

Corporate Assessment Report

June 2006



Corporate Assessment

Newham London Borough Council

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high quality local services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies in England, which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money each year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.

Copies of this report

If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0845 056 0566.

© Audit Commission 2006

For further information on the work of the Commission please contact:

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ

Tel: 020 7828 1212 Fax: 020 7976 6187 Textphone (minicom): 020 7630 0421

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction	4
Executive summary	6
Areas for improvement	9
Summary of assessment scores	10
Context	11
The locality	11
The Council	12
What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?	13
Ambition	13
Prioritisation	15
What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	18
Capacity	18
Performance management	20
What has been achieved?	23
Sustainable communities and transport	23
Safer and stronger communities	25
Healthier communities	26
Older people	28
Children and young people	29
Appendix 1 - Framework for Corporate Assessment	32

Introduction

- 1 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is the means by which the Audit Commission fulfils its statutory duty under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003 to make an assessment, and report on the performance, of local authorities. Corporate assessment is one element in the overall assessment that leads to a CPA score and category.
- 2 The purpose of the corporate assessment is to assess how well the Council engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities. It seeks to answer three headline questions which are underpinned by five specific themes.
 - What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?
 - Ambition.
 - Prioritisation.
 - What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?
 - Capacity.
 - Performance management.
 - What has been achieved?
 - Achievement.
 - Considered against the shared priorities of:
 - sustainable communities and transport;
 - safer and stronger communities;
 - healthier communities;
 - older people; and
 - children and young people.
- 3 Corporate assessments are normally aligned with a joint area review of services for children and young people (JAR). In practice this means that the Council's achievements in relation to children and young people are assessed using the evidence provided from the JAR. In addition, examples of outcomes and activity, which are relevant to the other themes and which are identified through the JAR, are considered within the corporate assessment.

- 4 The JAR covers all services for children and young people that are directly managed or commissioned by the Council, as well as health and youth justice services provided by other bodies. It focuses on the contributions made by services to improving outcomes. The separate JAR report covers the leadership and management of services for children and young people and, in particular, the way that such services work together to improve outcomes. The description and judgement in respect of children and young people in this report is summarised from the JAR report.

Executive summary

- 5 The London Borough of Newham Council is performing well. The borough's demography of a relatively young and very diverse population, with high levels of deprivation, sets a challenging context for the agenda for change in Newham. The Council has an ambitious programme of improvement, which is based on a clear understanding of local needs. Its vision is to make Newham not only a place where people want to live and work, but one in which they will want to stay more permanently. Raising people's previously low aspirations is an important part of the Council's agenda.
- 6 The Council's inspiring ambitions for Newham are shared with and understood by partners, staff and the public and the Council is highly regarded as a partner. There is a strong Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which is successfully reducing the gap between local performance and national targets in priority areas. The Council is actively planning to make the most of the unique opportunity that winning the 2012 Olympics represents. It is aiming to ensure that the investment, publicity and involvement of local people in this international occasion have a real and sustainable impact on the quality of life of local people.
- 7 There is a clear and compelling long-term vision for the community, and elected members and officers provide visible, effective community leadership. The 'influential councillor' scheme gives elected members a link to local community forums and high profile cultural events have successfully engaged local communities. The Council's good understanding of local needs has been used as the basis to formulate its priorities for improvement. This has been translated into some robust strategies, particularly in addressing the issues of the most deprived areas. This clarity has enabled the Council to increase investment in priority areas.
- 8 The Mayor and Chief Executive provide effective political and managerial leadership. Since Newham adopted the Mayor and cabinet model in 2002, the Mayor has been a strong leader, so that his position is now seen as Mayor of the borough not merely of the Council. There is a clear understanding of the local issues and priorities, which helps the Council and its partners to focus on what matters most.
- 9 The Council and its partners working well together, which strengthens their capacity to make the most impact on improving the quality of life in Newham. The structural and cultural change being brought about by Moving to Excellence is helping to promote a positive and innovative attitude throughout the Council. Internal roles and responsibilities are clear, with councillors and officers working together effectively. The Council has built a strong financial position through sound financial management and has used a range of procurement approaches to add to its capacity.

- 10 Performance management is delivering improvements, which is reflected in 71 per cent of performance indicators improving over the last three years. The Council takes action when underperformance is identified but systems are not sufficiently robust to highlight all areas of underperformance. The new strategic approach to risk management has yet to have a demonstrable impact because it is yet disseminated throughout the organisation and with partners. Contract monitoring arrangements are not sufficiently robust and do not ensure lessons are learnt across the Council.
- 11 The Council currently provides good value for money overall. The quality of services is usually consistent with spend, and in some cases it is better. It has a comparatively low level of Council tax, which was one of the Mayor's local pledges, and costs generally compare favourably with others.
- 12 The comprehensive understanding of local needs is particularly evident in terms of the diversity of the local population. This knowledge is shared with partners and is used to shape services. The wide spectrum of Newham's population is seen as a positive opportunity, with diversity being celebrated. Newham has been awarded beacon council status for culture and sport for hard-to-reach communities.
- 13 The Council and its partners are making real improvements in those areas that matter most to local people. This is reflected in the high scores the Council achieves in surveys about satisfaction with services and quality of life issues. The Council has been successful in improving the employment opportunities for local people. As a result, the employment rate in Newham has improved well above the national average. Child poverty is also reducing.
- 14 The strong local partnership with the police has been successful in reducing crime and the fear of crime. Crime hotspots have been specifically targeted and local community engagement initiatives have improved social cohesion, reduced repeat offending and supported young people into employment.
- 15 There is a comprehensive and ambitious approach to regenerating Newham. The Council is delivering significant improvements in the quality of local housing through regeneration initiatives. Current and planned major developments will continue this and transport links have also improved significantly.
- 16 The Council with its partners has a clear strategic framework for addressing health inequalities. This has an appropriate focus on children and young people to prevent future health problems and on over 50s to prevent premature death. With its partners the Council effectively communicates health promotion messages. The health of local communities is generally improving, but there are still wide variations from London and national levels, and the pace of improvement needs to increase to narrow the gap.
- 17 The Council has recently put in place an older people's strategy which has clearly signposted the prevention and wellness agenda as an important factor in improving the health of older people. Healthy living for body and mind initiatives have been targeted successfully at older people, which have helped them to become and remain more active, as well as develop support and friendship networks.

