



# Liveable London

*a cleaner and greener capital*

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# Foreword

by **Cllr Philip Portwood**  
**Chair, Transport and Environment Committee**

No matter where you live in London, from the very heart of the city to the leafy suburbs, your local environment and your quality of life matter.

Graffiti, litter, abandoned cars and fly-tipping are all too frequent facts of everyday life in parts of the capital. They cause our streets to be untidy and make our neighbourhoods less pleasant places to live and work.

We all suffer from the selfishness and indifference of the few who dump their rubbish without a thought for its impact on others. We all feel uncomfortable and less secure if our streets look unkempt and our bus shelters and phone kiosks are broken and vandalised.

It is hardly surprising that survey after survey shows just how much importance people attach to these concerns – refuse collection and street cleansing consistently top the poll, when it comes to satisfaction with council services and issues which matter most to people. But we can, and should, do more.

Our councils have a key role to play when it comes to protecting and caring for our environment – in making sure our streets and open spaces are more attractive and enjoyable places.

This short guide contains just some of the many imaginative and successful local schemes which have been launched by London councils to make sure that we win the battle to keep our streets cleaner and greener, and make our city more attractive and a better place to live.

London councils are taking positive action to make London a more attractive place to live.

London has led the way nationally, in pushing for legislative changes to allow local authorities to tackle difficult issues and provide the services that people want. The London Local Authorities Act 2004, promoted by the Association of London Government (ALG), has provided London local authorities with the powers and resources to protect and enhance London's local environment – particularly, in relation to enviro-crime and anti-social behaviour. Many of these provisions have been taken up in national legislation, such as the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. Initiatives such as ALG's 'Operation Scrap-it' is just one of the major London projects to improve the public realm.

I hope this publication gives you a flavour of what we can do when we work together.



Cllr Philip Portwood

# Introduction

Although the terms public realm, street scene and liveability issues may seem rather technical, they are all widely used and interchangeable. They are increasingly being used to highlight the role that the local environment plays in our lives and its influence on our sense of community and just what it means to be living and working in London. They refer to our city streets, local town and shopping centres, as well as parks, open spaces and recreation grounds.

Not always glamorous, liveability issues are at the heart of councils' work for their communities. This includes sweeping the roads, cleaning the pavements of litter and the walls of graffiti, and emptying rubbish bins.

Graffiti, vandalism, dumped vehicles, litter and fly-tipping are not just isolated nuisances. They demean and spoil our streets, town centres and open spaces. They are costly and annoying expressions of anti-social behaviour that can undermine our sense of well-being, making us feel uncomfortable in our own neighbourhoods.

Local authorities are often responsible for cleaning-up and repairing the damage done to public buildings, playing fields, monuments and street furniture. The total cost of vandalism to the country – including damage to private property – has been put at £1.5 billion. The London boroughs alone spend approximately £7 million a year<sup>1</sup> dealing with graffiti. It is estimated that the cost to London of graffiti and fly-posting, including the impact on businesses, is around £100 million.

In addition to this financial cost, is the heightening of people's fear of crime by these relatively minor 'quality of life' crimes - offences, which cause street degradation.

Evidence from the United States suggests that anti-social behaviour breeds contempt, and contempt breeds crime. The *Broken Window Theory* suggests that neglected street environment and fear of crime leads to residents' withdrawal, degradation of the public realm and, eventually, further eroding of community involvement. More people are more fearful of anti-social behaviour than they used to be.

For many years, London councils have known what is now widely recognised by central Government – that there is

strong public support for taking action against a whole range of local environmental nuisances which all stem from anti-social behaviour. In an ALG survey – *Londoners' Views: Findings from the 2003/4 BVPI Surveys* – into consumer views on public services, people's priorities were quite clear on the most important factors in making an area a good place to live. They were:

- cleaner streets;
- reduced crime;
- more activities for children and young people;
- better parks and open spaces;
- better street infrastructure, paving, lighting.



London boroughs are dedicated to providing clean and safe open spaces

People expect their councils to tackle these problems which is why liveability issues, and the care and management of public spaces, have become a key area of service delivery for both the boroughs and the ALG. The ALG and boroughs are working together, and with key stakeholders, to raise awareness of the problems, and the financial cost to the community, of environmental crime.

London councils have taken the lead in developing new approaches to street management, promoting better urban design, combating vandalism and tackling some of the more difficult and engrained problems that spoil our environment.

<sup>1</sup> *Graffiti in London, London Assembly, May 2002*



Good urban design can bring real benefits to the lives of Londoners

Funding is a perennial problem. Achieving the cleaner and greener vision promoted by Government through their *Living Places* agenda requires funding to take better account of the relationship between issues of social exclusion and the local environment. Just as much as it needs to make sure we have the resources to tackle economic deprivation and decline in our inner cities.

However, Spending Review 2004 sees only a disappointing 0.6% increase in councils' environment funding. There is not only a need for funding to be increased but also for the distribution of funding to be examined. The ALG believes the formulae need to use a much wider range of deprivation factors, that identifies both pockets of deprivation and the many dimensions of need. The ALG, on behalf of its member councils, has expressed concern that the Government's formula for funding Environment, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) has faced real term reductions in recent years and has not kept pace with new investment in other areas, such as education and social services.

