

Cabinet



Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at 5.30 p.m.

Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

Agenda

Cabinet Members

Mayor Lutfur Rahman

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Councillor Maium Talukdar | (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)) |
| Councillor Kabir Ahmed | (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding) |
| Councillor Saied Ahmed | (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living) |
| Councillor Suluk Ahmed | (Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion) |
| Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury | (Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care) |
| Councillor Abu Chowdhury | (Cabinet Member for Safer Communities) |
| Councillor Iqbal Hossain | (Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation) |
| Councillor Kabir Hussain | (Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency) |
| Councillor Abdul Wahid | (Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth) |

[The quorum for Cabinet is 3 Members]

Further Information

Reports for consideration, meeting contact details, public participation and more information on Cabinet decision-making is available on the following pages.



Public Information

Viewing or Participating in Cabinet Meetings

The public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet. Procedures relating to Public Engagement are set out in the 'Guide to Cabinet' attached to this agenda. Except where any exempt/restricted documents are being discussed, the public are welcome to view this meeting through the Council's webcast system.

Physical Attendance at the Town Hall is also welcome, however, seating is limited and offered on a first come, first served basis. **Please note** that you may be filmed in the background as part of the Council's filming of the meeting.

Meeting Webcast

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system.

<http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Contact for further enquiries:

Joel West, Democratic Services,
Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ
Tel: 020 7364 4207
E-mail: joel.west@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk>

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A Guide to CABINET

Decision Making at Tower Hamlets

As Tower Hamlets operates the Directly Elected Mayor system, **Mayor Lutfur Rahman** holds Executive powers and takes decisions at Cabinet or through Individual Mayoral Decisions. The Mayor has appointed nine Councillors to advise and support him and they, with him, form the Cabinet. Their details are set out on the front of the agenda.

Which decisions are taken by Cabinet?

Executive decisions are all decisions that aren't specifically reserved for other bodies (such as Development or Licensing Committees). In particular, Executive Key Decisions are taken by the Mayor either at Cabinet or as Individual Mayoral Decisions.

The constitution describes Key Decisions as an executive decision which is likely

- a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, above £1million; or
- b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the borough.

Upcoming Key Decisions are published on the website on the 'Forthcoming Decisions' page through www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee

Published Decisions and Call-Ins

Once the meeting decisions have been published, any 5 Councillors may submit a Call-In to the Service Head, Democratic Services requesting that a decision be reviewed. This halts the decision until it has been reconsidered.

- The decisions will be published on: **Friday, 1 December 2023**
- The deadline for call-ins is: **Friday, 8 December 2023**

Any Call-Ins will be considered at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee can reject the call-in or they can agree it and refer the decision back to the Mayor, with their recommendations, for his final consideration.

Public Engagement at Cabinet

The main focus of Cabinet is as a decision-making body. However there is an opportunity for the public to contribute through making submissions that specifically relate to the reports set out on the agenda.

Members of the public may make written submissions in any form (for example; Petitions, letters, written questions) to the Clerk to Cabinet (details on the previous page) by 5 pm the day before the meeting.

Cabinet

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

5.30 p.m.

Pages

PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There will be an opportunity (up to 15 minutes) for members of the public to put questions to the Mayor and Cabinet Members before the Cabinet commences its consideration of the substantive business set out in the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

11 - 12

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest, identified in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine; whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are also reminded to declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately it is the Members' responsibility to identify any interests and also update their register of interests form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of an interest, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

13 - 24

The unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 October 2023 are presented for approval.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to report on any issues raised by the OSC in relation to unrestricted business to be considered.

5.2 Any Unrestricted Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

(Under provisions of Section 30, Rule 59 of the Constitution).

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

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|--|
| <p>6.1 Single Homeless Hostels – Contracts 25 - 34</p> <p>Report Summary: Future contractual arrangements for the provision of support for residents of five hostels in the borough who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have been rough sleeping or are otherwise homeless; • often have complex support needs including mental health and substance misuse; • often become physically frail at a much younger age than the general population, necessitating increasing levels of care and support over time <p>Wards: All Wards Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Corporate Priority: A council that works for you and listens to you</p> |
| <p>6.2 Tower Hamlets Young People’s Supported Housing Pathway contract extensions 35 - 42</p> <p>Report Summary: The Tower Hamlets Young People’s Supported Housing Pathway (4 block contracts) is undergoing a transformative recommission to improve the Council’s accommodation and support offer for our children in our care and homeless young people. Due to unforeseen circumstances and unexpected staff changes this item requests to extend the current pathway contracts from the 1st December until the 1st June 2024 to ensure there is ample time to implement the new contract ensuring minimal disruption for our young people.</p> <p>Wards: All Wards Lead Member: Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor) Corporate Priority: A council that works for you and listens to you</p> |
| <p>6.3 Tower Hamlets Young People’s Advocacy Service contract extensions 43 - 48</p> |

Tower Hamlets Council
 Tower Hamlets Town Hall
 160 Whitechapel Road
 London E1 1BJ

Report Summary:

The Tower Hamlets Young People's Advocacy Service is undergoing a service review to plan a transformative recommission to improve the Council's support offer for our children in our care. Due to unforeseen circumstances and unexpected staff changes this item requests to extend the current service contract from 1st February until 1st December 2024 to ensure there is ample time to complete the service review, recommission and implementation of the new contract ensuring minimal disruption for our young people.

