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What legacy looks like

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The challenge of austerity

The forthcoming Spending Review will present councils with a significant challenge. We know that funding from government is to be substantially reduced for the vital services that councils provide, and at the same time we want to keep council tax rises to an absolute minimum – if they rise at all.

The financial context we operate in is changing drastically, but what won't change are the expectations and needs of our residents. While there will always be scope for making our organisations more efficient, such savings will likely not come close to compensating for the anticipated cuts to local government funding. At the same time, cuts to our partners in other public services – from health to transport or the police – will also impact on our ability to deliver services – perhaps even creating a greater demand on us.

Councils across London are already working with their residents to decide how services are going to be delivered in the future and how they will be paid for. We are also seeing the development of some innovative approaches to the way we run local authorities, whether through shared services, joint management structures or brand new models of service delivery and resident involvement.

These changes and innovations are not simply intellectual exercises for their own sake. They are some of the ways that councils are responding to the challenges that the coming period of austerity will pose. They will have a real impact on the communities we serve. While councils will surely do all they can to prevent the worst impacts of these cuts being passed on to residents, the reality is that many services that are valued and relied upon by many are unlikely to be the same again.

Mayor Jules Pipe
Chair, London Councils

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59½ Southwark Street, London SE1 OAL
Editorial office: 020 7934 9715/9628 www.londoncouncils.gov.uk
Editor-in-chief: Ian Mitchell ian.mitchell@londoncouncils.gov.uk
Editor: Laura Compton laura.compton@londoncouncils.gov.uk
Artwork and production: Robson Crome Design



Contributors: **Cllr Priyen Patel** is a Conservative councillor for the St James ward in Kingston-upon-Thames; **Cllr Atallah Said** is a Labour councillor for the East Acton ward in Ealing; **Jacob Sakil** is young mayor of Lewisham; **Cllr Rachael Saunders** is a Labour councillor representing the Mile End East ward in Tower Hamlets and is the council's lead member for health and wellbeing.



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EDUCATION

Primary purpose

Parents with children starting school in September 2011 will be the first to use a new and easier 'one-stop' London-wide system to apply for a primary school place.

The successful Pan-London Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme, which has co-ordinated applications for secondary school places since 2005, is being rolled out to

primary schools.

Parents will complete a single application form even if they are applying to primary schools in more than one borough. They can list up to six schools in order of preference and return the form to the council where they live. Applications opened last month for entry next September, and the deadline for completed forms

is 15 January 2011. Parents can apply online or use a paper form.

Eligibility for a place at each school applied for will be considered separately using the published oversubscription criteria. If a child is eligible for a place at more than one school, the local authority will offer whichever of these was listed as a higher preference by parents.

There will be one London-wide offer day on 4 April 2011 when all parents will be sent the outcome of their application.

Chair of the Pan-London Admissions Board, Chris Kiernan, said: "Co-ordinating primary school admissions across London will mean a fairer distribution of available offers and result in more parents being offered one of their preferred schools on the same date.

"Every time a multiple offer is eliminated an offer can be made to another pupil who would otherwise have received a less satisfactory offer or no offer at all.

"We want to remind parents to apply before the closing date. All parents must apply, including those with an older child attending the school already, or whose child attends the nursery at the same school."

The Pan-London Admissions Board has overall responsibility for the co-ordination scheme. Membership includes representatives of the Association of London Directors of Children's services, the London Inter Authority Admissions Group and the London Grid for Learning.



Third Avenue

EDUCATION

Surge in pupil numbers

London's boroughs need at least £480 million to ensure every five year-old has a school place over the next five years, London Councils has warned.

Most London boroughs are dealing with an explosion in demand for primary school places. Analysis of projections provided to Partnership for Schools by all local authorities in England shows the growth in London's primary school population

will be 143 per cent higher in London compared to the rest of England. This means that for every 100 places that need to be provided in a similar area elsewhere in England, 243 will need to be provided in London.

The surge in reception pupil numbers in London will result in a shortfall in permanent primary school places of more than 28,000 by 2014/15.

"This is quite clearly a problem that won't just disappear", said Cllr Steve Reed, London Councils executive member for children and young people.

"While the current focus is on cuts, this is an area where we need much more investment, not less. The real test of a government is not how much it saves, but what it chooses to spend its money on. Ensuring a decent start to the education of thousands of young Londoners seems a very good place to start."



Third Avenue

PARKING

Fewer PCNs linked to recession

More than half a million fewer PCNs (penalty charge notices) were issued for offences such as illegal parking and driving in bus lanes across London in 2009/10 compared to the previous year.

The figures, collated by London Councils, reveal a total of 4,855,073 PCNs were issued by the boroughs and Transport for London between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010; 588,074 fewer than in 2008/09.

Despite more boroughs enforcing bus lanes, the number of bus lane contraventions fell for the fifth year in a row. At 217,883, the total number issued in 2009/10 was less than a third of the 697,816 penalties issued in 2004/05.

The number of tickets issued for illegal parking in the capital in 2009/10 fell by 514,336 on the previous year to 4,151,901.

Chair of London Councils' transport and environment

committee, Cllr Catherine West said the economic downturn was a possible factor in the lower figures.

"The recession has meant that traffic levels are down so there is less pressure on parking spaces and less illegal parking".

But, she added that the trend indicated that civil enforcement measures were playing their desired role.

"Parking penalties are down for the second year in a row, which shows that civil enforcement is having the effect people want it to have on compliance by motorists with the rules of the road."

Around one per cent of the penalties issued in 2009/10 resulted in an appeal

being lodged with the independent adjudicators at the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS).



