies of Team Hackney have their own arrangements to ensure accountability, they are not directly accountable to the citizens of Hackney in the same way.

6.2.4 Operational responsibility for delivery

In an earlier section of our report (6.1.2) we refer to the structure of Team Hackney and explain the role performed by the Performance Intelligence and Equalities Steering Group which provides operational oversight of financial and performance management information and reporting from LAAs and Themed Partnerships. We have also found that some other local authorities share Hackney's approach of increasingly dealing with operational matters and

¹² See appendix 4

implementation through distinct Boards or Groups which in the examples we encountered were referred to as a Programme Board and a Public Service Board (section 6.1.4).

*‘Successful partnership working not only rests on cooperation between organisations but also on the ability of individuals from these organisations to work effectively with one another on a day to day basis. Any group involved in work of this nature requires leadership, tasking and direction to set its goals and drive their delivery and it is important that those working in partnership have a clear understanding of these management structures despite the fact that they come from different organisations’.*¹³

As the level of funding directed through each LSP increases and its role continues to evolve we believe that the governance arrangements of all partnerships and therefore Team Hackney would benefit from the demonstration of a greater distinction between the two core necessities of operational management and delivery and strategic agenda and objective setting. The Commission is therefore supportive of Team Hackney’s continuing development of two increasingly distinct approaches to the operational management of the partnership and the setting of a strategic agenda and its overall objectives. We recognise that such a distinction may require, over time, the development of increasingly different memberships among such groups to suit these two differing roles (see recommendation three).

6.2.5 Community engagement and accountability

Engaging with our communities is an important way to establish our priorities and seek further validation of an area’s focus and the activities undertaken by the Council, its partners and Team Hackney to deliver on our specific medium term policy goals.

However the Commission considers that engagement with our communities, while important, is not on its own sufficient to ensure that that services provided to them or activities undertaken in their name are planned, managed and delivered appropriately. The Commission therefore considers it essential that the Government has recognised the need for clarity over who should hold a partnership and its participants to account on behalf of the residents served.

6.2.6 Recommendation four - Alignment

The Commission recommends that, where appropriate, the Council’s democratic structures are aligned with Team Hackney’s structures so as to maximise enhanced

¹³ The Review of Policing By Sir Ronnie Flanagan – February 2008

understanding and the facilitation of democratic input and oversight.

We believe that our current approach in conducting Overview and Scrutiny reflects the nature and importance of partnership working, as captured through our reviews. However with an expanded role set out in new legislation we argue that such arrangements will become increasingly two way in their nature and more mutually interdependent. To promote such an approach the Commission proposes that the Overview and Scrutiny Board reviews its formation so as to better align itself with the structures of Team Hackney. Such proposals will also need to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny is well placed to assume its powers of democratic oversight over LAA expenditure and Hackney's Community Strategy. We recommend that the Team Hackney Board, its Thematic Partnerships and their Chairs should also familiarise themselves with the new role for Scrutiny and the chosen way forward.

The Commission endorses the general principle of elected Cabinet Members leading Team Hackney's Thematic Partnerships. We envisage such Partnerships and their Chairs will increasingly champion the whole of Hackney's engagement and response to appropriate Scrutiny reviews.

The Commission also proposes that the Council may, over time, wish to consider its own structure and whether there are any alternative models for leading and supporting the Local Strategic Partnership that might, as the process develops, work better for the partnership, service delivery and accountability.

6.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

'The limited research into partnership governance to date (Hall et al 1998; Robinson et al 2000) indicates that they display a democratic deficit compared to the benchmark. There is also evidence that partnerships problematic structures for gaining access to community input (Smith Beazley 2000; Taylor 2003)¹⁴.

One of the Mayor's priorities is *providing effective community leadership and involving the whole borough in what we do* it is therefore important not only for Councillors to be supported to effectively perform their key role as community leaders but also for

¹⁴ What Happens when Government, Business and Civil Society Work Together? School of Public Policy The University of Birmingham UK - 2005

the Council and Team Hackney to support and/or develop complimentary means of capturing community priorities and concerns.

6.3.1 The voluntary and community sector

The voluntary and community sector (sometimes referred to as the third sector) is an invaluable interface with an area's communities but can also be a partner in the delivery of services for meeting community needs in a variety of ways.

Indeed it can even be suggested that the advent and evolution of LSPs has provided a helpful catalyst for the organisation and thus enhanced opportunity for engagement with the voluntary and community sector – the Government encouraged the development of Community Empowerment Networks (CEN) to foster community involvement in neighbourhood renewal initiatives.

We established that Hackney has a substantial voluntary and community sector numbering around 1800 organisations. Those Hackney community and voluntary sector representatives we spoke to also advised us that the size of Hackney's financial support to the sector compares favourably to some neighbouring boroughs.

When we met with representatives of Hackney's CEN and Hackney's umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector (HCVS) we found that Team Hackney is seen as an important forum for their views to be heard and acknowledged. While their limited ability to influence decisions was recognised they felt they were welcome participants in the process.