Wards: All Wards
Lead Member: Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Corporate Priority: A council that works for you and listens to you

| | | |
|-------------|--|-----------------|
| 6 .4 | Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028: A Tower Hamlets for All | 49 - 118 |
|-------------|--|-----------------|

Report Summary:

A new Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028 is presented for agreement. It sets out a new shared vision and strategic framework for the borough that the Tower Hamlets Partnership can influence. It is informed by key findings from the 2021 census data, a state of the borough paper and views from stakeholder and community engagement. Residents, young people, community, faith, voluntary, and public service organisations have all contributed to its development.

Note – full Partnership Plan to follow

Wards: All Wards
Lead Member: Mayor
Corporate Priority: A council that works for you and listens to you

| | | |
|-------------|---|------------------|
| 6 .5 | Children and Families Strategy 2024-2029 | 119 - 160 |
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Report Summary:

This reports presents our partnership strategy for improving outcomes for children and families in the borough over the next five years.

Wards: All Wards
Lead Member: Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Corporate Priority: TH Plan 1: A better deal for children and young people: aspiration, education & skills

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|-------------|--|------------------|
| 6 .6 | Youth Justice Board Annual Report | To Follow |
|-------------|--|------------------|



Report Summary:

It is a constitutional requirement for Cabinet to review the Youth Justice Board annual plan. The plan sets out the priorities and strategic goals of the Youth Justice Board and operational frontline service delivery.

This report outlines the priority areas to be delivered over the next 24 months.

Wards: All Wards
Lead Member: Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Corporate Priority: Accelerate Education

6.7 Review of the Major Events Policy, Victoria Park**161 - 170****Report Summary:**

This report asks Cabinet to consider and approve an updated Major Events Policy for Victoria Park. The original policy was agreed by Cabinet in 2011. A partial amendment to the policy was approved by Cabinet in 2021, in response to the impact of COVID-19 on events.

A full review of the Major Events Policy is being recommended to enable the Council to be competitive with other London venues and be able to hold a wider range of events in the park for the public and resident benefit.

The decision is a Key Decision as it would have a significant effect on the communities of two or more wards.

Wards: All Wards
Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation
Corporate Priority: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure

6.8 Parks and Open Spaces Capital Improvement Programme**171 - 182****Report Summary:**

The Parks Capital Improvement programme will enable investment into parks and open spaces. Investment improvements will include:

- Improvements to outdoor sports amenities
- Upgrades to parks and open spaces
- Upgrades to playground equipment in parks and open spaces including a number of Council managed housing estate playground areas

Wards: All Wards
Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation
Corporate Priority: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure

6.9 New fees for the Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall – Register Office**183 - 224**

Tower Hamlets Council
Tower Hamlets Town Hall
160 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1BJ

Report Summary:

To agree fees being introduced by the Registration Service in order to provide customers with the option to have post wedding celebrations in the new Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall.

Wards: All Wards

Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding

Corporate Priority: A council that works for you and listens to you

6 .10 Nominations to Outside Bodies – Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf Further Education Trust 225 - 228**Report Summary:**

Wards:

Lead Member: Mayor

Corporate Priority:

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Should the Mayor in Cabinet consider it necessary, it is recommended that the following motion be adopted to allow consideration of any exempt/restricted documents.

“That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, the Press and Public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government, Act 1972”.

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL SECTION (PINK)

The Exempt / Confidential (Pink) Committee papers in the Agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

9. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**9.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business**

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to report on any issues raised by the OSC in relation to exempt/confidential business to be considered.



Tower Hamlets Council
Tower Hamlets Town Hall
160 Whitechapel Road
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9 .2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

(Under provisions of Section 30, Rule 59 of the Constitution).

10. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Next Meeting of Cabinet:

Wednesday, 13 December 2023 at 5.30 p.m. in Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel



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Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests. In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

Guidance on Predetermination and Bias

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

Further Advice contact: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer, Tel: 020 7364 4348.

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

| Subject | Prescribed description |
|---|--|
| Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. |
| Sponsorship | Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. |
| Contracts | Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged. |
| Land | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority. |
| Licences | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer. |
| Corporate tenancies | Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest. |
| Securities | Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class. |

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.42 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Mayor Lutfur Rahman | |
| Councillor Maium Talukdar | (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)) |
| Councillor Kabir Ahmed | (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding) |
| Councillor Saied Ahmed | (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living) |
| Councillor Suluk Ahmed | (Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion) |
| Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury | (Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care) |
| Councillor Abu Chowdhury | (Cabinet Member for Safer Communities) |
| Councillor Iqbal Hossain | (Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation) |
| Councillor Kabir Hussain | (Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency) |
| Councillor Abdul Wahid | (Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth) |