Third Avenue



Press Association

SUMMIT 2010

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (left) will be the keynote speaker at this year's London Councils' summit on Saturday 6 November. With tough times ahead for everyone involved in delivering public services, the 2010 summit will focus on the key policy issues facing the capital over the next four years and is an opportunity for councillors across the capital to come together to share experiences and develop knowledge.



Find out more about London Councils 2010 summit at www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/summit2010

BOROUGH BRIEFS

Harrow's online marketplace for care and leisure services 'shop4support' has been short-listed for a regional award by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement. The 'Amazon-style' website enables residents who receive care services to use their own personal care budget to shop online for the services they want to receive (Read more about shop4support in *Getting personal* on page 12).

Hillingdon has opened a new leisure centre to combine multiple facilities under one roof. The £20 million Botwell Green Sports and Leisure Centre and Library (right) is a first for the borough and provides a large, modern library and adult education rooms with a pool and gymnastics hall. The facility also includes an all-weather football pitch, funded by The Football Federation and Greenwich Ltd.



Richmond-upon-Thames has distributed eco-starter kits to more than 50 homes that have signed up to the Ham and Petersham Low Carbon Zone. The kits include several energy saving devices such as low energy light bulbs, hot water tank covers and electricity monitors. Residents with the kit can save over £100 a year in utility bills and reduce their carbon footprint.

London Councils and the Mayor Boris Johnson have put forward proposals for London boroughs to have greater control of housing budgets, as part of a devolution package from Whitehall to the capital.

Under the proposed 'Framework for Devolved Delivery', the Mayor and London Housing Board would agree an indicative housing budget for boroughs to allocate funding from the Homes and Communities Agency according to local need. The arrangement would give participating authorities more responsibility and freedom to respond to local priorities and place boroughs at the forefront of negotiations with developers.

In turn, boroughs would commit to making better use

HOUSING

Devolved delivery

of resources, delivering more affordable housing and helping to deliver the London Housing Strategy.

Chair of London Councils Mayor Jules Pipe said:

"Boroughs are firmly of the view that decisions about how housing budgets should be spent are best placed in the hands of boroughs, who understand the complex



needs of their communities.

"By the Mayor and boroughs working together, we will be able to have a more efficient, flexible and accountable investment process capable of responding to London's housing needs."

All council leaders have been invited to express interest in entering the voluntary agreement. Those boroughs that do not wish to take part will continue to receive their housing allocation under the current system.

The framework has already been piloted in three London boroughs - Croydon, Hackney and Westminster. The intention is for the next round of agreements to be in place with participating boroughs for the start of 2011.

HOMELESSNESS

Ludlow 2010

Six projects that tackle homelessness in the capital have been shortlisted for a share of £51,000 prize money from the Andy Ludlow Homelessness Awards.

The shortlist includes a scheme to help young homeless people access employment opportunities; a dual diagnosis project to help homeless people with both mental health and substance misuse problems; and an integrated hospital-based service that

specialises in supporting homeless people.

The Andy Ludlow Awards are run by London Councils and funded by all 33 local authorities in the capital, the London Housing Federation, CLG and Shelter. They were established in 1998 to recognise innovative projects

across London that tackle homelessness.



This year's winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on 21 October. Visit www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/ludlow for more information

Tower Hamlets residents will be voting for their first directly-elected mayor on 21 October, following a referendum in May that showed local support for moving to a mayoral system. The new mayor will have decision-making powers for most of the authority's executive functions and services. They will be the fourth executive mayor in London, following in the footsteps of Hackney, Lewisham and Newham.

Newham has secured the final £13 million funding to enable work on the borough's Canning Town and Custom House regeneration scheme to start. The funding, which had been at risk from government cuts, will provide 650 new homes, shops and community facilities as part of the Rathbone Market development (right), helping to kickstart the £180 million regeneration of the whole area.



Westminster has rolled out a recycling scheme to businesses in Marylebone, following a successful trial in Mayfair. The scheme offers daily collections to encourage small businesses to recycle more and collectively save more than £30,000 compared to disposing of recyclables with other refuse. Plastic, food cartons and empty aerosols can all be recycled via the scheme.

Posters have begun appearing across the tube and rail network to support the 99 per cent campaign, set up to tell the positive stories of the 99 per cent of young Londoners who are not involved in serious youth violence and how young people can work to challenge and change the 1 per cent who are.

The campaign challenges perceptions that overestimate the scale of youth crime, the number of young offenders and the proportion of overall crimes committed by young people.

In London, the total number of people under 20 years-old accused of serious youth violence in 2009 was

YOUTH CRIME


Positive signs



1,336 – or 0.07 per cent of London’s total under-20 population of 1.86 million.

Launched earlier this year, the 99 per cent campaign is an initiative of the London Serious Youth Violence Board (LSYVB).

The LSYVB brings together a wide range of partner agencies with a role in tackling serious youth violence in the capital including the Metropolitan Police, NHS, Home Office, Department for Children, Schools and Families, London Criminal Justice Board, NSPCC and London Councils.

 Find out more about the 99 per cent campaign at www.99percent.org.uk

YOUNG PEOPLE

Future success

New research commissioned by London Councils shows that young Londoners have high expectations and aspirations for the next few years, with four out of five teenagers feeling positive about their future after leaving school.


The study of 14-16 year-olds by Ipsos MORI also found 93 per cent of pupils believe working hard at school will help their future success in life. Three quarters said they had thought about their plans after year 11, with seven out of 10 saying they are likely to go to university.


The survey included pupils from secondary schools and pupil referral units across the

capital. The research also asked pupils about their interpretations of success, key influences and sources of support.

London Councils is holding a conference at the British Library on 13 October to further explore the research with those that work in education, training and employment, and with those with an interest in

raising the aspirations and achievement of young people.

