



2008 - 2009  
Reducing Re-offending  
2003 - 2008  
Winner of 6 previous  
Beacon Awards



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# Opinions Count: Increasing the Effectiveness of the EIA Scoping Process

A Case Study from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Peter Cole





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# *Setting the Scene*



**Tight Timescale**



**Scoping Report Prepared**



**5 Week Turnaround**



11/02/10



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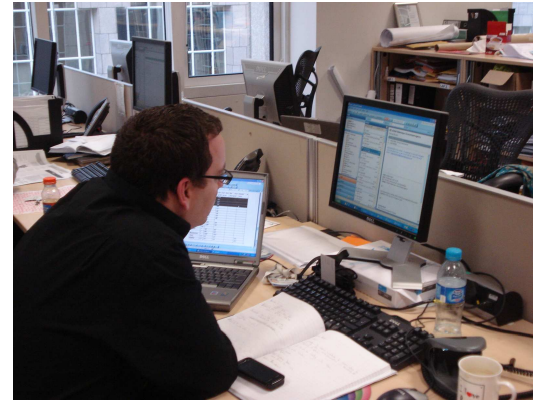


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## 5 Weeks Later

- No response?
- Generic Response bearing little relation to submitted Scoping Report?



With 2 months left until application submission, how do you respond?





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# *Why Does This Happen?*

- No EIA Officer
- EHO Workloads
- Generic Responses Infrequently Updated
- Lack of Contact from Applicant Pre-Scoping Report Submission
- Tight timescales
- Input from external consultees often generic (or even contradictory)



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# *Tower Hamlets Approach*

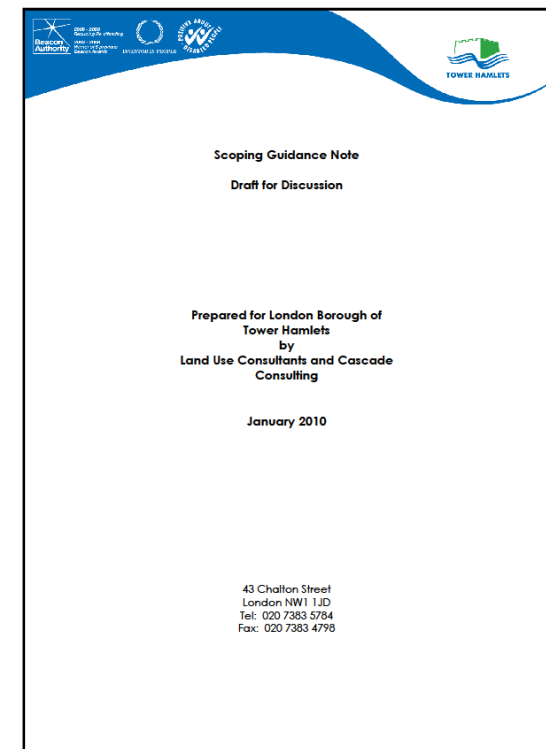
Pro-active approach to Opinions

## **EIA Guidance Document**

Residing online within 'Pre-Application Advice' on  
Tower Hamlets Planning Website (web link)

[http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/451-500/485\\_planning\\_applications.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/451-500/485_planning_applications.aspx)

Input from EIA Practitioners, Council Planners and  
Technical Officers and Statutory Environmental  
Bodies



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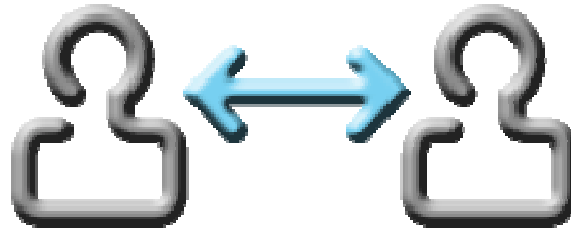
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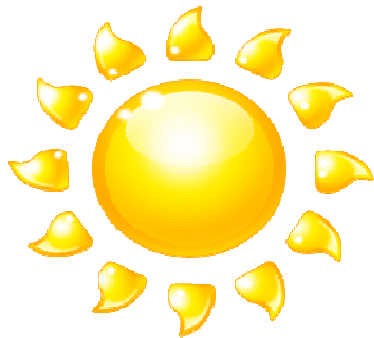
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Not compulsory, but serves as a trigger for negotiation



Allows us to highlight key issues and 'peculiarities' in suggested methodology





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## Scoping Opinion Template

Danger of producing another 'generic' document, however:

- Technical steer and subsequent negotiation should already have occurred
- Ensures timely response and no surprises

Template itself focuses on providing details of any deviation from guidance (agreed or not agreed) and summarising consultee comments





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# *In Summary*

- Ineffective Scoping was leading to increased cost and delay **post-submission**
- Front-loaded technical guidance and encouraged communication **before** Scoping Report submitted
- Achieve a more tailored and timely Scoping Opinion service (hopefully!)