Other Councillors Present in Person:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Councillor Musthak Ahmed | |
| Councillor Ahmodur Khan | Scrutiny Lead for Adults and Health Services |

Officers Present in Person:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Stephen Halsey | (Chief Executive) |
| Denise Radley | (Corporate Director, Health and Social Care) |
| Janet Fasan | (Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer) |
| Sam Harney | (Mayor's Political Advisor) |
| Nicola Klinger | (Housing Companies Manager) |
| Filuck Miah | (Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation Service) |
| Raj Mistry | Corporate Director for Communities |
| Katie O'Driscoll | (Director of Adult Social Care) |
| Jennifer Peters | (Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place) |
| Marissa Ryan-Hernandez | (Plan Making Team Leader) |
| Karen Swift | (Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration) |
| James Thomas | (Corporate Director, Children's Services) |
| David Tolley | (Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards) |
| Joel West | (Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee)) |

Matthew Wong

Planning Officer

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

John Harrison
Jignesh Parmar

Interim Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit
(Head of Procurement)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

In relation to Item 6.10, Councillors Abu Chowdhury, Maium Talukdar and Abdul Wahid declared they were current members of the Tower Hamlets Homes Board, having been nominated by the Mayor.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED:

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 20 September 2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

At the request of the Mayor, Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive made the following statement:

Tower Hamlets is a Council and a Borough where there is No Place for Hate.

We are also one of the most diverse and the most densely populated places in the Country.

We are an example of how people from different backgrounds and different religions can live and work together in harmony. Our recent Annual Residents survey showed that 87% of people feel they get on well with one another.

Our hearts and minds are with the people affected by the conflict in the middle east. We hope for a swift and peaceful resolution.

As a Council, services including Community Safety, Communications, Highways and the Mayor's Office, have been working on a daily basis to monitor the situation in our borough and to ensure that appropriate action is taken where necessary whilst at the same time ensuring we are not adding to any community tensions.

This work has included working alongside partners including Tower Hamlets Police, the Tension Monitoring Group, Community Faith Leaders, No Place for Hate Forum and community organisations.

Over the past two weeks, we have seen increased patrols of police and our THEOS on our streets. This work is also based on intelligence from our CCTV control room.

The strength of our community and the mutual respect and understanding demonstrated on a daily basis was underlined last week during national No Place for Hate week. We hosted and took part in events that celebrated diversity with activities including a reception at the Town Hall for our No Place for Hate Champions, a peace walk from Altab Ali Park to Rich Mix and a football tournament for people of all backgrounds in Stepney.

By continuing to be vigilant, responding to intelligence and through partnership working, we will do all we can to ensure the safety of our residents and staff.

The safety of our residents and the local community is of paramount importance and should evidence suggest that that is impacted appropriate steps will be taken, including the removal of flags.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions

Councillor Musthak Ahmed, Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee addressed the meeting on behalf of the Committee. He provided the Mayor and Cabinet with an overview of the Committee's recent meetings.

On 9 October the Committee considered a call-in on the decision taken by the Chief Executive on 25 September on the Mayors Community Grant Programme (MCGP). The committee deliberated on the evidence presented and subsequently voted on re-affirming the original decision.

On 23 October the Committee considered a call-in on the decision taken by Cabinet on 20th September 2023, on Liveable Streets Bethnal Green Outcomes and Measures. The committee deliberated on the evidence presented and subsequently voted on re-affirming the Cabinet decision.

The Committee also reviewed the Strategic Delivery Performance 2023/24 and Budget Monitoring Q1 and raised performance questions on a number of matters including homes for future priority and additions to the housing stock; drop care leavers in education training and employment; and keeping residents informed about decision making processes.

On budget monitoring, the Committee considered a number of matters including risks and investment needed with the integration of Tower Hamlets; application of funding for members development; deficit repayment, funding for Education Health and Care Plans

The Committee had also received presentations on the Combatting Drugs Partnership Strategy and the new Local Plan.

Finally, Health Scrutiny Lead Councillor Ahmodur Khan spoke briefly on the background and recommendations for the scrutiny review report on workforce shortages across the health and care sector, which Cabinet would be asked to consider at this meeting.

5.2 Any Unrestricted Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

None.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 MTFs and Budget Scene Setting 2024-27

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the item that provided an update on the MTFs position since it was approved by Council in March 2023 and an overview of the budget setting process being undertaking to present Council with a proposed budget for 2024/25. Councillor Ahmed explained that the focus was how to maximise benefits of transformation and customer focus at a reduced cost. He briefly outlined some of the strategies being explored to help deliver this including:

- Exploring potential restructure and streamlining options; voluntary and early retirement and other flexible options for staff.
- Utilising the Council's assets to maximise income generation.
- Reviewing third party contracts to identify and deliver best value
- Review of temporary and agency workers.

Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources and John Harrison, Interim Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit added further detail. Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive, explained how the work to deliver a balanced budget was critical to delivering the administration's manifesto promises. He assured the Mayor and Cabinet that the Council was in a relatively strong financial position compared to other authorities that had been in the media in recent years; an assertion that would be validated when the full MTFs report was considered by the Mayor in Cabinet early in 2024.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the current projected MTFs budget position in paragraph 3.2.2.
2. Note the actions set out in section 3.4 that are being taken to address the budget gap.