*'The formation of a partnership will not automatically produce better mechanisms for engaging with hard-to-reach communities than those that corporate bodies have established already. Many partnerships find that the same community representatives come forward.'*¹⁵

Amongst those we met from CEN and HCVS we encountered some frustration at the suggested existence of parallel officer based networks to many of Team Hackney's structures. We encountered no evidence of substantial parallel operations however as a Commission we have come to the conclusions that many functions and activities are helpfully pursued by Team Hackney but that it is not and cannot ever be the only vehicle through which organisations will operate in partnership.

We welcome the involvement of the voluntary and community sectors in our partnership as we do in other aspects of Council business. However not unique to the voluntary sector, a challenge

¹⁵ Governing Partnerships - Bridging the accountability gap, Audit Commission 2005

with such involvement is the extent to which any one community or voluntary sector group can lay legitimate claim to speak on behalf of a community and on what basis, despite no doubt genuine efforts in this direction, they might be held accountable for the views they express or the decisions they are involved in taking. This is not to conclude that our community and voluntary sectors should not play a full role but to again suggest that the only true route to accountability and openness lay through the development of more mechanisms, in tandem with other approaches, to appropriately engage Councillors as accountable representatives of their communities. Above all the partnership must seek to avoid the impression that these differing positions are of equal function and status.

However we understand that some parts of the voluntary sector are concerned that there appeared to be a lack of clarity in some aspects of Team Hackney's decision making, particularly around funding. As we discuss in section 6.4.3 we found the current procurement arrangements within Team Hackney sound and transparent. Members of the Commission believe that the "third sector" have an important role in the success of Hackney. This is reflected in recommendations, later in this report, that further work should be done on the role of the community and voluntary sector regarding the LSP, and also asked for further information on the "mainstreaming" of funding.

*'It confuses accountability for public services from the perspective of the citizen, who on the one hand is encouraged to vote for their elected representatives but on the other is unable to exercise judgement in respect of the activities of partnerships.'*¹⁶

6.3.2 Neighbourhood or Locality Working

'There is consistent evidence from various areas of public policy, both nationally and internationally, that engagement should be tailored to communities' needs and preferences and that there is no 'one size fits all' model or strategy They need to be used as required, and supplemented by more innovative engagement methods that increase representation. It is important to properly profile the neighbourhood and to develop a range of engagement methods. A neighbourhood profile brings together information about an area and the people who live in and use it from a wide range of sources, enabling a plan of engagement to be tailored to fit local need. Many partnerships already have well developed systems for generating the necessary clarity about roles and remits required to harness fully neighbourhood resources and this area is one where

¹⁶ What Happens when Government, Business and Civil Society Work Together? School of Public Policy, The University of Birmingham UK - 2005

*local agreement, rather than central dictation, is essential to success*¹⁷.

Hackney has four neighbourhood forums. The value these forums play in facilitating a public interface for the Council, and potentially for our partners, with our residents is not directly part of this review.

However we do know that to date the involvement of any neighbourhood model in the work of Team Hackney has been negligible. We do not find fault with the partnership because of this, rather it may be that no such structure or no appropriate one exists within Hackney. To be successful the Commission believes that wider engagement is required by the partnership with our communities or at the very least their representatives.

A New Local Government Network's report relating to neighbourhood working "Councils embracing localism: lessons from ... June 2005) provides a number of case studies detailing different models of Devolution and Localisation.

West Sussex County Council established 14 county local committees which meet quarterly. The committees were structured in such a way as to reflect the priorities of residents and Councillors capturing their views, their roles include monitoring and advising on local community strategies, pursuing initiatives aimed at improving local engagement and advising Cabinet and monitoring Local Public Service Agreements (LPSA) targets.

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council has 4 Local Area Partnerships which meet every two months. They are founded on the principles of creative engagement; a citizen focus; partnership-based service improvement; and maximising opportunities for elected Members to engage with and respond to the needs of the community. Both of these approaches appear to find ways of combining wider Member input and engagement in an area with the workings of the LSP.

We have considered the neighbourhood or locality working in two other London local authorities and have briefly referred to their approach in section 6.1.4 of this report. The Commission is also mindful of some work undertaken by another Overview and Scrutiny Commission (Regeneration and Social Inclusion) when it looked at Safer Neighbourhoods which found;

'Team Hackney does not currently have a local level but aims to remedy this in the future. Members heard varying opinions from other agencies about whether operational co-ordination should take place at neighbourhood or borough-level. On the one hand,

¹⁷ The Review of policing by Sir Ronnie Flanagan – Final Report. February 2008

neighbourhood-working is consistent with the Government's general move towards promoting localism and can allow for more detailed consideration of local issues, but on the other, oversight at borough-level allows for solutions to be shared and resources directed more effectively. The Commission came to the conclusion that operational co-ordination should occur on a neighbourhood-basis, with clear reporting up to allow for oversight and synergy, and should be supported at the borough level through similar arrangements.

