1   Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Scrutiny Commission of the history of the tenant decant of the two major estates regeneration schemes in Newham; Carpenters Estate and Caning Town and Custom House Regeneration programmes and outlines the current activity in taking the schemes forward. The Commission is being asked to note the report.

2   Recommendations

That the report be noted as evidence.

3   Background

3.1 Major estates regeneration programmes have been ongoing in the Canning Town and Custom House area since 2001 and on the Carpenters Estate since 2003.
3.2 Consultation on the Regeneration of Canning Town and Custom House commenced in February 2001 culminating in a Masterplan being agreed by Cabinet in July 2003. A Consultation Log detailing all of the consultation is attached at Appendix One. Tenant decant and buyback of leasehold properties commenced in February 2004 following the Newham Cabinet’s agreement of the Residents Charter which gave key additional rights to Council tenants that exceeded Newham’s Housing Allocations scheme.

3.3 The Residents Charter included the following rights:
The Right to Return to or remain in the Canning Town and Custom House area.
A high level of priority under the Choice Based Lettings Policy to bid for an alternative home after emergency rehousing cases.
Priority above all other applicants to be rehoused in the Canning Town and Custom House area.
The Right to continue to under-occupy Council properties.
£2000 compensation per bedroom if under-occupying tenants move to a smaller home.
The Right to Independent advice throughout the regeneration consultation and rehousing process.

3.4 In addition to the Resident’s Charter, Council tenants are entitled to a Statutory Home Loss payment which is currently £6,400 and a disturbance payment of £200/ £250 if over pensionable age. Removals are paid for by the Council and other reasonable disturbance costs will be reimbursed.

3.5 The Council will acquire freehold and leasehold homes under the Compulsory Purchase Code of Compensation. Owners are offered open market value for their property plus a home loss payment of 10% of market value if they are a residential home owner, and 7.5% if they are an investor owner. Reasonable disturbance, legal and surveying fees are paid for the acquisition of the property and the purchase of a replacement property. Home owners are entitled to have an independent Chartered Surveyor (paid for by the Council) to value their property and negotiate the sale and disturbance claim with the Council’s valuer.

3.6 The Carpenters Charter mirror’s the key rights of the Canning Town and Custom House Charter. The Carpenters Charter 2012 also specifies payment levels for carpets and floor coverings.

3.7 Consultation with the residents of Carpenters estate commenced in 2003 and was initially focussed around the future of the three tower blocks and core themes relating to the second Stratford Station entrance, a new square and community hub facility. The decant of James Riley Point commenced in 2005, followed by Lund and Dennison Points and low rise one bedroom flats in Doran Walk in 2009. Consultation entailed home visits to all residents affected and public meetings and drop-in events.

3.8 Rehousing process – following consultation, once an active decant area is designated, the Housing Decant Team arrange to visit all the tenants to
discuss their housing options and housing needs. They are then registered under the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme. Tenants can then bid for available homes advertised on CBL each week. Each tenant has a case officer to support them in their search for alternative housing and assist them with the move and settling into their new home afterwards. Where tenants are older, disabled or have other support needs, additional support is provided by the team including bidding on behalf of the tenant where appropriate. Where tenants' are elderly or disabled or otherwise vulnerable, the Council will pay for internal decoration and other disturbance costs such as carpets and curtains.

3.9 The timescale to decant a block is usually from eighteen months to two years to enable tenants to find a suitable property that meets their needs in the area of their choice. All tenants will be offered a permanent move, if they express an interest in the right to return or would like to move outside Newham and are registered on waiting lists outside Newham they will be rehoused and retain their decant status to give them priority to be rehoused again at a later date.

3.10 There are currently 68 Council tenants with active decant status in the Canning Town and Custom House area and 35 tenants on the Carpenters estate. Decants are predominantly rehoused in relet Council housing stock. In 2018/2019 Newham relet 430 empty properties; in 2019/2020 there have been 195 empty homes this year to date. In the Custom House area, regeneration sites have been identified for Newham’s Affordable Homes programme where the intention is that 50% of homes are at Council tenancy rent levels.

3.11 The decant team keeps a list of all tenants who have expressed an interest in the option of the right to return to new build properties. Both tenants on this list and current and future decants are advised of all new build opportunities and invited to site visits once they can be safely visited. Where tenants express an interest, they will be pre-allocated a property once the homes have been handed over. There is no obligation to accept a property.

3.12 To date 496 tenants have been rehoused under the Canning Town and Custom House Regeneration programme; of these 250 remained in the Canning Town and Custom House area, 190 were rehoused elsewhere in Newham and 56 where rehoused either in Newham’s out borough estates or outside of London. 30 decants were directly rehoused in new build accommodation built as part of the Canning Town Regeneration Programme in the Fife Road Countryside/ Affinity Sutton scheme, English Cities Fund Rathbone Market scheme and Link-City Hallsville Area 7 scheme. A further 8 decants returned to new build homes.

3.13 On the Carpenters decant 289 tenants have been rehoused of which 257 were rehoused from the tower blocks. 206 tenants were rehoused within the Stratford area, this figure includes 25 tenants who were rehoused on the Carpenters estate. 68 households were rehoused elsewhere in Newham and 15 rehoused outside of Newham. 125 tenants were rehoused in houses and
94 households had been over-crowded with 18 households being rehoused in four bedroom accommodation, 2 in five bedroom and 1 in a six bedroom accommodation. The larger units were sourced from Housing’s flat de-conversion scheme, where flats were converted back into houses.

4 Consultation

4.1 Ongoing resident consultation is being undertaken across the Regeneration areas. In Custom House architects are working with the Custom House Steering Group, whose membership includes an elected group of local residents to co-design the proposals for new build housing in the area. A series of workshops for local residents is being undertaken to seek feedback on the proposals. Once the proposals have been developed, a resident’s ballot will be undertaken next spring. Tenants who have moved away from the area and have the right to return are invited to be involved in the development of these proposals.

4.2 On the Carpenters estate the Mayor wishes to progress working in co-partnership with residents through a series of workshops to identify how Carpenters Estate might deliver benefits for the local community and for those in housing need. The membership of the residents steering group has been refreshed and rebalanced to reflect the occupancy of different tenures of residents on the estate and to include former tenants with the Right to Return who are being invited to participate in developing the proposals. A ballot is due to be held next Spring. Tenants and home-owners can still be rehoused or sell their property back to the Council if they wish to do so; or they can await the outcome of the consultation as to whether their home will be directly affected by the proposals.

5 Implications

5.1 The tenant decant is funded from the Housing Capital Programme.

5.2 Secure tenants are offered suitable alternative accommodation under the Housing Act 1985. The Resident’s Charter offers an enhancement of the obligations under this legislation. It also offers enhancements to the Council’s Allocations Scheme.

5.3 Equalities – analysis of gender, ethnicity, age and disability has been undertaken throughout the decant and consultation process. This data is available at Ward level rather than on the boundaries of the Regeneration sites. Data shows that there is a wide age range from 25-85+. In the over 50’s group there is a higher proportion of women to men. There are no groups that are more proportionately affected by the Regeneration proposals than others. Site assembly will entail one to one interaction with all affected residents.
Individual needs for certain groups of people such as older or disabled residents will receive a higher level of support and assistance. The feedback received at consultation workshops also informs the type of housing required for different groups within the community.

6 Background Information used in the preparation of this report

6.1 Canning Town and Custom House Residents Charter -

6.2 The Carpenters Resident’s Charter -
https://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/ServiceChild/The-Carpenters-Estate-Stratford.aspx#CarpentersResidentsCharter