6.2 Continuation of Business Rates Pooling

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the item that proposed why and how the Council could continue to participate in the business rates pool with seven other neighbouring London Boroughs in 2024/25.

The Mayor welcomed the report and proposals. He indicated he felt the pool would ensure the Council and its partners would be better off financially than by acting individually.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Continues the Council's participation in the 8 Authority Pool for Business Rates with seven other London Local Authorities for 2024-25.

6.3 Record of Corporate Directors Action 23-24 Q1

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the report that set out Corporate Director's Actions taken under Rule 10 (section 50 Record of Corporate Director's Actions (RCDA) - Waiving of Procurement Procedures) in Part C – Codes and Protocols of the Council's constitution. The section stated that Corporate Director's Actions in respect of contracts over £100,000 must be reported to Cabinet for noting.

Jignesh Parmar, Head of Procurement, provided further detail.

Further to questions from the Mayor on the listed RCDA reference P(R)347, officers explained that due to difficulties securing market interest, a 12 month direct award had been agreed for the Catering Cafe Operator which would allow sufficient opportunity for the Council to undertake a review of the market and conduct an open tender.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the Record of Corporate Directors' Actions set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

6.4 Contracts Forward Plan (Quarter 2 2023/2024)

Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living introduced the report that set out a forward plan of supply and service contracts over £1m in value, or capital works contracts over £5m. Jignesh Parmar, (Head of Procurement) provided further detail.

Further to questions from the Mayor on ref P5343, Parking Management System, Raj Mistry, Corporate Director Communities explained that this was a variation of an existing contract to ensure the Council could manage parking

on Tower Hamlets Homes sites. It was noted that the covering report incorrectly categorised this contract in the housing and Regeneration Directorate, but should be within the Communities Directorate.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the contract summary at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Authorises the appropriate Corporate Director in consultation with the Mayor to award those contracts set out in Appendix 1 to the report, following an appropriate procurement exercise.
3. Authorises the Director Legal Services (Monitoring Officer), to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contracts, subject to an appropriate award decision being achieved.
4. Notes the procurement forward plan 2023-2028 schedule detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

6.5 Action Plan Response to Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee Review and Recommendations Report on 'Workforce Shortages Across The Health and Care Sector'

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care introduced the report that presented the service action plan response from the Northeast London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) and the Council on the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HASSC) review report regarding 'Workforce Shortages Across The Health and Care Sector' in Northeast London.

At the request of the Mayor, Francesca Okosi, Chief People and Culture Officer, NHS North East London addressed the meeting to explain how the action plan would be supported by her organisation.

Further to questions from Cabinet members, Ms Okosi provided further detail on.

- How the success of the action plan would be measured
- Efforts to promote access into employment for underrepresented communities.
- Quick wins and short-term measures that could be taken to deliver swift improvements.
- Plans to access to external funding; pooling resources, working with stakeholders and learning from good practice.
- Efforts to reach out to BAME patients; establishment of universal basic standards and training so patients from all backgrounds get appropriate care.
- How the service will listen to service users to build on their experiences.
- Communication activities and plans. Non-traditional methods are being explored among efforts to demystify the sector and raise its profile

amongst underrepresented groups.

The Mayor welcomed the report and offered his thanks to Ms Okosi for her presentation and work to address workforce shortages across the sector.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Agrees the council's action plan response on the HASSC scrutiny review report recommendation on 'Workforce Shortages Across the Health and Care Sector.
2. Notes the action plan response on the HASSC scrutiny review report recommendation on 'Workforce Shortages Across the Health and Care Sector provided by the executive and Northeast London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) to the report recommendations.

6.6 Tower Hamlets - Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022-23

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care introduced the report that presented the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report setting out progress, achievements and learning over the previous year. Denise Radley, Corporate Director, Health, Adults and Community and Katie O'Driscoll, Director of Adult Social Care, provided further detail. Councillor Choudhury, Denise and Katie outlined some of the key achievements of the Board over the past year, including:

- Community safeguarding YouTube video created by the engagement group.
- Strengthening of audit work in adult social care.
- Focus on learning and development of staff across the system.
- Three Tower Hamlets residents now part of the London Safeguarding Voices Network.

Denise noted that, whilst there had been a fall in safeguarding referrals in 2022-23 compared to the year before, this was being treated with vigilance due to awareness of under-reporting in the sector. Awareness raising remained critical to the work to ensure full reporting of cases.

Further to questions from Cabinet members, Denise and Katie explained how different approaches to awareness-raising were being pursued. They also explained that referral processes were kept under review to ensure they are as clear as possible.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022-23.

6.7 Additional Licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation Designation

Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency introduced the report that set out the proposed renewal

designation for an Additional Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme for properties in multiple occupation within the Borough, following on from a public consultation. The report also covered proposed standard conditions imposed on each licensed property, the revised rental property standards to be adopted and the fee structure for a licence. Councillor Hussain expressed hope that, through the scheme, landlords would be providing more safe and high-quality homes for renters in the borough.