The Commission was keen to promote fewer, but more effective bodies, and was aware that the restructure of the SCPB has already reduced the number of sub groups in operation. Members consider the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels (SNAPS) should be enhanced to provide a basis for co-ordination of joint working on a neighbourhood-basis, subsuming any ad-hoc groups set up to deal with crime and ASB-related issues in the neighbourhood where possible'.¹⁸

The Commission believes a role and potential exists for greater community engagement within the workings of Team Hackney, not merely as a worthy end in itself but in order to enhance the outcomes of partnership working. Such engagement would provide opportunity to capture intelligence and local information, which may be of relevance to both day to day operational activity for one or many partners, but also the longer term strategic planning of objectives for the area. The Commission does not seek to prescribe nor recommend what form such community engagement should take but we do recognise the natural role of Councillors, who are the elected representatives of the people of Hackney.

6.3.3 Recommendation five - Locality or neighbourhood working

This Commission is guided by its firm belief that Councillors are and should be supported and empowered to both inform and represent their constituents and their communities. Indeed we consider that local Councillors represent the best and most appropriate mechanism to achieve this – this is sometimes called community engagement.

We recognise that it is not the role of Team Hackney to influence the shape or nature of our democratic institutions or to create parallel structures to those already existing within organisations. However there are currently no real political structures that facilitate engagement with Team Hackney at either a Neighbourhood or Ward level, and inadequate

¹⁸ Safer Neighbourhoods – A review of the Regeneration & Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission 2006/7

arrangements for non-executive Councillors to participate in this process. We are aware that other structures exist, such as the relatively new arrangements for Community Advisory Panels (CAPs¹⁹), where innovative solutions might be applied. Structures, such as Overview and Scrutiny, also exist which might be used in different and new ways to improve and expand the engagement of Councillors and the communities they represent in the workings of partners and therefore Team Hackney.

We believe that Hackney would benefit from a model of working, encountered on visits to a number of our peers, where partnership arrangements, delivery of services, consultation, Councillor and resident interaction and local priority setting is stronger when and if they are supported by discussions that take place in a devolved setting.

We recommend OSB should be offered a report detailing options for how these challenges might be tackled by no later than November 2008.

6.3.4 Councillor Call for Action

In publishing the Local Government White Paper and the subsequent Local Government and Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act 2007 the Government set out a clear aim to increasingly empower local authorities, to bring Government closer to the local residents, to assess all services in an area and to correspondingly find new ways of empowering a wider group of non-executive Councillors to be involved through, for example, Overview and Scrutiny.

The proposals for a Councillor Call for Action arise from the LGPIH and the Police and Justice Act 2006, and envisage that Overview and Scrutiny will act as a forum for the consideration of issues arising from Members' casework and/or enquiries which that Member does not feel has been sufficiently addressed by the local authority or partner organisations who are a member of the CDRP. Any matter that is the responsibility of the Local Authority or the CDRP may be raised through Calls for Action in this way and accordingly LBH will need to develop a clear and understood process to facilitate this (when guidance is issued). A clear process will need to exist for raising and tracking Member Enquiries and officers will need to brief and prepare partners for their engagement in all appropriate stages of the process. Members themselves will need to be given clear explanations of what constitutes a Call for Action.

¹⁹ A community interface for the Safer Neighbourhood (policing) Teams

The Commission received evidence from CfPS about what this provision would mean for the function and we were advised that;

- Scrutiny is the last part of a process which is itself a “backstop” measure
- “Once an issue arrives at overview and scrutiny, all of the committee’s powers come into play”

At this time all that the Commission feels it can do is to raise the matter within LBH and with partners to ensure that all relevant organisations are aware of a forthcoming need to prepare for such provisions and to encourage LBH to respond proactively to this potential.

6.4 FINANCES

6.4.1 Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) represented a special non ring-fenced grant made available to England’s most deprived local authorities, to enable them in collaboration with their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), to improve services, narrowing the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country. This fund has historically funded most of Hackney’s partnership activity and unique projects. Its existence aroused Member interest based upon a desire to gain a clearer understanding of the role and nature of such funding and was one of the original drivers for this review.

Despite the fact that NRF funding has now been replaced by a different sort of central Government fund, the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, it remains possible to see the influence of the original initiative both in the manner and way that some partnership participants or members of the community approach the issue of funding but also in their preferences for the direction, structures and priorities of the LSP and in the functioning of Team Hackney itself. Neighbourhood renewal sought to improve mainstream services by producing better outcomes in the most deprived areas. This meant;

- Increased employment and improved economic performance,
- Reduced crime,
- Better educational attainment, improved health ,
- Better housing and cleaner,
- Safer, greener public spaces.

Hackney’s NRF spend was administered by the now defunct Hackney Strategic Partnership (this partnership was refreshed and became Team Hackney). A number of proposals for structural and

administrative improvements were made at this time. Prior to this Hackney received five years of NRF funding until March 2007. During this time the Partnership Board was likely to allocate funding to Thematic Partnerships for their autonomous decision making and allocation. This system resulted in the potential for questions to be posed on the value for money delivered by such funding and also the appropriateness of local governance arrangements.