- 18 The outcomes for children and young people are good. The Council and its partners work effectively and imaginatively to significantly improve the opportunities for children and their families. The work in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve their potential is outstanding. There is strong involvement of children and young people in decision-making which has led to improvement. Housing is available for vulnerable young people but there is a shortage of suitable long-term accommodation for young people generally.

Areas for improvement

- 19 The Council's plans and strategies are not sufficiently well co-ordinated and consistent. Some key documents, such as the delivery plan, the older people's strategy and service plans have been finalised and implemented only recently. Inevitably, some necessary links between these and other strategies and plans are missing. The Council is now aware of this and is currently mapping its strategies and plans to ensure a more coherent and consistent approach, with greater clarity on timeframes for individual plans.
- 20 The Council can improve its service planning and performance management arrangements. A corporate approach to producing service plans has been disseminated but the implementation and application of this is inconsistent. The targets set by service areas are not always challenging, with several examples of future targets being less than or close to current performance. Some action plans in priority areas do not put enough focus on outcomes. This could result in improvement not happening at the pace the Council and its partners are looking for.
- 21 The Council has recently strengthened some key corporate services and strategies. The new arrangements have started to make an impact, as they tackle key strategic issues such as workforce planning, asset management and contract management. There has been insufficient time for these new approaches to become fully embedded into operational activity across all directorates.
- 22 The Council has recently reviewed and updated its strategic approach to risk management and has issued corporate guidance. The new arrangements are not yet fully effective as there are still inconsistencies in the review and control of service risks. In addition, the risks of some partnerships and other procurement arrangements are not fully assessed.

Summary of assessment scores

Headline questions	Theme	Score*
What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?	Ambition	4
	Prioritisation	3
What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	Capacity	3
	Performance management	2
What has been achieved?	Achievement	3
Overall corporate assessment score**		3
*Key to scores		
1 – below minimum requirements – inadequate performance		
2 – at only minimum requirements – adequate performance		
3 – consistently above minimum requirements – performing well		
4 – well above minimum requirements – performing strongly		

**Rules for determining the overall corporate assessment score

Scores on 5 themes	Overall corporate assessment score
Two or more themes with a score of 4 None less than score of 3	4
Three or more themes with a score of 3 or more None less than score of 2	3
Three or more themes with a score of 2 or more	2
Any other combination	1

Context

The locality

- 23 Newham is part of Greater London. It is located north of the River Thames, three miles east of the City of London.
- 24 The borough includes the areas of East Ham, West Ham, Canning Town and Stratford; and most of Docklands and the City of London Airport are also within Newham's boundaries. Newham has good road, rail and tube links with the centre of London, enhanced through the Jubilee Line extension and the Docklands Light Railway. There is ready access to the M25 and beyond and from City Airport there are regular flights to several UK and European destinations. Stratford International Station will soon offer a direct rail link to Paris via the Channel Tunnel.
- 25 Newham's population is around 254,000 and the people of Newham make up one of the youngest, most diverse populations in the UK. More than 40 per cent of the population are under 25 years old compared to the London average of 31 per cent and over 110 languages are spoken locally. Around three in ten residents are Asian/Asian British (the second highest percentage of Asians in England and Wales) and two in ten are Black or Black British, including the second highest percentage of Black Africans. Newham's population has the second largest percentage of Muslims in England and Wales.
- 26 The difficulty of replacing the docks as a major source of employment together with an influx of new residents, has contributed to Newham being the fourth most deprived area in London, and eleventh in England. Life expectancy remains lower than in most areas nationally. Nearly one-third of the population is income deprived. Unemployment in Newham continues to be higher than the national and London averages and, whilst employment levels are increasing, the rate of employment remains low. This is a particular challenge for the Council and its partners.
- 27 The borough played an important role in the successful bid for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games which included making investment to secure the infrastructure. The Games will provide the area with a major economic and social boost. A new Olympic Village including an 80,000 seat stadium will be built in Newham which builds on the major re-development of the Stratford area. Regeneration initiatives across the borough have meant that the number of businesses have increased significantly, as have opportunities for residents, particularly young people.

The Council

- 28 Newham opted for the elected Mayor and cabinet model of local democracy in 2002. This provides clear accountability, with the Mayor supported by cabinet, mayoral advisors and officers in making decisions. The political structure has an executive arm, supported by policy forums that focus on local priorities, a scrutiny function, and committees for specific topics such as development control, political standards and licensing.
- 29 There are 60 elected councillors, with only four not part of the Labour group. Newham modernised the role of its councillors when it introduced the 'Influential councillor' scheme. This promotes councillors as representatives of each community forum area, to ensure there is a real focus on local issues.
- 30 The Council's scrutiny function is headed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which is supported by six scrutiny commissions. Four of these are topic-based and there are specific commissions for education and health. These contribute to the development of policies that will make a real difference to Newham's people.
- 31 Through its Moving to Excellence initiative, the Council is changing its organisational structure and culture. The Council's officer structure is now led by the Newham executive board, chaired by the Chief Executive. Below this are several directorates, reflecting the Council's priorities, such as Children and Young People and Adults Culture and Community. The Council is the biggest employer of local residents. Minority ethnic communities and people with a disability are under-represented in Council staff numbers compared with most other Councils but this is improving.
- 32 Newham is funded by central government as an outer London area. In 2005/06, the Council will spend around £454 million on its services and functions. Between 2004 and 2006 there was an additional £40 million available to the Council and its partners through neighbourhood renewal funding, with another £39 million awarded for the period 2006 to 2008. Maintaining a low council tax compared to other London Boroughs has been a priority, given the level of deprivation experienced by local people. Despite having achieved this, council tax collection rates are in the worst 25 per cent nationally even after levels of deprivation have been taken into account.
- 33 Partnership is important in Newham. The Council is a key partner in the LSP which is chaired by the Mayor. The civic partnership sets the overall strategic direction of the LSP which then oversees five local action partnership boards. These in turn focus on the key community strategy themes. The community board co-ordinates and engages the community, voluntary and faith sectors, with a particular emphasis on involving Newham's ten community forums. Introduced in 1999, these enable local residents, businesses and 'influential councillors' to contribute to local debate, decisions and the resulting neighbourhood action plans.