Yet, London boroughs continue to work to promote best practice. For example, with initiatives such as 'Operation Scrap-it', one of the examples of how London councils are taking positive action to make London a more attractive place to live, (discussed later in this guide). The ALG continues to lobby for the finance and the powers that London's local authorities need to effectively tackle public realm issues, and to promote local authority best practice.

The ALG organised in 2001, a major *Streets Ahead* conference to assess the expense, nuisance and environmental impact of the increasing number of abandoned cars being dumped in residential streets all over

the capital. At that conference, the ALG announced the launch of the precursor of Operation Scrap-it in five London boroughs and identified key amendments required to legislation, to speed up the removal of nuisance vehicles.

This was followed by the 2003 *London's Living Places* conference, which addressed a wider range of liveability issues of concern to the public, in particular, graffiti and fly-tipping. The ALG subsequently, arranged a series of special seminars to take a more detailed look at these issues in conjunction with the Environment Agency (EA). This led to the development of a protocol on the sharing of EA powers to better tackle fly-tipping alongside the ALG lobbying for these powers to be granted to local authorities. Issues and experiences discussed at the conference were fed into the London Assembly Environment Committee's scrutiny – Protecting the City Environment – which supported the work of London's local authorities in this area.



It's important for councils to listen to the needs of all parts of the community

Following these successful conferences, the ALG has organised a third conference, *Liveable London 2004*, to develop further thinking and action in London to improve the public realm, street environment and open spaces. This conference will draw together speakers from local and central government, the private and community sectors and academia to discuss issues ranging from anti-social behaviour, urban design and regeneration and managing the street environment to improve Londoners' quality of life. A key area for discussion will be the public realm powers proposed in the 9th ALG Bill. The launch of this publication will promote the various initiatives being carried out by the ALG and London's local authorities, to help improve London's liveability.

# Innovation in London boroughs

**The ALG and London boroughs, together with other partners, are at the forefront of work on the public realm.**

London boroughs and the Corporation of London continue to lead in developing imaginative and award-winning schemes to improve parks and playing fields, get rid of clutter and litter on our streets and make our communities more attractive and pleasant places.

The London Local Authorities Act 2004 contains a wide variety of powers for London authorities, many of which address public realm issues and include, for example, sections on graffiti removal, fly-posting, abandoned vehicles and the upkeep of bridges. There are also a further series of partial decriminalisation provisions and the introduction of fixed penalty notices (FPN) for certain offences and by-laws.

The provisions for the new fixed penalty offences will only take effect after consultation with boroughs about the levels to be set, ALG TEC as a Section 101 committee under the Local Authorities Act 1972, is currently consulting on proposals for FPN levels.

Sections in the Act relating to graffiti removal and pigeon proofing require relevant Codes of Practice to be agreed by a joint committee (ALG TEC) before boroughs can use them. The Codes of Practice are currently being drafted for consultation and are targeted to be in place by the end of the year.

The ALG and London boroughs have often led the way nationally in pushing for legislative changes to allow local authorities to tackle difficult issues and provide the service that people want. As a result of lobbying by the ALG proposals have been taken up on a national basis, including the clause making it an offence to sell spray paints to those under-eighteen and further graffiti removal powers. These are now in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, and are applicable by all councils through the UK.

The anti-social behaviour legislation has been described as the biggest single package of measures aimed at protecting communities and gives councils, environmental health officers and housing staff, as well as police, a new range of powers to tackle crime and nuisance from noisy neighbours to the possession of airguns, intimidating behaviour by gangs of youths and the so-called 'job culture'.

It also introduces new powers to clean up graffiti and prevent fly-posting, with councils now able to issue £50 FPNs to people caught in the act, as well as being able to confiscate vehicles used to dump rubbish illegally.

Shopkeepers can now face a fine of up to £2,500 if they break a ban on selling aerosol cans to people under the age of 16. Environmental health officers will be able to close noisy clubs or pubs and noisy neighbours could face an FPN of £100 or have their audio equipment confiscated if they ignore warnings.

The London boroughs of Merton and Westminster, as two of the national Graffiti Clean-up pilot areas, are using their new legislative powers to clean up graffiti from town centre street furniture and public places. The Home Office has estimated it costs some £700 million a year to clean up criminal damage and vandalism and, in London alone, the cost of graffiti and fly-posting, including the impact on businesses, is around £100 million a year.

ALG will continue to press for more streamlined and direct powers to tackle enviro-crime and believes that there is a need for increase financial deterrents, including the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.

Magistrate's courts too, have a role to play in making sure that fines and penalties for vandalism and anti-social behaviour reflect the damage done to local people and communities. The Magistrates Association must continue to work closely with the Local Government Association (LGA) in the development of the magistrates guidance *Costing the Earth* to ensure local magistrates are familiar with the severity of offences, for what is likely to be only a small number of cases brought to court. It is also important to reform magistrate courts' practice of reduced fines and sentences for guilty pleas, as it provides the defendant a means to lesson the offence. Minimum fine levels should be set to serve as an effective deterrent.

Money collected from fixed penalties or fines for all public realm offences should go back into the community and be used to help make our neighbourhoods and town centres more attractive.

Although the latest legislation will help, adequate funding is vital for long term success. London councils are already hard at work putting liveability issues top of the public service agenda.

Learning from each other, sharing best practice and forging effective partnerships with business and voluntary groups are all an integral part of how our councils have developed new approaches and practical solutions to the challenges that blight our public spaces.

