

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8TH OCTOBER 2008

EXECUTIVE – 13TH OCTOBER 2008

Report by the Chief Executive and Director of Administration on the initial results of a programme of consultation on the future of Tooting Town Centre, and proposals for an initial action plan for improvements.

Summary

This report provides initial results from the survey of residents and visitors on views of Tooting Town Centre. Although a final report of the survey will not be received until October, these initial results are thought sufficiently accurate, and give a clear picture that both residents and visitors saw the need for improvements in Tooting: the streets were seen as cluttered and dirty, with too much litter and uncollected rubbish, and a majority also wished to see an expanded range of shops with more major High Street names. In relation to community safety, concerns about the crime rate and police presence were recorded, but only at the average rate for the borough. Initial results from a workshop confirmed the general findings of the survey and provided some suggestions for improvement: a full report is awaited, and this will be made in November together with a final assessment of the detailed survey results.

Tooting Town Centre seems very much a victim of its own success, with very limited scope for development or change, a constrained infrastructure, and a classic conflict between shopping and traffic. The Leader has asked officers to bring forward suggestions for improvements that could address some of the concerns shown in the survey, and some 22 initial proposals are put forward for approval. New powers are available to tackle the problem of collecting commercial waste placed on the street, and it is proposed a report on using these to specify permitted timebands for collection should be brought forward in January, following local consultation. At the same time, reflecting the views found in the survey that local shops could do more to make streets look cleaner, a 'Good Neighbour' initiative with owners is proposed, in conjunction with the Tooting Business Network.

Highway management is a Transport for London responsibility on the main A24 shopping parades, but a Council responsibility on Mitcham Road. It is proposed that more vigorous enforcement on street trading, illegal signs etc. should be deployed, a pilot pavement washing scheme and a decluttering exercise mounted, and repainting of street furniture and railings in a new colour scheme initiated. Ideally these initiatives should proceed on both main shopping streets, and TfL would be urged to effect this. An agency agreement for the Council to carry out enforcement actions on the A24 pavements has been offered to TfL to facilitate this, and is due to be considered by their Board on 5th November. Various other improvements are proposed for the appearance of the Town Centre.

As regards improving the shopping offer in Tooting, it is noted that apart from the Market area, there is little scope for redevelopment. However a shopping 'gap analysis' study, similar to that conducted for Putney, would provide useful information on potential trade being lost to Tooting. It is proposed a study of this type should be commissioned, and the results used to alert local businesses and traders to opportunities and to lever in investment. Research into development opportunities is also proposed. Overall the cost of the various improvements and initiatives proposed is £89,400, and a budget variation for this amount is sought: this assumes TfL would cover the cost of improvements on their roads.

Glossary

AQPR – Annual Quality and Performance Review
BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicator
CPZ – Controlled Parking Zone
CDRP – Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
DLAS – Director of Leisure and Amenity Services
DTS – Director of Technical Services
EDO – Economic Development Office
ENCAMS – Environmental Campaigns
LDA – London Development Agency
SNTs – Safer Neighbourhood Teams
TBN – Town Business Network
TfL – Transport for London
UW- University of Westminster(Survey/study conducted in 2005 in Tooting)

Recommendations

1. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to support the recommendations in paragraph 3.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve any views, comments or recommendations on the report, these will be submitted to the Executive/General Purposes Committee for their consideration.
3. The Executive is recommended:-
 - (a) to note the interim results of the Tooting Survey, as set out in paragraphs 9-57 of this report, and that a final report, complete with workshop findings and school/youth survey results will be reported to the November Committee;
 - (b) to note the main findings echo those of the 2005 University of Westminster results, but add significant further information on the concerns of residents and visitors;
 - (c) to note that the Leader has requested officers to draw up an Initial Action Plan – set out in paragraphs 59-106 - to respond as promptly as possible to the issues identified in the survey, and this is presented for approval here,

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since they are considered unlikely to pre-empt any further decisions to be taken when the final report is presented;

- (d) that the Director of Leisure and Amenity Services (DLAS) regularly monitors the current street cleaning contract performance in Tooting to ensure standards are as near to 100% of contract level as possible (see paragraph 63);
- (e) that the DLAS continues to organise litter enforcement “blitzes” in Tooting, and also undertakes an exercise to replace and enhance Town Centre litter bins as necessary (see paragraph 66);
- (f) that the DLAS further initiates a pilot street washing exercise to remove accumulated pavement dirt and detritus from the worst parts of the Town Centre, to correspond to the litter bin replacement exercise in (e) above (see paragraph 66);
- (g) that enforcement action on flytipping continues vigorously (see paragraph 68);
- (h) that the DLAS continues consultation with commercial waste contractors and customers in Tooting to devise suitable time bands for permissible collection, using new powers in the London Local Authorities Act 2007, and reports on the use of those powers in Tooting as a pilot scheme in January 2009, with a view to commencing on 1st April 2009 (see paragraphs 69-73);
- (i) that the Economic Development Officer progresses a “Good Neighbour Scheme” for shops and traders with the Tooting Business Network, from November 2008 onwards (see paragraph 75);
- (j) that enforcement of licensed street traders’ regulations be vigorously pursued and TfL be requested to offer the Council a pilot 6 month agency highway enforcement scheme for highways regulations, unlicensed traders etc, to accompany a parallel operation on borough roads (see paragraphs 76-80);
- (k) that a decluttering exercise be conducted to remove redundant street furniture and illegal signs and materials, seeking parallel actions from TfL (see paragraphs 81-83)
- (l) that a repainting programme of street furniture, with a new colour scheme, be commenced on Mitcham Road at a cost of some £38,000, and TfL be encouraged to mount a complementary programme along the A24 at a comparable cost; (see paragraph 83);
- (m) that an exercise should be mounted to identify and remove street railings where possible without safety risks should be mounted (see paragraph 84);
- (n) that opportunities for tree planting in suitable residential roads around the Town Centre be identified, including suggestions from Ward Councillors and other partners (see paragraphs 88-89);
- (o) that the proposals to examine the scope for junction improvements to improve pedestrian flow around the Broadway Station junction with TfL be endorsed (see paragraphs 89-90);
- (p) that parking arrangements in residential streets adjacent to shopping parades be investigated where required, with attention being given to suggestions from Ward Councillors (see paragraphs 92-93);
- (q) that a shopping “gap analysis” study be commissioned by the EDO at an anticipated cost in the region of £22,500 - £27,500 (see paragraph 95);

- (r) that the Council officers research land ownerships and redevelopment opportunities in the Town Centre in order to identify potential major sites and report on conclusions and potential actions in November or after completion of the study in (q) above (see paragraph 96);
- (s) that officers encourage developers and property dealers to keep properties in good repair and signage boards within legal requirements, enforcing in cases of infringement (see paragraph 99);
- (t) that developers be encouraged to improve the appearance of derelict shops and redevelopment sites, with a pilot Community Payback project being progressed (see paragraph 99);
- (u) that the DLAS encourages further suitable local traders in Tooting to sign up for the Community Toilets scheme (see paragraph 101);
- (v) that further environmental improvement schemes and sitting out areas be identified where possible (see paragraph 103);
- (w) that Community Safety issues, though only registering at average levels, be pursued in discussions with the Police, SNTs and partners, as suggested in paragraph 105;
- (x) that a title be conferred on the Action Plan, which is expected to continue throughout 2009, which is provisionally suggested as “Tooting Together”, and appropriate signage and logos be developed accompanying this; and
- (y) to approve a revenue budget variation of £89,400 in 2008/09.

Introduction

4. The Corporate Resources OSC received a report (Paper No. 08-340) at its meeting on 23rd April 2008 outlining a programme of survey and consultation work on the future of Tooting Town Centre. This was fundamentally designed to assess residents and visitors views on the pressures being experienced by Tooting Town Centre as a successful retail centre facing changes and competition, but with severe constraints on its ability to adapt. The study was designed in two stages as set out below.

Stage 1 Components

5. It was proposed these would be broadly as follows:
 - (a) A face-to-face, in-home interview survey with 500/700 residents;
 - (b) an on-street interview survey with 300/500 visitors to the town centre; and
 - (c) on-line surveys of younger residents/users of the Hub and Base, possibly with additional measures in collaboration with local schools.
6. The aim of the Stage 1 surveys was to address the following 3 broad questions.
 - (a) What are seen as the key issues/problems, and benefits, if any, facing the area now and over the next decade?
 - (b) How does this impact on daily life and use of the centre?