What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

Ambition

- 34 The Council is performing strongly in this area. The Council is highly ambitious for its community. With its partners, it has set a clear, challenging but realistic agenda for change. This is fully supported by the public and staff. The ambitions are founded on a thorough and researched understanding of local needs and take full account of the substantial diversity of Newham's population. Strong and clear community leadership is reflected in the work of the Mayor and Chief Executive, the effective representative roles of councillors and the commitment and support of officers and partners.
- 35 There is a clear and compelling vision of Newham as 'a place where people choose to live and work', by 2010. This vision is particularly challenging as Newham has a history of a transient population, with people moving out of the borough for better jobs and housing. As an area of significant deprivation, the Council and its partners recognise the need to raise the aspirations of local people and to improve the quality of life for Newham's residents.
- 36 The Council has clear and inspirational ambitions for young people in Newham and has set challenging targets for what it wants to achieve. This is embodied in its aim that, by 2010, 'All our children, whatever their background, to be achieving the same level of educational attainment as the national average. They should be healthy with good career prospects and a good quality of life.' This is a significant challenge for the Council as current performance at Key Stage 3 is amongst the lowest 25 per cent nationally and the child poverty rate, although falling, is 50 per cent. The community strategy and the corporate plan reinforce this ambition and identify the organisations that are supporting the Council to deliver it. This clarity has helped to focus the use of resources in the borough.
- 37 The Council has very impressive ambitions for the long-term regeneration of Newham, including strategic transport development. It has a track record of delivering against this ambitious agenda, exemplified by the Royal Docks, Silvertown Quays, Channel Tunnel rail link and Lower Lea Valley development. In addition the Canning Town and Custom House Regeneration Project includes the building of 8,000 new homes and the creation of 500,000 square metres of floor-space in a revitalised town centre. This £1.7 billion project will transform the area physically, socially and economically.

14 Corporate Assessment | What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

- 38** Newham's Community Strategy sets a clear and ambitious agenda for health improvement, that 'By 2020 the health of the people in Newham will be as good as other Londoners, and health services will be as good as anywhere'. This is again a challenging vision for the borough, given the levels of deprivation, and health inequalities. People in Newham have the lowest life expectancy for both males and females in London.
- 39** These ambitions have been translated into targets which are both clear and realistic. The targets are being used to measure progress and to identify areas where additional effort is required to deliver the vision. For instance, there have been significant improvements in educational attainment, which have narrowed the gap between past performance and the vision for 2010.
- 40** The Council has proactively seized opportunities to build on its ambition. It has used the transformational power of the Olympics to plan for rapid improvements to the quality of life for its citizens. The Council was a key player in the successful bid for the 2012 Olympics and is moving quickly to reap the full long term benefits of the games for the area.
- 41** The Council's ambitions are based on a clear and, thorough understanding of the needs of the local communities and the Council and its partners have continued to keep this intelligence up to date. The Neighbourhood Information Management System (NIMS) provides shared access to local intelligence and other information from partners and is used to shape services. The Newham household panel survey identified the key underlying issues, and their causes, that impact on the lives of local residents. The survey, which has been undertaken for three consecutive years, also tracks changes in perceptions and circumstances over time. This initiative, which this year included 1,500 individual interviews with residents as well as a household survey, explored the key issues for Newham of:
- income poverty and deprivation;
 - migration, housing and quality of life;
 - children, young people and families;
 - education, training and employment; and
 - health and social care.
- 42** The Council uses this information to develop policies and to prioritise actions to meet the changing needs of its communities, particularly in terms of the substantial diversity of its local population. The health and social care report from the household panel survey provided the Council with detailed information on young people's health, including eating habits and body mass figures. This information was used in the development of the physical activity and obesity strategies.

- 43 Elected members have a clear understanding of the needs of the area. They have acquired this knowledge of local issues through regular contact with constituents, work with businesses, both local and national, and through dialogue with Council officers. The Mayor's considerable awareness of local issues helps the Council and partners to focus on what matters most. The Council also champions the needs of the area and takes every opportunity to lobby hard to bring in additional investment to help address the deep-rooted deprivation and disadvantage.
- 44 Partners and staff have a strong commitment to and actively support the achievement of the vision for Newham. The translation of the vision into clear targets has enabled both groups to be clear and enthused about how they contribute to its achievement. This clarity is also reflected in the community strategy, which uses the life episodes of 18 year olds in Newham to identify how the work being done to achieve the vision will improve their life chances. This explanation of what the council and its partners must do to achieve the vision has provided a real clarity of purpose and focus for improvement.
- 45 The Council's ambitions for Newham are shared with and understood by the people of Newham. There have been major participative consultation events, such as the Big Sunday, which was actively supported by a large number of partners and attended by 32,000 people. This engaged the public in, and enlisted their support for, tackling significant local issues for Newham such as skills and training, fostering and adoption, smoking cessation and anti-social behaviour.
- 46 Partners share the Council's ambition to secure a lasting legacy for the borough through regeneration and jobs creation for local people. They are very supportive of the new employment strategy, which recognises but challenges current successes seeking to maximise future opportunities, such as those in the construction industry.

Prioritisation

- 47 The Council is performing well in this area. There are clear and robust priorities which reflect the needs of the community. These priorities, which are shared with partners, enable the Council to stay focused on what needs to be done and to resource it appropriately. Not all service plans are sufficiently developed to support the delivery of these priorities.

