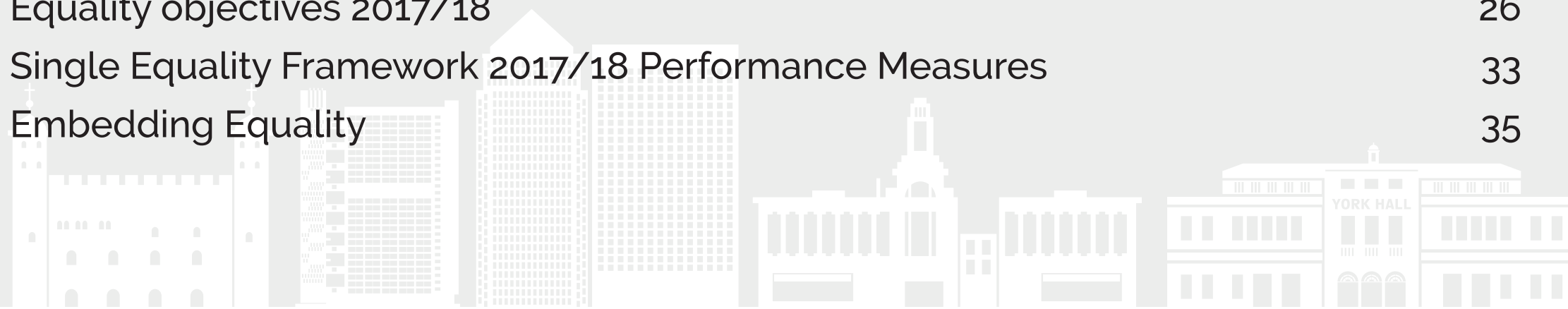


Tower Hamlets Single Equality Framework 2017-18



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Foreword

Tower Hamlets is a vibrant place built on a history of inclusion and a diversity of communities. Thousands of people are attracted to our borough because we are diverse, modern and exciting with a global economy that contributes significantly to wider London life. However, there underlying inequalities still persist. Tower Hamlets has the highest levels of pensioner and child poverty in the country; one in six households have an average income of less than £15,000 and over 20% of families live in overcrowded housing. On top of this the council continues to face budget pressures.

As a council we are committed to addressing inequality wherever we find it and this framework sets out how we intend to achieve that. The actions in this plan reflect the analysis we have undertaken to understand current need and what more we need to do to ensure that all residents have access to excellent services and aspirational opportunities.

This plan continues to build on the things we have already achieved, for example increasing the amount of new wheelchair accessible homes in the borough, an action plan to support the Somali community to better access council services and support for our LGBT staff resulting in the council being ranked as London's most inclusive local authority in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

Through this framework and our overall Strategic Plan we will ensure that tackling inequality, fostering cohesion and improving outcomes for all our residents remain at the core of the services we deliver.



John Biggs

Mayor of Tower Hamlets



Introduction

This document sets out the council's equality priorities for 2017/18. This includes the council's approach to promoting equality and cohesion, re-iterates our commitment to equality and diversity, provides the context for our equality priorities and highlights key achievements over the past year.

The Single Equality Framework (SEF) is made up of our:

- key activities that the council will deliver to improve equality related outcomes for local residents
- what the council will do as an organisation to promote equality as an employer and through the goods and services that are purchased and commissioned, and
- the measures that the council will take to improve its equality practice across the organisation.
- the performance measures that will be used to monitor progress

The Framework brings together the Borough Equality Assessment, which is an account of inequality in the borough, and the policy and service delivery responses to these challenges that make up the Single Equality Framework Action Plan.

The SEF is embedded within the council's Strategic Plan to ensure equality is a driver of the council's strategic approach to the delivery of services. The SEF takes forward the principles laid out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people. It sets out the council's equality objectives and priorities and builds on the council's strong record of embedding diversity and equality in everything we do.



Background

Housing



Tower Hamlets has the highest level of child and pensioner poverty in England affecting **39.3% of children** in the borough **49.7% of older people**. There are shortages in affordable housing, high rates of unemployment and low healthy life expectancy which all affect the life chances and potential of many residents in the borough. Despite having an economy worth over £36 billion Tower Hamlets is the **10th most deprived local area** in England according to the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Additionally, one in six households in the borough have an average income of **less than £15,000** and half of all households in the borough have an average income of **less than £30,000**.

Budget Pressures



It is also important to recognise the challenging financial climate the council is currently facing. Ongoing reductions in central government funding have had a significant effect on the resources available to councils and other local public sector organisations to tackle inequality. Since 2010 the council has had to **save £138.3m from its annual budget** and now the council has to save a **further £58m by 2020**.

Population



At the same time, the council has to manage growing demand for services as the population increases. Additionally, the government's programme of welfare reform is having an impact on many in the borough. This includes residents affected by a decline in income, reflected in a rise in the number of people **seeking advice in relation to their debts** and **increased rates of homelessness**. The convergence of these issues increase the likelihood of difficulties in tackling inequality.

The council has a strong track record of working with our partners to mitigate the impact of deprivation and to improve outcomes for local people. In 2014 we were re-assessed as 'excellent' for the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) and this document includes our more recent local achievements in continuing to build on that assessment.

Leadership and Vision

The Mayor and his Cabinet have set out priorities for their administration which focus on tackling inequality, protecting vulnerable residents and ensuring Tower Hamlets is a great place to live and work. The commitment to equality is further reflected in the Mayor retaining the lead role for equality within his portfolio.

The Community Plan sets out the vision and aspirations for the borough. The plan was refreshed in 2015 with the core themes of:

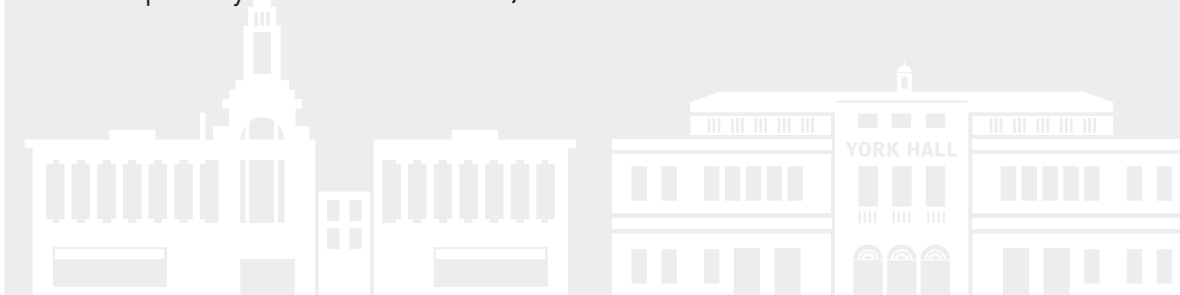
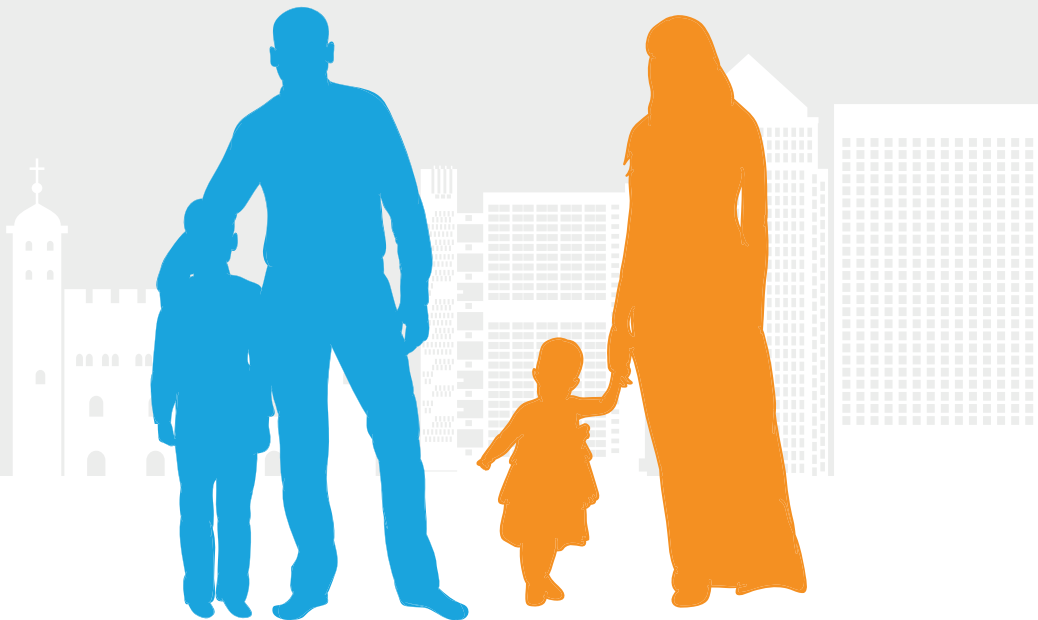
- **great place to live**
- **a fair and prosperous community**
- **a safe and cohesive community**
- **a healthy and supportive community.**

In addition, there is a focus on how the council will further the aims of One Tower Hamlets – a more equal and cohesive borough with strong community leadership.

The plan also identifies some long term and emerging challenges:

- persistent low employment levels, particularly for women and some ethnic minorities;
- high levels of child and pensioner poverty and the impact of welfare benefit cuts on an already deprived community;
- low levels of healthy life expectancy;
- a further wave of austerity and public sector cuts ushered in by the Comprehensive Spending Review and a consequent Medium Term Financial Strategy savings target of £58 million over the next 3 years.

The Strategic Plan takes the Community Plan forward by further defining the outcomes and developing the business plan of the council. The priority outcomes for 2017/18 are set out below.



Priority Outcomes

Creating opportunity by supporting aspiration and tackling poverty

- a dynamic local economy, with high levels of growth that is shared by residents
- residents in good quality, well-paid jobs
- children get the best start in life and young people realise their potential
- people are healthy and independent for longer
- gaps in inequality have reduced and diversity is embraced

Creating and maintaining a vibrant, successful place

- an improved local environment
- people feel safe and places have less crime and anti-social behaviour
- better quality homes for all
- communities are engaged, resilient and cohesive



Enabling Objective

- an enabling and efficient council



The SEF is embedded in the Strategic Plan through the inclusion of diversity and equality activities across all outcome areas. There is a dedicated priority 'Gaps in inequality have reduced and diversity is embraced'. This approach helps to embed and promote equality activity as business as usual across the organisation. Within the organisation the Tower Hamlets Equalities Steering Group (THESG) have responsibility for the delivery of the SEF, including the delivery of the embedded Strategic Plan equality objectives (Section 8).

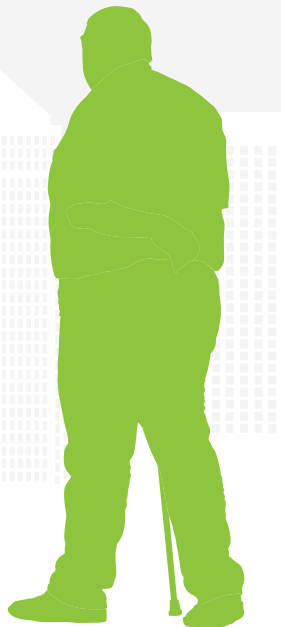
The SEF is supported by council processes to ensure that 'due regard' is demonstrated. For example, equality analysis is required for any proposed service changes and /or savings proposal in order to consider and identify potential impacts on equality groups and mitigate against them. Equality priorities and the related measures are included in the council's Performance Management Framework and these include:

- priorities where the primary intention is to reduce inequality between people; and
- priorities that relate to an outcome where we know that there are significant inequalities between different groups and where we will seek to narrow the gap.

Valuing Diversity: The council's policy statement on equality and diversity

Valuing diversity is one of the four core values of the council. We will promote equality and diversity in everything we do to improve the quality of life for everyone living, working and visiting Tower Hamlets. The borough's diversity is one of its greatest strengths and assets.

The council's commitment is supported by a legal duty to have due regard to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups. This provides an important driver to help further embed equality and diversity in the culture of the organisation. The council believes that it has a strong moral and social duty to do everything it can to challenge prejudice and discrimination and promote better understanding and respect. At the same time the council recognises that discrimination takes place and tensions can sometimes exist between different communities.



As a service provider the council will:

- advance equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination in the planning and delivery of our services in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, health and income status. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships;
- promote good relations between communities and address negative stereotyping of any groups;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
- tackle harassment relating to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, health and income status and marriage and civil partnership status.

As an employer the council will:

- develop, review and promote policies and practices that ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for our workforce in all areas of employment (including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, disciplinary and retirement); and
- ensure that the council's workforce serves and represents the diverse nature of the borough.

Key equality achievements in 2016/17

Some of the key achievements related to equality priorities over the past year include:

One Tower Hamlets

Somali Task Force

The Somali Task Force was established by the Mayor and his Cabinet to review the issues faced by the Somali Community. This is linked to the wider context of funding reductions that are driving the mainstreaming of services and the need to understand the impact on equality groups as changes are made. The Somali Task Force concluded the review phase of its work culminating in a report to Cabinet in November 2016 and a launch event was held to disseminate the findings of the report to the Somali community in February 2017.