David Tolley, (Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards) provided further detail, including how the proposed scheme compared to the scheme currently in place and which properties would be covered by it.

The Mayor and Cabinet welcomed the report and asked that a communications strategy be developed to create awareness of the new scheme and its provisions.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Notes the results of the consultation undertaken in relation to the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme as summarised in the report.
2. Designates all wards in the Borough as subject to Additional Licensing under section 56(1) of the Housing Act 2004 in relation to multiple-occupied properties occupied by three or more persons in two or more households where some or all the facilities are shared. Such designation to take effect from 1st April 2024 and to last for five years unless revoked before then.
3. Agrees the fee structure for the Additional Licensing Scheme as set out in in the report, with the fees being determined during the budget setting process for 24/25. The application fee will be apportioned for administrative and enforcement costs.
4. Agrees the Additional Licensing Scheme licence conditions, fit and proper person protocol and private rental property standards as detailed for adoption at the commencement of the new designation. The revised private rental property standards, revised conditions and fit and proper person protocol will also apply as necessary, to the mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation, current Additional Licensing and Selective Licensing schemes from 1 January 2024.
5. Delegates the Corporate Director Communities authority to issue the required statutory notifications in relation to the commencement of the Additional Licensing Scheme designation.
6. Agrees that there are no exemptions apart for the statutory exemptions.

6.8 Tower Hamlets New Local Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation Draft

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report that proposed a new Local Plan for consultation. Councillor Ahmed explained:

- the demographic and geographic context for the plan, including stressing that the borough is the fastest-growing local authority in the country with the highest housing-building targets.
- how the new Local Plan would assist in realising the economic, environmental, health and social objectives of the Council in building a vibrant and successful future for Tower Hamlets that benefits all residents, regardless of background or circumstances.
- how early engagement with the community had informed the draft.
- how the plan aligned with the Council's strategic plan.
- how the six-week public consultation would allow all stakeholders to have their say and provide feedback.

Councillor Ahmed offered thanks to all officers involved in the development of the draft plan.

Jennifer Peters, (Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place)
Marissa Ryan-Hernandez, (Plan Making Team Leader) and Matthew Wong, Plan Making Manager provided further detail.

The Mayor welcomed the report. He indicated he felt the previous planning policies did not allow the Council to reach its full ambition regarding regeneration, housebuilding and supply. He stressed he wanted the borough to be a regeneration-led authority, something he hoped would help to address wider social and structural concerns faced by residents. The limited opportunities for building meant the Council would consider building out, but also building up, helped in part by changes to tall building policies. Through this new approach, the Mayor explained he wished the borough to be as creative and ambitious as the City of London and delivering similar benefits for the people of the borough as had been delivered there.

Further to questions from Cabinet members, the Lead Member and officers provided further information on

- Consultation methods and how the views of hard to reach communities, including younger residents would be encouraged, rather than listening only to the loudest or most articulate voices.
- How the new plan proposed an increase in the minimum affordable housing provision from 35 to 40 per cent, split as 85 social rent and 15 intermediate, to help address overcrowding and delays in the housing waiting list.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Approved the publication of the Regulation 18 – Tower Hamlets Draft Local Plan 2038: (Appendix 1 to the report) for formal consultation;
2. Approved the publication of the Regulation 18 – Tower Hamlets Draft Local Plan 2038: Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) and other supplementary information, including draft evidence base studies (as

Table 1) on the Council's website, at the Town Hall and other locations in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, alongside the Tower Hamlets Draft Local Plan 2038.

3. Provided approval to make any amendments to the documents in advance of public consultation commencing. Any such amendments to be made through the delegated authority of the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Mayor.

6.9 Statutory Transfer Scheme to support the proposed transfer of town planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report that sought the Mayor's approval for the return of planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets.

The Mayor welcomed the report, noting it as a necessary administrative decision prior to the return of planning powers.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Confirms their support for the statutory process for the transition of planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets.
2. Delegates any further amendments to and completion of the Statutory Transfer Scheme and supporting documents to the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Mayor.
3. Authorises the Director of Legal Services to complete any legal steps that might be required prior to and as a consequence of the transition of planning powers from the London Legacy Development Corporation to Tower Hamlets.

6.10 Tower Hamlets Homes Articles of Association and Board of Directors

Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding introduced the report that, prior to the transfer of housing management services back to the council, set out the administrative process, including the appointment of a new board of directors and adoption of a new set of Tower Hamlets Homes Limited Articles of Association to simplify the composition of the board. The report also recommended that a members' voluntary liquidation process is completed to wind up the Company.

The Mayor welcomed the report and proposals, which he noted were temporary arrangements to secure the transfer. He nominated himself,

Councillor Abu Choudhury and Denise Radley as board directors, and indicated he would chair the board.