16 Corporate Assessment | What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

- 48** Clear priorities are in place, which address the right issues for the community. They are based on a robust assessment of needs. The Council's vision is supported by six aims that prioritise the areas the Council must concentrate on to make Newham a place:
- which is attractive, clean and well maintained;
 - which is safer and where people feel safer;
 - where young people are healthy, educated, safe, have high aspirations for employment and good self esteem;
 - where the diversity of its people is celebrated, where people live harmoniously, respect each other and play a full part in the life of their community;
 - which is thriving economically and socially and where all people share in the growing prosperity; and
 - where health and well being and the quality of housing continues to improve, where people are active, have greater independence and where the most vulnerable are supported.
- 49** The delivery of the Council's services is clearly prioritised around these six aims. The corporate plan sets out the specific targets and intended outcomes in each priority area. It also identifies the partners who are working with the Council to deliver improvements. The corporate plan is supplemented with a delivery plan and a medium term financial strategy; these additional plans strengthen the prioritisation and resourcing aspects of the corporate plan.
- 50** The delivery plan is new and therefore is not yet driving service planning but the Council has implemented systems to ensure it will be used consistently. The Council developed the delivery plan between June 2005 and February 2006. This means that the links to service planning are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure consistent application across the Council. The delivery plan is now available to inform service planning for 2006/07.
- 51** The Council has some realistic and robust strategies to deliver improvements on local priorities. The town centre strategies identify the need to make deprived areas more attractive for business growth and are linked well with other priorities. This includes encouraging more retailers and businesses to develop in deprived areas. The Council has also secured funds to support the regeneration of town centres and it has a marketing strategy to further underpin development. This approach has helped to increase the jobs available and has attracted business into the most deprived areas.
- 52** Clear priorities for health improvement have been developed with partners, which reflect the findings of the needs assessments of the local community. There is a strong focus on using national and local research evidence to determine priorities for health improvement and these have been reflected in the health inequalities strategy. The Council and its partners are now translating the health improvement priorities into clear action plans.

- 53 The Council does not yet have a comprehensive system to ensure that all the required strategies and plans are prepared and finalised, and that the plans address the priorities consistently. The Council is aware of this and is developing a plan mapping system to rectify this.
- 54 Although most action plans are focussed on improving outcomes, this is not applied consistently in all key plans. For example the action plans for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) have limited outcome targets, for example the outcome target for the Violent Crime Delivery Group for domestic violence relates to the detection rate as opposed to reducing the incidence of domestic violence. This makes it more difficult for the Council and its partners to identify how the actions taken have successfully addressed the needs of the public.
- 55 There are clear and robust targets to achieve the Council's vision in most areas but some targets as set out in plans and strategies are not sufficiently challenging. For example the target set for reducing road casualties in 2005/06 is above the actual performance in 2004/05. Failure to set challenging targets, particularly in priority areas, is inconsistent with the Council's headline ambitions.

What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

Capacity

- 56 The Council is performing well in this area. It is focussing its capacity on improving the quality of life for its residents and works well with its partners, to increase capacity, to make the most impact. Councillors and officers work well together, roles and responsibilities are clear and the Council has built a strong financial position.
- 57 The respective roles and responsibilities of the elected Mayor, councillors and officers and their delegated powers are clear. The role of Mayor, individually and with Cabinet Members and Cabinet collectively, is clearly articulated in the constitution. The Mayor is highly regarded throughout the organisation and by partners for his contribution to community leadership and for gaining recognition for Newham, nationally and internationally.
- 58 The Council has successfully supported the development of councillors. Extensive training and support is provided for councillors through a wide range of processes. The influential councillor programme has improved the councillors' effectiveness as community advocates for their wards. The cabinet is supported by a range of Mayoral advisers, scrutiny is involved in policy development and community forums provide opportunities to engage with local people in reviewing local services. This enables councillors to be involved in the work of the Council in a meaningful way which supports the achievement of priorities.
- 59 The Mayor and Chief Executive are both rigorous in ensuring high standards of ethical governance. This is particularly important given the long term absence of a strong and coherent opposition group that is able to hold the Council openly to account. Councillors adopted a voluntary code of conduct and established a standards committee well before they were required to, by legislation. The number of referrals to the Standards Board for England is below the London average.
- 60 Overview and scrutiny committee makes a positive contribution to policy prior to formal decisions being made. It has provided a focus on important issues such as mental health and waste management. The Council could encourage more open challenge and debate in scrutiny and other Council forums. This would demonstrate publicly the value and legitimacy it places on alternative views.

- 61 The Council's financial capacity is strong. There is a culture of sound financial management, which has enabled the Council to develop a stable financial base with a healthy working balance to meet unforeseen events and to provide some stability. Strong leadership has helped to ensure reserves are maintained in line with corporate plans. The Council's medium term financial strategy has enabled the Council to be innovative in pursuit of its ambitions and it has moved resources into priority areas, such as education and the environment. A challenge for 2007-2009 is to respond to the phasing out of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF), including how current NRF-funded activity can be mainstream funded. The Council is aware of this and is working with its partners to review all NRF-funded activity.
- 62 The Council is making good use of ICT and e-government to support service delivery. Newham has had a network of local 'one stop shop' centres (local service centres), supported by customer relationship management, since 1988. These, together with the telephone contact centre, achieve good levels of user satisfaction. The Council is making good progress on e-government, having delivered all priority and good ODPM e-government outcomes. It has also recently redesigned its website to significantly improve electronic access to services and information, including the provision of information in a number of community languages. However it is too soon for the impact of this development to be evaluated.
- 63 The Council, with its partners, is using modern procurement arrangements successfully to improve capacity. The Private Finance Initiative scheme for integrated waste management is enabling the Council and its partners to develop this service. The Council is a joint shareholder in a company providing ICT support, training and employment opportunities for local young people. It has also participated in joint venture companies which have allowed the Council to be more flexible with its resources and has outsourced some major services, for example leisure, to improve service provision.
- 64 Partnerships are a strength in Newham and have been used effectively to increase capacity and flexibility to meet changing needs. Partners share the common vision for Newham and so are focussed on working with the Council in delivering the shared priorities. The Council, with its partners, makes effective use of other external funding streams such as NRF, PFI and New Deal for Communities. Strong partnerships are helping to deliver solutions to long-term social and economic challenges.
- 65 There is a strong commitment to equalities and embracing diversity in the Council. The Council has achieved level 4 of the Equality standard for local government. To ensure fair access, the Council monitors the delivery of services and actively targets under-represented groups. It is working to mainstream equality issues by implementing equality impact assessments in all its services and for planned projects. Diversity is celebrated at various cultural events and councillors play a key role in helping to facilitate consultation with specific communities. The language shop ensures that all of the borough's diverse communities are able to access Council services. These initiatives help to ensure effective targeting of the most disadvantaged communities.