The Task Force reviewed areas where outcomes for Somali residents are generally lower than for other groups to identify ways to improve. The Task Force covered health and social care needs, youth provision and community safety, employment and educational attainment, housing and welfare reform. The action plan includes twenty-three recommendations across three key themes:

- Improving access to services
- Skills development and job support
- Capacity building and development

A Somali Reference Group, which includes all members who participated and supported the review and is open to all community members, has been created to ensure residents have a role in supporting and monitoring the delivery of the activities.

Ranked 43 in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

The council's effort to provide an inclusive workplace for its LGBT staff was recognised in January 2017. The council features in the Stonewall Top 100 Employers 2017 and is ranked as the top Local Authority in London. Commendation was given on the council's community engagement work with through the council's commissioned LGBT Community Forum, run by East London Out Project (ELOP).

Leadership and engagement with Mental Health issues

One in four people are expected to have a mental health difficulty at some point in their lives and the figure is one in six people at any given time. The ability to cope with difficulties and negative experiences is more likely to be challenged in the context of deprivation and vulnerability. We know that 5.4% of the working age population are long term unemployed and on Employment Support Allowance and about 3% are claims related to mental health and behavioural disorders. This is higher than for example the Jobseeker Allowance cohort of 1.8% of the working age population.

In February 2017 the Council marked the national Time to Talk Day with a 'tea and talk' event for staff, which allowed them to come along, have a 'cuppa and some cake' and talk about mental health. Staff could also learn what support the Council provides for mental health issues, which was set out in a flyer and suggestions were taken as to how that support could be further improved. This followed on from an article on the intranet last year about the support available for staff within regards to mental health issues.



Local Voices

The Local Voices project is the council's key mechanism for engaging, connecting and consulting with disabled people (including people with a long-term health condition) living, working or studying in Tower Hamlets. The project is funded and supported by the council and led by an independent steering group of local disabled people and facilitated and supported by Real - the borough's user-led organisation of disabled people.

The Local Voices steering group, in partnership with the council agreed the areas of work that should be prioritised during its 2016 programme. This was based on feedback from local disabled people and related service providers. The two key themes were 'access and transport' and 'social care'. In addition two emerging themes were 'housing' and 'digital inclusion'. Local Voices utilised a variety of methods to gather the voice of local disabled people and carers, Raise awareness of the issues with policy and decision makers and work with partners to address the issues.

Access and transport steering group (a part of the Local Voices community engagement programme)

The steering group continued to build on the previous year's outcomes which included lobbying for better access to public transport for disabled people, influencing training programmes for Transport for London staff (and other relevant transport providers) on access and disability awareness. As well as maintaining a dedicated incident reporting service for public transport issues.

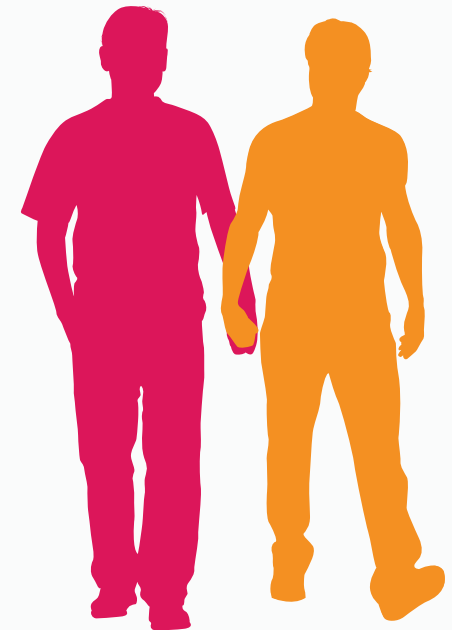
Local Voices engagement with DLR has resulted in agreed changes including upgrading emergency points; turning them into general help points that will have a video element. In addition, an audit of DLR signage is underway including a review of gap widths between platform and trains.

LGBT Arts & Events Programme

In 2016, East London Out Project (ELOP) was commissioned to deliver a programme of events on behalf of the LGBT community in Tower Hamlets. The programme is required to offer a range of community arts and cultural based awareness events and activities which promote the One Tower Hamlets principles across the borough. The timeframe for delivery is 2016 to 2018. Specifically, the organisation is required to:

- Identify local LGBT groups and to organise events and work with them to effectively contribute to key events including LGBT History Month, London Pride and IDAHO;
- Work with the council and its partners, including the Police and commissioned services such as the Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum, to promote key services for the LGBT community;
- Produce and distribute publicity material for events;
- Produce a report showing activities and outcomes for the Commissioners.

The council and the forum's work on LGBT community engagement was commended by Stonewall as part of the Workplace Equality Index. The council featured in the Times as an example of best practice for engaging with the local LGBT community.



A great place to live

Project 120 – Housing / Disability

There are 121 no of households on the Accessible Housing Register (AHR) as requiring wheelchair accessible homes. Project 120 was started to tackle this areas of need and includes working with the Registered Providers, Developers and the GLA to ensure new homes being built for wheelchair users are well designed and meet the various size and location requirements of the families on the waiting list.

At December 2016, 46 homes, which represent 7% of all affordable homes delivered, were wheelchair accessible or future-adaptable. 26 new homes have also been let to applicants requiring wheelchair accessible homes, on track to reach the Councils target of 30 per annum. The Lettings Occupational Therapists carry out and complete satisfaction surveys post occupancy of tenants into the new build properties. Of the surveys carried out the 84% of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied.

"I now feel like part of the family, I can now make myself and others a cup of tea in the morning, instead of feeling like an invalid stuck in my room unless someone came to help me into the living room".

(38 year old resident, living with her family, and on the waiting list for 4 years)



A fair and prosperous community

Employment Disability

In 2016/17 the employment service have trained 20 adults with learning disabilities on the pre-apprenticeship programme and further supported 10 people with (declared) disabilities into employment in 16/17. Additionally, through the Mainstream Grants process, Economic Development assists Third Sector Organisations that provide specific support to residents with mental health issues and disabilities.

In order to build on their work further, the Apprenticeship, Training & Skills team have worked with colleagues in Adult Social Care to develop the Social Impact Bond. This will support the provision of work experience programmes for Adults with Learning Disabilities. An offer in principle has been received with details to be confirmed.

Case Study:

P is 24 years old and had not worked since leaving college at 16. He undertook a variety of training with the Tower Project who supported him to apply for a pre-apprenticeship programme with the Council. P went on to successfully gain a place and is a current apprentice on the LBTH apprenticeship programme.

The service continues to liaise with the Tower Project to ensure we understand P's particular support needs and work towards securing employment in the labour market.



Employment – BME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Women

It is estimated that around 41 per cent of working age BME women were in employment in Tower Hamlets - 35 percentage points lower than the employment rate for White women (76 per cent), and 28 points lower than the rate for BME men (69 per cent). Employment rates have increased across all groups (BME women, BME men, White women and White men). This has improved from 29 in 2012 but there is more to do.