 For further information on attending the event, visit www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/events

 Read more about our youth aspiration research on page 8

BOROUGH BRIEFS

Southwark has received top marks for the accuracy and scope of its residential and commercial address lists from the Local Government Information House. The list, known as the Local Land and Property Gazetteer, will help councils and the Office for National Statistics gather accurate census data next year, crucial for planning future services and the level of funding allocated by government.



Havering has moved to make compulsory purchase orders on 17 empty properties that could be repaired and transformed into homes for local families. The council took action after the owners repeatedly declined offers of help to bring the homes up to a liveable standard for rent or sale. Since 2006, Havering has turned more than 850 empty properties into occupied homes for local residents.

Lambeth is asking residents to suggest local schemes that should benefit from a share of £250,000 available to improve local areas. The money will be used to fund four community or voluntary groups that improve local services, reduce council costs and promote local involvement and sustainability. Proposed projects will be shortlisted before being put to a public vote later this year.

NETWORKING

London's first 'virtual' mayor takes office

Lambeth councillor Jack Hopkins has been appointed the first 'virtual' mayor of London Councillors, the online networking site for the capital's members.

The role of the virtual mayor is to lead debates, start discussions and prompt fellow councillors to get involved. The position of mayor is open to volunteers and appointments to the role will be for a month at a time.



Inaugural mayor Cllr Hopkins was elected as councillor for the Oval ward in Lambeth in May 2010 and

is chief whip to the Labour administration.

The London Councillors site is accessible to London members via a personal login and has both 'open' and closed party group areas for debates.

If you are a London councillor and you do not have login details please email councillors@londoncouncils.gov.uk



visit www.londoncouncillors.org.uk


LEADERSHIP

New chief

Waltham Forest looks set to appoint Martin Esom as its new chief executive.

Mr Esom took up the reigns as acting chief executive after former chief executive Andrew Kilburn stood down earlier this year.

At the time of going to press, Mr Esom had been recommended for the role on a permanent basis by a panel of councillors, subject to approval by full council.

 You can keep up-to-date with all senior staff and members at every London borough at www.directory.londoncouncils.gov.uk



EFFICIENCIES

Camden and Islington councils have unveiled plans to share a chief executive. The proposals are due to be considered by both councils' executives before the end of the year.

If they proceed, current Camden chief executive Moira Gibb would take the helm at Islington when current chief executive John Foster retires in May 2011. Both councils said that the appointment of a shared chief executive would be the first step toward greater collaboration between the boroughs to deliver financial efficiencies. Pictured left to right: Camden CEO Moira Gibb and leader Cllr Nasim Ali, Islington leader Cllr Catherine West and CEO John Foster.

Kensington and Chelsea has approved funding to assess the impact a Crossrail station at Kensal would have on the performance of rail services in the area. Crossrail and Network Rail have asked the council to demonstrate that its plans for a station would not affect the overall performance of rail services. A Crossrail station is central to the council's plans for regenerating the North Kensington area.

Waltham Forest is to become the first London borough to introduce a permanent speakers' corner for residents to debate since the original in Hyde Park almost 150 years ago. Stoneydown Park will host the new community area following consultation with local people. The initiative was proposed by the Speakers' Corner Trust, a charity dedicated to the promotion of public debate and active citizenship.



Lewisham Mayor Sir Steve Bullock has called on heritage minister John Penrose to reject an appeal by English Heritage for a school in poor condition to be listed. Sydenham School survived government cuts to the Building Schools for the Future programme and was to be rebuilt. However, English Heritage is claiming the 1950s building should be Grade II listed instead.

Generation next

Young Londoners about to embark on the world of further education or employment are faced with a different set of choices and pressures to previous generations, but what are their expectations and aspirations? We decided to ask them. **Ian Mitchell** reports

“A significant proportion of London pupils are anxious about their future”

You don't need to be an avid viewer of Channel 4's *The Inbetweeners* to be aware of some of the pains and anxieties of coming of age in London today.

A heady mix of peer pressures and parental expectations, combined with information overload and teenage bashing media headlines, could be enough to bring anyone out in spots.

Despite this, the encouraging news is that the capital's generation next are overwhelmingly an optimistic bunch who value their education and who have high aspirations for personal success.

That at least is among the topline findings of an innovative piece of research commissioned by London Councils to find out more about the aspirations and expectations of 14-16 year-olds in London schools today.

Based on interviews and discussion groups involving more than 1,300 key stage 4 pupils in mainstream schools and in pupil referral units (PRUs), the Ipsos MORI survey found that 82 per cent of London teenagers are optimistic about their future prospects and 93 per cent recognise that working hard at school will be key to their future success.

A-levels are the most popular post-year 11 option (75 per cent), followed by getting a part-time job (53 per cent), a diploma or other course (39 per cent) and an apprenticeship (23 per cent). Seven out of 10

pupils (71 per cent) say they are very or fairly likely to go to university.

Encouraging as such figures are, the research also reveals the fact that a significant proportion of London pupils are anxious about their future, fear they will not succeed at exams and feel that their race or gender may be a hindrance in fulfilling their ambitions.

The research broadly categorises the pupils into four groupings that share similar attitudes and aspirations around themes such as attitudes to school, the importance attached to skills in future success, confidence or otherwise in exam results and expectations to stay in education or to find work (see box).

While these groupings are necessarily broad brush, they provide a potentially useful starting point for educationalists and policy makers looking to improve school experiences and opportunities for all pupils.

And while the school experience for the majority of young Londoners is a positive one, the research highlights that some pupils are significantly disengaged from their education.

Almost one in three (30 per cent) pupils in the survey admitted to having 'bunked off' school at some time, with 'not liking the teacher' or 'not liking school' the most common reasons given.