20 Corporate Assessment | What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

- 66 The Council is developing a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to workforce planning but has yet to develop joint strategies with its main partners which address workforce development issues over the longer term. The Council jointly funds public health posts with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) and has introduced campaigns to recruit in areas of staff shortages, including 'Grow your own' schemes and an Asian Graduate scheme for social workers. Management development is an important element of Moving to Excellence, with over 300 managers attending the shared leadership programme. The launch of a set of common values is helping to develop a 'one organisation' approach. The Council is addressing its historical reliance on long term use of agency workers. However, some key human resource challenges remain, such as reducing absenteeism through sickness which following a reduction, has recently increased to 12.8 days per employee, and progressing single status at a faster pace.
- 67 The Council's approach to asset management is adequate. A new asset management plan for 2006-2010 has been produced and service level asset management plans are being developed which will inform a five-year corporate property strategy. The Council is considering a range of options for the development of a new single site headquarters. There are examples of a collaborative approach to the use of assets, including release of a Council property for a new health care facility, as part of the LIFT initiative.

Performance management

- 68 The Council is performing adequately in this area. Performance management is delivering improvements. This is reflected in 71 per cent of performance indicators improving over the last three years. There is robust action when underperformance is identified but systems are not sufficiently robust to highlight and prevent underperformance in some areas. The new strategic approach to risk management has yet to have a demonstrable impact on the way services are managed. Arrangements for the monitoring of contracts are not sufficiently robust.
- 69 The Council's performance management framework is sound. There are clear formal connections between the vision for Newham in 2010, the Mayor's priorities, the community strategy, shared priorities, Council plans, desired outcomes, delivery, monitoring and measuring achievement. The Moving to Excellence approach and the Gateway Board led by the Chief Executive are widely understood by staff. These are seen to be moving the Council to the next stage of its development, ensuring coherent and consistent approaches. As a consequence, performance management is embedding across the Council.

- 70 The Council opens itself up well to external challenge by inviting respected organisations to assess how well it is doing in specified areas and to make recommendations for improvement. Many of the reports are available to the public, even where the findings have criticised the current method of service delivery. This open approach to external review helps to drive improvements in the Council.
- 71 There is an effective use of information to monitor the performance of the LSP. The Council, with its partners, uses comprehensive and detailed demographic information, such as on race, age and disadvantage, to analyse issues, agree action and monitor progress. Satisfaction surveys, which monitor the quality of life and views of local residents, are used to inform service prioritisation and design. Performance is clearly compared to national data, and targets are set for each area of activity within the context of national and local performances. The information used by the LSP shows trends over time. There are clear, regular and comprehensive reports on the effectiveness of NRF projects.
- 72 There is a good approach to the handling of the complaints and the Council uses this information proactively to improve and develop services. The corporate working group on complaints identifies common issues and ensures that the Council learns from the issues raised. Complaints are also reported annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Of the 20 complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman during the last year none were upheld. Details of the Council's whistle-blowing policy are available on the Council's web site; however, the policy is internally focussed and contact arrangements for the policy are not widely known.
- 73 Monitoring of performance is adequate, but the strength of the high level arrangements are not always replicated at service level. The current performance management processes in place to manage and monitor services have not identified some service issues early enough to enable the Council to prevent poor performance. For example, in crime and anti-social behaviour, in the youth service, and in children's social care. The Council is developing corporate health indicators to help to rectify the situation. At a more strategic level, the Mayor's strategy and performance meetings provide skilled, robust and positive challenge and are a key part of the Council's monitoring process. Cabinet members hold regular monitoring meetings with relevant Executive Directors. Performance monitoring by the scrutiny performance management information working group and Newham's executive board is cascaded through the organisation down to service level.
- 74 The Council is using creative and effective approaches to improve performance. For example it worked with an external consultancy to re-engineer the way that housing benefit and council tax services are delivered. This approach is being rolled out to other Council services, many of which have not been fundamentally reviewed in this way before. This approach has considerable potential to improve customers' overall experience of the Council.

22 Corporate Assessment | What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

- 75** The Council's approach to monitoring of contracts and partnerships is adequate. It is developing its approach to procurement to ensure a more coherent and consistent approach for the future. There are some notable examples of review and development of contracts, for example in the provision of leisure services with an external partner. However, there is no consistent and formal contract review process, with examples of inadequate contract monitoring and limited sharing of learning from experience of what works and what does not.
- 76** The Council reflects the levels of risk and service performance in setting the frequency of service reviews. For example, poor performance in the housing benefit service was monitored on a weekly basis at a corporate level and social services have been kept under close review. Performance has improved in both services.
- 77** Newham has recently improved its approach to risk management, although this is not yet embedded across the organisation. The Council is confident in its abilities to take risks and actively seeks out new and innovative solutions to meet local needs. This is supported by the Gateway Board, which ensures that risks on major projects are managed effectively. The approach to risk management has recently been strengthened through a review of its risk management strategy and guidance. However, there are inconsistencies in the identification and control of service risks and in the management of risks associated with partnerships as risk management is not consistently considered in the performance management of all services.
- 78** Although the Council generally provides good value for money, the principles for reviewing and improving value for money are not consistently applied across all services. There is an increasing focus on value for money and the quality of services is usually consistent with spend, and in some cases it is better. However, this currently relies on individual or service initiatives rather than on a clear and disseminated corporate approach and the sharing of good practice. Consequently, value for money is not fully incorporated into the Council's approach to performance management.
- 79** Service planning is adequate. Service plans are in place for most of the Council's services. Outline guidance has been issued for managers but they have not been able to interpret the guidance consistently. One consequence is that it has taken longer than anticipated to produce all the plans. This is hampering the Council's ability to fully monitor delivery across all services areas. The lack of consistency is being addressed through a new robust approval process.

What has been achieved?