RESOLVED that the Mayor in Cabinet:

1. Agrees to the Tower Hamlets Homes Limited Articles of Association to be changed to the articles set out in Appendix One to the report.
2. Appoints a board of three directors, comprised of council officers and members, as set out in paragraph 3.9.16 of the report.
3. Nominates the following persons as board directors
 - Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Chair of board)
 - Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury
 - Denise Radley, Corporate Director Health and Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive.
4. Agrees the process for winding up Tower Hamlets Homes Limited will be via a members' voluntary liquidation.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

A motion to exclude press and public was not required.

9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

None.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business

None.

10.2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

None.

11. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION


None.

12. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None.

The meeting ended at 7.02 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman
Cabinet

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| <p>Cabinet</p> <p>29 November 2023</p> |  <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p> |
| <p>Report of: Denise Radley, Corporate Director of Health and Adult Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Single Homeless Hostels – Extension to contracts</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lead Member | Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care |
| Originating Officer(s) | Ben Gladstone, Deputy Director, Hibo Mohamed, Senior Commissioning Manager- Housing with Care, Ageing Well-Integrated Commissioning |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Key Decision? | Yes |
| Reason for Key Decision | Significant impact on wards |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 16 October 2023 |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | The provision of hostel services to residents living in Tower Hamlets supports the following strategic plan priority 1-Tackling the cost-of-living crisis and Priority 2: providing homes for the future by providing accommodation to residents threatened with homeless/homeless by providing accommodation and preventing rough sleeping. Priority 5-Investing in public services: the hostels sector is commissioned to support vulnerable homeless people with multiple and complex needs and serious physical and mental health needs. Priority 6- Empowering communities and fighting crime: through providing hostel accommodation to residents in Tower Hamlets who are at risk of homelessness/homeless this prevents rough sleeping and consequently reduces the levels of street crime. |

Executive Summary

This report responds to the need to ensure that a new service model for hostels is in line with the priorities of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy currently in development and aligns with the other hostel provision in the Borough to improve outcomes for residents and maximise use and value for money. In addition, it seeks permission to extend the hostel contracts further by a period of 12 months until end November 2024 to be able to complete the recommissioning and tender process, leading to the award of new hostel contracts in 2024.

The reasons for the need to further extend the five contracts for single homelessness hostel provision are set out in detail in this report,

Recommendations

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Health and Adult Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive to extend the five hostel contracts referenced below until 30 November 2024 to allow Officers to review and competitively tender the services. The hostels are:
 - Founders House
 - Riverside Complex
 - Daniel Gilbert House
 - Edward Gibbons House
 - Providence House
2. Following the review of the services, authorise the Corporate Director Health and Adults Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive following consultation with the Mayor to award new hostels contracts in accordance with the tender results as determined by the application of the published evaluation criteria.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This report responds to the need to ensure that any new service model for these five hostels is in line with the priorities of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that is currently in development and aligns with the other hostel provision in the Borough to improve outcomes for residents, maximise use and value for money. In addition, it seeks permission to start the recommissioning and tender process, leading to the award of new hostels contracts in 2024.
- 1.2 The procurement of the hostel services was originally timetabled to be completed by the end of the contract (30 September 2023). However, it has been crucial to give consideration to the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy when devising a new service model for hostel services. Furthermore, there is a need for an updated needs analysis as the last Homelessness and Hostels Health Needs Assessment was completed in January 2022. A refreshed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping needs assessment is currently in development and will be published by February 2024.
- 1.3 The five extended contracts for the provision of hostel services are due to expire on 30 November 2023.
- 1.4 The new procurement process is anticipated to take up to a total of twelve (12) months to complete. This will include a period of pre-tender needs assessment and market analysis and engagement (3 months), the

preparation of revised tender documentation including a service specification, outcomes monitoring framework, contract schedules and agreed price: quality weighting and scoring mechanism (3 months), a tender process (2 months) and contract award (1 month).

- 1.5 In addition, a further period of transition and contract mobilisation will be necessary following contract award. The Corporate Director of Health and Adults Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive will report on progress to the Mayor and Lead Member.
- 1.6 The Council is committed to protecting vulnerable people in the Borough and the recent extension of the contracts has been necessary to avoid a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable service users who may otherwise require assistance from one of the Council's statutory services.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The only other option would be to decommission the services; however, this would have an adverse impact on vulnerable service users with physical, mental health and substance misuse issues. Furthermore, due to the significant needs of many of the service users without the hostel provision they may require greater assistance through one of the Council's statutory services such as requiring temporary accommodation through Housing which would be significantly more costly.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Hostels represent the largest proportion of commissioned accommodation provision for homeless people in Tower Hamlets and these services provide a significant opportunity to improve the quality of life and outcomes for this population.
- 3.2 Integrated Commissioning is responsible for commissioning five hostel contracts in the borough, providing a total of 339 bed spaces at a cost of £2.8 million p.a. In addition to these five contracts, the Greater London Authority (GLA) funds one further hostel in the Borough known as East London Apartments (ELA). This has 31 beds at an annual cost of £570,750.
- 3.3 The Councils Housing Team also commission and provide a 35-bed service for rough sleepers at Luke House which is funded through the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) administered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DULHC). The contract value is £2,704,761 over a three-year period (£901,586 pa).
- 3.4 Annual uplifts will increase the contract values as part of the Councils commitment to the London Living Wage and other inflationary pressures.
- 3.5 The hostels sector is commissioned to support vulnerable homeless people with multiple and complex needs including physical and mental health needs. This includes service users who have been assessed under the Care Act 2014