In group discussions, however, it became clear that underlying these apparent reasons were a variety of motives linked to a wish to avoid potentially stressful or difficult situations, such as a test they think they may fail, or a confrontation with a teacher due to not having done their homework.





The report also highlights a significant discrepancy between the 6 per cent of respondents who said they had a disability, the 11 per cent who said they had difficulties with learning and the government figure of just 2.2 per cent of London secondary school pupils with special educational needs (SENs).

Responding to questioning about personal factors, around one in ten pupils said they thought that their family background or gender would make it more difficult for them to succeed in life, while 16 per cent said they thought that their ethnic background would make it more difficult.

Among the pupils who took part in discussion groups, the most spontaneous association with the idea of success was largely focussed on materialistic outcomes with almost every pupil mentioning 'making a lot of money' as an indicator of success.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the notion of 'celebrity' was also associated with the idea of success, partly because being a celebrity results in having money, but also because the idea of celebrity was linked with recognition of being 'good at what you do'.

Alongside such aspirations, however, there was a recognition that the fall out from the economic recession may make it harder to get the type of job they would like. As one pupil puts it: "It doesn't matter how many qualifications you've got, if the job isn't there you can't get it."

But while some aspirant academics may be beginning to question the point of staying in education, concerns about post-graduate employment do not as yet seem to be influencing their actions.



You can read or download the full report: *Youth aspirations in London* at www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/children



London Councils will host a one day conference to explore the full findings of this groundbreaking project in detail on 13 October. The conference will include workshops based on some of the key themes arising from the report, including re-engaging the disengaged and exploring the gap between official and self defined figures on SEN. The research and the conference will feed into London Councils work to support the achievements of all young Londoners.

Four distinct groups were identified by the research:

Aspirant academics (41 per cent)

The largest group, aspirant academics are most likely to expect to stay in education beyond year 11, be more confident of their exam results and feel most well prepared for their future.

Self detractors (19 per cent)

Characterised by a tendency to blame themselves for a lack of success at school and least likely to think that literacy and numeracy are important in future success in life. Most likely to play truant from school, self detractors are significantly more likely than aspirant academics to be interested in a vocational course or apprenticeship.

Unprepared (20 per cent)

This group feel the lowest expectation from their parents or carers to stay in education after year 11 and a lack of support from their teachers. They tend to lack confidence in their academic abilities and feel least positive about their future compared to other pupils.

Aspirant workers (19 per cent)

Despite their awareness of parental and other expectations for young people to stay in education, this group is characterised by a strong preference for getting a job rather than staying in education after year 11. They are also more likely to be interested in an apprenticeship or a vocational course.

Golden opportunities

Ahead of 2012, boroughs are already delivering a range of projects inspired by the Games and with lasting social benefits for Londoners. **Laura Compton reports**

With less than two years to go until the start of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, expectations are rising for London organisers and athletes to deliver the best performances ever. And as the opening ceremony gets closer, more Londoners are starting to look beyond 2012 to their post-Olympic city. After the greatest show on earth packs up and leaves town, Londoners will be asking – what have the Games given me?

The long-term legacy will undoubtedly be the impact it has on London's local communities, between them the largest sponsor of the Games, providing £635 million through their council tax. And as with any investor, Londoners deserve a fitting reward to reflect this contribution.

A recent survey commissioned by London Councils shows that, despite the high costs and economic downturn, two thirds of Londoners are still pleased that the capital is hosting the Games. And it seems that most Londoners – 93 per cent – still believe this will be of long-term benefit to London.

Better transport infrastructure is top of

Londoners' Olympics wish list, and improvements to the London Overground are already kick-starting regeneration in parts of east and south London. But Londoners also want more jobs (58 per cent); better access to quality sporting

facilities (57 per cent); and a more physically active capital (52 per cent).

While the media spotlight may be on physical legacy and the future of the Olympic Park, it's actually social and economic improvements like these that will have the greatest impact on most Londoners. And it's local councils that will be at the heart of delivering them for their communities.

The borough of Bexley is in a strategically important position for access to and from the Olympic Park. But far from sitting back and waiting for the Games to roll up, the borough has already developed a wide-ranging strategy to capitalise on Olympic opportunities and deliver tangible benefits to residents ahead of Games time.

The borough's 20/12 Library Challenge earlier this summer was inspired by the Games and saw Bexley's 12 libraries host 20 diverse events to attract new audiences to libraries and make different uses of their space. The programme included author visits, poetry readings as well as more unusual activities for residents to try, such as jazz sessions and salsa dancing.

Erith Yacht Club in the north of the borough was also awarded £2.35 million from the Homes and Communities Agency in 2007 to create a lasting sporting legacy for the Games. Together with additional funding from Sport England and support from the council, a new multifunctional clubhouse has been developed to turn the club into one of London's leading sailing venues.

The clubhouse now offers facilities and training to encourage a wide a group of people to get involved in sailing, particularly from disabled and disadvantaged communities. The new facilities also have a major environmental benefit by enhancing and protecting nearby Erith Salting, home to a huge range of wildlife.

On the other side of London, Brent is preparing to host the football finals, badminton and rhythmic gymnastics in two years. But the borough is also using the build-up to the Games to help local people access training, employment and business opportunities.

Brent was among the first boroughs to pilot the pan-London Personal Best programme, designed to help individuals who are furthest from the labour market to build their confidence and find work using volunteering at



the 2012 Games as a hook. To date, the borough has supported more than 300 residents through the programme.

The borough is also using its own unique, local strengths to make the most of Olympic opportunities. As one of the most diverse authorities in London, the borough launched its Flavours of Brent programme to showcase the rich variety of foods eaten and prepared in the borough and to support residents to tap into catering opportunities at local Olympiad events and during Games time.