The issue is complex, with many Women from BME backgrounds being further away from the labour market than the majority of local residents – in some cases there may be language barriers, issues concerning a lack of skills and training and in others a lack of confidence as a result of never having engaged with the labour market. Consequently a range of initiatives have been put in place to address the journey back to work. Targeted outreach/engagement has increased a great deal, often in locations where women / mothers will be engaged, these include JCP services, Ideas Stores, Children's Centres, with Housing Options and Central Benefits.

Once engagement has occurred, referrals are made to the Integrated Employment Service, which is particularly, beneficial for BME Women and those furthest from the labour market as it identifies individualised pathways from inactivity to work (including training and skills, job preparation, Job Centre Plus). This approach is designed to bring the most appropriate partners to work with the customer making the journey easy to navigate and more efficient leading to a higher number of job starts.

As a result of the above outreach and integrated service approach, both the number of registrations (of the Integrated Employment Service) and job starts for BME Women have all improved since 2015. In 2016 there were 604 IES registrations from BME Women (44% of all registrations) with 126 job starts (38 % of all job starts). In 2015 there were 423 registrations from BME Women and 80 jobs starts respectively). An example of the service's successful work with residents is provided below:

Case Study:

B had not worked since having children and is the main carer of 2 teenage boys. She was looking for part – time work because she was worried about how she could continue to look after her sons. She did not feel very confident and was encouraged to take up voluntary positions to build her confidence and develop her social skills with people outside of her immediate social circle.

B attended her voluntary work placement weekly, sometimes twice weekly and a referral was made to the pre-employment team for further group based training (Interview preparation, communicating effectively and customer service workshops). This was very motivational and B was assisted to develop a new CV and attended sessions on how to present herself to others and to search effectively for work. She was supported in applying for a barista role and was successful.

She was concerned about the impact on the support she gets through benefits and the services carried out a better off assessment which showed that the job would genuinely improve her income. B has now started work and is very happy in her new role.

A safe and cohesive community

Creating gender-neutral toilets in Idea Stores and libraries

All Idea Stores and libraries used to have male, female or wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets. There has been growing national awareness about transgender need and the bullying and harassment trans people face in daily life and basic access to services including access to toilets and changing rooms. Idea Stores have acted proactively to implement a scheme of gender neutral toilets and changing rooms which are in place at all our sites since 2016.

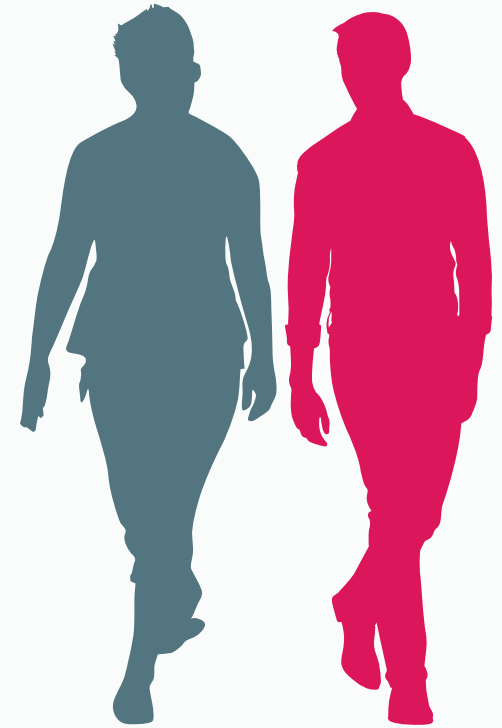
"It is great that you provide gender neutral toilet facilities at the Idea Store. As a non-binary trans person it makes me feel like I am welcome in the space. Thank you."

(Feedback from a resident who lives in Bow)

Working with Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community to raise awareness about Domestic Violence

About 25% of LGBT people suffer through violent or threatening relationships with partners or ex-partners which is similar to rates of domestic abuse in heterosexual couples. Research shows that almost half (49%) of all gay and bisexual men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16.

The Domestic Violence Hate Crime (DVHC) team worked with ELOP and the Police during the White Ribbon and 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence campaigns to raise awareness of DV in LGBT relationships via a training session with partners and outreach work at social venues across the borough. A same sex DV trained Caseworker is available this year and is supporting male victims of DV. The aim is to acknowledge same sex DV and to encourage male victims to come forward. There has been improved hate crime and DV/MARAC data collection allowing for identification of any equality gaps so to improve direction of service provision. Staff from the DVHCT now attend the LGBT DV Forum that monitors LGBT service provisions and seeks to find ways to embed this into all practice across the borough.



Delivery of the partnership's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) programme

The council continues to recruit VAWG Champions from organisations across the borough with a representation of all the protected characteristics. The aim of VAWG Champions is to dramatically improve responses to VAWG. To facilitate disclosures of abuse and tackle all forms of VAWG, it is vital that professionals have an understanding of the issues and Champions are crucial to assisting with reaching a wider audience. An example of the VAWG programme and its champions' impact is proved below.

One of the council's VAWG Champions is from City Gateway Women's Project, an organisation working to transform the lives of women in our community who are most impacted by social and economic inequality and exclusion, including those from BME backgrounds. In almost two years of being a VAWG Champion, she has dealt with at least 30 disclosures of VAWG and delivered awareness raising training to 30 members of staff across the organisation. She has also coordinated and facilitated numerous VAWG related workshops for the clients with whom she works. Other VAWG Champions have produced similar results and say "I think that the training was a great investment" and "the day has had a profound impact on me personally and was really well delivered".

Training Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) staff on identifying and dealing with homophobic hate crime

In response to an increase in hate crimes and under reporting of homophobic hate crime, training was delivered to approximately 300 THH staff. Participants were mainly frontline officers (Caretakers/ Team Leaders, and Housing Officers). The training covered all strands of hate crime including Homophobic crime. The training identified marginalised and hard to reach groups such as LGBT communities, Disabled, BME, Refugees, etc. and the underreporting by these groups and barriers they faced when accessing support services.

It provided best practice guidelines when supporting members of these communities. It also examined the role of RSLs, and their responsibilities and duties under the Equality Act in relation to those with protected characteristics. The training explored enforcement tools available to RSLs such as ABC's and ASBOs, warning letters, injunctions, Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP), Notice of Possession Proceedings (NOPP), Demotion Orders, Parenting Orders, Cautions, arrest and prosecutions.