- 80 The Council is performing well in this area. The Council and its partners have a clear understanding of the issues that face the local community. There is a close alignment between the local priorities identified by the Council and the national priorities defined by government. The Council has made effective use of NRF and additional funding in these priority areas to improve the quality of life of residents. There is a significant NRF programme, which has helped to improve community cohesion through targeted projects and major multicultural events that celebrate diversity in Newham.
- 81 The Council is working hard, with its partners, to develop a sense of local pride, so that communities feel they connect with the places and people that make up Newham. Improving aspirations are reflected in 95 per cent of young people who responded to the household survey saying that they intend to remain in education after the age of 16. Many young people felt that they were being successful in accessing advice through connexions and school based initiatives.
- 82 Changes are leading to improvement in the quality of life for the people who live in, work in and visit Newham. For instance, the Government Office for London commended the Newham LSP for reducing the gap between Newham's achievements and national targets in those areas that central government sees as the national priorities for improvement.
- 83 The commitment to improve outcomes for people is evident at all levels throughout the Council and it is clearly shared by its partners. The Council has recognised that the challenge set out in its vision is a significant one. It has therefore supplemented its capacity by building strong partnerships, entering into commercial arrangements with the private sector and buying in expertise where appropriate.
- 84 Some management processes need to be strengthened to ensure improvement is achieved at the required pace and to the appropriate standard. Plans and programmes need to be better co-ordinated to ensure that priorities are addressed at the appropriate and expected levels.

Sustainable communities and transport

- 85 There is a clear understanding of the issues for building sustainable communities in the context of changing demography, which is being used to improve outcomes. This understanding has helped ensure that key strategies draw on the wider support of all Council services and partners. The implications of deprivation, low income, health and social attitudes are clearly understood. The Council recognises that it needs to break the culture of benefit reliance and barriers to work, so that it can further reduce the level of unemployment.

- 86 The Council has been effective in ensuring local residents get employment opportunities in new developments by ensuring people are 'job ready'. The Council and its partners worked together to meet local employer and residents needs by provide customised training for the new Gallions Reach Retail Park which secured work for 500 local people. Around 300 people a year have been placed into growth sector jobs in construction and hospitality through the links with Dockland Recruitment and the Action Team in Plaistow successfully got 800 people into work last year.
- 87 The Council with its partners have contributed to an increase in the employment rate. Since 2002/03, the national employment rate has worsened by 0.2 per cent. Over the same period the employment rate in Newham has showed a significant improvement of 2.9 per cent which compares favourably with only a 0.8 per cent improvement in other neighbourhood renewal areas. However there is more to do as unemployment, at 4.5 per cent, is significantly above both the regional and national average. The new employment strategy, which builds on the previous access to jobs strategy, is focussing on the 'worklessness' agenda to drive further large scale improvements.
- 88 There is a strong entrepreneurial approach to housing regeneration, which is delivering large scale change in Newham. The Council is making extensive use of the private sector in the regeneration of housing in the borough, through the use of private finance initiatives and joint ventures. There are innovative plans for improving the quality of private sector housing, reducing homelessness and poverty levels through Local Space. Work is already underway on the £1.7 billion Canning Town redevelopment. This extremely ambitious partnership aims to transform the area including a significant improvement in the quality of housing and developing a more sustainable mix of ownership/tenure, moving from 90 per cent social housing towards 50 per cent. The Brooks Estate in Plaistow North is in the process of a £50 million improvement programme, part of this has included the demolition of flats and maisonettes and replacement with 205 new properties.
- 89 The Council has engaged well with partners resulting in improved public transport. There have been significant improvements in the transport links such as through the Stratford Station and the additional Jubilee Line and Docklands Light Railway stations. Satisfaction levels of public transport users are high, being in the top 25 per cent nationally.
- 90 The Council is beginning to deliver on its ambitions for the local environment, with improvements in areas of priority for residents. The cleanliness of the streets has improved from a low base as shown in Local Environmental Quality scores. These improvements have been noticed by residents and satisfaction with street cleaning has risen by 15 per cent in the past year. Although the Council is not meeting the government recycling targets this is because it has taken a long term collaborative approach to the treatment of waste through the East London Waste Authority. This solution is projected to deliver significant improvements in recycling rates from 2007/08. Several services have a role in addressing local and global environmental issues but there is no central focus for environmental sustainability or co-ordination of action.

Safer and stronger communities

- 91 The Council, with its partners, is successfully reducing crime and the fear of crime. Levels of recorded crime reduced significantly over the three years to 2004/05. For example, domestic burglaries per 1000 households fell from 21.9 in 2002/03 to 19.8 in 2004/05. This meant that by 2005, Newham had improved from being amongst the worst 25 per cent nationally to amongst the top 50 per cent. There was similar improvement in the reduction in violent crimes against people. Sustained improvement in the crime figures was evident in each of the key areas of recorded crime.
- 92 However, the latest police figures for the year to February 2006 show an increase in the overall levels of crime. The further reduction in sexual and racist crime has been more than offset by a significant increase in burglaries and robberies. The Council and its partners are exploring the underlying causes and taking appropriate action.
- 93 Participation in the cultural events programmes such as the Big Sunday, financed by NRF, has improved feelings of community safety and confidence. Local people were provided with new ways of meeting people and making new friends, which has helped to address a perception that people feel less connected to each other than they do to the borough. Social inclusion and social cohesion have improved, with reported racial incidents per 100,000 population falling from 80 in 2002/03 to 24 in 2004/05.
- 94 Cultural projects have successfully helped to reduce crime in Newham. Outcomes achieved through the outreach work stream indicate that such projects reduce offending levels because they give young people more things to do. They also make people feel more able to tackle the causes of crime in their neighbourhood. This has both reduced offending rates and increased the feeling of safety in the community. Perceived levels of anti-social behaviour are low; for example there is less fear in Newham about the problems associated with teenagers hanging around on the streets than in most other authorities.
- 95 The Council is successfully using diversionary activities to help reduce crime. The estate based sports projects, involving partners such as Leyton Orient Football Club and the London Towers Basketball Club, are engaging young people in sporting activities. This has improved employment opportunities for young people involved in the projects and has reduced repeat offending.
- 96 The Council is making good progress in dealing with the misuse of drugs and alcohol by both individuals and organised groups, reflecting the focus on targeting drug-related crime. More people have accessed support arrangements and, once people are in drug treatment, the Council and its partners are more successful than most authorities at getting people to stay in treatment. Newham's residents are also less concerned than most about problems with people who use drugs. The Council and its partners continue to be proactive in combating drug related issues, for example 177 cannabis factories and 13 crack houses were closed between April and October 2005. The Council has also refused a large number of personal licensing applications and has taken action to ensure that premises comply with new licensing procedures.