The project was aimed at both existing food stall holders and unemployed residents with an interest in catering. Twenty participants (right) took part in a four-day training course, leading to a CIEH Level 2 certificate in Food Safety in Catering. The borough also offered attendees a free pitch at the 2010 Respect festival to showcase their talent and help them to gain valuable experience.

The project has since been awarded the London 2012 Inspire Mark by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

No discussion of Olympic legacy can ignore the dramatic impact the Games will have on the five Olympic host boroughs in east and south east London. But while the future of the Games' physical infrastructure is still up for grabs, these boroughs are pressing ahead to make the most of London 2012 for their communities.

CREATE is an annual festival that showcases the best home grown talent from across east and south east London and grew out of a cultural partnership of the five Olympic boroughs. Led by Hackney and now in its third year, the festival will return every summer leading up to and following the 2012 Games to offer local people the chance to participate in world-class activities, explore the rich cultural

talent on their doorstep and be part of delivering a cultural legacy for the area.

The festival already attracts audiences of more than 800,000 people and, through partnering with arts organisations such as Whitechapel Gallery, O2 and Theatre Royal Stratford East, is able to offer activities such as dance, local walks, comedy and exhibitions.

Cllr Guy Nicholson, Hackney's Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games believes CREATE is a key part of involving local people in the Olympics.

"CREATE provides the perfect platform to show the great world-class creative talent that lives and works in east and south east London" he says.

"This cultural festival truly belongs to the people of the five host boroughs and will inspire many more of us to join in and take part in shaping a legacy for the arts from the 2012 Games."


In addition to showcasing east London talent, research by the University of East London estimates that last year's event had an economic impact on the local area of more than £15 million.

Across London, boroughs are working creatively to make the most of Olympic opportunities that can support their own local priorities. Boroughs have a huge responsibility not only to deliver on these, but to convince all Londoners that their investment in the Games has brought real benefits to their area.

There is undoubtedly still work to be done – residents away from east London and older Londoners need more convincing of the local benefits that the Games will bring to them than their younger, east London counterparts.

But with two years to go, and with Londoners still supportive of the Games, boroughs are in a strong position to deliver wide-ranging social benefits for communities across the capital, and to ensure their efforts are not overshadowed by the bigger players after 2012.



 For more examples of how boroughs are delivering long-term benefits from the Games visit www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/2012localbenefits

Getting personal

The way social care is delivered is fundamentally changing and London is leading the way.

Ian Mitchell reports

“I have made lots of friends. I feel more independent now”

For Gill it was an electric bike, for Claudia it was a travel buddy and for Leon it was a game of football. Each is just one example of the sort of small choices that are making big differences to individual's lives thanks to the increasing personalisation of adult care services in London today.

The move towards personalisation can be traced back to the 2007 ministerial concordat: *Putting People First*, that set out a 10-year plan to transform the way social care is provided by giving people more choice and control over the services and support they need.

Putting People First defined a fundamental change in thinking about the delivery of social care that recognised that individuals rather than organisations are best placed to choose the support and services they need to improve their well-being.

Personalisation requires both organisations and professionals to help and support individuals to choose the care they actually want, rather than that which might be prescribed for them by a care agency or social worker. This means enabling them, for example, to take the same day-to-day risks that the rest of society take for granted and to maximise their independence and well-being.

To date this transformation has been supported with a three-year (2008-2011) ring-fenced grant given to local authorities to enable the structural, organisational and cultural changes needed to make personal choice a reality for service users.

And while there are no plans to provide any further funding beyond 2011, the coalition government has already signalled its support for continuing to develop choice and control for service users, including in its white paper proposals for the NHS (*Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*, July 2010).

Given the size, diversity and complex needs of London's population - and given that the social care bill for London, at more than £2 billion, accounts for around 18 per cent of all adult social care spending in England - the capital was always going to be an important test bed for putting personalisation into practice.

To support London boroughs in meeting the challenges of delivering personalisation, the Department of Health London region and the London Association of Directors for Adult Social Care have jointly invested in a programme of pan-London activity to promote and accelerate personalisation across the capital.

Thanks to this support, London is today able to boast a wealth of pioneering best practice examples putting personalisation into practice.

Gill has a physical disability brought on by ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis).

With the help of a care manager from Hackney, Gill was encouraged to think about what would give her a better standard of life.

“I said I'd like to go cycling with friends in Epping Forest, like I used to.”

After a bit of research Gill used some of her personal budget to buy an electric bike that enabled her to enjoy cycling once again.





“On that bike I’m a cyclist; I don’t feel like I’m disabled. That’s the outcome.”

Claudia has learning disabilities and received her first personal care budget from Wandsworth social services in March 2009.

“My money pays for a travel buddy to help me cross the road safely, use public transport and get to places on time. It means I can visit my sister at weekends and volunteer at The Bridge, a café. I have made lots of friends there. I feel more independent now.

“I have an art project at the day centre once a week and I like to go to karaoke and shopping with my friends. They sometimes come back to mine for dinner. My next step is to exercise at the gym and go swimming. I am happy.”

Ardent Chelsea fan Leon was one of a number of service users at a day centre in Harrow who expressed an interest in playing football through the person-centred planning process in Harrow.

By gathering Leon and other interested service users together, Harrow was able to approach a local football centre and suggest they develop a programme of football activity that could be promoted specifically to people with a personal budget via Harrow’s e-marketplace shop4support.

Leon, along with several other personal budget holders, now uses shop4support to book football games at the local centre.


“I can always tell when Leon has had a good day”, says Leon’s mother and carer Jennifer, “He thoroughly enjoys the football and comes back really happy.”

Figures collated by London Councils in April indicated there were 19,305 service users receiving self directed support in London, 14,211 of whom receive direct payments for a personal care budget; and the pace of change continues to accelerate.