London councils have also joined forces with local artists and schools to develop more creative approaches to neighbourhood renewal and community engagement, bringing about the longer term cultural changes that are needed to really make a difference when it comes to getting rid of litter or vandalism.

What this guide features is just some of the many examples that show that London councils are at the very forefront of imaginative, community-based and award winning schemes to help make our capital city a cleaner and more pleasant place for everyone to enjoy.

## Operation Scrap-it



**37% of all of England's abandoned vehicles are dumped on the capital's streets**

Operation Scrap-it is just one example of how London councils can take positive action to make our capital cleaner and greener.

Part of the Government's Together campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour, this pioneering scheme aims to rid London's streets of untaxed and abandoned vehicles – an unsightly nuisance, which blights the local environment and often leads to petty vandalism and crime.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of dumped, untaxed vehicles. The problem has worsened considerably and disposal costs increased due to a variety of factors, firstly, vehicles' scrap yard value has tumbled, secondly, the End of Life Vehicle (ELVD) was

introduced, and thirdly, the Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (ROHS) Directives.

Removing untaxed and abandoned cars now costs London councils around £10 million a year with almost 135,000 dumped vehicles a year being taken away and crushed – enough to fill the whole of one side the M25 Motorway all the way round – just because their owners no longer want them but are not willing to dispose of them properly.

Some 37% of all of England's abandoned vehicles are left dumped on the capital's streets. A recent survey by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has shown that some 128,000 vehicles in the Greater London area are not taxed – some 9% of the national total.

London councils and the ALG have worked closely with the Home Office Anti- Social Behaviour Unit, the DVLA, as well as the police and fire services, to expand and publicise Operation Scrap-it, which is based on a pilot project launched in Newham in 2000.

The Home Office is giving £13.4 million to help fund the scheme which offers motorists a free take-back service for their unwanted cars or vehicles – if they no longer want it, their local council will help them get rid of it and dispose of it safely.

So far the free take-back scheme has been a real success in helping to clear London's streets of unwanted vehicles. In the first five months of the free take-back scheme, from initiation in December 2003 to the end of the financial year April 2004, London boroughs accepted 6,419 vehicles for disposal. The amount of vehicles surrendered has increased steadily per month and during April 2,285 vehicles were accepted by boroughs under the scheme.

Abandoned and untaxed cars will be cleared from the streets within 72 hours of being reported by members of the public and any untaxed and unregistered vehicles found on local roads will be crushed.

Newham started its pilot project in response to community pressure for action to clear the streets of abandoned cars, which were often then vandalised or set on fire.

The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) has estimated that non-accidental vehicle fires have cost more than £110 million over the past two years.

24 boroughs are now enforcing against untaxed and abandoned vehicles under Operation Scrap-it. All 33 boroughs have signed and by October this year every London council will be running local Operation Scrap-it schemes and motorists who want to get rid of their cars will just have to contact their local Abandoned Vehicles Unit or can contact the Operation Scrap-it Information line 020 7747 4822 or e-mail [scrap-it@alg.gov.uk](mailto:scrap-it@alg.gov.uk).



During April this year 2,285 vehicles were accepted by boroughs under the Operation Scrap-it scheme

A major publicity campaign with the slogan 'If Your Car's Had It, We'll Have It!' has supported the programme. The publicity also reminds motorists that it is illegal to dump vehicles on roads and that they could face prosecution with a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months in jail.

Chair of the ALG, Sir Robin Wales says: 'There are no longer any excuses for people to dump their unwanted cars in London. This pioneering take-back scheme will boost the quality of life for everyone by getting rid of the eyesore of abandoned cars on our streets.'

London boroughs have been furnished with further powers to tackle abandoned vehicles through the London Local Authorities Act 2004. Enhanced powers to allow immediate destruction of cars, not just those that are unlicensed but also those without a valid registration plate or no registered keeper at DVLA; powers to properly recover costs for such disposal; and powers to allow

sharing of information between borough councils and Transport for London to allow tougher enforcement.

The ALG and London boroughs continue to be at the forefront in tackling abandoned and nuisance vehicles. The ALG has been working with the ODPM in developing a national abandoned vehicle campaign and producing guidelines to assist operatives nationwide, based on the London experience.

Further information on Operation Scrap-it is available on the website [www.alg.gov.uk/scrap-it](http://www.alg.gov.uk/scrap-it).

## People Power

Community action is at the heart of the New Harrow Project which scooped top honours by winning the award for Best Local Environmental Quality Initiative at the 2004 ENCAMS' *People and Places* conference in Edinburgh. This came on top of Harrow's 2003 success in winning the Local Government Management Network Top Team Award for the project.

The New Harrow Project has been developed around a rolling 'clean and green' public realm maintenance programme to make the borough more attractive by clearing graffiti and litter together with a major drive to improve landscaping and street furniture design around the borough making real and lasting improvements to the environment. It aims to deliver improvements in the services Harrow Council provides to all those who live and work in the borough.



Not always glamorous, liveability issues are at the heart of councils' work for their communities

However, there is more to the New Harrow Project than just a cleaning and greening programme. The project is a partnership including the police, health authority, voluntary and residents groups, businesses and transport companies.