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- (c) What kind of area do the target groups want tooting town centre to be and what do they expect it to become?
7. It was agreed a draft questionnaire for these surveys would be prepared with the selected Market Research contractor (Plus Four Market Research Ltd.) and be circulated to Ward Councillors for comments, prior to piloting. The questionnaire was also planned to include some open ended questions with prompt lists for possible preferences.
8. The draft questionnaire was circulated and piloted as promised, and the final version used is attached at Appendix 1. 709 residents from within the planned area were questioned. The area is indicated in Appendix 2. Responses from 303 visitors were also obtained in the on-street survey. Fieldwork was carried out in June, and the raw initial results were supplied to the Council at the end of July. The final report from the market research contractor covering both stages of the project, is expected in October and will feed into a further report to this committee in the November cycle. However, the initial results supplied in the form of raw tabulations and cross-tabulations (some 500 pages of data) have been analysed by officers and the main findings extracted. These are believed to be statistically robust and any adjustments (see paragraph 49) are unlikely to change the results to a significant degree. Paragraphs 12 to 56 below outline these results.
9. Similar questionnaires, adapted for young people, have been circulated to 6 local schools. The results from schools other than Broadwater and St Boniface have not yet been received but will be incorporated into the report to this committee in November.

Stage 2 Components

10. Stage 2 of the survey was planned to explore the concerns and views identified through the Stage 1 surveys together with options for improvement via a residents' workshop. This was designed to involve a more qualitative evaluation of the available options for dealing with concerns, and could also include, as necessary, any trade-offs between cost, quality and value. This workshop, attended by 34 residents, was conducted on 10th September 2008, and initial feedback is that views expressed generally confirmed the initial survey findings. A considerable number of suggestions for improvement were also received. Full results will be available in the final report in October. Following this, it was suggested wider feedback on all study findings and the proposals for improvement would be obtained via a special Tooting newsletter and on-line feedback using the Council web-site.

Action Programme to tackle Issues identified at Initial Results Stage

11. The initial results give a useful picture of the main concerns, and are not dissimilar to the concerns found in the 2005 University of Westminster survey. The final report from Plus Four in October will give a more accurate picture of the results and more detailed identification of possible causes and

explanations, via pinpointing sub groups who have significantly differing views to the residents/visitors as a whole. Also the residents' workshop results will provide a deeper understanding of residents' views and attitudes.

Leader's Views

12. The Leader has been informed of the likely timetable for reporting results, and has requested officers to prepare proposals for general improvements to the area, taking as full account as possible of clear local concerns and issues from the initial results, together with known issues raised previously via the Town Centre Manager or the Town Centre Partnership. Accordingly, officers have identified the main Tooting Town Centre issues that can be confirmed at this stage of the surveys, and prepared a schedule of proposed initial actions, where it can be safely assumed these will not compromise any further decisions or actions that could possibly follow when the final report is available.

Initial Survey Results

13. These findings are based on initial, unweighted results from the surveys of residents and visitors. Final results may shift by a few percentage points. Results are rounded so may not add to 100 in all cases. Statistically significant differences are highlighted in bold. Unless otherwise stated, percentages are based on the 709 residents and 303 visitors who responded to the surveys. Pupils in local schools were also surveyed; results for 113 pupils aged 9-11 in Broadwater School were received before the summer holidays and are reported here.
14. A number of other surveys put these results in context:
 - (a) a study by the University of Westminster (UW) in 2005 included surveys of residents and visitors; and
 - (b) surveys of 1200 Wandsworth residents carried out in 2005 and 2007.

Similarities and contrasts with these earlier surveys have been made where appropriate.

General views on the area

15. Just over one in four (26%) residents had lived in the area for less than two years (14% for less than one year), confirming the high levels of in and out migration in the area found in the 2005 University of Westminster (UW) and 2007 residents survey. One in three has lived in central Tooting for over 10 years. 77% of under 25s and 68% of 25-44s have been in the area for less than 5 years. With just over half of all residents having been in the area less than 5 years, it is perhaps not surprising that, asked whether they felt part of the area, just 39% said "very much so" and 42% "a little".

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16. Four in five residents like living in the area (one in three like it very much) while 7% dislike it and the remainder have no strong feelings about it. Negative feelings are more common in the older, longer-established population – 15% of over 65s and 10% of 45-64s dislike the area.
17. Broadwater pupils have a generally less favourable view: 34% rate the town centre as at least “good” (13% “great”) and 45% “OK” while 18% see it as poor or terrible.
18. Asked, unprompted, what is best and worst about living in the area, the following were cited by residents. Some rather different views emerged when respondents were asked directly about issues (see later).

Table 1 – General Views – Residents 2008

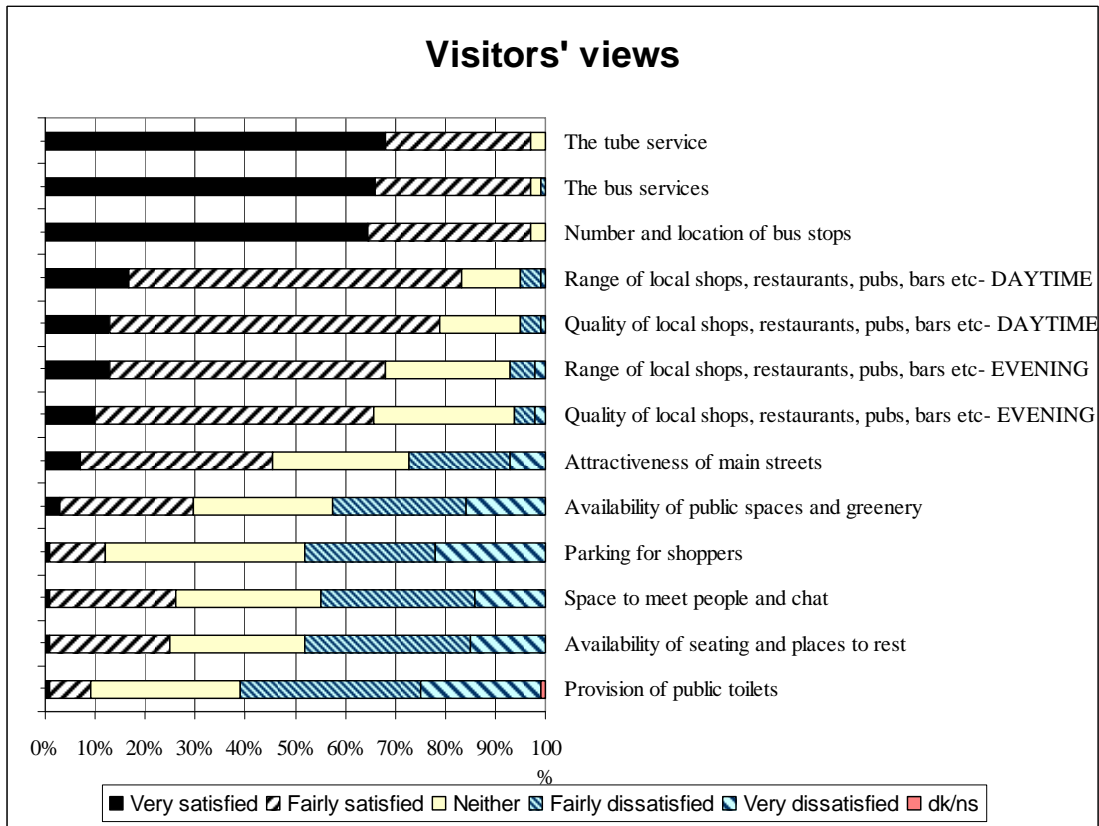
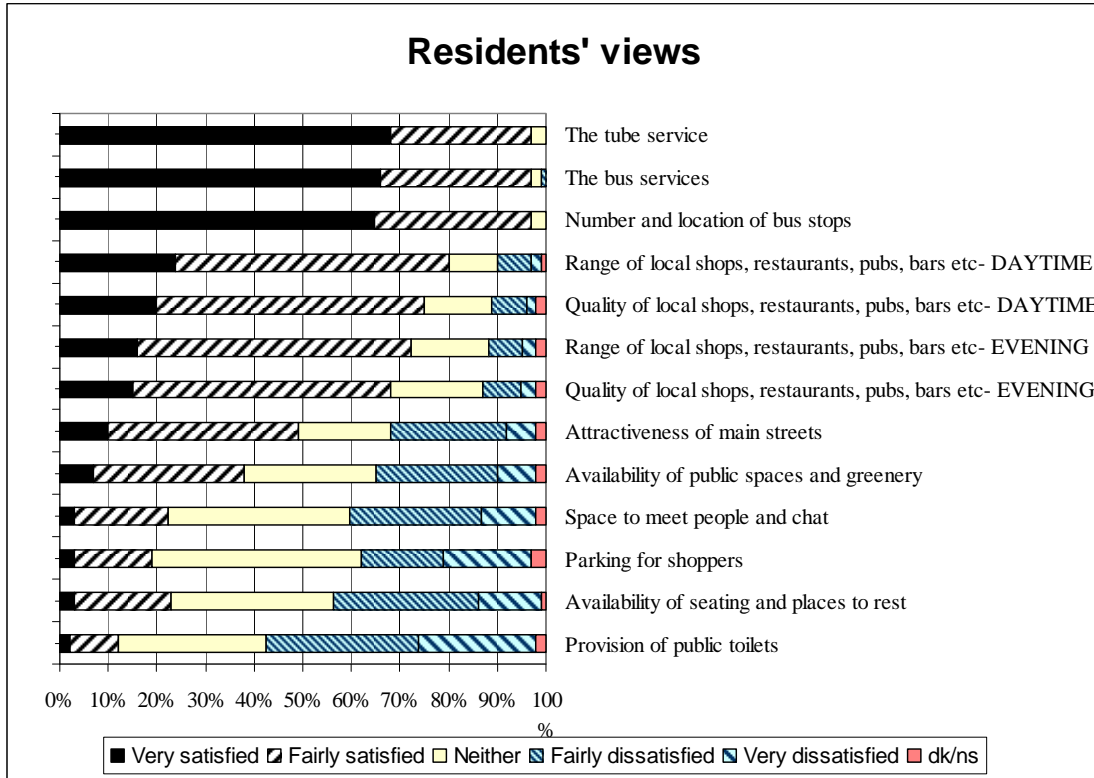
Best things about the area	Significant “outliers”
Good transport facilities 53%	Asian 40%, White 30%
Good shops nearby 34%	
Quiet area 13%	
Close to GP/hospital 10%	
Friendly people 8%	
Worst things about the area	Significant “outliers”
Too much litter/uncollected rubbish 20%	25-44 24%. Female 25%. Black 13% White 17%. Resident 1-3 years 19% Resident <1 year 4%. Social tenants 15% Single persons 12%
Dirty environment/streets/dog mess 14%	
Youths hanging around/ASB 10%	
High crime rate 9%	
Too much noisy traffic 9%	
Parking problems/charges 9%	
	Male 12%. Owner-occupiers 15%. Asian 14%