The forthcoming financial constraints across the public sector will mean that finding new ways of supporting interventions that can improve community well-being, enable more

people to live independent lives and avoid the need for expensive and intensive residential care, will become more rather than less vital.

In short, personalisation increasingly looks to be the future of adult social care and London local authorities are leading the way.

 London Councils is currently working with colleagues at the Department of Health to identify and share examples of innovation and best practice in delivering the personalisation of adult care services in London. To find out more email London Councils’ health and adult services project and policy manager, Valerie Solomon on 020 7934 9507 or email valerie.solomon@londoncouncils.gov.uk

“On that bike I’m a cyclist; I don’t feel like I’m disabled”



Some useful definitions:

Personalisation

Personalisation of social care services means giving people who receive support, whether funded by statutory services or themselves, choice and control over that support.

Individual budgets

This refers to the combination of various funding streams into one clear amount of money available to be directed to meeting an individual’s support needs.

Direct payments

This is a cash payment paid directly to the service user to allow them to buy their own support in lieu of services provided by the local authority.

Town hall teens

With more young people taking part in local democracy, Lewisham's Young Mayor **Jacob Sakil** shares his experience and explains why his role is so important

My name is Jacob Sakil, I'm a 17 year-old student and currently Lewisham's Young Mayor. I stood for election last year because living in an inner city borough and being a teenager I felt there were a lot of obstacles and problems I had to face, as do all young people growing up around me. I had so many questions to ask.

I watched influential people on television making speeches and creating different outcomes for everyone's lives, from leaders of countries to the activist seeking justice in some way. I think that was the beginning of me realising that I couldn't just be an observer or someone who just feels the outcome of someone else's actions. This sparked a passion in me. I heard a friend say "politics is opinions" and I thought "I've got a lot of those!"



I decided to run for Young Mayor and one thing I can say is that it wasn't easy. I felt the main battle was really with myself. It wasn't until the campaign training day that I realised if I believed in myself and what I wanted to bring to other young people, then my dreams could become a reality. I campaigned for two weeks and won the election on 15 October 2009.

The whole experience of campaigning made me feel like it was make or break time. It was two weeks of my life that I had the least amount of sleep. It all came down at one time; all the emotions, doubts, weariness and insecurities, but the strategising, thinking, planning and understanding also showed me at my best.

When I won, the reaction of my friends was what made me realise that this isn't a joke, but the start of something new. A start that we are all capable of. The fact that a lot of my friends were genuinely happy for me showed me that I had people around who wanted me to achieve whatever I set my mind to.

My main priority as Young Mayor was to be a voice in local government for young people. I'd say their top three concerns are being appreciated and understood by their community and local government; finding a job or being in a learning environment where they can achieve their best; and being able to find their place of who they are and what they want to be in this world.

I wanted to make sure that young people got their views across on these issues and anything that involved them. I think the real change will come from young people being the creators and drivers of their own ideas to help themselves as well as each other.

As Young Mayor I have a budget of £30,000 to spend on the needs and wants of young people in Lewisham. I decided to spend the money on self-improvement programmes. All of the money is now invested in young people gaining new skills, being self-motivated, meeting role models who can inspire them and programmes for young people to learn a trade or do an apprenticeship.

I'm now coming to the end of my term in office, but I think when my budget is spent and the young people can see, feel and benefit from the ideas that my advisors and I came up with, I will be able to step back and pinpoint the best thing that I've done.

However there are two events I will always remember. One was being able to have a discussion with the President of South Africa

“ I heard a friend say ‘politics is opinions’ and I thought ‘I’ve got a lot of those!’ ”

Jacob Zuma, and the other was going into primary schools and realising that me showing up as Young Mayor made these young people feel special, appreciated and inspired. Hopefully that made them want to go on and do something with their lives and maybe even run for Young Mayor one day.

I'm coming to the end of my year as Young Mayor, but I think the role has helped me learn a lot more about myself and what I'm capable of. My future plans are going to college to do A-levels, then to university. At some point I also want to experience life in another country less fortunate than ours, so I can see what other young people go through. I want to meet young people who haven't got what we young people have in Lewisham, so I can see the differences and make better decisions not only for my life but also for others.



Young democrats

Research by the British Youth Council reveals that up to 19,800 young volunteers are already actively involved in local government, through informing, influencing and participating in local decisions and improving services.

Most are involved through local youth councils, with participation on the increase. These young people can be valuable assets to authorities, helping councils consult on young people's issues, improve services and even save money; 94 per cent of youth councils said they represented the views of young people to local government either through campaigning or being consulted directly by decision-makers.

Youth councils also hold local government to account, with two-thirds helping to review children's plans, and half sitting on scrutiny panels or involved in inspections.

Youth councillors also tend to be a more diverse group of people than local councillors, and more representative of their local communities. Through the participation of young people, whole communities can be brought closer to decision-making.

Many young people first get involved with local politics through taking part in the annual Local Democracy Week. Across the UK, hundreds of councils and schools regularly take part in various activities to increase the participation and involvement of residents in decision-making and democratic processes. The week is particularly focussed on young people, and brings together current politicians with the next generation of electors and political leaders.

This year's Local Democracy week runs from 11-17 October.



Loosening the cap

Major reform of the housing benefit system is an early priority for the coalition government, but its impact will be disproportionately felt in the capital. **Ian Mitchell** reports



When the coalition government announced significant changes to the housing benefit scheme, it was immediately evident that the changes would impact on London households disproportionately.

Based on Department for Work and Pensions' own figures, London Councils calculated that 17,000 London households would be affected by the caps to be introduced next April, while a further 89,000 would be affected by changes to the method of calculating LHA in October (see box).

Driven in part by a wish to stop the use of large properties in expensive market rental areas for people on benefits, in reality the caps have been set so low that in London 83 per cent of the claims affected will be one, two and three bed properties.