as eligible for care and support by Adult Social Care (ASC) and those who have a Care Programme Approach (CPA) already in place. The people who are supported by hostels are some of the most vulnerable in the Borough and are often care leavers, ex-offenders, people with physical disabilities, people who have experienced childhood abuse, women fleeing domestic violence or sexual exploitation, those with a history of rough sleeping, those who are alcohol dependent and vulnerable people with current or histories of substance abuse. Whilst these services are not statutory, they do enable the Council to discharge its statutory duties in relation to providing Housing.

- 3.6 Hostels provide a transitional accommodation option for people with housing related support needs and deliver programmes of support and aim to achieve the following objectives:
- Improve access to health services and encourage healthy lifestyles.
 - Maximise and maintain income.
 - Maintain personal safety and security.
 - Minimise substance misuse and develop personalised harm reduction strategies.
 - Create a place of change and progression with an emphasis on engagement with services, key work and move-on.
 - Work in partnership with other agencies including in-house specialist services and external services and activities.
 - Facilitate access to culturally specific services and legal advice where required.
 - Promote social inclusion: encourage, facilitate, and support continuous access to both existing and new positive social networks and activities.
- 3.7 Hostels are preventative services that aims to improve the quality of life, independence and outcomes for service users and reduce reliance on further intervention/services that are also often more costly.

Savings

- 3.8 Following a previous comprehensive review of the services, two savings proposals were put forward in 2021-22 and 2022-23. These two savings proposals have both been at Cabinet through the Medium-Term Financial Savings (MTFS) process.
- 3.9 The first MTFS proposal (SAV / HAC 013 / 21-22) committed to finding a £100,000 saving in the 2022-23 financial year. This was initially proposed to be achieved by improving the pathways between our drug treatment services and hostels provision. However, a specific project to deliver this saving across the two portfolios was not arrived at and it was agreed that this saving could be achieved by remodelling the hostels pathway (specifically the removal of the 21-bed Grieg House building from the Riverside Complex contract). Work to progress this change has now completed and commissioning is now renegotiating the contract values with the service provider (The Salvation Army) and savings will be realised from the last quarter of 2023/24.

- 3.10 The second MTFs proposal (SAV / HAC 001 / 23-24) outlined a commitment to realise £200k of savings over 2024-25 and 2025-26 through a decommission of a 58-bed hostel (the Dellow Centre) with the balance between the support contract and saving being reinvested into an improved support model for people with complex needs.
- 3.11 The Dellow centre was successfully decanted by 30 September 2023 and has been returned to the landlord. Integrated Commissioning is now working with the service provider (Providence Row Housing Association) to fulfil any remaining contractual obligations and savings will be realised from the last quarter of 2023/24.

Investment into the Pathway

- 3.12 It is proposed that the balance of funds following the Dellow Centre Decommission will be ringfenced and reinvested into the hostel's pathway. Specifically, Officers are exploring options to improve access to statutory services for homeless residents through the provision of specialist health and social care workers. A strong academic case has been made for these posts nationally and it is our intention to explore the potential impact in Tower Hamlets by running a "Care Coordination pilot" which has been set-up as part of the Tower Hamlets Together (THT) Improving Equity Programme.
- 3.13 The pilot has brought together colleagues from Adult Social Care, the Health Trusts, Primary Care, Substance Misuse and Housing who will work with a small cohort of hostel residents and track the impact of care coordination over a 12-month period.
- 3.14 The project has been established using Quality Improvement (QI) principles and we have allocated business analyst support from East London Foundation Trust (ELFT). It is hoped that by bringing colleagues together and utilising a multi-disciplinary team approach the project will evidence improvements to people's health, independence, and the quality of care received while also improving value for money. Key metrics will include the number of accidents and incidents occurring in services, the number of blue light callouts to hostels, hospital admissions and self-reported satisfaction with the quality of care received.

Contracting Approach

- 3.15 The procurement of these services was originally timetabled to be completed by end of the current contracts (30 September 2023) however there have been challenges with regard to staff capacity as Officers have been focussing on the delivery of operational savings outside of competitive tendering (see savings section above).
- 3.16 The five hostel contracts listed below have been extended via RCDA until 30 November 2023 and it is proposed that all five of these contracts are extended

for a further period of 12 months (up to 30 November 2024) to allow Officers to complete a competitive tender exercise.