19. In the 2007 borough-wide residents survey, 11% mentioned dirt and litter as the things they most disliked about their area (also in response to an open-ended question), suggesting that the issue has greater prominence with Tooting residents.
20. Almost half (48%) of visitors came to central Tooting two or more times a week (20% came daily). Asked, unprompted, what most attracted them to Tooting, one in three cited good shopping facilities while one in five come to work and the same proportion come to meet family or friends. One in ten mentioned the market as a specific attraction.

Views on the main issues

21. The charts below show residents’ and visitors’ views on a range of issues within the area. In broad terms, there is relatively little difference between the two groups in the pattern of views: transport facilities and the range of quality of shops, restaurants and bars are generally well regarded whilst most aspects of the streetscape are not. However, on these issues, over one in four say they’re neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This might be interpreted in a number

of ways; that the issue does not concern them, that they expect no more/less etc., but later questions suggest that it generally reflects a fairly negative view. When full results are available we will look at this in more detail.



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22. Several of the issues in the graphs repeated questions in the UW 2005 survey. The precise target area of that survey is not known, beyond being within 1km of the town centre, so comparisons must be cautious. However, given that the general situation on the ground is largely unchanged since 2005, there is a suggestion that views may be quite volatile. While the general patterns of satisfaction/dissatisfaction apply to all sub-groups of residents, it is notable that on issues such as range and quality of shops etc, attractiveness of main streets, Asian residents are the most satisfied and white residents the least. As expected, there are some differences between recent and longer-established residents but this does not extend to a universal truth: whilst on many issues those resident under one year are the most satisfied and those over three years the least, differences are fairly marginal. It is certainly not the case that there is a simple divide between newcomers and longer-term residents as regards the retail and leisure offer.

Table 2: Residents' views: 2005 v 2008 Surveys

<i>(Bases)</i>	2005 (303)	2008 (709)
Dissatisfied with range of local shops and businesses	15%	9-10%
Dissatisfied with quality of local shops and businesses	17%	9-10%
Satisfied with attractiveness of main streets	35%	49%
Satisfied with places to meet people/chat	41%	22%
Satisfied with availability of seating/places to rest	31%	23%

Cleanliness of the area

23. The cleanliness of the environment features high on residents' list of local problems. Almost two-thirds see litter as a big or very big problem – a level well above anything seen in previous borough-wide surveys. In a 2005 borough-wide survey, 7% saw cleanliness of streets as a big problem, locally and 26% a slight problem. Over half now see fly-tipping as a significant problem, a result possibly affected by a “no-flytipping” campaign that was underway in part of the area during the 2008 survey.

Table 3: Residents' views on environmental issues 2008

<i>(Base 709)</i>	Very big problem	Big problem	Not a very big problem	Not a problem at all
Noisy/rowdy behaviour at night	17%	20%	45%	18%
Pedestrian congestion near tube station	8%	30%	44%	18%
Litter	29%	35%	28%	7%
Graffiti	5%	10%	54%	30%
Fly-tipping	27%	27%	32%	13%

Trends in conditions in Tooting

24. Residents have a more ambivalent view on how the area is developing. More people, both residents and visitors, think the area is getting better than worse, but results are more polarised and less positive here than we have found in previous borough-wide surveys, perhaps because of the focus on the Town Centre physical conditions. Negative views increase with age and length of residence but are consistent in other respects. To put these results in context, the BVPI surveys in 2003 and 2006 found that on a range of issues Wandsworth residents were two to three times more likely to say things were getting better than worse.

Table 4: Residents' and Visitors' views on Trends

	Residents	Visitors
Getting much better	9%	7%
Getting a little better	23%	17%
Remaining the same	43%	58%
Getting a little worse	20%	12%
Getting much worse	6%	6%

25. One in three Broadwater pupils feel the area needs a lot of improvement and half see the need for some small improvements; just 14% say it “is fine as it is”.

Likelihood of Moving

26. 49% of residents feel they will definitely, and 39% probably, be living in the area two years hence. Those not likely to be living in Tooting will be looking for a place that has more green/open spaces (24%), a quieter environment (23%), is cleaner (20%) and safer (15%). 14% of this group hope to move to an area with more/better shops.

Safety on the Streets

27. Residents seem to have a more positive view on safety than do visitors but, even so, one in five of them feel unsafe in the area at night. This is not out of line with results from the 2007 borough-wide residents survey.

Table 5: Residents’ and Visitors’ views on “How safe do you feel when out and about in this area during.....”

	Daytime		Evening	
	Residents	Visitors	Residents	Visitors
Very safe	53%	44%	20%	15%
Quite safe	41%	52%	55%	55%
Not very safe	5%	3%	18%	9%
Not at all safe	1%	1%	6%	5%
Do not visit in evening/ns			1%	17%

28. Those not feeling safe were asked why this was. The small number of visitors means comparisons must be treated with caution.

Table 6: Residents’ and Visitors’ reasons for concerns about safety

Residents (base = 171)		Visitors (base = 43)	
Youths hanging around	45%	Youths hanging around	30%
High crime rate	36%	High crime rate	30%
Drunks/drug addicts on streets	10%	Drunks/drug addicts on streets	16%
Not enough police presence	8%	Too crowded	16%
		Not enough police	8%

29. 56% of those residents who feel unsafe (96 respondents) identified specific locations: the High Street (14%); Franciscan Road (12%); the station (8% - but 23% of visitors); Garratt Lane and Mitcham Road (7% in each case).
30. Safety concerns are also prominent amongst Broadwater pupils, 37% of who, said they felt unsafe to some degree when in the area. The range of factors causing this concern include gangs, drunken people and a more general worry about traffic and crowds. Much of the worry was about the area in general but the specific sites most mentioned were the area around the tube station and around McDonalds.

Police Performance

31. While a police presence seems only to have a fairly minor impact on feelings of safety, police performance was not as highly rated as might be expected. In the 2007 residents survey, 87% saw the police as doing a good or very good job in dealing with local crime.

Table 7: Residents’ and Visitors’ views on satisfaction with the performance of the police in this area

	Residents	Visitors
Very satisfied	17%	16%
Quite satisfied	45%	43%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23%	34%
Quite dissatisfied	8%	5%
Very dissatisfied	6%	2%

The retail offer

- 32. 69% of residents do over half of all their shopping in the local area (23% do all their shopping locally). Residents and visitors have different patterns of use of the town centre, probably reflecting the range of purposes for which visitors come to Tooting as well as the different age structures of the two groups (residents being older on average).
- 33. 40% of Asian residents do all their shopping locally compared with 16% of white and 22% of black residents. On average, those resident for less than one year do less of their shopping locally but over three quarters do over half of it in Tooting.