One of the major innovations in the Project is what Harrow have coined the 'single pass' approach. London Borough of Harrow assessed those issues that affect the street environment and have developed a single coordinated approach to tackling them. Instead of having different team at different times and often from different departments working on the streets, each area now has a specific team of people who tackle all the issues, street sweeping, removing fly-tips, cleaning graffiti, clearing gulleys and trimming overhanging trees.

The key aim is that following the single pass, the public should be able to see a real difference and improvement to the street environment.

Alan Woods, Chief Executive of Keep Britain Tidy, praised the London Borough of Harrow for its success in developing the scheme in partnership with local community groups, police and businesses and said: 'It is a major achievement to win a *People & Places* award, as they are now recognised as the most prestigious environmental accolade any council can receive.

'Above all else, this demonstrates that Harrow Council is in tune with its residents and has realised that taking care of the streets and open spaces is extremely important and does much to enhance business and tourism.'

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The London Borough of Southwark believe that a 'cleaner, safer, greener' approach are not just words. The highly successful 'Living Southwark' programme is a project which combines a series of initiatives led by street action teams and neighbourhood wardens in tackling local 'crime and grime' issues, which encourage people to take greater pride in their communities and aimed at transforming the local environment. Cleaner streets, well maintained shrub beds and open spaces, making the street and open spaces accessible to all for example through improved signage and cyclists green lanes are just part of the initiative.

Over the past two years the borough has delivered rapid improvements to the local environment through an

integrated approach to delivering services, informing its residents and working with other agencies. Street cleanliness has improved by 25% and resident satisfaction with this area of service deliver has increased, bucking the national trend identified by MORI.

At the same time a tough line on anti-social behaviour has resulted in more than 1000 fixed penalty notices and the 2003 ENCAMS award for innovation in tackling enviro-crime.

## Streets



**London boroughs continually work to develop best practice**

The London Borough of Lewisham has put the 'clean and green' agenda at the heart of its drive to improve the local streets with a series of schemes aimed at targeting graffiti, fly-tipping, and litter especially near well-known problem areas such as local railway lines.

The borough first launched a 'Street Leader' scheme more than 10 years ago encouraging residents to take the lead in identifying local problems with teams of volunteers organising clean-up campaigns, reporting fly-tippers and removing graffiti.

There are now more than 700 Street Leaders across the borough and the programme is supported by a 'clean and green' school programme to increase awareness of environmental issues among young people and by publicity campaigns to encourage greater support for recycling and waste reduction.

Lewisham council has always acknowledged the long term importance of having community support for

environmental issues. It is in local neighbourhoods and streets that the battle to get rid of graffiti or litter must be won and that is why schools and education have a key role. The council is also training Street Leaders to take direct action to improve the local environment and has begun training some Street Leaders in graffiti removal techniques.

Every year, Lewisham hosts the Street Leader conference for Street Leaders and local residents. The aim of the conference is to acknowledge the positive impact of its Street Leaders and promote the scheme to other residents.

At the end of 2003, Lewisham council began a survey of its Street Leaders following the Best Value Review (2002/3) which recommended a review of the scheme to establish local commitment and examined ways of extending the programme with improved training and local award scheme as well as ways to get more people involved and to share best practice between groups. The review showed continuing commitment toward the Street Leader initiative. The borough now aims to extend and evolve the Street Leaders programme to develop Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams (NEATs), where local Street Leaders will combine to organise and deliver improvements to their local street environment, such as campaigns to combat fly-tipping, graffiti busting, and river clean ups. The benefits of the NEATs is that they bring with them local knowledge, teams will be set up by local people and each project will have appropriate support from Lewisham Council.

This is echoed in the London Borough of Croydon which also has a long history of encouraging community involvement and public support for its 'Smarter Croydon' campaign. This has actively sought strong public support in tackling problems such as litter and graffiti, as well as providing a dedicated free graffiti removal service and a Litter Enforcement Patrol team.

The borough has promoted the 'Smarter Croydon' brand through such things as widespread usage of the logo on corporate publications and vehicles, an annual awards scheme, inclusion on roundabout advertising, etc. It seeks to gain community support and public endorsement for its commitment to a more attractive borough and sets

key milestone targets (such as the use of a Local Public Service Agreement on public satisfaction with street cleansing services) to measure its success.

Business and voluntary groups have been invited to play more active roles in identifying local problems. The council invites residents to become 'Street Champions' – people who actively help monitor local environmental standards – and local businesses will soon be able to register for 'Environmental Business Excellence Awards' that encourage compliance with the law, as well as promoting community action. Since the Street Champions scheme was launched several hundred people have been involved, resulting in far better communication between local residents and the council's Street Scene officers.

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As in other boroughs, a high profile publicity and advertising campaign has underlined the importance of combating problems such as graffiti and litter by stressing positive gains for the community as well as the responsibility of each individual to look after their local environment. Use of the LPSA pump priming funds has enabled this work to be extended substantially, with a series of themed advertisements being run across a range of local media to ensure wide coverage and recognition of the messages.

The London Borough of Camden's campaign against graffiti has been just one, albeit important, strand in its award winning Boulevard Project, a five year scheme costing some £24 million and designed to make local streets safer and more attractive.

The borough has developed its own 'Grimefighter' a high pressure washing machine that can clean the streets and walls of graffiti, fly-posting, chewing gum and other deposits.

Launched in 2000 the Boulevard Project was developed in response to calls from residents for cleaner streets, better pavements and a more attractive local environment.