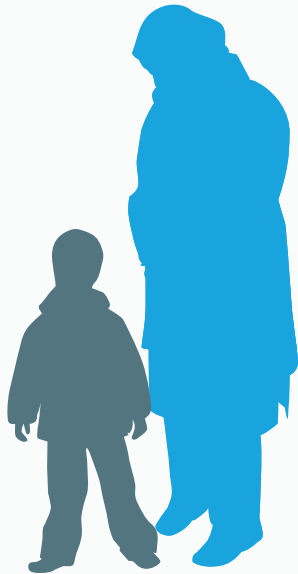
Since the training there has been an increase in the numbers of homophobic referrals to the monthly Hate Incident Panel (HIP). Latest HIP monitoring reports indicates that majority of the referrals reviewed at the panel from the year 1st April 2016 – 31st January 2017 were racial harassment cases, followed by homophobic cases. The same report also indicates that approximately 10 enforcement actions were successfully taken against identified perpetrators of homophobic hate crimes.

A healthy and supportive community

Tackling excess weight in children

Public Health Children's Team worked with local parents and primary schools to tackle obesity levels through the 'primary school neighbourhood pathfinders project. Local communities and stakeholders were engaged to explore reasons and solutions as to the high levels of obesity in primary school aged children, particularly Bangladeshi boys within two areas with particularly poor health outcomes.

- Cubitt Town Primary School on the Isle of Dogs and
- Marner Primary School in Bow.



This exercise involved community asset mapping with local parents and stakeholders to identify how to support children becoming more physically active as well as accessing healthier food. Findings included:

- Identifying unused land to develop into a play area
- Setting up a food co-op
- Raising awareness around air quality and its impacts on health including walking or cycling to school, and
- Looking at safe walking routes.

Early successes include:

- establishment of a fresh fruit and vegetable cooperative operated by volunteer parents
- 9 British Bangladeshi mothers trained as sailing leaders to enable community use of a water sports centre which was perceived as being not for everyone

- engagement of pupils, teachers and parents in measurement of air pollution levels around both schools, awareness raising around the impact of air pollution on health and measures that can be taken including identification of 'safer routes' to school
- a 16% increase in travelling to school by sustainable means (walking, cycling, scooting) from 55% to 71% in Marner School
- Identification of a piece of unused land near Marner School that could be redeveloped as a play area
- a 'discovery walking group' where parents visit and find out about exciting local spaces such as the Olympic Park and come back as communication champions to encourage wider use
- Cubitt Town school secured a £10,000 award to work with the Healthy London Partnership on their Healthy Steps programme on reducing obesity in the community.

Improve learning disability and people in need of mental health services access to health services

One of the Adult Social Care priorities have been to improve care and support for vulnerable adults and their carers, integrating with health and promoting independence and keeping people safe from abuse.

The council and the Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (THCCG) work closely together, through joint commissioning, to tackle raising awareness about dementia and taking preventative action and raise the profile of the support available in the community. A significant number of factors that affect a person's health involve the social and economic circumstances of individuals. In terms of health inequalities, there are several risk factors for common mental health disorders that are more prevalent in Tower Hamlets in comparison to the levels in London and England.

The council and THCCG commission the Alzheimer's Society to run a BME outreach service to engage with people from a BME background to raise awareness of dementia which is under-diagnosed. Work continues with the wider BME communities along with Bangladeshi and Somali communities. The Alzheimer's society attended an interfaith event to raise awareness about dementia and made links with a range of faith groups including Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Muslim representatives. They also went to the Chinese Association in Tower Hamlets to discuss early signs of dementia and what to do, as well awareness raising sessions to housing officers and staff at Poplar Harca. Presentations were also delivered at a primary school.

In one quarter, they reached out to 170 people in the community through information stalls at events and stalls. These were held during the summer at Idea Store Whitechapel, Royal London Hospital, Mile End Hospital and Crisp Street Idea Store. The Alzheimer's Society have also set up YouTube videos to and offer training to professionals to raise awareness of Dementia and help their families. They run a series of Dementia cafes for service users and their carers. An example of a successful intervention made by the Alzheimer's Society is provided below:

Case Study:

Mr A – a 77 year old Somali speaking gentleman was diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia, which impacts on all areas of his daily life and independence. He was referred to the Alzheimer's Society but his daughter had said that they did not need any support.

Staff at Alzheimer's Society recognised from experience, that people from BME backgrounds are not always keen to share information about the difficulties they are faced with, and so encouraged them to attend a meeting where they could get to know more about services available.

As a result of that the family identified that Mr A needed help with attending the dementia café and Tower Hamlets lunch clubs as he is unable to travel by himself. This was resolved and Mr A continues to live independently in the community.

Cohesion – fostering good relation between local people

The Community Plan outlines our vision for improving the lives of all residents that live and work in the borough, and one of the cross cutting priorities is to improve cohesion.

Cohesion Co-Production Training and Workshops

In February 2017, the council held workshops with the borough's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and partners to consider community cohesion and what outcomes we can achieve in relation to it. This involved a range of local partners from across different public and VCS roles, as well as faith and belief organisations and educational institutions. In addition to this, training was provided on co-producing future services with the community.

More than 100 people participated and were asked the following questions:

- what are the key community cohesion outcomes?
- how can we work together to build cohesion?
- what methods can we use to measure success?

Based on the finding of the workshops the council is developing tenders to deliver against the outcomes identified. These contracts which will be commencing delivery as of September 2017 have generated strong interest from within the community with well over 100 expressions of interest and strong attendance at suppliers briefing events.

Cohesion Working Group

The borough has established a Cohesion Working Group consisting of professionals from across agencies whose work focuses on cohesion. It seeks to ensure that the borough's work on cohesion is well informed, coordinated and supported. The group will be playing a key role in the development of a cohesion strategy for the borough and feeding in cohesion considerations in the delivery of services.

Cohesion and new Developments

Work is currently being undertaken for each of the pilot s106 funded projects in Mile End and Aldgate East to inform the commissioning specification for this work. This is a new and innovative approach to funding cohesion activities and is one of only a few examples in the country. The programme will have elements of co-production in its development and delivery and will have a strong focus on achieving robust outcomes.

Cohesion offer in schools

In order to promote community cohesion amongst young people in schools, the HEC Global Learning Centre is supporting a range of work, including:

- Cohesion and Equalities Lesson Plans which will allow young people to critically reflect and think about cohesion, equalities and discrimination and how this affects their daily lives
- Cohesion and Equalities 'Train the Trainer' Training Materials for School Councils
- Cohesion and Equalities 'Train the Trainer' training to pupils and staff and facilitation of cohesion projects in the first year
- Delivery of a large schools cohesion event: showcasing a number of school cohesion projects

Community Engagement Strategy

The council is also developing a Community Engagement Strategy. The strategy will set out how we will engage and empower the local community to better meet local needs and embed opportunities for participation. It will aim to ensure that the council's engagement work is informed by the needs and the inequalities particular communities may face. The strategy will focus on a number of areas including improving digital inclusion; as the council becomes more digital it is essential that work is undertaken to improve digital skills and access, particularly among community groups that are often excluded. The strategy will also help to foster cohesion between different parts of the community by encouraging sustainable interactions with wider sections of the community.