Table 8: Residents’ and Visitors’ Shopping Patterns: % done in Tooting town centre

	Major food shopping		Daily shopping		Clothes shopping	
	Residents	Visitors	Residents	Visitors	Residents	Visitors
50-74%	13%	24%	14%	23%	19%	25%
75-99%	19%	12%	18%	7%	12%	7%
100%	55%	11%	57%	8%	22%	4%

- 34. Clothes shopping is by far the least important attraction for both residents and visitors (20% and 33% respectively said they do none of their clothes shopping in the area).20% of residents said they did most of their clothes shopping in central London, 14% in Oxford Street/West End and 13% each in Croydon and Wimbledon. Similar patterns apply to visitors.
- 35. Around two-thirds of residents and visitors are satisfied with local shopping opportunities. Satisfaction is, however, fairly muted with just one in ten describing themselves as “very satisfied”. It should be borne in mind that, in respect of visitors, an on-street survey is likely to catch those who visit most frequently and, by implication, those with most positive views. Residents, who make greater use of the centre for most forms of shopping, might be expected to more satisfied but this is not the case. That the satisfaction rating hides a degree of discontent is confirmed by the 45% of residents who see local shopping as poorer than that available elsewhere.

Table 9: Satisfaction with shopping opportunities in this area?

	Residents	Visitors
Very satisfied	10%	12%
Quite satisfied	53%	55%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19%	22%
Quite dissatisfied	12%	8%
Very dissatisfied	5%	3%

Table 10: Residents' views on local shopping opportunities compared with other areas

Much better than elsewhere	5%
A little better than elsewhere	12%
About the same	37%
A little poorer	32%
Much poorer	13%

36. Responses to a series of statements about the shopping offer provide further evidence of perceived need for improvement, even if there is some ambiguity about what sort of shopping centre is needed. Four fifths of residents and almost nine in ten of visitors want to see more high street names in the centre while large majorities also want more small independent shops. Visitors are significantly more likely to feel there are too many shops selling low quality goods but a majority of residents also feel this way.
37. Large majorities of both groups see the markets as important. Residents are quite polarised in their views on the quality of the markets; visitors have a more negative attitude but it is not clear that updating the markets would find favour with a majority. 38% of residents and 24% of visitors describe themselves as regular users of the markets.
38. More than three quarters of visitors and two-thirds of residents see the streets as “messy” while there is almost no disagreement amongst residents and visitors agree that local shops could do more to make the area less messy. More than 90% of visitors and 60% of residents feel the main streets are too busy/cluttered for pedestrians.
39. Overall, therefore, visitors are more likely to agree, and to agree strongly, with negative statements about the shopping area. Whilst residents are often less prone to criticise, a clear majority shares the negative views of the town centre.

Table 10: Agreement or disagreement with statements about the shopping centre

		Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
There should be more well known High Street names in this area	Residents	46%	34%	13%	6%	*
	Visitors	50%	39%	7%	3%	*
This area would benefit from more small, independent shops	Residents	19%	41%	23%	13%	5%
	Visitors	35%	40%	13%	8%	4%
There are too many shops in this area selling cheap, poor quality goods	Residents	28%	29%	21%	19%	3%
	Visitors	35%	35%	23%	6%	2%
There should be more arts and crafts shops in this area	Residents	17%	31%	40%	8%	3%
	Visitors	32%	44%	16%	7%	2%
The markets are an important feature of the area	Residents	36%	44%	14%	4%	2%
	Visitors	46%	41%	11%	2%	-
The markets are old and depressing	Residents	11%	26%	28%	25%	9%
	Visitors	24%	25%	31%	16%	3%
Local shops could do more themselves to make the area look less messy	Residents	38%	39%	17%	4%	*
	Visitors	54%	31%	12%	2%	-
The main streets are messy	Residents	26%	37%	21%	14%	2%
	Visitors	39%	38%	13%	7%	2%
The streets are interesting and lively	Residents	16%	39%	24%	15%	5%
	Visitors	13%	44%	24%	13%	5%
The main streets are difficult/ too busy/too cluttered for pedestrians	Residents	20%	41%	23%	13%	3%
	Visitors	68%	24%	6%	1%	-

40. 64% of residents and 55% of visitors said they had been regular users of Marks & Spencer. Perceived impact of the loss of the store is shown below. Again, it should be noted that a sizeable proportion of visitors to the centre are not there for the shopping. Amongst residents, views on the impact of the closure are closely related top age.

Table 11: Views on the closure of Marks & Spencer

	Residents	Resident “outliers”	Visitors
A great loss to the shopping offering in Tooting	45%	<25 31%, 65+ 62%; women 50% Resident <1 year 31%, over 3 years 49%	38%
A loss, but not a great loss to the shopping offering in Tooting	24%		23%
It doesn't matter very much	21%	65+ 20%, <25 46%. Resident under 1 year 45%, over 3 years 27%	16%
It doesn't matter at all	9%		24%

The social and leisure offering

Restaurants

41. Local residents are more likely to eat out in the area and to do so more often than visitors. For residents doing less than half of their eating out locally, Wimbledon and Central London are the main venues (10% in each case).

Table 12: % of eating out done in Tooting

	Residents	Visitors
None	9%	19%
Up to a quarter	5%	14%
Over a quarter and up to a half	12%	11%
Over a half and up to three-quarters	26%	36%
Over three-quarters but not all	17%	8%
All	20%	3%
Don't do activity	12%	9%

42. Asked their views on the number and quality of local restaurants, the largest single group of both residents and visitors said they were “quite satisfied”. Although levels of satisfaction were greater than for shopping opportunities, this seems a fairly luke-warm response. Nevertheless, there is no sign that there is mass discontent with local restaurants.

43. Older people (over 65) are generally less satisfied but this largely reflects a high “don’t know” response. There is also no clear pattern as regards length of residence; those resident under one year are only marginally more likely to be very satisfied with the number and quality of restaurants than those resident over three years, in fact those resident 1-3 years are the most satisfied on both measures.

Table 13: Views on the number and quality of local restaurants

	Number		Quality	
	Residents	Visitors	Residents	Visitors
Very satisfied	18%	18%	15%	15%
Quite satisfied	52%	48%	46%	48%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12%	22%	18%	22%
Quite dissatisfied	7%	5%	8%	5%
Very dissatisfied	4%	2%	5%	2%
DK/NS	7%	7%	9%	7%

Pubs and bars

44. Results are affected by the large percentage of “not stated” responses to these questions, mainly for religious reasons.

Table 15: Views on the number and quality of local pubs and bars

	Number		Quality	
	Residents	Visitors	Residents	Visitors
Very satisfied	10%	10%	6%	10%
Quite satisfied	39%	43%	35%	38%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16%	28%	20%	30%
Quite dissatisfied	6%	3%	6%	4%
Very dissatisfied	3%	2%	5%	3%
DK/NS	26%	15%	28%	17%

Priorities for improvement

45. Respondents were asked, unprompted, to suggest the 3 things they thought most important in improving Tooting. Although it appeared at the end of the survey and interviewers sought to gather order of priority, we will probably need to consider all three together. The main priorities are shown below - but note there were many more things suggested by small numbers of people. For example, 3% of residents and 4% of visitors gave more/more variety of bars and restaurants as their first priority.

Table 15: Residents' top priorities

1st	2nd	3rd
Cleaner streets – 18%	More/better quality shops - 12%	Cleaner streets – 5%
More/better quality shops – 12%	Cleaner streets – 11%	More visible police presence – 5%
More visible police presence – 10%	More bins/clear litter more often – 7%	
More bins/clear up litter more often – 8%	More visible police presence – 6%	
More disabled/free parking for residents – 6%	More free parking for residents – 6%	
Childrens/youth activities and centres – 6%	NB – 20% had no second priority	NB – 41% had no third priority

46. Visitors placed markedly more emphasis on enhanced police visibility. Perhaps as noteworthy are the things they did not prioritise, e.g. parking. Note the relatively low proportions able to suggest second and third priority improvements!

Table 16: Visitors' top priorities

1st	2nd	3rd
More visible police presence – 22%	More visible police presence – 13%	Cleaner streets – 5%
Cleaner streets – 19%	Cleaner streets – 10%	Stop shops overflowing onto pavements – 4%
More bins/clear up litter more often – 5%	More bins/clear litter more often – 5%	More visible police presence – 4%
		More bins/clear litter more often – 4%
	NB – 24% had no second priority	NB – 43% had no third priority

47. Making the area cleaner also topped the list of priorities for Broadwater pupils, followed by reducing crowds/traffic and improving security. More and better shops features as a higher priority than the latter two but there was no consensus as to what they would look like, i.e. some wanted more shops for children, others fewer cheap shops etc.