In the absence of any evidence of how London landlords might respond to changes in their tenant's financial circumstances though, it was not possible to put a figure on how many of those people whose claims would be affected would be likely to lose their home.

A survey conducted by London Councils in conjunction with the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme has now established that around 60 per cent of landlords in the capital would not be prepared to lower their current rent by any amount if the tenant

could no longer pay the full rent.

Where the shortfall in rent rises to £20 a week or more, nearly all landlords surveyed say they would look to evict or not renew the tenancy at the end of the existing period.

Applying the probabilities of eviction and/or termination of tenancy to the existing DWP analysis indicates that around 82,000 tenants across London will be at risk of losing their homes as a result of the housing benefit changes.

The caps on Local Housing Allowances (LHAs) to be introduced in April are in reality a London issue; no other region in the country will be affected by them. The further changes proposed in October will compound the impact on households in the capital.

London Councils is urging the government to allocate a budget to make sure inner London can cope with the massive shortfalls the caps generate, or to revise the caps for London to ensure the capital's unique housing market is taken into account.



See Capital facts on page 19 for further details of the impact of the housing benefit changes on London

“ Around 82,000 tenants across London will be at risk of losing their homes as a result of the housing benefit changes ”



The main changes to housing benefit

- From April 2011 the maximum Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates payable to each property size will be capped at £250/week for a one bed; £290/week for a two bed; £340/week for a three bed and £400/week for a four bed property
- From October 2011 the method of calculating the LHA will be changed from the 50th percentile to the 30th percentile. This means tenants in receipt of housing benefit will have access to the bottom 30 per cent of the market instead of the bottom half as at present
- Other changes include the removal of the £15 weekly housing benefit excess and, from 2013, updating LHA on the basis of consumer price index rather than local rents.

I propose...

We're asking councillors across the capital to put forward one proposal they think could make life better for Londoners

“ I propose...saving bureaucrats. Financial times are tight, and across the capital local government bean counters are dealing with the first round of government cuts and preparing for the Spending Review in October.

When cuts have to be made, bureaucrats tend to feel the sharp end of the knife first. The people who collect in information and keep structures running are regarded as more dispensable than social workers or teaching assistants.

The problem with this is that when cuts are made, the consequences cannot always be predicted, and some will be unintended. I don't actually believe that George Osborne intended to penalise women most severely when he presented his emergency budget, but Yvette Cooper's research has demonstrated that that's what he did, with 75 per cent of the burden of cuts shouldered by women. If

you don't understand equality, you hit the most vulnerable hardest.

In Ealing, it's the bureaucratic equality legislation that gave Southall Black Sisters the tools to fight cuts to their funding.

In London, we need to push the boundaries of equality legislation to understand the impact of our decisions in local government and how they relate to the impact of decisions made by central government. We may need to do more to support particular communities or groups once we see where this government is heading. In our beautiful diverse city decisions about cuts made in Whitehall will reverberate, and will hit some harder than others.

We need to understand the equality impact of the decisions we and others make.

That means data, which means bureaucrats. Don't cut too many of them.

”

Cllr Rachael Saunders is a Labour councillor representing the Mile End East ward in Tower Hamlets and is the council's lead member for health and wellbeing.



Cllr Priyen Patel is a Conservative councillor for the St James ward in Kingston-upon-Thames.

“ In these times of deficits, cuts and freezes, the allure of selling off assets to off-set these decisions must be tempting. However, school playing fields are important. A report by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology said that obesity in children aged 15 was running at 15 per cent (8.5 per cent of 6 year-olds). This is truly shocking and must be considered of national importance for two reasons:

1. A growing number of young people with obesity will lead to increases in heart problems; osteoarthritis of the hands, hip, back and knees; and increases in the risk of breast cancer in men and women. Obesity is even the most common factor in non-alcoholic steatophepatitis, a major cause of liver disease.
2. The sheer cost of this for London's NHS, taking in our GPs' and other health

professionals' time and resources, will escalate. It is estimated that this will cost the NHS over £6 billion by 2015.

So, coming back to playing fields.

When I was at school, competitive and non-competitive sport was encouraged for all students. And I took advantage. Football, tennis, rugby and basketball were just a few of the sports which I took part in. This could not have happened if my school had sold its playing fields.

London has very little space for sports. It is therefore paramount that these special places, where children are encouraged to run, tackle, shoot and dunk are not lost. I want all council leaders and head teachers in London to make a pledge that playing fields are not sold to developers, and where possible, the amount of land used for children's sport is grown.

”



My London

Atallah Said is a recently elected Labour councillor for East Acton but has been an active member of the Labour party since 1997

Q. What motivated you to enter local politics?

A. I was born in Palestine but grew up in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and have been around politics all my life. After coming to the UK in 1990, I was keen to become an active member of the Arab community living in Ealing and wanted to help them integrate better into the community.

Q. How long have you lived in London?

A. I've lived in London since 1990, but I used to live in Kensington and then I moved to Luton for a short while before settling down with my family in Acton.

Q. What is the best thing about living in London?

A. For me, it has to be the diversity of London. When I came here, I felt like I'd been adopted into a massive multi-cultural family. People from all over the world are living together, experiencing each other's traditions, foods, music and faith.

Q. What is the worst?

A. I can't think of anything as such. I love the hustle and bustle of life in London.

Q. If you could change one thing about the capital, what would it be?

A. I'm used to open spaces, so I guess I'd like it if we had wider streets and more lanes on the road, especially during rush hour.