The Borough Equality Assessment for 2017/18

The Borough Equality Assessment is a review of the outcomes that the council is committed to achieving and what this means for different equality groups; where there is data available.

A summary of the assessment is set out below.

Strategic Plan priority/ Protected characteristic	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion and belief	Gender reassignment	Sexual orientation	Pregnancy and maternity
1.2 Residents in good quality and well-paid jobs	Address high levels of pensioner poverty	Increase employment levels amongst residents with disabilities	Increase employment levels amongst working age women	Increase employment levels amongst Somali and Bangladeshi residents	Increase employment levels amongst Muslim residents			
	Increase employment rates for people aged 50+							
	Address high levels of child poverty							

Strategic Plan priority/ Protected characteristic	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion and belief	Gender reassignment	Sexual orientation	Pregnancy and maternity
1.3 Children get the best start in life and young people realise their potential	Reduce number of NEET (Compared to London / England) - Including unknown cohort		Improve attainment for boys at GCSE (Reduce attainment gap between girls and boys)	Reduce number of White British NEET (Compared to London / England)		Reduce transphobia in schools and promote understanding	Reduce homophobia in schools and promote understanding	
	Reduce the number of Looked After Children who are NEET		Improve White British attainment at GCSE					



Strategic Plan priority/ Protected characteristic	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion and belief	Gender reassignment	Sexual orientation	Pregnancy and maternity
<p>1.4 People are healthy and independent for longer</p>	<p>Reduce childhood obesity</p>	<p>Improve access to health services for people with a learning disability</p>	<p>Improve healthy life expectancy amongst men</p>	<p>Reduce childhood obesity amongst BME children</p>	<p>Improve health outcomes within the Muslim population</p>	<p>Improve the trans community's access to primary health care services</p>	<p>Improve access to domestic violence services for same sex victims</p>	<p>Support more pregnant women and new mothers to quit smoking</p>
			<p>Improve healthy life expectancy amongst women</p>	<p>Improve BME health outcomes as they are worse than the rest of their peers</p>			<p>Improve access for trans people in need of mental health services</p>	
			<p>Reduce the gaps in health outcomes for carers who are more likely to be women</p>	<p>Support more BME smokers to quit smoking</p>		<p>Improve access for LGB people in need of mental health services</p>		
			<p>Reduce the gaps in health outcomes for carers who are more likely to be women</p>					

Strategic Plan priority/ Protected characteristic	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion and belief	Gender reassignment	Sexual orientation	Pregnancy and maternity
2.2 Better quality homes for all	Address increasing homelessness amongst younger age groups	Increase access to housing for disabled residents	Address the high levels of lone parent women in temporary accommodation	Fewer BME families live in overcrowded housing	Fewer Muslim families live in overcrowded housing	Fewer trans young people become homeless	Fewer LGB young people become homeless	
2.3 People feel safe and places have less crime and anti-social behaviour			Reduce violence against women and girls				Improve hate crime reporting amongst LGBT community and ensure they feel safe	
2.4 Communities are engaged, resilient, and cohesive	Reduce isolation and loneliness amongst people aged 65+	Give disabled people a voice in decision making Address increasing hate crime and negative stereotyping of disabled people Tackle isolation as a result of the built environment		Address the vulnerability and increases in intolerance and abuse faced by new residents and migrants		Improve hate crime reporting amongst trans community and ensure they feel safe Reduce trans hate crime	Reduce Homophobic abuse and ensure the LGBT community feel safe	

Strategic Plan priority/ Protected characteristic	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion and belief	Gender reassignment	Sexual orientation	Pregnancy and maternity
An enabling and efficient Council		Ensure that there is adequate representation of disabled staff at the senior manager level	Ensure that there is adequate representation of women at the senior manager level	Ensure that there is adequate representation of BME staff at the senior manager level		Support staff who are transitioning in the workplace	Ensure that the council is an inclusive environment for LGB staff	



Equality objectives 2017/18

The Borough Equality Assessment and the Single Equality Framework development process are undertaken to identify the equality priorities for 2017/18. The key criterion for prioritising areas as equality objectives is based on any evidence of differences in outcomes for groups with protected characteristics. The areas with the most significant differences in outcomes include:

- **Attainment of White British children in schools**
- **Community cohesion, particularly amongst disabled and older residents**
- **The employment rate of BME women**
- **Excess weight in 4 – 5 year olds, particularly BME children**

These areas will be reviewed in further detail by the Tower Hamlets Equality Steering Group to identify actions that can help to narrow the gap in outcomes.



This section sets out the list of equality related outcomes and activities that make up the Single Equality Framework Action Plan for 2017/18.

Appendix 1, the Single Equality Framework 2017/18 Delivery Plan includes the more detailed deliverables.

Priority Outcome 1: Creating opportunity by supporting aspiration and tackling poverty

1.1 A dynamic local economy, with high levels of growth that is shared by residents

Linked to equality outcomes: Address high levels of pensioner poverty; increase employment rates for people aged 50+; increase employment levels amongst residents with disabilities; increase employment levels amongst working age women; increase employment levels amongst Somali and Bangladeshi residents; increase employment levels amongst Muslim residents;

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Improve our ability to secure local employment through S106 agreements with developers building in our borough	Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development	31 March 2018

1.2 Residents in good-quality, wellpaid jobs

Linked to equality outcomes: Address high levels of pensioner poverty; increase employment rates for people aged 50+; increase employment levels amongst residents with disabilities; increase employment levels amongst working age women; increase employment levels amongst Somali and Bangladeshi residents; increase employment levels amongst Muslim residents; Reduce number of NEET (Compared to London / England) – Including unknown cohort; reduce the number of Looked After Children who are NEET;

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Develop an Integrated Employment Service to support higher volumes of local people into work, including graduates into higher skilled jobs	Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth	31 March 2018
2. Improve the quality and availability of skills training and ESOL provision, and better co-ordinate the provision of both third-sector and private sector employment support, including by moving from grant giving to commissioning for employment services	Cabinet Member for Culture & Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth	31 March 2018

1.3. Children get the best start in life and young people realise their potential

Linked to equality outcomes: Reduce number of NEET (Compared to London / England) – Including unknown cohort; reduce the number of Looked After Children who are NEET; improve attainment for boys at GCSE (reduce attainment gap between girls and boys); reduce number of White British NEET (Compared to London / England); improve White British attainment at GCSE