Population change in the area

48. The residents' survey was designed around a simple random sample: every 10th address was selected (with a buffer to ensure achievement of target number within timescale). Interviews were achieved with 709 of around 8,500 residential addresses in the target area. This achieved sample is sufficiently large to give a good indication of the current population although, inevitably, the greater propensity of older people, Council tenants and others to participate in such surveys means some re-weighting of results may be needed. This is not straightforward given the unreliability of the 2001 census, which recorded just c6,400 households in the area, and the pace of change since then.
49. It is normal for survey results to need re-weighting so that the respondent profile matches that of the known population. This is generally needed in relation to age (older people being more likely to respond) and gender (women more likely to respond). In this survey, the gender balance of respondents matches that of the known population but older people are over-represented. Responses were initially re-weighted to reflect the known age profile but this had no significant effect on overall results for key questions, i.e. there was no significant difference in view on these questions across the age profile. This itself is an unusual finding – age and gender generally explain much of the differences in views and attitudes across the population. In keeping with standard industry practice, weightings will not be applied where they have no impact on overall results.
50. As importantly, the survey found 46% of the sample to be private tenants. This compares with some 30% in the broad target area in the 2001 census. These people are younger on average and, generally, more difficult to contact and pin down for interview so we would normally expect to undercount them.
51. The result is thought to be reliable because:
 - a) The random sampling approach means we can calculate the “true” percentage as lying within a range of c43-49% - i.e. if we did the same survey 100 times, we'd get a result in this range on 95 occasions. In a small area it is highly unlikely that there would be a systematic problem that would inflate the likelihood of finding private tenants;
 - b) The 2005 UW survey found 39% to be private tenants, although in the “central” area, this rose to 48%;
 - c) Research for the GLA estimated that in 2006 45% of all new-build properties in London were bought by buy-to-let investors. The 2007 “new development” survey by the Borough Planner produced a similar finding;
 - d) Of the 211 leasehold dwellings on the six Council estates within the target area, over one in three have leaseholders that live elsewhere.

52. The “newcomer” and longer-established populations differ markedly in age profile, as noted above. They also differ in terms of employment status, as shown below.

Table 17: Economic Status by length of residence

	Less than 1 year (100)	1-3 years (172)	Over 3 years (437)
Full time employment	56%	57%	35%
Part time employment	9%	9%	12%
Self-employed	2%	3%	5%
Unemployed and seeking work	7%	3%	4%
Full time student	12%	12%	5%
Looking after the home	13%	13%	14%
Retired	2%	3%	24%
Permanently sick/disabled	-	1%	3%

53. At this stage, it should not be assumed that the two groups consistently hold very different views on the area, the retail offer etc. As noted at paragraph 22 above, the situation seems to be rather more complex. The final report will look at this issue in more detail.

Overall Assessment of results at Interim Report Stage

54. The above interpretations of the main question areas gives some clear leads on the ways in which a majority of residents and visitors are looking for improvement. These can be summarised as follows:-
- (a) the dirty and messy conditions on the main shopping streets, especially around the markets, street traders’ stalls etc;
 - (b) the ‘clutter’ on the streets – waste left out for collection, boxes, signs, street furniture, railings;
 - (c) the shopping offer could be improved with more well-known high street names, more small independent quality shops and fewer shops selling poor quality, cheap goods; and
 - (d) more visible police presence needed: high crime rate, youths etc. hanging around (although it should be noted the concerns here are only registered at a level found across the Borough as a whole, and hence it is not shown as a special priority in Tooting).

Residents also mentioned more disabled/free parking, and further children’s/youth activities, but both only at the 6% level, which again may not be reckoned above the average level in the Borough.

55. Of the above, (a) and (b) are both issues where initial steps can be taken to effect improvements now, without risks of pre-empting more considered actions and policies when more detailed and accurate results are obtained. On (c), whilst a majority of residents and visitors are very or quite satisfied with shopping opportunities, a majority still thought the offer could be improved by more High Street names and a general upmarket move. However there were differences in views of residents and visitors, although a majority of both felt the markets were important, and also regarded the closure of Marks & Spencer as a loss to the overall offer. It is anticipated there may be a clearer picture when the final results and report can be studied: in the meantime consideration has been given to preparatory detailed studies that could be done to provide an early information base on ways in which shopping changes and developments might be progressed.
56. In relation to community safety, again there are differences between residents' and visitors' views on the strength of concerns. Importantly this did not register as a higher priority than the Borough as a whole. For visitors, a more visible police presence was a top priority for improvement, whereas it came lower down on residents' priorities for improvement, possibly reflecting the greater presence of SNTs in residential areas, and also residents' greater confidence and familiarity with the area. Clearer perspectives may be available from workshops and other later results: in any event the results will need careful discussion with the Police and others before proposals for any improvement can be worked up.

Selection of Actions for an Initial Action Plan

57. Accordingly it is felt that major improvements can be put forward now on the issues of environmental improvements and approaches to reduce cluttering and congestion on the pavements. Preparatory work on ways of strengthening the shopping offer can also be put in hand. Finally, initial discussions of ways of improving the fear of crime in the Town Centre can be commenced. Although approvals for some actions on all these points are sought now, it is considered none of the proposals are likely to prove abortive but will at least provide valuable experience, and policies and approaches have been designed to be refined if necessary when the final report and results become available.
58. Taking this approach, officers have considered the four broad headings in paragraph 53 (a) to (d) above and using the survey results and their knowledge of on the ground problems and opportunities in the Town Centre, have drawn up a 22 point initial Action Plan for Tooting.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Street Cleansing: Basic Contractor Performance.

59. There are clearly several aspects to street cleaning, including enforcement of littering penalties, dealing with chewing gum and fast food residues on pavements, washing and jetting of pavements and others. On basic street cleansing, the contractor, Connaught, is required to clean some 227,190 metres

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of street per week, an increase of 57% on the weekly meterage delivered in the previous MRS contract which concluded in 2005. Of the 80,000 increased weekly meterage, around 60% was dedicated to the main roads. Hence there is no reason why the streets should not be kept to an acceptable standard, and whilst there is always a need to ensure the contractor is fulfilling the specification, the situation is not considered by the Director of Leisure and Amenity Services to be significantly below expectations. The contract is, in fact performing reasonably well as a whole. In the annual Quality Performance Report (AQPR) for waste management (Paper No. 08-370, approved 9th June 2008) the cleansing operation in the borough recorded the lowest level of complaint since 2000/01, and the Council showed improvement on its 2007/08 Best Value Indicator BV199. With only 20% of roads rated as unacceptably clean, the 2007/08 result bettered the Government's target of 25% and was an improvement on the previous years 22%. The performance however did not achieve the Council's own performance target of 18%. The contract is being very closely monitored, and officers will continue to work with Connaught to achieve full compliance with the standards. Recent survey results from ENCAMS, as part of the Capital Standards London-wide annual stocktake of performance on street cleanliness, shows the Borough in a good overall position, around the upper quartile boundary, with if anything, evidence that Tooting and Graveney Wards (including all their residential roads) are above the average standard when compared to other Boroughs. However the ENCAMS sample size at ward level is such that there is a limited confidence on Ward results.

60. What may have affected the survey responses negatively rather than low performance are three other possibilities:-
- (a) littering levels have increased, particularly in high footfall/high-use shopping/transport interchange areas;
 - (b) expectations have increased; possibly new residents moving in with higher standards and expectations, coupled with some significant improvements from the 57% specification enhancement leading to good possibilities being translated into much higher expectation than previously; or
 - (c) the perception of respondents were negatively affected by the high visibility of messy on-street conditions – waste awaiting collection, traders rubbish, flytipped waste etc.

At this stage it is not possible to identify any general single cause: flytipping complaint volumes are down (see below). Further analysis at the final report stage may give better information.

Proposed action

61. The Director of Leisure and Amenity Services considers the best course for improvement is to seek to encourage Connaught to deliver the contract specification fully, rather than to enhance contract standards further. It always

requires skill and regular thorough-going monitoring to ensure a contract specification is delivered to as near to 100% as possible. In reality the 100% level proves almost impossible to achieve regularly, but this should be aimed at, through seeking the best from the contractor via regularly ensuring all specified sweeps are being delivered.

Enforcement Action on Littering

62. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council is able to serve Fixed Penalty Notices on individuals who litter the pavements or streets. Officers have already mounted enforcement exercises throughout the borough. The Town Centre, with its exceptionally high footfall, fast food and take-away outlets and transport interchanges, proves a very high intensity littering hotspot. Whilst the aim must be to seek to ameliorate pedestrian behaviour towards less littering, if anything the trend has been for littering to increase. In the new 2005 street sweeping contract for example, main shopping areas were increased to 12 sweeps per day.

Proposed Improvement Action

63. It is planned to organise some enforcement ‘blitzes’ against litterers, and seeking to use publicity on the fines imposed to produce a demonstrative effect to reduce littering in the Town Centre or at least stem the trend for it to increase. Exercises are being planned by DLAS Enforcement Officers, with assistance from the Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams, whose presence is desirable to ensure offenders are made to provide their true name and address on challenge following an offence. Exercises have been planned and organised in September and will be repeated periodically throughout the borough. It is also proposed to survey Town Centre litter bins and replace and enhance these where appropriate as part of an initial “tidy-up” operation – see paragraph 66 below.