6.4.2 Local Area Agreements

From 2007/08 NRF has operated in the context of Local Area Agreements (LAA). LAAs were first introduced in July 2004 in a context of greater devolution of power to Local Government, promising a new relationship between Central and Local Government with the desire being to develop partnership between local stakeholders.

LAAs should focus on agreed local outcomes to improve service delivery, simplify funding streams from Central Government affecting an area and promote local decision making to achieve efficiency gains. LAAs therefore built upon the momentum initiated by the NRF Process (*more information on LAAs appendix five*).

The Government has made Local Area Agreements the centrepiece of a new performance framework, something that is further emphasised by the previously referred to move to replace the CPA (local authority specific) with the CAA Comprehensive Area Assessment (all public sector providers) in April 2009. Though Government will, no doubt, continue to set high-level strategic priorities, the intention behind the LAA policy is to explore the scope for Central Government departments to move towards stronger partnership working with Local Authorities and presumably to support and reward more partnership working within an area.

The timing of our review creates an opportunity for us to suggest how we might best develop an approach to developing and delivering improved local services through the LAA and the necessary accompanying local accountability. The Commission believes, as is envisaged by the Government, that scope exists for greater involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in both the monitoring of performance linked to agreed LAA targets and in their development. The Overview and Scrutiny Board already has a well established role in assessing performance information and will, in future, have new powers to hold statutory partners to account for their activities and actions.

6.4.3 Commissioning and Funding

The existence of LAAs and their targeted and outcome based nature makes it a necessity for a clear identification and assessment process to exist from which LAA funding can be

directed. Such a process influences the way decisions are made as to which projects are progressed and the measures by which the success of a project are judged. The Commission therefore explored the local approach to strategic commissioning as the means by which Hackney ensures the locally determined priorities are reflected in the allocation of LAA funding and the activity that follows.

In our report we do not propose to dwell on the minutiae of detailed processes, however under the systems explained to the Commission a framework exists which guides decision making and has been applied to over 100 funding allocations, most awarded by open tender. The process was first applied in LBH during a pilot exercise in March 2007 and is based upon the evidence amassed during the compilation and negotiation of the LAA targets.

The intention is that such funding may be used to establish momentum in an area, change culture, trial a variety of initiatives or to build capacity so that not only is a particular challenge tackled in the short term but that statutory partners are well placed to assume responsibility and continue tackling an issue through their mainstream activities after an initial period of 'pump-priming'.

When an intervention is identified Team Hackney follows the LBH procurement process, which is well understood both internally and externally, and ensures that a number of necessary criteria are met in common with the majority of procurement frameworks but including probity, openness and fairness. The Council's Cabinet Procurement Commitment formally endorses the strategic commissioning framework and reviews outputs of all Team Hackney commissioned activity. When a contract for activity or an intervention is awarded the procurement process ensures that appropriate performance monitoring procedures are in place which are regularly reviewed against the expected outputs, spend and outcomes. The Team Hackney Board and its sub group PIE has a role in monitoring performance, assessing activity and requires demonstration of results for the additionally allocated funding, allowing for improved decision making.

Such oversight is welcomed however it is equally important that the strategic commissioning process facilitates leadership by the elected Chairs of Thematic Partnerships so as to ensure public accountability for decisions that result in LSP activity, and increasingly the extent to which Overview and Scrutiny may choose to hold them to account for such decisions.

As this process evolves we expect that the planning and identification process will necessarily become more aligned with the respective processes of each statutory partner so as to ensure that the identified outcomes continue to reflect gaps in service provision,

that duplication is minimised and statutory partners, rather than the partnership itself, are held to account for the delivery of any priorities assigned to them. Any alignment should also facilitate and allow for the evolution of an appropriately channelled bidding or submission process where, ideally, a service (whether voluntary or statutory) should only have to make one bid for a variety of possible funding streams with such differing potential funding source ideally determining their funding allocations in a staged way with each subsequent stage incorporating and reflecting earlier decisions.

During our evidence gathering we also encountered the view from a variety of sources that such a clear link for funding to the borough's priorities may cause difficulties for worthy community or voluntary sector based projects. The Government's expectations are clear and the Commission believes it is appropriate for funding to follow the identified and shared priorities of the borough, however it is perhaps understandable that a new process may be difficult to understand or to access. However the funding exists to improve performance in an area and to deliver services which may assist in such objectives.

The Commission supports the existence of a vibrant and effective voluntary and community sector in the borough but in such a climate it should be recognised that LAA funding will and should only be utilised if a contribution is and can demonstrably be made in an area's agreed priorities. That is not to say that LBH or its statutory partners should turn their back on the community and voluntary sector but rather that funding or grants might best be obtained through other locations and routes.