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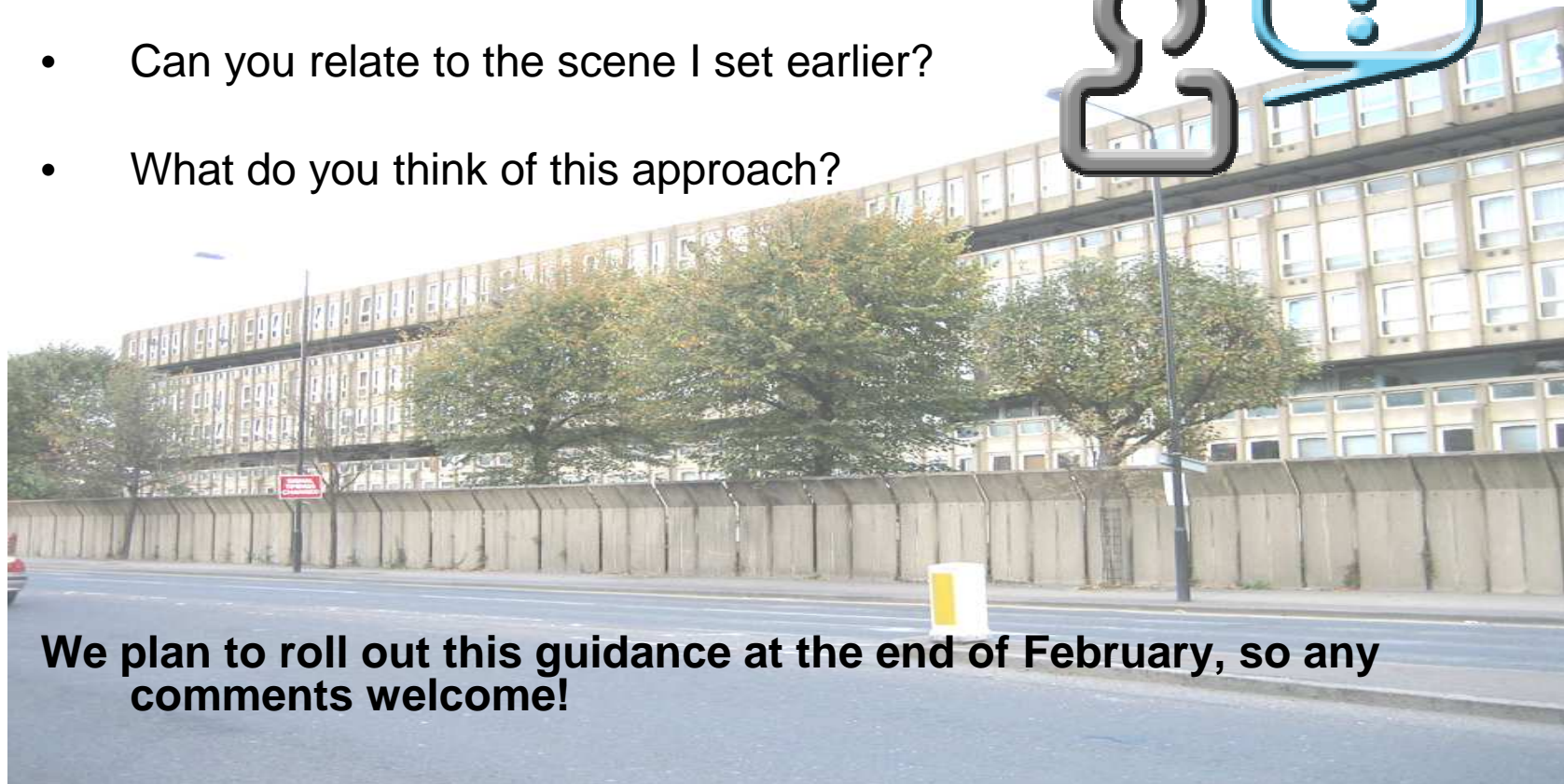


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# Questions for you....

- Can you relate to the scene I set earlier?
- What do you think of this approach?



**We plan to roll out this guidance at the end of February, so any comments welcome!**