Street Washing

64. Undoubtedly the perception of dirty, messy streets in the Town Centre arises in part from conditions in some of the ultra-high footfall areas, both around the Broadway Underground Station where there is a flow of 17 million passenger movements per year, and the Markets and other high use areas around street traders stalls, fast food outlets, bus stops and street corners nearby. Whilst traders and shop-owners can play a part in improvements (see paragraph 74 below) one possible operation to show that a cleaner street scene is being pursued could be to run a pilot scheme for pavement washing.
65. However, washing schemes have been trialled in the past, and results have been of limited success. It is considered they will not remove significant staining but can remove the worst of food residues, detritus and surface waste. They are expensive, and also need careful organisation to ensure the operations are at night so that they do not disrupt pedestrian flow or annoy the pedestrians themselves or create dangerous pavement conditions. Generally, it is not safe to conduct such operations in the winter period (say December to

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March, depending on temperatures) since residual surface water can result in dangerous icy pavements. Despite these drawbacks, there could be a significant payoff if the behaviour of both the pedestrians and shopkeepers could be changed towards generally taking more care and responsibility for cleanliness of their streets.

Proposed Actions

66. The most severe street cleanliness problems are considered to be around and up to the entrances of the Tooting High Road indoor markets and the Broadway Station and its pedestrian island. A map of this area will be on display in the Committee Room. Accordingly it is proposed to initiate a small pilot street washing scheme over a one week period between mid October and the end of November 2008. This could correspond with publicity on the start of a 'Keep Tooting Clean' initiative. This could be coupled with the enhanced enforcement initiatives and a complementary 'Good Neighbour' scheme for shop-owners and traders (see paragraph 74 below). The most effective way to conduct the pilot would be to combine its start with the survey and replacement of litter bins (see paragraph 63 above), taking the opportunity to thoroughly clean the site of each one, which tends to accumulate filth and detritus. Some of the new litter bins will include special compartments for cigarette butts to reduce littering by smokers. The Director of Leisure and Amenity Services estimates the pilot would cost £1,200 for five nights' work, and following evaluation, the benefits of conducting periodic further cleaning operations could be assessed. The one off costs of litter bin replacement/upgrade is estimated at £6,200.

Flytipping

67. Flytipping was mentioned in survey comments on the street conditions, but as stated above, this may have been a by-product of a publicity campaign that had been prominent in the area to reduce flytipping. Certainly flytipping has been a problem in the Tooting Town Centre residential area – particularly the Totterdown Grid/Franciscan Road areas where several years ago a vigorous deterrence campaign was mounted, using street signs as a warning. It is considered that relative to that time, with follow up campaigns and efforts, levels have reduced. Current figures show a one-sixth reduction on the 2005 level (reports down from 379 to 314 since 2005).

Proposed Action

68. The recent campaign shows action is continuing and it is considered a success. It is accepted it should be possible to achieve even more by continually attempting to change the mindset of residents and emphasise the unacceptability of flytipping. Enforcement can continue to play a part, since inevitably speedy removal of flytipping can act as an incentive for some residents to use this as a disposal method if they have no fear of detection and punishment. It is proposed to continue targeted high profile enforcement campaigns in residential areas of the borough.

Collection of Commercial Waste

69. A real opportunity for the improvement of the Town Centre street scene arises though powers available in the London Local Authorities Act 2007 to control on-street commercial waste collection. From 1st April 2009 for the first time London boroughs will have properly tailored powers to specify and enforce the place and times when commercial waste can be placed for collection on the streets. Since much of the problem at the end of each day and evening arises from the unsightly bags of commercial waste placed on street awaiting collection, the chance of constraining this to a coherent regular pattern of minimum duration is a tremendous opportunity to improve the conditions in the area. It is planned to tackle the issue immediately, using the experience as a pilot for a later parallel action in other Town Centres. In due course, given the new powers in the Act, it would be feasible to look at the issue of waste storage in retail/commercial premises, and consider planning policies are introduced to ensure all future such developments in the Borough feature adequate in-built waste storage space to allow effective use of the powers.
70. The Director of Leisure and Amenity Services believes bags of commercial waste awaiting collection are a significant contributory factor to the poor perception of the street scene on the main parades. There are however two complicating factors. Firstly, some traders put out bags of waste onto pavements without making collection arrangements: this is an offence, and requires vigilance and enforcement to minimise. If anything, this enforcement will require strengthening when the new Act becomes operational. Secondly, there is the problem of household waste collection from the numerous residential units above shops on the main parades. Daily collections of this household waste have been operated in Tooting and similar areas and the Director of Leisure and Amenity Services believes the problems and untidiness from waste from these households is therefore being minimised, using the service from Biffa Waste Services, our current contractor.
71. To make the greatest impact with the new powers it will be necessary to discuss possibilities with the several commercial waste contractors covering the Town Centre, to ensure they will be able to achieve collection within specified time bands – these discussions have commenced, and have proved positive, with a number of the contractors having experience of operating such schemes elsewhere. Similarly discussions with shop owners, via the Town Centre Partnership, will be needed to identify times when it would be feasible and reliable to specify collection. Here patterns may vary for different types of outlet e.g. shops normally close around 5.30 p.m., but this would be much before fast food and late opening restaurants close. Hence the Director of Leisure and Amenity Services considers it will be necessary to specify two alternative time bands in some or all areas, if the maximum impact on street tidiness is to be achieved. Furthermore the collection times will need to avoid rush hour periods as far as possible.
72. As well as specifying time bands, the Director of Leisure and Amenity Services considers it will be beneficial to also impose requirements on traders

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under the new Act to place commercial waste more precisely adjacent to their premises: this will clarify waste 'ownership' and simplify the task for collection contractors as much as possible. Penalty levels for all contraventions will need to be established.

Proposed Action

73. The Director of Leisure and Amenity Services proposes to continue to conduct discussions with the commercial waste contractors, and the local shopkeepers etc. via the Town Centre Partnership to identify viable scheme options for a pilot control scheme for Tooting. As this will inevitably be a complex matter, and in any event will ultimately need to cover the whole borough, it is envisaged he will prepare a report to the January 2009 Environment and Leisure OSC, for implementation from 1st April 2009 in Tooting. It is anticipated a period of initial warnings and following that enforcement action will be needed to ensure adherence to the specified times. A map showing the planned restriction areas will be displayed in the Committee Room. Recommendations on penalty levels will be included in the January report.

"Good Neighbour" Scheme for Shops and Traders

74. The survey gave clear evidence that respondents thought that local shops could do more to make Tooting cleaner and less messy. A possibility is to seek to formalise this via an initiative that would seek to both educate and motivate traders to look after and improve their Town Centre. LDA revenue funding (£15,000) has been obtained for the Tooting Business Network to appoint a Tooting Business Champion, and this could be a key milestone in moving towards such a scheme. Discussions have commenced between the chair of the Tooting Business Network and the EDO on taking the initiative forward. While experience has shown that some of the more anti-social shop owners have a poor track record of becoming involved in such schemes (possibly an inevitable by-product of their businesses being marginal and pressurised) there is considerable potential for some significant improvements at least. There is also scope within such a scheme to signpost and promote appropriate training and development opportunities to help smaller companies improve their business performance (customer care, management, marketing window display, IT etc)

Proposed Action

75. At present it is proposed to actively progress discussions with the Town Business Network (TBN). A proposal has been discussed with the Network and it is hoped to formalise the arrangement and for TBN to make an appointment by the end of October 2008, when it is hoped the project will start.

Street Trader Enforcement

76. There are a considerable number of street trading activities in Tooting Town Centre, most of which have the potential to cause some of the problems perceived by the survey respondents. Firstly there are licensed street traders operating stalls of various types in prominent locations, such as outside the Tooting Broadway Station in Letchworth Street, in Vant Road, adjacent to the library etc. Such stalls need to ensure they do not encroach beyond their demarked 'pitch' for which they pay rent, nor store their wares or waste alongside on the public realm. These and various other anti-social practices, including in some cases failure to contain their waste, are adding to the general street clutter and mess. This is clearly the case with some successful stalls, who are in effect overtrading. There is a need to enforce the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant regulations on these licensed traders.
77. A second category of street trading activities are illegal and unlicensed stalls. These can involve attempts to trade from the back of vans parked on the main or adjacent side roads (or both, used in rotation) or may result from shops overtrading with display stalls extending beyond their own street frontage area onto the pavement, without any agreement or license. Finally there is blatant unlicensed street trading of various sorts.
78. A third category of what is effectively street trading, but which is not generally illegal, is legitimate use of shop street frontage areas by the shop owners themselves, who in many cases sub-let them to traders who then sell wares that are different to the main shop itself. Typically these are display stands of jewellery, sunglasses, trinkets and accessories, T-shirts and other cheap goods. Provided the sub-tenants operating such vending stalls are not contravening environmental health legislation or obstructing the highway proper as opposed to using the shop's own frontage, these operations are not illegal, and may prove an attraction to some shoppers. However, along the main frontages of Mitcham Road and Tooting High Road they add to the general problems of street clutter, inhibited pedestrian movements, and commercial waste storage and collection.