Q. What are the top three issues people bring to your surgery?

A. Housing is always the main issue in my ward. Residents are also concerned about controlled parking restrictions and disputes with neighbours. Acton is a great place to live, but there is sometimes a lack of

consideration from a small number of residents who make life difficult for the rest. I get a lot of parents asking for more investment to be considered for the parks and open spaces in the area to give young people more to do, especially during the holidays.

Q. Will the 2012 Olympics bring long-term benefits to London?

A. I definitely think so, especially in terms of jobs and a boost to tourism. Londoners will benefit from things like the building of new sports venues, homes, transport links and cleaning of streets and open spaces, all being carried out in preparation.

I strongly believe this standard of care for London should continue even after the Games have finished.

Q. What's your favourite building in London?

A. There are so many lovely buildings. I personally love St Paul's Cathedral. I also really like modern architecture and impressive buildings like City Hall; it makes the London skyline look spectacular.

Q. Name one London building you think should be demolished

A. I would love to see some of the unused buildings, in massive disrepair, demolished to make way for attractive new buildings. The community could then use them for better projects and housing, instead of leaving these unsightly, derelict properties standing empty and often contributing to anti-social behaviour.

Q. Describe yourself in three words

A. Passionate, decisive and confident.

Q. What historical figure do you most admire (and why)?

A. I admire Gamal Abdel Nasser; he was a pivotal figure in the recent history of the Middle East and played a highly prominent role in the 1956 Suez crisis. Nasser has been described as the first leader of an Arab nation who challenged what was perceived as the western dominance of the Middle East. Nasser remains a highly revered figure in both Egypt and the Arab world. I also admire Yasser Arafat for having the courage to tackle difficult politics during a difficult time in Palestine and raising the plight of the people to an international level.

Q. What was the last film you saw/book you read?

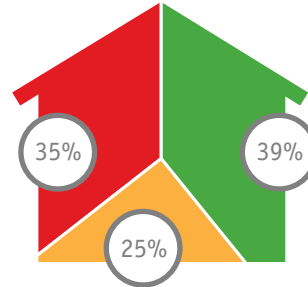
A. The book was *Darkness at Noon*, by Arthur Koestler, and the film was *Catch Me If You Can*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio.



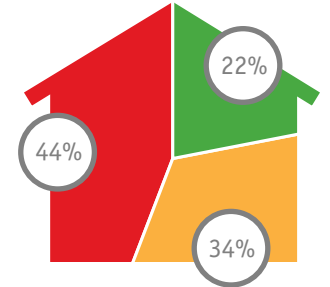
Benefit trap door?

Smaller properties (one and two bed)

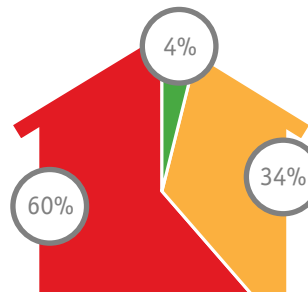
Any shortfall



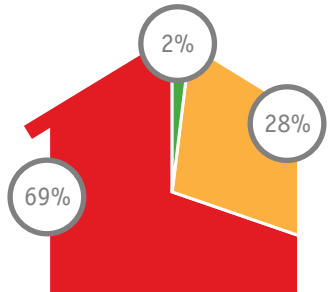
Shortfall of over £10 a week



Shortfall of over £20 a week



Shortfall of over £40 a week

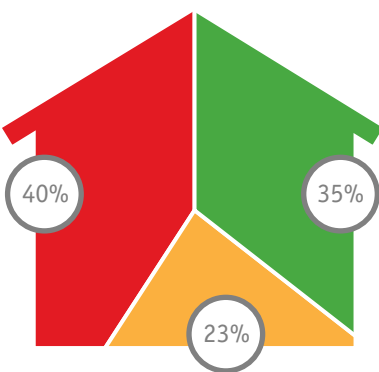


Landlord intentions

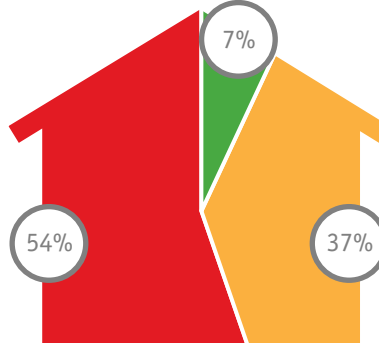
Around 60 per cent of London landlords with housing benefit tenants say they will not reduce their rent by even a small amount if the tenant can no longer meet the full rent following plans to cap Local Housing Allowances next year. *Figures based on London Councils' survey in conjunction with the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme. Read 'Loosening the cap' on page 16.*

Larger properties (three bed plus)

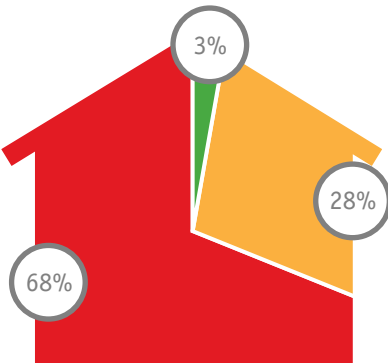
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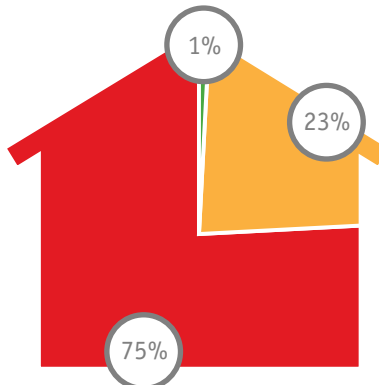

Shortfall of over £20 a week



Shortfall of over £50 a week



Shortfall of over £75 a week

- Keep the rent the same but evict tenant if they fall into arrears
- Reduce the rent to the new HB level in the long term
- Accept the shortfall in rent until the end of the tenancy and then terminate the tenancy

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