This aspiration formally incorporates the Camden Community Strategy which promised: 'We will make streets in Camden more attractive by 2005 through a thorough programme of cleansing, design, quality surfaces and lighting, with pro-active management and enforcement.'

To this aim the Boulevard Project is a range of initiatives to make the streets of Camden more attractive, through carrying out a major programme of improving the local street environment.

New footways, improved street lighting, less clutter and attractive new street furniture, more trees and better access for the disabled are just some of the local benefits of the project.

Initial work on the Boulevard Project was targeted in the Camden Town, Kings Cross and Somers Town areas, but the scheme has now been rolled out to all parts of the borough with staff from the environment, housing and leisure departments all working in partnership to co-ordinate improvements.

Camden has also taken major reviews of its enforcement activities for combating street environment issues.

In addition to the 'Grimefighter', Camden has also been making moves to tackle enviro-crimes at their source. In June this year Camden Council took the unprecedented step to end the practice of illegal fly-posting in the borough, by seeking Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) against executives at two major music industry companies who repeatedly advertise their products by fly-posting in Camden.

Camden sought the ASBOs following innumerable complaints from residents, businesses and visitors about fly-posting. The borough has taken this action despite repeated prosecutions and requests by the council to both companies to stop putting up illegally located posters within the borough. In just one year the council issued more than 400 notices to remove fly posters and brought successful prosecutions against 20 companies.

Camden's work to improve the local physical environment is also linked with initiatives to reduce street crime by tackling problems such as drug use, street prostitution and drinking.

A specialist Street Service Team was set up in 2003 to develop strategies aimed at reducing rough sleeping and begging in the Bloomsbury, Camden Town and Kings Cross areas.

The team work in close partnership with police and other street management agencies and funding for the scheme

has been extended until 2006 to allow it to build on its initial success in improving community safety.

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The London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is at the beginning of an exciting and innovative project to improve the local environment in North Fulham. The project is a partnership between the North Fulham NDC (New Deal for Communities) and the council, bringing together many of the councils local area cleansing and horticultural operations.

The partnership is introducing additional and coordinated direct services together with independent monitoring, to improve the environment in the area for the benefit of the community. To deliver the project the council has put together a 15-strong team made up from the councils in house street cleansing, grounds maintenance, graffiti action and street scene monitoring officers. In addition the scheme will also give employment to three local people, two of whom will be trained to monitor the achievement of environmental standards in the area and one taken on as a trainee Grounds Maintenance operative.

In addition to the usual council services, the new team will offer a range of new services, including:

- free graffiti removal;
- monthly street washing of North End Road and Lillie Road;
- annual street washing of all pedestrian footpaths in the area;
- yearly chewing gum removal from the main road footpaths in the area;
- additional street cleansing at the weekends;
- higher levels of enforcement;
- recycling initiatives.

The partnership will also hold publicity drives to raise people's awareness of the issues relating to litter and the opportunities for recycling in the area. A Neighbourhood Board will be inaugurated which will consist of local residents and council officers, whose role will be to evaluate and monitor results and seek continuous improvements in standards in local environmental quality.

The project is set to run for 2 years, after which time a full evaluation will be undertaken.

## Anti-social behaviour

Islington is another a London borough which attaches the highest importance to getting tough with people who spoil the local quality of life for others.

The London Borough of Islington was pioneering in developing the first ever local authority Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC), in partnership with the Police at the end of 1999 and have since signed over 300 contracts. Generally the contracts are applied to young people and a key part of their success is that the whole family is included in the process of designing the contract.

Islington has a dedicated anti-social behaviour team, made up of multi-agency staff, including borough officers, police and social services.

Islington has found that the act of designing the contract itself is very helpful to the family involved. In many cases it is the first time that the family have been involved with the two agencies (housing and police) working together.

The work done by the London Borough of Islington into Acceptable Behaviour Contracts had significant impact in shaping the redefining of Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. As a result of the ASB Act 2003, ASBOs are now far more frequently sought by local authorities over and above the agreement of ABCs. However, Islington continue to use ABCs as a means of early intervention in tackling anti-social behaviour.

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Begging is one of London largest anti-social behaviour issues. To the individual concerned it is often degrading and for the public it can be very intimidating.

The *Killing with Kindness* campaign is a partnership between the City of Westminster and the London Borough of Camden, local stakeholders and other key agencies including the Government Office for London, the Home Office Anti-social Behaviour Unit, the Metropolitan Police and the West End Drugs Partnership.

Now in its second phase the campaign aimed to raise awareness about some of the major social issues surrounding begging. One important issue is that many beggars may use the money to feed drug habits, the name of the campaign *Kill with Kindness* was developed from this.



A partnership campaign between the City of Westminster and the London Borough of Camden

The official counts of rough sleepers in the two boroughs of Camden and the City of Westminster earlier this year in preparation for the campaign revealed that only 5 and 175 people respectively were sleeping rough in the boroughs. Furthermore statistics of people arrested for begging showed that 62% in Camden and 42% in Westminster gave fixed addresses when charged.

The campaign was established by the boroughs with the aims to reduce the number of people who give money directly to beggars and to inform the public of other ways they can help those on the capital's streets, to inform the public about services that are available to people on the street and most importantly to reduce the number of street beggars and associated anti-social behaviour.