Proposed Actions

79. Enforcement action under the licensed street trader and various highways regulations already takes place. The Council monitors its pavements and street traders and it is proposed to ensure effective actions are taken following the survey. However, there are several main ways in which overall efforts on both Council and TfL roads can be coordinated and improved. One problem is that whereas the Council enforces on Garratt Lane/Mitcham Road, TfL enforces along the A24 frontages with separate officers. It is generally accepted that TfL have not had the local knowledge and resources in the past to do this effectively and hence there is a need to enhance their enforcement efforts and standards. Contact has been made with TfL at a high level requesting greater co-operation to enforce to a higher standard in a more co-ordinated way. Further, a pilot 6 month agency arrangement for the Council to operate

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enforcement for TfL has been requested and discussed. A price has been submitted to TfL for this work to be undertaken by the Council, and this will be considered by their Board on 5th November 2008, and if approved, commenced on 1st December 2008. The pilot would operate on the A24 pavements between Lynwood and Coverton Roads. .

80. It should also be possible to raise the enforcement standards on licensed street traders via closer examination of their operations, and discussions and warnings to ensure minimisation of nuisance and overtrading. This would apply for example to traders encroaching beyond their marked pitch areas. Empty crates, cartons and general detritus arising from operations can obstruct and disfigure these extremely busy areas such as the Broadway Station. Enforcement procedures can then be used vigorously where needed, including the use of recently available powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. Finally in the case of the shopkeepers sub-letting their frontage areas to stalls, both close monitoring (to pick up any encroachments) and encouragement via the Good Neighbour scheme can be pursued energetically.

HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS

Clutter, obstruction and illegal signage on Highways

81. In some ways an extension of the street trading issues, a further problem is the cluttering of highways with illegal sign boards (A-boards), pallets, food delivery trays and other substantial items. In some cases illegal advertising boards may be chained to railings or street furniture in an attempt to prevent removal and enforcement. Removal and fines can be imposed on offenders under the highways acts.

Redundant Street Furniture

82. An extension of the previous problem are cases where telephone boxes, free newspaper stands, utility cabinets, and defunct or redundant street furniture are on the street. In addition illegal advertising material may be clamped permanently to street light posts, railings and other street furniture (as opposed to the free-standing A-boards mentioned above). There is an opportunity to remove redundant items (with agreement of the original owners where appropriate), check furniture for duplication, and generally de-clutter the highway to improve pedestrian flow. It should be noted progress on removal of some items (e.g. serviceable telephone kiosks) may be slow, as negotiations with owners can be protracted. Licensing of free newspaper stands is proposed to control the number of these stands in town centres and current legislation allows for these to be removed if they become a hazard or obstruction on the highway. Further, all remaining street furniture etc. should be kept clean and free of graffiti and flyposting. Street surveys aimed at identifying opportunities for de-cluttering in this way can be organised, and can also be used as an opportunity to check if any key signs are needed.

Proposed Actions – Obstructions and Street Furniture

83. As mentioned above, a main requirement is to ensure that TfL works in partnership with the Council to remove obstructions and reduce pavement clutter. The renewed contact and request for agency enforcement work mentioned above on illegal street trading would equally cover these problems and hence will be vigorously pursued with TfL. DTS has carried out an inventory of all the remedial repairs necessary, (such as broken signs, replacing panels on lamp columns etc), from Lynwood Road to Coverton Road on the TfL network and on Mitcham Road – the Broadway to Amen Corner – on the Council’s network. The estimate for these repairs comes to £30,000, split approximately 50% TfL responsibility and 50% WBC responsibility. In addition an estimate was put together for carrying out a complete repainting programme for the same stretch of Mitcham Road, as well as removing any excessive railings, (taken the necessary H&S aspects into consideration). These respective estimates come in at £38,000 and £4,000.

For consistency if the same work had to be done on the A24, the estimate would be similar to the two figures above. It is recommended that as part of a “Keep Tooting Clean” initiative suggested, in paragraph 66 above, both the decluttering and street furniture painting work on the Council’s roads should be progressed, and TfL actively lobbied to support the two complementary projects on the A24. A suitable new colour scheme could be discussed with the Town Centre Partnership.

Street Railings

84. In the 2005 UW study the problem of street railings, particularly on stretches of Mitcham Road, was clearly identified as contributing to pinch points for movements of pedestrians on the pavements around bus stops, busy shop entrances, street furniture etc. Whilst these railings were introduced in the mid 1990s to provide for greater pedestrian safety, initial findings undertaken by DTS indicates that some railings could be safely removed to improve mobility.

Proposed Actions

85. It is planned to carry out a full assessment to identify any suitable lengths of railings that could safely be removed.

Flyposting

86. Whilst not at present particularly evident from the survey responses, flyposting on the main shopping streets has been a recurrent problem. Again it is something that TfL has had a poor enforcement and removal record on. Boarded up or vacant shops and utility cabinets are main targets.

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Proposed Actions

87. Again, improved co-ordination, and if possible an agency agreement although thought unlikely in the medium term, will be sought with TfL, and the Council will maintain its removal programme.

Tree Planting

88. Survey responses showed a fairly neutral level of satisfaction with spaces and greenery in the Town Centre. Tree planting is something generally not appropriate on the main Town Centre streets, nor are there major suitable areas of residential streets that are currently unplanted. Nevertheless there may be some residential streets that lack trees which have wide enough pavements to permit planting, and this would clearly enhance the general environment and ambience.

Proposed Actions

89. Ward Councillors and others will be contacted to identify any suitable streets for additional planting, which can be funded to an extent from existing planting budgets, or, if necessary, by bidding for special funding from the Mayor of London or other sources.

Junction Improvements

90. The main A24/Mitcham Road/Garratt Lane junction could conceivably be improved by examining the phasing of the lights. However with two major traffic arteries crossing, and a high pedestrian footfall as mentioned, (17 million movements per year at the Broadway Station) it may be difficult to achieve significant gains. As TfL is the responsible authority for the traffic lights, and it is known their current priority for junctions improvements is the 2012 Olympic movement plan across London, it is unlikely there can be a high priority given at present to this particular junction. Also finance might be required for a significant improvement scheme, were it feasible. Equally, there are other high priority TfL junctions in the borough, such as the Wandsworth gyratory system. Nevertheless the need for improvement feasibility work should be noted to TfL for action when possible.

Proposed Actions

91. TfL will be notified of the need to examine this junction in due course, acknowledging other priorities may prevent an early feasibility exercise.

Parking

92. The survey results show a degree of dissatisfaction with parking availability for visitors (45%) and residents (35%), and there are other responses rating additional parking as a desirable improvement. This may however not be an untypical level for the Borough. There are no easy options for increasing parking near to the main shopping streets. In theory it would be possible to either identify some 'residents only' bays in residential streets off the main

roads and convert them to dual resident/visitor use or conversely, change dual bays to residents only bays. However at present the Director of Technical Services believes the balance is about right and does not have evidence of significant numbers of unused day time residents bays. Hence any change to dual use of bays would be likely to give rise to vociferous residents' complaints about the reduced capacity. Nevertheless the DTS is happy to investigate any potential pockets of spare capacity that ward members may be aware of. Similarly there may be issues at CPZ boundaries where a Monday-Friday zone abuts a Monday-Saturday zone that may give rise to a particular Saturday parking problem (e.g. Hebdon Road area).

Proposed Actions

93. Any petitions, complaints and suggestions from Ward Councillors will be investigated, In the event that any major development opportunities arise in the longer term, the scope for off-street parking will be examined.

SHOPPING

Development of the Shopping Offer

94. The differences in the visitor/residents views and possible issues are given in paragraphs 32-40 above. Whilst the closure of Marks and Spencer may be colouring some impressions on shopping offer in a negative way there seems a clear desire for more main High Street names and upmarket shops – it is understood that this has been reinforced at the Town Centre workshop held on 10th September. An improvement strategy for the Town Centre is probably the best way of ensuring environmental, transport and planning policies are all used to best effect to improve the general attractiveness for both visitors and more upmarket chains and shops. This can be specifically developed as a consequence of this survey, and will help to ensure the policy set out in the Council's LDF core strategy and the Wandsworth Sustainable Community Strategy for Tooting being one of the Borough's five thriving Town Centres is realised.