- 97 Partnership working between the Council and the police is a strength in Newham. There is evidence of co-ordinated initiatives being used to tackle crime hot spots. For example, the Jardin initiative, which aims to reduce crime and improve community confidence in an area where crime levels have recently increased, is targeting police and Council activity through a more visible presence.
- 98 The Council has a well-developed approach to emergency planning. Its senior officers have played a key role in developing London-wide as well as borough-wide arrangements. Contingency plans are in place and training scenarios are used to test out plans on a regular basis. The Council has excellent relationships with all services relevant to emergency response situations, especially the three blue light services.
- 99 The Council and its partners do not currently make full use of performance data. This information is not systematically used to prioritise action and target resources through the CDRP. The CDRP action plans for 2006 recognise the need to improve baseline data and performance measurement definitions, and to be more consistent in the approach to data collection, for example with registered social landlords. The CDRP is being strengthened and new monitoring arrangements will support improvements.
- 100 Council service plans do not yet fully recognise the role played by all Council services in reducing crime. A new crime and antisocial behaviour team has been established which is starting to draw services together to improve the mainstreaming of community safety.

Healthier communities

- 101 The health of local communities is generally improving, but there are still wide variations from London and national levels. The Council has developed a strategic approach to tackling health inequalities with its partners and now needs to start demonstrating an impact and narrow the gaps in health inequalities. Death rates from all causes are falling year on year in Newham but have remained high compared with London and nationally over the last ten years. Newham has the lowest life expectancy for males and females in London and, although this is improving, the gap between Newham and the rest of London is not narrowing. Infant mortality rates in Newham are consistently higher than in London and England and are getting worse. However, the Council has agreed a joint investment plan with partners to address this.
- 102 The Council, with the PCT and the LSP, has produced a clear strategy for tackling health inequalities based on a comprehensive picture of local health needs. This was developed through consultation with local agencies and residents. It sets a clear baseline for the key local health inequalities, identifying actions partners will take to meet 2010 national targets. There is an appropriate focus on children and young people to prevent health problems and on over 50s to prevent premature death from the big killers such as coronary heart disease. This strategy, together with the delivery plan for the corporate plan, provides a strategic framework with clear outcomes for health and well being.

- 103** The Council is working with its partners to develop a joint approach to improving the health of children and young people. It is consulting parents, carers and children, including using the Newham Youth Parliament, to turn priorities in the draft strategy for diet, physical activity and health for children and young people into actions, targets and outcomes. The launch of the strategy should provide a more systematic approach to promoting healthier outcomes for children. Guidance to Council staff has been developed to ensure that service plans recognise and incorporate the contributions that all services can make to reducing health inequalities.
- 104** Smoking has been identified as a key factor impacting on local health equality and the incidence of smoking is starting to decline through the actions of the Council and its partners. The Council's child and family health services, together with the PCT, has introduced a number of smoking cessation initiatives such as 'healthy babies' which has successfully helped pregnant mothers to stop smoking. Although smoking levels in men are above national averages, the level of smoking among women is below average and the national target of 21 per cent has already been achieved. In the West Ham and Plaistow New Deal for Communities area smoking levels have fallen from 31 to 29 per cent and the proportion of residents who say they have had good health over last year has increased from 45 to 52 per cent.
- 105** Effective intervention initiatives have been developed with partners to reduce teenage pregnancies. School ethnicity data has been used to inform targeted peer education programmes for looked after children and those in pupil referral units who are among the groups most likely to conceive as teenagers. The level of teenage pregnancies is now less than the London average.
- 106** The Council has engaged socially excluded young people through sport and this has resulted in the recent award of beacon status for culture and sport for hard-to-reach groups. Investment in the Council's programme for children in foster care, has increased the proportion of looked after children visits to leisure centres by 231 per cent from 2001 to 2004. There has been a particularly high impact from NRF funded cultural projects amongst Asian groups and females, previously under-represented in sporting activities.
- 107** There have been clear wider health benefits from the Council's regeneration programmes. Increased educational attainment, improved high employment rates and better quality housing will provide health benefits in the longer term. The Newham Warm zone scheme has improved heating and or insulation in 12,000 homes and provides grants to fuel poor families. Housing renewal programmes have increased the proportion of decent homes in more deprived neighbourhoods. For example the Housing PFI in Canning Town and Custom has led to the refurbishment of 1,000 homes.
- 108** The Council is fully exploiting the opportunity presented by the 2012 Olympics to promote physical activity, encourage volunteering and achieve the social and physical regeneration of the borough. The Olympics is being used to provide a focus on sport and health and to encourage a shift in public attitudes and behaviour towards healthy lifestyles. In 2004, 64,000 young people took part in 26 sports as part of Newham's Olympic and Paralympic programme.

- 109 The Council is improving its approach to promoting the health and well being of staff, but this is not yet systematic. It is developing an Organisational Wellness strategy. Healthier lifestyles are promoted to staff and residents through newsletters and magazines, including encouraging physical activity and quitting smoking. The Council has an employee assistance scheme. Other initiatives in development include a work-life balance strategy and a home working policy.
- 110 The Council has been successful in encouraging local people with serious health problems to improve their lifestyles. The GP Exercise Referral Programme aimed at tackling problems of chronic adult health and improving lifestyles of all borough residents, has seen an 18 per cent increase in the numbers completing the programme from 2001 to 2004 and there has been a 50 per cent increase in those attending leisure centres after their programme finished. NRF funded Community Care Navigators support over 800 people to help reduce hospital admissions and visits to GPs.
- 111 There have been a number of health focussed scrutiny reviews, for example, reviews of tuberculosis, school meals, asthma and mental health. These have raised the profile of these issues and helped to inform policy and service delivery. For example, the mental health review resulted in greater awareness of mental health issues and earlier introduction of the suicide prevention strategy.