Both councils have established support teams, Camden's Street Services Team and Westminster's Rapid Intervention Team both work 24 hours per day, seven days per week. They work directly with people on the street providing help to arrange hostel beds. In addition to the campaign, police officers and council outreach workers will warn people who beg about their behaviour and offer advice about the various support services and agencies.

The campaign has had a number of measurable results, during phase one there was a reduction in begging on the streets and awareness research showed that 99% of the public asked recognised the distinctive publicity.

## Graffiti

Cleaning up graffiti and fly posting in London costs more than £100 million a year and for many people it is a highly visible, ugly and often offensive nuisance that spoils neighbourhoods across the capital.



Clearing graffiti and litter make real and lasting improvements to the environment

London boroughs spend around £7 million a year cleaning graffiti from public buildings and street furniture but it is a problem that is shared by many utility companies, shopkeepers, businesses and even householders.

The London Borough of Wandsworth first set up a specialist graffiti removal service in 1994 and has adopted a strategy which combines cleaning up and enforcement to tackling the problem with a community education programme designed to highlight the damage and cost of graffiti. This year alone the council estimates tackling graffiti costs will be nearer to £500,000.

It operates a three day removal service for most types of graffiti though like all London boroughs it aims to clean up all racist or abusive graffiti within 24 hours of it being reported. For the period April 2003 to March 2004 the graffiti removal service reached the following standards:

- 92% of racist/abusive graffiti was removed within 24 hours of it being reported;
- 96% of other types of graffiti was removed within three working days.

The borough removes graffiti from all types of property in the borough with the exception of where the owners have their own contracts, including through agreement with Network Rail to remove graffiti from on street facing Network Rail Property.

All graffiti is photographed and recorded before removal and the council has joined forces with local and transport police to build a database of graffiti tags that can be used to assist prosecution of offenders with a reward of up to £1,000 offered for information leading to a successful prosecution.

The Wandsworth graffiti removal service won a Charter Mark award in 2002 which they hold until 2005. The borough has worked closely with neighbouring boroughs and stakeholders to set up the South West Action Against Graffiti (SWAAG) partnership pooling information and sharing best practice. Set up in March 2002, SWAAG recently held its first Anti Graffiti Awareness Week, in April 2004, which was used to highlight issues around graffiti.

The borough also works closely with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) participating in referral panels for offenders, to put across the council's view as a victim of graffiti crime.

## Night time economy



The Licensing Act begins its transitional period in February 2005

The Licensing Act received Royal Assent on 10 July 2003, providing a single integrated scheme for licensed premises used for the supply of alcohol, the provision of regulated entertainment and the provision of late night refreshment. With the advent of the Licensing Act, many London boroughs began programmes and schemes working in partnership with licensees and other key stakeholders within their boroughs, particularly focusing on the night

time economy, to improve the street environment. The London Borough of Ealing, in line with the proposals set out in the original Licensing Bill, developed the Responsible Host Awards scheme. The scheme works towards reducing crime and disorder, late night noise and public nuisance, street crowding and pollution in order to increase public safety and make Ealing a more inviting place for residents, businesses and visitors.

Started five years ago, the borough worked with the Police, London Tourist Board and local licensees to draw up a list of criteria which would encourage licensed premises to address the negative impacts of their business.

The borough holds an annual launch event inviting all licensees. The benefits of this are two fold: maintaining and raising management standards in licensed premises and encouraging licensees to network and share best practice. Licensing officers from the Metropolitan Police and Ealing Council assess entries to the award scheme and pass their findings to the judging panel, which is comprised of council officers, the police, industry representatives and local residents' groups. The panel then undertakes mystery shopper visits to each of the short-listed premises and, using the Responsible Host criteria, decides which pub or bar is best dealing with the impact of the business on neighbouring residents, businesses and on the environment.

Responsible Host is still evolving. With the publication of the Licensing Act guidance in July 2004, licensing authorities are preparing for the start of the transitional period of the Act in February 2005. The London Borough of Ealing is looking to widen the Responsible Hosts Award criteria and to further engage with licensees and other participants in the night time economy.

## Design

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has a long tradition of excellence in street design with the practical results to show just how effectively this can transform the local environment.

Over recent years the council has simplified and transformed the once busy clutter of Kensington High Street into a spacious and attractive area, which has become a model for many local communities.

Though work started in the High Street in late 2000, the council adopted a careful review process that checked its design innovations for both community support and effectiveness before pressing ahead with other changes.

The overall result has made it a model for the principles of clarity and design purpose put forward in the English Heritage publication *Streets for All* but also made it a model for the House of Common's select committee's *Living Places* report which called for a major reduction in road signage and for streets to be made more accessible for people.

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For the Bellenden ward of the London Borough of Southwark the involvement of local artists and their creative approach to street furniture and fixtures has helped transform what was once a rundown part of the borough into a lively and cosmopolitan area.

Sculptor Anthony Gormley, of Angel of the North fame, and the eclectic fashion designer Zandra Rhodes are just two of the local artists whose innovative ideas have contributed to the practical regeneration of the ward, helping to attract a new generation of community pride in the area.

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In the City of Westminster the role of the arts is perhaps most dramatically seen in 'The Wall of Light' in St Ann's Gardens, Soho – a project carried out in partnership between Westminster Council and community groups.

The area has long been associated with some of the more intractable of social problems such as prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse but the Wall of Light project has helped protect and enhance one of the few green open spaces in central London by preventing out of hours access to the gardens and improving lighting and security.