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Provide adequate early help for the most vulnerable children and families, with a strong focus on safeguarding	Deputy Mayor Education and Children's Services	31 March 2018
2. Develop a sustainable offer of support to children with special educational needs	Deputy Mayor Education and Children's Services	31 March 2018
3. Improve educational aspiration and attainment	Deputy Mayor Education and Children's Services	31 March 2018
4. Ensure better outcomes for looked after children and young people	Deputy Mayor Education and Children's Services	31 March 2018
5. Promote post-16 provision so that it is appropriate and inclusive for all students	Deputy Mayor Education and Children's Services	31 March 2018
6. Support all young people to access enrichment and social activities	Deputy Mayor Education and Children's Services	31 March 2018

1.4 People are healthy and independent for longer

Linked to equality outcomes: Reduce childhood obesity; improve access to health services for people with a learning disability; improve healthy life expectancy amongst men; reduce childhood obesity amongst BME children; improve BME health outcomes as they are worse than the rest of the population; improve Muslim health outcomes as they worse than their peers; support more pregnant women and new mothers to quit smoking; improve the trans community's access to primary health care services; Improve access for trans people in need of mental health services; Improve access for LGB people in need of mental health services; tackle the growth in 'chemsex' amongst the gay community; improve access to domestic violence service for same sex victims

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Create a healthier place	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services	31 March 2018
2. Develop an integrated health and social care system	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services	31 March 2018
3. Support communities to drive change in health and wellbeing	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services	31 March 2018

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
4. Increase the independence and resilience of our communities	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services	31 March 2018
5. Tackle health-related employment issues	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services	31 March 2018
6. Keep vulnerable adults safe, minimising harm and neglect	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services	31 March 2018
7. Improve participation in sport, and other health promoting activities, at a community level*	Cabinet Member for Environment	31 March 2018

1.5 Gaps in inequality have reduced and diversity is embraced

Linked to equality outcomes: Address high levels of pensioner poverty; increase employment levels amongst residents with disabilities; increase employment levels amongst working age women; increase employment levels amongst working age women; increase employment levels amongst Somali and Bangladeshi residents; increase employment levels amongst Muslim residents; reduce transphobia in schools and promote understanding; reduce homophobia in schools and promote understanding; reduce childhood obesity; reduce childhood obesity amongst BME children; Improve hate crime reporting amongst trans community and ensure they feel safe and reduce trans hate crime; Improve hate crime reporting amongst LGBT community and ensure they feel safe and reduce Homophobic abuse and ensure the LGBT community feel safe

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Mitigate the impact of welfare reform on our most vulnerable residents	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance, Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth	31 March 2018
2. Support more women and black and minority ethnic and disabled residents into employment*	Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth	31 March 2018

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
3. Improve children's weight and nutrition	Deputy Mayor Education and Children's Services	31 March 2018
4. Respect, value and celebrate our cultural history and diversity *	Cabinet Member for Culture, Statutory Deputy Mayor (Lead for Faith Communities)	31 March 2018

Priority Outcome 2: Creating and maintaining a vibrant and successful place

2.2 Better quality homes for all

Linked to equality outcomes: Address homelessness amongst younger age groups; increase access to housing for disabled residents (P120 – demand still outstripping supply); address the high levels of lone parent women in temporary accommodation; fewer BME families live in overcrowded housing; fewer Muslim families live in overcrowded housing; fewer trans young people become homeless; fewer LGB young people become homeless

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Increase the availability of good quality housing, including family-sized homes, across all tenures	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance, Cabinet Member for Strategic Development	31 March 2018
2. Maintain and improve the quality of Council housing stock and housing management services	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance	31 March 2018

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Tackle homelessness, including through improved prevention and a reduction in families in temporary accommodation	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance	31 March 2018

2.3 People feel safe and places have less crime and anti-social behaviour

Linked to equality outcomes: Reduce violence against women and girls; improve hate crime reporting amongst the trans community and ensure they feel safe and reduce trans hate crime; improve hate crime reporting amongst the LGBT community and ensure they feel safe and reduce homophobic abuse and ensure the LGBT community feel safe;

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Work with our partners to target resources to reduce crime	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety	31 March 2018

2.4 Communities are engaged, resilient and cohesive

Linked to equality outcomes: Reduce isolation and loneliness amongst people aged 65+; give disabled people a voice in decision making; address increasing hate crime and negative stereotyping of disabled people; tackle isolation as a result of the built environment; address the vulnerability and increase in intolerance and abuse faced by new residents and migrants; improve hate crime reporting amongst the trans community and ensure they feel safe and reduce trans hate crime; improve hate crime reporting amongst the LGBT community and ensure they feel safe and reduce homophobic abuse and ensure the LGBT community feel safe

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
1. Engage and communicate effectively with local people	Executive Mayor	31 March 2018
2. Co-produce services with local resident	Executive Mayor	31 March 2018
3. Promote community cohesion, bringing different parts of the community together, tackling divisions and encouraging positive relationships	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Cabinet Member for Resources	31 March 2018
4. Deliver an effective and broad leisure, cultural and learning offer that reaches people living and working in the borough.	Cabinet Member for Culture	31 March 2018

Priority three: Working smarter together as one team with our partners and community

Linked to outcomes:

Ensure that there is adequate representation of disabled staff at the senior manager level; ensure that there is adequate representation of women at the senior manager level; ensure that there is adequate representation of BME staff at the senior manager level; support staff who are transitioning in the workplace; ensure that the council is an inclusive environment for LGB staff

Activity	Lead Member	Deadline
4. Deliver the One HR Plan	Cabinet Member for Resources	31 March 2018



Single Equality Framework 2017/18

Performance Measures

For the Strategic Plan 2016-19 key measures have been developed to monitor changes in outcomes as a result of the activities in the Strategic Plan's delivery plan. The SEF performance measures are made up of the strategic plan measures that specifically relate to equality and are further disaggregated to determine gaps in outcomes and to monitor progress against the nine protected characteristics. The performance measures for 2017/18 can be found in the following table:

Table 3 – Single Equality Framework Performance Measures 2017/18

Priority	Sub-Priority	Strategic measure	Equality groups to monitor
Creating opportunity by supporting aspiration and tackling poverty	Residents in good quality and well-paid jobs	Employment rate (gap between LBTH and London average)	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
		Number of job starts for Tower Hamlets residents	
	Children get the best start in life and young people realise their potential	Excess weight in 4-5 year olds	Ethnicity, Gender
		EYFS Early Years Achievement – proportion of children achieving a good level of development	SEND/non-SEND, Ethnicity, Gender
		Key Stage 4 (GCSE) – Attainment 8 (average across 8 core subjects) and/or Progress 8 (progress against 8 core subjects) measures	SEND/non-SEND, Ethnicity, Gender
		Key Stage 5 (e.g. A-Level) – Average grade: Academic qualifications and vocational qualification	SEND/non-SEND, Ethnicity, Gender
		Proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual orientation, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy/Maternity
		Number of adoptions and special guardianship orders granted	Disability, Religion/Belief, Gender, Age, Race