Older people

- 112 The new strategy for older people is now place. This sets the strategic direction for older people's services and brings together the contribution of all Council services and that of partners to improve outcomes. A key strand of this strategy is the Council's approach to addressing the wellbeing agenda.
- 113 Good consultation arrangements were used in the development of the strategy. There is a partnership board for older people and an older people's reference group which includes a broad, multi-cultural group of representatives. An older people's stakeholder event was held in January 2006 to support the development of the strategy. This enabled older people to be involved in the planning and implementation of services.
- 114 The Council used the findings of its overview and scrutiny commission on older people to inform the development of the older people's strategy. The commission also helped to set some parameters for supporting older people in the future. The Council has clearly signposted the prevention and wellness agenda as an important factor in improving health in older people. This will support the Council and its partners in their efforts to improve life expectancy.
- 115 Healthy living for body and mind initiatives have also been successfully targeted at older people. The Newham Fit Club offers free activities to the over 50 population. These include free swims for over 50s, tea dances, tai-chi sessions for mental well-being and improved balance, Click on IT sessions in libraries, arts development work and sports health sessions. These initiatives help older people to become and remain active, as well as developing support and friendship networks for them.

- 116 The Council is improving opportunities for older people to live more independently in their own homes. It has expanded the provision of support in people's homes by introducing initiatives such as alarm schemes and the handy person service which provides assistance with minor house improvement.
- 117 Initiatives run in association with partners such as the SubCo Asian Elders Day Centre and the PCT have successfully improved the level of benefit take-up by older people. For example, more than 500 pensioners attended the third annual Pension Credit Event and it was estimated that as a result of advice provided, an additional £180,000 a year in benefits could be claimed.
- 118 The Council has also provided services for older people in response to public consultation. It has re-introduced a programme of tea dances in the borough and has targeted specific communities in Newham such as through the Caribbean style tea dance party. These events help improve the social regeneration of the borough and support keeping older people active.
- 119 Whilst the Council has developed a comprehensive older peoples' strategy, it is still developing the baseline data for the performance indicators it will use to measure success. More work is also needed to ensure that plans and strategies across the Council recognise the contribution that all services make to the well being of older people.
- 120 Although there are a number of initiatives in place to support a more active lifestyle by older people, there is limited publicity about some of the activities. This means that some older people are not fully aware of the activities that are available to them.

Children and young people

- 121 Overall, the Council is generally performing well to meet the needs of children and young people, with a range of outstanding features which are all the more commendable in an area of high deprivation. Social care is adequate. The Youth Service makes an adequate contribution to outcomes in a number of areas with some good examples, but the overall service is judged inadequate.
- 122 There are extremely strong, long term and challenging ambitions for young people with a strong commitment from all agencies to improve outcomes for them. The draft Children and Young People's Plan is a robust document with clear links to the community strategy, the corporate plan, and the council's delivery plan. Planning throughout is based on the five Every Child Matters outcomes. There is a strong focus to meeting the diverse needs within Newham. Plans and ambitions are based on a thorough understanding of the complex and changing needs of the area, supported by broad-ranging and detailed data. The Council established an integrated children's service in 2005, and the new structure was implemented in January 2006.

- 123** The Council and its partners have achieved adequate and improving health outcomes for children and young people overall. Children's lifestyles are improving with their involvement in physical activities and healthier eating, and parents are encouraged and enabled to support these developments. More mothers are breastfeeding, and there are reductions in both smoking among young people and the rate of teenage pregnancies. The number of low birth weight babies and high infant mortality rates are of concern but a sound strategy is now in place to help address inequalities and differential mortality rates across the borough. Oral health is poor but a clear oral health strategy is in place which is beginning to improve access to dental care. Agencies are collaborating effectively to improve immunisation rates and to tackle obesity. There is good inter-agency work to promote the mental health for children and young people although there are delays between assessments and the delivery of provision for those in acute need.
- 124** On the basis of the evidence gathered, children appear safe. There are effective strategies to reduce domestic violence, bullying, and anti-social behaviour. The police work well with schools to reduce the incidence and the fear of crime. There has been investment in family support services and the number of looked after children has stabilised in line with comparators. The area child protection committee is effective. There are high numbers on the child protection register, but very few in the category of sexual abuse. The threshold to access social care services is high, and the council's response to some referrals is inadequate.
- 125** The contribution of local services to helping children and young people achieve well and to enjoy their education and recreation is outstanding. An EarlyStart programme across the borough is effective in preparing children for school. Newham counters underachievement well and progress in raising standards is good or better against comparators in nearly all respects. Attendance is managed well, and support for schools is valued and effective. GCSE results are higher than comparators and in line with national averages. Newham is at the leading edge of inclusive practice in education. Access to, and participation in leisure and sports activity is high and Newham has one of the most extensive free community sports programmes in the country.
- 126** The work of the Council and its partners to help children and young people contribute to society is outstanding. Very good support for personal, social, and emotional development contributes to positive attitudes to learning and behaviour. Children and families, including those from vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups, receive good support to manage changes in their lives. Young people take their responsibilities as community members very seriously, with some outstanding contributions to voluntary activities. There is a wide range of opportunities to enable children and young people to make decisions about, and changes to, services. Many take part in these and the work of the youth parliament is outstanding. Almost all young people feel safe and happy at school and say their views make a difference to what happens. The number of offences committed by young people has reduced substantially and re-offending rates remain lower than comparators.

- 127 The combined work of all local services in helping children and young people to achieve economic well-being is outstanding. Staying on and retention rates are very good and educational outcomes for young people have risen sharply and are above national averages. Young people, including those with disabilities, have an unusually broad and expanding range of opportunities to participate in learning. Participation in work based learning is exceptionally high. An energetic vision for sustainable community regeneration sets ambitious targets supported by innovative projects to improve families' economic well-being. Youth unemployment, particularly among careleavers, is high but reducing. Young people are fast-tracked to accommodation, and careleavers are offered a range of tenancies, including the provision of secure council tenancies, but there remains a shortage of suitable long-term housing for young people.

Appendix 1 - Framework for Corporate Assessment

- 1 This corporate assessment was carried out under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, under which the Audit Commission has power to inspect local authorities' arrangements for securing continuous improvement. The results of the corporate assessment contribute to the determination of the overall CPA category for an authority, which the Audit Commission is required to assess and report on under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 2 The Council's self assessment provided a key resource in focusing the assessment activity which included consideration of:
 - key documentation, including the Council's improvement plan;
 - updated performance indicators and performance data; and
 - interviews and meetings attended.
- 3 The assessment for Newham London Borough Council was undertaken by a team from the Audit Commission and took place over the period from 6-17 March 2006.
- 4 This report has been discussed with the Council, which has been given the opportunity to examine the Audit Commission's assessment. This report will be used as the basis for improvement planning by the Council.