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For the London Borough of Hounslow the route to environmental improvement has been by paying attention to relatively small but important local detail and a programme to use shrubs and flower planting to make the local streets and town centre areas more attractive has proved highly popular with residents.

Pilot schemes in the Hanworth Terrace, Hanworth Road/Grove Road and in the Bath Road areas cleared debris and litter from the streets and introduced a new programme of planting and garden maintenance.

Community environment teams have monitored progress on the schemes and have reported positive gains with a marked reduction in vermin and litter and strong support from residents for extending the 'greening' schemes to other parts of the borough.

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The London Borough of Enfield covers a diverse area with large tracts of green belt land and open countryside as well as large industrial areas and significant areas of urban deprivation, but it also enjoys a significant reputation as a Beacon Council for its success in 'improving urban green spaces'.

Members of the Beacon Advisory panel judged Enfield to be 'well above the national average' and to have sound corporate vision for its success in developing a programme of continuous improvement in managing green spaces.

Building on the borough's success in promoting an 'Enfield in Bloom' programme the council was able to develop a programme of exuberant flower and plant displays by winning community support for major landscape improvements to parks and open spaces.

Enfield has also been successful in attracting financial backing for its work from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Neighbourhood Renewal, New Opportunities Lottery Fund and English Heritage as well as from private sector sponsors and conservation groups.

The council has developed a five-year strategy for improvement to its parks and green spaces, using regular survey and opinion polls to gauge support for the work and cultivating local partnerships to develop and expand ideas to increase public awareness and use of its parks.



London boroughs are taking positive action to make London a more attractive place to live

# Working together

**Boroughs, through officer and member groups and with key stakeholders, are working in partnership to share best practice and deliver cross boundary options and improvements to the public realm.**

## Capital Standards

The Capital Standards Network was proposed in the Mayor's Municipal Waste Strategy as the key initiative to improve the local street environment. It was launched in May 2002 as a partnership of 26 of the 33 London Boroughs, the Mayor of London, the ALG, London Fire Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA), the Metropolitan Police, TFL and the Environment Agency. The aim of the network is to improve London's Street Environment.

The Capital Standards work programme includes:

- annual, independent assessments of performance via street surveys;
- devising programmes of action to develop better and more effective services across London;
- training courses, such as the Street Enforcement Academy;
- public awareness raising campaigns.



**In partnership, London boroughs are working to keep London's streets clean**

The Capital Standards Programme delivers independently verified Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) Surveys which provide information on a wide range of parameters. This information allows members to identify key issues and to focus resources accordingly.

A major success of the Capital Standards network is the Street Enforcement Academy, which trains borough enforcement officers in environmental legislation and techniques to clamp down more effectively on litter, graffiti, vandalism and fly-tipping. So far the programme has trained 240 officers, with plans to bring this up to 500 by the end of 2004.

Capital Standards have also run a number of, and continue to plan, public awareness campaigns to improve the street environment, including campaigns to tackle smoking related litter and the highly successful *Litter Fairy* campaign. As part of a pan-London campaign *Litter Fairy* adverts were seen across London on cinema screens, bus-backs and other media.

The network's key message to Londoners is that 'A cleaner London is up to you'.

## Working with businesses

Whilst boroughs are actively working to improve performance in cleaning up London's streets and improving the street environment, there is also the opportunity to achieve greater results through sharing best practice and forging effective partnerships with business. A number of boroughs are part of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). BIDs provide the means for private sector leadership in the improvement of a given locality through the formation of an independent company to enhance and manage a defined area. In collaboration with the local authority and other stakeholders, the private sector is then responsible for delivering sustainable management of the district, over and above the services traditionally provided by the borough.

Again London is leading the way nationally, the Central London Partnership's *Circle Initiative* was the first programme to pilot BIDs in the UK. It aims to raise the standard of public spaces, reduce crime and fear of it, improve public transport and generate commercial success and local jobs.

The Circle Initiative operates across Central London and includes five individual BID partnership areas; Better Bankside, Circle Waterloo, Holborn Business Partnership, Paddington Circle and Piccadilly Circus Partnership.

Formed in July 2000 as a voluntary BID, the New West End Company is a city centre partnership propelled and funded by the property owners and retailers within the District. In July 2003 the New West End Company launched the Red Caps. Their role is to act as ambassadors for the area, enhancing the visitor's experience by providing local information, monitoring the appearance of the street environment, identifying potential crime and deterring anti-social behaviour. During their first three months of operation, the Police reported that crime fell by 9% in the District, the number of 'calling cards' placed in phone boxes decreased by 88% and 60% of rough sleepers moved when requested to do so.

## Continuing to build business relationships

The ALG in partnership with London First have been discussing way in which businesses and boroughs can continue to build on partnerships to improve the local street environment, especially in support of London's bid to host the Olympics in 2012. Possible areas for future partnership include:

- volunteer clean up campaigns to improve the street environment relating to graffiti, fly-posting, litter.
- tackling fly-tipping. Some small businesses dump waste on the streets to avoid paying for trade waste collection. Implementing the voluntary code of practice for fast food litter (being developed by Defra for implementation later this year) could help.
- working with shops to encourage the sweeping of shop front areas. Where possible this could be linked to street cleansing regimes.
- helping to promote the involvement of large businesses in the local environment, through, for example, sponsorship of open spaces to improve the area or contributing towards street warden costs.
- working with boroughs and pub chains to promote good practice.