Proposed Actions

95. Although the Council itself has limited scope to affect the retail offer it can develop a more commercially aware view of what retail aspirations for Tooting may be achievable and seek to influence potential investors and existing businesses and owners. A shopping 'gap' analysis would identify in broad terms how well the current shopping offer in Tooting serves the retail needs of its changing population. Similar studies have been carried out in Putney (jointly with the Town Centre Partnership Board), Wandsworth and Clapham Junction, to help guide investment decisions. Such a study would provide valuable information on how much potential trade was being lost to Tooting. As well as providing such valuable information to local traders and businesses for the various market sectors, it could also help lever in development investment by pointing up opportunities (the estimated cost is £25,000).

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96. A second and linked initiative would be to take a more pro-active approach to identify likely development opportunities in Tooting. Failure to meet the retail needs of the local population will tend to cause a ‘doughnut’ retail pattern, with more affluent Tooting residents shopping in Wimbledon, Putney, Kingston, Southside, etc. whilst attracting visitors to specialist and low priced shops and the markets. However some development potential for major retail does exist – the site of the markets and Marks and Spencer, for example, could offer redevelopment opportunities. There are also other smaller main road sites that might be redeveloped.
97. It is proposed to initially investigate the key site ownerships and potential Town Centre development sites, with a view to identifying ways the Council might catalyse the process. Given the minimal land holdings by the Council in the area, it has limited scope to stimulate interest, especially in the currently depressed market. It is possible that when the current credit etc problems are resolved market interest may emerge for main Tooting opportunities – alternatively the Council might consider seeking expert outside advice on how it might be able to stimulate interest. The results of the shopping “gap” analysis and the results of analysis of ownerships will enable a decision on the best approach to adopt to be taken in due course.

Boarded up Shops and Property Dealer Activities

98. There are a number of boarded or bricked-up or permanently closed shops on the main Tooting parades that are not trading and therefore have a negative impact on the centre. An example is the parade at 180-218 Upper Tooting Road. Others are trading behind permanent shutters, giving a depressed and blighted air to part of the street scene. It appears there is little direct action the Council can take on these cases. Other developers and property dealing companies are active, although in many ways unhelpful to the strengthening and regeneration of Tooting as a desirable Town Centre, as in the short term they are making no improvements or investment in the premises themselves, merely holding them as development opportunities in the longer term. Very recently it appears the boarded-up Marks and Spencer’s store may shortly reopen as Primark, who have submitted a planning application for a new shopfront there. It is anticipated they would move and expand their existing successful outlet from its current site adjacent to Tooting Market. This itself may catalyse redevelopment interest in this important market area.

Proposed Actions

99. It is proposed to maintain vigilance on derelict or boarded up shops and keep in contact with developers where possible, encouraging investment and improvement. Any planning enforcement on illegal oversized boards or signage and environmental services action on flats over shops or premises in disrepair will be used, although powers are limited in some cases. The opportunities of taking up Town Centre Improvement Scheme loans and grants under the Council’s scheme will also be progressed. The actual appearance of empty buildings can be improved by brightening up hoardings around major projects and working with owners of derelict shops to soften their appearance with some appropriate environmental improvements. A

Community Payback pilot project is being investigated for the 180-218 Upper Tooting Road parade.

Public Toilets

100. Residents and visitors registered their highest dissatisfaction over the provision of public toilets. Currently in the Town Centre area there are three Automatic Public Conveniences located in Garratt Lane, Garratt Terrace and Longmead Road all of which are very close to the A24 junction. Given the difficulty of finding sites on the shopping parades for further conveniences, the main prospect for improvement is via the Council's new Community Toilets scheme, which could have the potential for providing a good number of new sites, including the refurbished Tooting Library, which will be made available under the scheme.

Proposed Action

101. The Director of Leisure and Amenity Services will give priority to identifying and signing up potential Community Toilet locations in Tooting Town Centre. It may be that the Town Centre Partnership will be able to assist in promoting the benefits and publicity on this, especially if the 'Good Neighbour' scheme gains acceptance.

Availability of Seating and Meeting Places

102. High levels of dissatisfaction were registered in the survey on both questions relating to availability of places to meet and rest, and as mentioned these views are stronger than recorded in the UW 2005 survey. As regards seating and small sitting out areas, there were problems with these unless they can be subject to some sort of supervision and control, which would be difficult. Experience has shown such areas do not work well in the shopping centres, and can be magnets for street drinkers to congregate. This was a previous problem at the Tooting Broadway Station area, until the pedestrian area outside the entrance was remodelled to remove seating. The area at the bottom of Church Lane was substantially improved some years ago as a larger scale environmental improvement under an Economic Development Office initiative and has been highly successful, but other opportunities for similar schemes are limited.

Proposed Action

103. Environmental improvement potential will be considered for any major new developments or when opportunities arise. This could be an issue to include in the specification for the development opportunity study recommended in paragraph 97 above.

Community Safety

104. As mentioned, there is a fairly strong concern expressed in the surveys about safety and the visibility of a police presence. Concern was also registered over anti-social behaviour and youths congregating in some localities such as

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around McDonalds. In general these concerns are only registered at average levels for the Borough, although the levels expressed by visitors are higher, and their first priority for improvement was to have more police visibility. The CDRP has already identified Tooting as a priority area, and a proposal for a Night Time Disorder Research Project has been approved. A first obvious priority will be to discuss the results with the Police and the SNTs along with workshop findings as there could be a number of options for trying to identify more precise sources of concern. On business crime, there are options for adapting the Retail Radio scheme in Tooting and discussing the potential for developments such as Alert Box, which has been piloted in Southfields.

Proposed Actions

105. The options for closer monitoring of street crime in the Town Centre will be discussed with Police and with local SNTs. The scope for more intensive or effective use of the various Town Centre CCTV systems (Council and TfL) will also be examined. Discussions will be held on suggestions for developing stronger approaches to business crime, including the scope for strengthening Retail Radio, and whether the Town Centre Partnership has an interest in developing a more formal Crime Reduction Partnership.

106. **A New Tooting Initiative?**

There was a major improvement campaign in Tooting Town Centre in the early-mid 1990s, badged and the “Tooting Initiative”. This major project involved considerable investment, but was mainly focussed on repairing and generally improving the pavements, circulation and on-street safety. It had a special logo that was incorporated into the various project signboards to add coherence and impact to the whole initiative. The issues and solutions at the current time are very different, stemming from Tooting’s own success, its highly constrained infrastructure, and the impact of 50% of the road being managed by TfL. There could however still be great benefits in grouping all action programme activities including the “Keep Tooting Clean” initiative (see paragraph 66) and the “Good Neighbour Scheme” (see paragraph 74), as two early components of a single initiative. This could be particularly helpful in maximising the response of traders to the Good Neighbour Scheme for shops etc., and the public in general on littering and flytipping. An appropriate title for the whole longer-term initiative has been suggested as “Tooting Together” (provisional at present) as a strapline, perhaps coupled on logos, signs and leaflets with the words – “ – working for a Brighter Tooting” (also provisional) thus emphasising the initial clean up and decluttering aspects of the initiative.

107. **Director of Finance comments**

The Director of Finance comments that the proposals such as fly tipping and trade waste liaison that will be met from existing budgets. The Good Neighbour scheme has secured funding from the LDA for the Tooting Business Network to appoint a Tooting Business Champion at a cost of £15,000 and any additional costs will need to be met from within existing approved budgets. The cost of any additional tree planting will not fall as an

additional cost to the council, being funded from within existing budgets or special funding from the Mayor of London or other sources. Should the pilot enforcement arrangement for TfL be approved by TfL, this cost will be fully recovered from them. However, there is no budget provision for the following proposals:

Street Washing – 1 wk pilot	£1,200
New/replacement litter bins	£6,200
Street Clutter removal	£15,000
Shopping gap analysis study	£25,000
Painting Street Furniture etc	£42,000
Total	£89,400

Therefore a budget variation of £89,400 is required in 2008/09, equivalent to £0.74 at Band D council tax. In the event of the additional repainting scheme for the A24 (paragraph 83) not being funded by TfL, an additional budget variation is likely to be required which will be included in a future report to this committee as appropriate.

Conclusion

108. The initial results outlined here show the survey to have been of great value in confirming some of the expected local views about Tooting Town Centre, but giving a complete picture and an indication of action residents and visitors wish to see. An initial comprehensive assessment of possible actions has been compiled to tackle the four major findings – the dirty state of parts of the area, the street clutter and congestion, the need to improve the shopping offer, and concerns about Community Safety.
109. There are a number of immediate actions that can be taken, including a pilot street wash, the launch of a Good Neighbour Scheme for traders and retailers, decluttering and painting street furniture, and consultation on a new scheme to control commercial waste collection. At the same time, discussions on priorities for enhanced community safety, and work to develop the shopping offer can both start. The Action Plan will continue through into 2009, subject to approval and local endorsement, and could be given a strapline or title to encourage local participation – such as “Tooting Together”.

The Town Hall
Wandsworth
SW18 2PU

Gerald Jones
Chief Executive and Director of
Administration (on behalf of all officers)

30th October 2008