Priority	Sub-Priority	Strategic measure	Equality groups to monitor
	People are healthy and independent for longer	Adult Social Care – service user carer satisfaction	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual orientation, Gender Reassignment, Age, Religion/Belief
		Population healthy life expectancy	Gender
		Social care-related quality of life	Disability, Religion/Belief, Gender, Age
		Smoking cessation	Gender, Ethnicity, Pregnancy, Age, Disability
	Gaps in inequality have reduced and diversity is embraced	Workforce diversity of senior managers	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
		Number of people with mental health problems in employment	This measure is a disaggregation of employment
Creating and maintaining a vibrant, successful place	Better quality homes for all	Number of affordable homes delivered	N/A
		Number of affordable units provided as wheelchair accessible or adaptable (10% of affordable homes delivered)	N/A
		Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual orientation, Gender Reassignment, Age, Religion/Belief, Marriage/civil partnership, Pregnancy Maternity
		Number of lets to overcrowded households	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual orientation, Gender Reassignment, Age, Religion/Belief, Marriage/civil partnership, Pregnancy Maternity
	People feel safe and places have less crime and anti-social behaviour	Total Notifiable Offences / Borough crime reduction	Disaggregation is not available for this measure (externally managed data source with specific categories e.g. hate crime)
		Extent to which residents feel the police and other local services are successfully dealing with ASB	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Religion/Belief
		Local concern about ASB and Crime	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Religion/Belief
	Communities are engaged, resilient, and cohesive	The council involves local people in decision making	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Religion/Belief
		Residents feel able to influence decisions in their local community	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Religion/Belief
		The council listens to concerns of local people	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Religion/Belief
Proportion of people from different backgrounds who get on well together		Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Religion/Belief	

Embedding Equality

Robust structures and processes ensure that our equality objectives are translated into work at all levels of the organisation. The council uses equality analyses, EAs, as a tool to enable us to assess the implications of council decisions on service users and staff. Carrying out an EA assists the council to:

- eliminate discrimination
- tackle inequality
- develop a better understanding of the community
- target resources efficiently
- adhere to the transparency and accountability element of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- meet legal duties

In 2017/18, the Lead Member with responsibility for equality is the Executive Mayor John Biggs. The Corporate Director responsible for diversity and equality is the Acting Corporate Director Governance, Graham White. The Strategy, Policy and Partnership Service, facilitate and coordinate equality and diversity work across the council.

In order to maintain and develop good practice the council has in place a number of business planning arrangements which support our work on equality:

1. The Tower Hamlets Equality Steering Group (THESG) is the council's strategic level group with responsibility to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. The group has a key role in identifying processes and projects that will embed and mainstream equality and put structures in place to meet our equality objectives. Meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive, Will Tuckley, and take place quarterly with senior representation from each directorate.
2. Each service, team and individual plan is expected to draw on the BEA and include diversity and equality objectives. Our processes are designed to ensure that staffs consider equality issues as part of their day-to-day work, including our duties to promote equality in employment. To support this, a range of training is offered by Corporate Learning and Development including on key equality duties and issues within the corporate induction offer, e-learning, disability awareness events and equality and diversity workshops. There is also detailed information available on the staff intranet which provides an easy guide for staff to help mainstream equality.

In addition to the above, in terms of equality and diversity in the council's workforce, this is embedded into the Workforce Strategy and is covered by the general approach to wellbeing, which is included in the council's Wellbeing Strategy for employees, which is currently being updated. The Annual Workforce Equalities Report is used to identify any areas of over or under representation in relation to any of the 9 protected characteristics related to areas of the workforce, e.g. leavers, recruitment, promotion etc. Actions are developed from this report, which forms part of the Wellbeing Action Plan, alongside other holistic wellbeing actions, including those related to the Council's corporate social responsibility. These actions then feed in to the council's Strategic Plan and the Single Equality Framework.

Below is an outline of the key activities that the council will undertake during 2017/18 to ensure we continue to monitor standards and processes underpinning our corporate approach to equality.

Table 4 – Single Equality Framework - embedding equality action plan

Priority	Activity	Deliverable	Deadline
Meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and exhibit due regard to the Equality Act 2010	Undertake Equality Analysis (EA) to assess the impact of changes in policy, service design and strategy on people from different backgrounds as a result of the council's transformation programme	Services to publically consult on and undertake equality analyses, prior to implementation, on the savings proposals that have been agreed as part of the 2017-20 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	Ongoing
	Ensure that all council team plans incorporate relevant equality and diversity objectives and targets	Undertake an annual review of team plans; the results of the review will be reported to the council's Performance Review Group (PRG)	30 November 2017
	Ensure that all council policies are compliant with the Equality Act 2010	Committee reports and budget proposals must include equalities consideration and an equality analysis where required Undertake a full review of the council's equalities policies, procedures and training offer to staff.	Ongoing 31 March 2018
	Publish the council's PSED data on the internet and ensure that monitoring practices are robust throughout the council.	Undertake an annual service equality monitoring audit exercise, targeting front line services that are related to gaps in outcomes for particular groups. Publish accurate datasets	28 February 2018

Priority	Activity	Deliverable	Deadline
Engage with stakeholders	Engage our internal staff networks and address areas of concern	Refresh and develop work programmes for the staff equality forums, including delivery of quarterly events and celebrating key date, such as International Women's Day, Black History Month and Pride.	31 March 2018
	Work with external partners and community groups to tackle inequality and foster good relations	Support and ensure that commissioning to run and support community forums is fit for purpose (LGBT community forum, New Residents and Refugee Forum, the Interfaith Forum and Local Voices) Deliver the Corporate Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that council services are engaging the community in the delivery of core services	31 March 2018
Meet the needs of the Tower Hamlets population and ensure that services are appropriate	Ensure that we have a diverse senior management and workforce that broadly represents the diverse makeup of the borough and is effectively supported to deliver excellent services to the community.	Benchmark the council's workforce diversity against the borough population and other London Boroughs	Ongoing
		Develop actions to address any areas of over or under representation for any of the protected characteristics	
Ensure the council continues to be recognised as a diversity friendly employer and public service provider	Use the appropriate equality and diversity frameworks to improve performance and provide a healthy and inclusive workplace	Develop a Stonewall WEI 2018 action plan that addresses transgender staff support including transitioning at work, gender identity awareness and community engagement	31 March 2018
		Reach Achievement Level of the London Healthy Workplace Charter	
		Maintain 'Excellent' rating in Equality Framework for Local Government	
		Seek gold standard for Investors in People	