# Shaping future policy and legislation

**The ALG and the boroughs have gathered favourable publicity and obtained required powers from promoting Bills in the past, and have demonstrably influenced national debate, policy and legislation.**

## Legislation

The ALG is now looking toward taking forward a new 9th London Local Authorities Bill. The ALG will be promoting the 9th London Local Authorities Bill in the autumn with many of the proposals likely to focus on public realm issues, which have been a marked success of the 2004 Act. Proposals are to tackle such issues as nuisance vehicles, fly-tipping, fly-posting and graffiti.

The Association is also promoting its document entitled *Local Councils, Local Solutions* produced June 2004, which proposes a number of freedoms and flexibilities. Many of these proposals have been included in the Bill as a useful vehicle to highlight these issues with Government.

One key proposal will be for further flexibility on the use of proceeds for fixed penalty notices. The Bill will propose flexibility for London local authorities in setting FPNs, allowing for higher fines in particularly sensitive or affected areas, greater powers to ensure boroughs can recover fines and most importantly provision for boroughs to retain the proceeds from FPNs to invest in funding the necessary enforcement.



**It is now an offence to sell spray paints to under 18s**

The 9th London Local Authorities Bill not only identifies new powers for London boroughs to improve service delivery, but proposes amendments to existing legislation to make it more robust, usable and

appropriate in tackling the prevalent public realm issues. Examples of these can be seen in the proposals for trade refuse, fly-posting and fly-tipping.

The 9th Bill is also proposing to make the enforcement of trade refuse littering offences easier. At present borough enforcement officers aren't able to issue a FPN for commercial waste 'dumped' on the street, but have to undertake a lengthy prosecution process. The Bill proposes the provision for local authorities to issue an FPN for the failure of businesses to produce a valid trade waste agreement and also for dumping their waste on the streets. This will allow immediate enforcement action to be taken but retain the option to prosecute.

The 9th Bill will also propose powers relating to fly-posting, including proposals for borough officers to have the power to seize posters and equipment used in fly-posting; increase penalties for fly-posters and remove further loopholes, such as boroughs not having the power to see 'arrangements for waste disposal'; and that which allows companies responsible for fly-posting to simply cover previous posters with new ones, causing a build up of posters and a worsening problem rather than a remedy. Graffiti and fly-posting street furniture is a particular problem and the Bill will go further than the 2004 Act did and propose that utility companies have a duty to look after their property and keep it clear of fly-posting and graffiti.

Earlier this year the Government released a consultation on the development of a national Fly-Tipping Strategy. Many of the measures set out in the strategy were welcomed by the ALG. It assisted in focusing the need for action to tackle the issue of fly-tipping and the illegal deposit of waste. However, there were areas that the Association felt the strategy did not fully address or give significance to, particularly relating to discrepancies in local authority resources and funding. Following on from the consultation the Association will promote further powers relating to fly-tipping in the 9th Bill. Proposals to furnish boroughs with the powers to seize vehicles that are used in fly-tipping, not registered as waste carriers or without valid waste transfer notes are included, in addition to this powers to permanently impound vehicles following prosecution for fly-tipping offences (powers should apply to all vehicles not just those over 7 tonnes). The ALG has been lobbying

for some time for amendments to Section 59 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and the 9th Bill will seek to close the loophole in Section 3a which, states that 'the court shall quash the requirement if it is satisfied that the appellant neither deposited nor knowingly caused nor knowingly permitted the deposit of the waste' a clause which at present is easily exploited.



Councils want greater financial powers to deal with fly tipping in a more practical way

Following consultation and further analysis of items for inclusion in the Bill it will then be prepared and submitted to Parliament on 26 November 2004 for the 2004/05 parliamentary session.

## Developing Policy

Within London the ALG has a central role in helping to develop regional policy, working with national and regional government and strategic partnerships including ODPM, the Home Office, DEFRA and Dti, regionally we work closely with the GLA, London Assembly and GOL.

This can be seen in the continuing work that the ALG is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour, working with the GOL to develop the ASB strategy for London.

This strategy aims to ensure that regional agencies support boroughs in delivering effective local solutions to anti-social behaviour. The aim of the Strategy is to support actions at borough level, help coordinate action across London and provide a framework for regional policy and practice on ASB.

The key issues highlighted in the strategy document are:

- working together to ensure greater consistency in policy;
- identifying forms of ASB that can be targeted effectively at regional level and putting in place programmes for doing so;
- improving coordination within and between cross-London agencies involved in work on ASB;
- extending support for partnership structures and systems;
- making sure that local partnerships have the right tools for the job.

London is unique and vibrant city that brings with it a number of challenges. Having a safe and clean city is one of the top priorities for people that visit, work and live in London and delivering the quality of life that we all deserve is one of the greatest challenges we face every day and it is one the ALG and boroughs achieve and are determined to continue to improve on.

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[www.uk-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts](http://www.uk-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts) Her Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO)

[www.cleansafeworldwide.org](http://www.cleansafeworldwide.org) Supported by ODPM and Neighbourhood Renewal

[www.together.gov.uk](http://www.together.gov.uk) TOGETHER: tackling anti-social behaviour, ODPM and Home Office.

[www.takingastand.org](http://www.takingastand.org) Taking a stand awards, Part of TOGETHER: tackling anti-social behaviour

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