The Commission believes that the relatively fast paced evolution of the LAA and strategic commissioning made necessary through its existence may mean that some officers and Members may not be as best placed to signpost and identify appropriate assistance for community based projects. The Commission therefore welcomes the decision by the LBH Chief Executive to re-align and more clearly establish a community development role sitting along side the Team Hackney structure. A structure that this Commission hopes will allow for appropriate support to exist and capacity building to take place to ensure our Voluntary and Community Sector are and can be well placed to support the improvement and development of Hackney.

6.4.5 Recommendation six - Commissioning

We believe the Strategic Commissioning process to be sound and sufficiently transparent as to move beyond the debates surrounding the NRF era.

However we conclude that decisions relating to expenditure of Hackney's public funding should reflect the priorities of those in elected office and that those bodies responsible for spending public money in pursuit of agreed Team Hackney priorities should be subject to oversight of such spending by those holding public office as it is only these individuals that can be and are held to account for their actions by our residents. To facilitate this aim Scrutiny by elected Members will inevitably have an enhanced role (see recommendation two).

The Commission would welcome receipt of a report from the Director of Partnerships which sets out how the local LAA indicator on supporting a strong local environment for a thriving third sector and a 'fit for purpose' sector, will be met. This will include an update on the implementation of the COMPACT, how representation and advocacy will be taken forward and details of how the 3rd sector commissioning framework currently in development will be taken forward.

We also recommend that this Commission receive a report by November 2008 detailing the extent to which one-off funding for projects have been subsequently included or excluded from mainstream programmes. In receiving such a report we hope to allow for improved awareness and tracking of which areas prove successful, why and what lessons have been learnt as a result.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This review occupied the whole of the Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission 2007/8 municipal year. The review has sought to identify and better understand the issues relating to Team Hackney, our local strategic partnership, and hopes to begin a debate on this increasingly important area of the Council's work and responsibility.
- 7.2 The Commission encountered a broadly effective Team Hackney operation and has concluded that it sees one of the partnership's key roles as supporting the development of a shared sense of place, the challenges faced within Hackney and any consequently emerging local priorities where action is deemed necessary.
- 7.3 Effective and appropriate partnership activity is not about the day to day business of providing public services (mainstream) but also identifying ways of doing this in better and more efficient ways. New public money is available to spend and allocate through partnership activity. Such activity should seek to improve, link to and enhance the mainstream.
- 7.4 We conclude that a partnership is not an entity in itself and can only be as successful and effective as the contributions made to it by its constituent parts.
- 7.5 The Commission considers that a greater level of Member engagement and understanding of the operation, inputs and outputs of Team Hackney is both appropriate and necessary so as to minimise duplication, foster openness and good governance, for example, through the development of closer links and representation between Thematic Partnerships and Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. Members need to be able to hold the partnership to account on behalf of residents.
- 7.6 Team Hackney should consciously aspire to hold itself to the same standards of conduct, openness and transparency as the Council itself is subjected to. The Commission would therefore encourage Team Hackney to, for example, seek to publish its agendas and minutes for all constituted forums and decisions taken in accordance with commonly applicable standards

Lead Councillor: Cllr Rob Chapman

Scrutiny Officer: Ben Vinter, ☎ 020-8356 3441

8. CONTRIBUTORS

The following people attended the Scrutiny Commission's meetings and gave evidence or spoke with Members of the Commission in ways that helped shape the review. The Scrutiny Commission owes a great deal to them not only for what they contributed to the investigation but also for the enthusiasm and commitment they brought to the task.

Ian Lewis – Director of Partnerships LBH
James Palmer – Head of Partnership – Team Hackney
Jane Woolley – Head of Strategic Commissioning
Jessica Crowe – Executive Director, Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)
Gareth Wall – CfPS
Michael Piner (Team Hackney Board Champion)
Kevin Sugrue (Team Hackney Board Champion)
Gavin Cansfield (Team Hackney Board Champion)
Lesley Mountford (Joint Director Public Health)
Alan Wood (Chief Executive Learning Trust)
Ian Ashman (Principal Hackney Community College)
Steve Dann (Borough Commander – Hackney Police)
Cllr Guy Nicholson (Chair of Economic Development Partnership)
Cllr Rita Krishna (Chair of Children and Young People Partnership)
Cllr Nargis Khan (Chair of Thriving Healthy Partnership)
Jake Ferguson and representatives of HCVS and Hackney CEN
Sir Steve Bullock – Mayor of Lewisham
Shazia Hussain & Lainya Offside-Keivani – Tower Hamlets Partnership

9. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

9.1 Contributing Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Rob Chapman, Chair
Councillor Simche Steinberger, Vice-Chair¹
Councillor Luke Akehurst
Councillor Michael Desmond
Councillor Emma Plouviez
Councillor Angus Mulready - Jones
Councillor Mischa Borris

Scrutiny Officer Ben Vinter

¹ from 28/11/07 replacing Cllr Coggins

Background papers

The following documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report or were presented to the Scrutiny Commission as part of the investigation:

Description of document	Location	Date
Governing partnerships – Audit Commission	Overview and Scrutiny Team, Room 40, HTH	31.5.08
Strengthening the accountability, governance and leadership of local partnerships – a CfPS discussion paper	“ “	“ “
Team Hackney Strategic Commissioning Framework	“ “	“ “
Negotiating New Local Area Agreements - DCLG	“ “	“ “
Local Strategic Partnerships - LB Hillingdon Overview and Scrutiny Report	“ “	“ “
National Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships - Report on the 2006 Survey of all English LSPs - DCLG	“ “	“ “
Strong and prosperous Communities, The Local Government White Paper - DCLG	“ “	“ “
Devolution and Localisation - Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Report	“ “	“ “
Community Engagement - Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Report	“ “	“ “
The Birmingham Local Area Agreement - Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Report	“ “	“ “
Comprehensive Area Assessment A joint consultation by the Audit Commission,	“ “	“ “
Local Area Agreements A review of OSC involvement - CfPS	“ “	“ “
The Review of Policing – Final Review. Sir Ronnie Flannigan	“ “	“ “
Corporate governance and corporate social responsibility - INLOGOV	“ “	“ “
Lewisham Local Assemblies – Mayors Neighbourhood Commission	“ “	“ “
Review of partnerships – Maidstone Borough Council	“ “	“ “
New Local Government Network’s - Councils embracing localism	“ “	“ “

Glossary

ASB- Anti-Social Behaviour
CAA- Comprehensive Area Assessment
CAPs- Community Advisor Panels
CCfA- Councillor Call for Action
CDRP- Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership
CEN- Community Empowerment Networks
CfPS- Centre for Public Scrutiny
CPA- Comprehensive Performance Assessment
EDP- Economic Development Partnership
HCVS- Hackney's umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector
LAA- Local Area Agreement
LGPIH- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
LPSA- Local Public Service Agreements
LSPs- Local strategic partnerships
NED- Non-Executive Director
NRF- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
PIE- Performance Intelligence and Equalities (Team Hackney steering group)
PCT- Primary Care Trust
SNAPS- Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels
VCS- Voluntary and Community Sector

Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission
Review Proposal

To be completed prior to the start of the review

1. Proposed review

To review the arrangements made within the borough for the operation and management of the Local Strategic Partnership – Team Hackney

To establish the extent to which such arrangements are considered fit for purpose, identify any proposed areas for improvement and propose ways in which the authority and its partner's may respond to the emerging government agenda in respect of partnerships. Exploring how best scrutiny may engage with Team Hackney as envisaged by the Government and set out principally within the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Bill.

2. Origin of proposal (e.g. Surgery, Neighbourhood Committee, outside body, performance indicator, Mayor's Priority)

Member interest has existed in the LSP for a period of time with a review of the way in which neighbourhood renewal funding (NRF) was allocated and spent previously considered. Owing to the anticipated changes, now implemented, in such funding arrangements, through the introduction of Local Area Agreements, such a proposed review was deferred.

The Government has now published its Local Government Public Involvement in Health Bill which indicates a clear role for local authorities at the heart of and leading local strategic partnerships and new roles for scrutiny in relation to a number of statutory agencies and the performance of LSPs.

As a result of such activities the prospect of a review of Team Hackney was suggested, discussed and agreed at the Scrutiny Work Programme Discussion in OSB March 2007 and allocated to the Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission.

All three of the Mayor's Priorities are relevant to this review (as detailed below) however perhaps the most relevant is priority number 3;

1. Improving services and increasing opportunities for all, raising the life chances of the most disadvantaged
2. Ensuring the Council is high performing and efficient.
3. Providing effective community leadership and involving the whole borough in what we do

3. Scope and terms of reference

An overview and scrutiny review of Team Hackney aims to;

- Build wider Member understanding of the role and potential of LSPs and to create an environment where partner organisations may become more familiar with the nature and role of overview and scrutiny and how best to engage with it as a function.
- Consider current and any proposed changes to the governance arrangements of Team Hackney and the role and potential of elected representatives in these processes and consider to what extent the discussions and decisions taken are accessible and understood by local communities and/or those that represent them

- Establish the extent to which decisions made and those making decisions within the LSP structure are accountable both within and external to Team Hackney and the extent to which such accountability should be enhanced or promoted.
- Review funding and the way in which LAA commissioning is undertaken locally and the extent to which such decisions are scrutinised.
- Clarify the new direction and role of LSPs and extended powers of overview and scrutiny in relation to them and in so doing explore approaches for improved joint working, shared agendas and mutual two-way engagement, a role for overview and scrutiny in performance management
- Discussions may also take place on the nature and direction the Community Call for Action (a Scrutiny power) and the role of statutory partners.

4. Timescales and methods (including details of formal meetings, public engagement, site visits and other sources of evidence)

This review will commence in June 2007 with an introduction from the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) which will independently detail the role of LSPs, examples of scrutinies of LSP's from elsewhere, the proposed legislative changes and the ways in which such a role and powers may potentially be exercised by scrutiny.

Thereafter draft terms of reference will be considered and approved which will include;

11th June

Introduction to Local Strategic Partnerships (CfPS)

10th July

Team Hackney – an introduction

5th September

Team Hackney – LAA, commissioning arrangements and future proposals?

Board Champions and their role

17th October

Team Hackney – Regulatory environment & the voluntary sector

14th November

Team Hackney – Partners

12th December

Team Hackney – Partnership Board Chairs

14th January

Team Hackney – Partnership Board Chairs

Throughout - Visits to appropriate peer authorities

5. Objectives and likely outcomes

The review aims to;

- Increase mutual awareness of role, processes and potential
- Provide an opportunity for a health check of Team Hackney and its journey to date
- To proactively identify and propose ways in which LBH and Team Hackney

may wish to respond to new arrangements (LSPs and Scrutiny) as set out by the Government

6. Lead Member

Cllr Rob Chapman – Chair of Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission

7. Details of how the review and its outcomes will be publicised

The scrutiny work programme for 2007/8 will be promoted through Hackney Today and other appropriate publications via the LBH Communications team.

These proposals will and have been discussed with the Team Hackney support function and they may choose to promote this through their already existing networks.

The Team Hackney Board will be offered the opportunity of a briefing on the purpose of the review and

Outcomes and conclusions of this scrutiny exercise will be reported to all appropriate decision making forums.

The overview and scrutiny function will usually work with the LBH communications team to ensure appropriate publicity is associated with the conclusion of an overview and scrutiny review.

8. Key contributors to the review

Contributor	How have they been consulted on proposal
<i>Council Lead Officer</i> Ian Lewis	A number of meetings have been held
<i>Council Officers</i> LBH Chief Executive, Head of Partnerships (T.Hackney), LBH AD Policy and Performance.	A number of meetings have been held prior to initial scoping.
Team Hackney Partnership	A number of discussions have been had with the Chair of Team Hackney which will continue during the course of the review. Chairs of themed partnership are likely to be invited to contribute toward the review.
Partners Organisations	Partners are already actively involved within Team Hackney
Voluntary Sector	See above
Live/Pending Consultations	It is understood that the development of a new community strategy is planned. Consultation may take place at an appropriate time linked to the development of this strategy. LAA targets are intended to flow from an areas community strategy.

Structure of Team Hackney Partnerships and priorities



Economic Development - Developing opportunity through skills, employment and enterprise.

The key priority for the EDP in 2007/8 is to deliver the Economic Development Block of the Hackney Local Area Agreement (LAA). The outcomes and targets for the LAA were agreed based on an analysis of Hackney's economic landscape

Safer Cleaner - Reducing crime and the fear of crime to create a safer, cleaner and greener Hackney. The Safer Cleaner Partnership aims to ensure that Hackney is a place where people feel safe in their homes and can walk the streets, day or night, without fear of intimidation or harassment, and can enjoy living in a safe, clean and green borough. The partnership has identified the following local priorities:

- Reducing violent crime and criminal gang culture
- Reducing anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime
- Reducing drug and alcohol misuse and related crime
- Improving liveability and reducing environmental crime
- Reducing property crime such as street robberies and burglaries

Thriving Healthy - Improving access to health care and promoting good health and independent living for all adults.

The main priorities of the Thriving Healthy partnership are to:

- Promote physical, mental and social wellbeing
- Reduce the gap between the life expectancy of Hackney residents and the rest of the country

- Encourage participation in culture and leisure, and in sporting and physical activity
- Improve services to vulnerable people and enable them to live as independently as possible
- Promote voluntary activity to build stronger communities
- Improve access to health care and promote healthy living. .

Better Homes - Better Homes, better places, better lives. The main objectives of the Better Homes partnership are:

- Decent and affordable homes
- Reduce overcrowding and homelessness by securing additional affordable homes
- Increase the availability of homes in Hackney that are attractive to those unable to afford market prices
- Improve the condition and management of houses and housing estates in the borough.

Children and Young People - Empowering children and young people to stay healthy and safe, achieve well and contribute positively. The key local priorities the partnership has identified are:

- Improving educational achievement, particularly for underperforming minority groups
- Addressing childhood obesity
- Reducing infant mortality
- Reducing teenage pregnancy
- Addressing worklessness for 18-24 year olds

Team Hackney Partnerships sub groups;

Better Homes Partnership (2 sub groups);

- Housing Management
- Investment
- Community Investment

Children and Young People Partnership (1 sub group)

- Local Area Agreement (LAA) Working Group

Economic Development partnership (1 sub group)

- Local Area Agreement (LAA) Working Group
- Skills Strategy Task Group

Safer Cleaner Partnership (6 sub groups)

- Domestic Violence
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Youth Crime Reduction

- Drugs and Alcohol
- Liveability
- Performance

Thriving Healthy Partnership

- Choosing Health Implementation Group
- Older People
- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health
- People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities and Long Term Illness
- Vulnerable People

Sustainable Community Strategy

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on Councils to produce Community Strategies to cover the area that they represent. According to the legislation, these should aim to

- Promote well being in their areas: and
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK

They should have four key parts:

1. A long-term vision for the area which focuses on the end results to be achieved
2. A plan that identifies shorter-term pieces of work that will help achieve the end results
3. A shared commitment to carry out the plan
4. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress against the plan

The Local Government White paper; *Strong and Prosperous Communities* indicated a Sustainable Community Strategy is to set out the strategic vision for a place and provides a vehicle for considering and deciding how to address difficult cross-cutting issues such as the economic future of an area, social exclusion and climate change. Local authorities have the job of preparing the Sustainable Community Strategy. A vital part of that is to consult local citizens, communities and the voluntary, community and private sectors. The Strategy should also reflect: the views of other local partner agencies and the thematic partnerships. The Sustainable Community Strategy should therefore aim to reflect the collective vision of the LSP.

So while a local authority can neither agree nor deliver a Sustainable Community Strategy on its own, it is appropriate for it, as the locally elected and therefore accountable body, to be charged with co-ordinating the work of LSP partners.

Hackney is currently in the process of revising and reviewing its 2005 Community Strategy, and aims to set out our shared 10 year vision for the local area. This will be based on evidence about the place now and analysis about changes likely to take place and factors likely to impact on and affect local people and the local area.

Hackney's refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy will set out the agreed vision for the Borough and will include a set of 10 year priority outcomes, which are in effect specific medium term policy goals for Hackney. These outcomes will provide all partners in the Borough with a 'clear line of sight' about what we are aiming to achieve over a 10 year period for the local area. These outcomes align with the LAA

targets, which are in effect three year milestones for our longer term 10 year plan. The LAA indicators and targets are being embedded in strategies across the borough as they are developed and agreed. To date (April 2008) they have been incorporated into LB Hackney Corporate Story Board, the Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment, the Local Development Framework, the Regeneration Delivery Plan as well as the emerging Youth Crime and Skills Strategies for the Borough.

As part of the renewal process for the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council is planning to align its' annual monitoring of the Strategy with the LAA monitoring cycle. Over time, the Council's Annual Report will become the Community Strategy Action Plan and expanding the focus of the Council's Annual Report to cover progress made towards achieving local strategic priorities for the whole area, rather than just focusing on the reporting on performance of the Council's Services. In effect we would produce an annual Community Strategy Action Plan which would include performance information on Hackney's LAA targets.

The Council is also looking to develop a system of policy reviews for the Sustainable Community Strategy. These would provide partners and the wider community with means to get involved in shaping decisions about big issues affecting the local area and any recommendations stemming from these reviews could help inform delivery of the Local Area Agreement. It is proposed that the first review looks at Worklessness in the Borough.

Non executive directors

A **non-executive director** (NED) or *outside director* is a member of the board of directors of a company or organisation who does not form part of the executive management team. He or she is not an employee of the company or affiliated with it in any other way. They are differentiated from *inside directors*, who are members of the board also serving as executive managers of the company (most often as corporate officers).

Non-executive directors have responsibilities in the following areas, according to the 2003 report by Derek Higgs commissioned by the British Government:

- **Strategy:** Non-executive directors should constructively challenge and contribute to the development of strategy.
- **Performance:** Non-executive directors should scrutinise the performance of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitoring, and where necessary removing, senior management and in succession planning.¹¹

¹¹ Review of the role and effectiveness of non executive directors – Derek Higgs - January 2003, DTI, HM Govt, UK

Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements are 3-year agreements which should both define and represent local priorities. They are now a reality for all unitary authorities but were introduced by the Government in a staged approach. Through their introduction the Government hopes to see the development of a number of complimentary objectives at a local level including greater efficiency, strengthened partnership working and providing a framework within which Local Authorities can enhance their community leadership role.

The introduction of LAAs has been gradual and began with a pilot in 2005. Initially locally focussed and restrained in their ambition, with each evolution they have allowed for expanded levels of flexibility and freedom. Hackney joined the LAA process in the third round which began in March 2006. The borough's first LAA was focussed upon reducing inequalities across the borough we also have a number of stretch targets which will deliver additional funds to the area if LBH and our partners deliver on agreed (stretching) performance targets.

The Local Government White Paper issued in October 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act that followed it have placed greater emphasis on the LAA as well as clarifying a number of the Government's expectations and the anticipated interactions between partners in an area; as follows

- A stronger role for local authorities
- LAAs to be refreshed in 2008
- Mainstreaming of funding to support LAA targets
- A smaller set of national indicators
- LAAs will be the only place where targets are monitored
- Maximum of 35 local priority targets in LAAs + 17 education and early years targets
- Stretch targets will not be renegotiated

A new unringfenced area based LAA grant will provide an increasing amount of funding, with a presumption that all area based funding will go through this route unless there are very strong arguments for retaining a ring fence. We understand the Government intends that such a grant will have no performance reporting or other conditions attached.