| Single homeless hostels | Bed spaces | End date | Value pa |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Riverside Complex Riverside (40 beds for women) Matthew House (20 one bed-flats) | 60 | 30/11/2023 | £446,519 |
| Founders House • 84 beds • 15 bed assessment centre • 19 step-down flats | 123 | 30/11/2023 | £876,868 |
| Providence House • 33 units (one bed flats with en-suite) | 33 | 30/11/2023 | £309,140 |
| Edward Gibbons House • 37 units for male substance misusers only (CQC registered wet hostel) | 37 | 30/11/2023 | £562,965 |
| Daniel Gilbert House • 83 beds • Four bed Assessment Centre • One emergency bed | 88 | 30/11/2023 | £618,563 |

- 3.17 This longer extension period will allow Officers to undertake a review of the emerging needs following the closure of the Dellow Centre and Greig House, the service pathway, service provision and consider better alignment between Hostels and the Mental Health pathway which is also due to be procured in the next year.
- 3.18 The annual contract value for the five hostel contracts for 2024/25 onwards will be determined on an annual basis as part of the annual inflationary uplift negotiations with the respective providers. These will account for national increases in the London Living Wage as well as other price and wage cost pressures in the care market for the sector.
- 3.19 These contract extensions will also enable Officers to carry out the further work required in partnership with Housing to ensure that any new service model for hostels fits with the priorities of the upcoming Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and to ensure that there is comprehensive join up between the hostels and the remaining service and support on the housing pathway.
- 3.20 Finally, this time will also allow Officers to undertake appropriate research/consultation and engagement/co-production which has been highlighted as a gap.

- 3.21 The proposed route to market is to issue one competitive tender with five lots. Each service/lot will have a separate specification and three of the five contracts will require bidders to offer a building. This is due to the incumbent support provider owning the building from which support is currently delivered. Where this is the case, the landlord has confirmed that they will not permit another support provider to deliver a housing related support service from their building.
- 3.22 Officers propose offering a three year contract with three one year extensions (3+1+1+1). This will give providers confidence and stability to recruit longer term-staff (currently providers rely heavily on agency staff) and also allow us to work in partnership to improve the interface(s) with stakeholders and improve the pathway(s) both into independence and into other services.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As part of the commissioning process, Officers will undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment to assess whether the changes to the service and contractual model could have any adverse impacts on those with protected characteristics. Mitigations will then be identified and acted on to minimise any adverse impact.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 Providing hostel accommodation to those who had been rough sleeping or are at risk of rough sleeping reduces the level of street crime and its impact on communities. It also safeguards vulnerable residents often with physical, mental and substance misuse issues.
- 5.3 The new contracts awarded to hostel service providers will need to ensure Best Value for the Council whilst ensuring that staff are paid at least the London Living Wage.
- 5.4 It will be important to ensure that all personal data processed and stored by the providers is kept secure and in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). This will form part of the contract conditions.
- 5.5 Officers will seek evidence of Social Value both during the tender period where this will form 10% of the quality weighting and subsequently work with hostel

service providers to ensure this is realised including increasing apprenticeships, employment, and training opportunities for residents of Tower Hamlets. Hostel service providers will therefore actively seek to improve local employment and where possible offer opportunities to local individuals. This will include opportunities for Service Users as appropriate to the outcomes they are seeking.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The annual contract value for the five hostel contracts, including MTFS savings, amount to £2.805m, at the current agreed contract prices for 2023/24.
- 6.2 Costs are funded within the existing budget in Integrated Commissioning.
- 6.3 A full competitive tender exercise for these contracts will determine if further savings and efficiencies can be identified.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to undertake the activities detailed in this report.
- 7.2 The contract extensions constitute new awards for the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Regulation 32 provides that the Council may negotiate a new award (rather than run a competitive exercise) where competition would be absent for technical reasons and no other reasonable alternative exists.
- 7.3 The Council only requires a comparatively short extension which would not justify the cost of tender borne by the contractor and make such a tender opportunity reasonably uneconomic for a bidder who is not the existing provider. Also, a change of contractor may render it necessary to move service users to new accommodation for a short period of time which would be undesirable both to the Council and the individuals. Therefore, the Council may satisfy itself if tested at law that Regulation 32 would apply to the extensions.
- 7.4 The Council's overall legal duty (and the one under which most procurement challenges arise) in respect of the extensions is not to act anticompetitively. The report references a clear intention to go to market demonstrating that the extensions are borne out of expediency rather than a desire to act anticompetitively.
- 7.5 The Council has a legal duty to obtain Best Value in terms of economy efficiency and effectiveness. A significant contribution to this legal duty is the Council reviewing the nature of its purchases prior to going to market. The one year extensions allow the Council to undertake this review and therefore the extensions contribute to the future satisfaction of this legal duty. Also, the review of the purchased services ensures that over time there is continuous improvement.

- 7.6 The new contracts will be subjected to competition with bidders assessed and chosen against pre-published evaluation criteria. The subsequent contracts will allow for contract monitoring and compliance all of which will further demonstrate the Council's compliance with its Best Value duty.
- 7.7 It is likely that many of the Service Users will have various protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, any decision other than to extend the existing provision may only be taken following further detailed equality analysis so that the Council may properly understand the impact such changes would have on such persons when compared with those people who do not have the same protected characteristics.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None.

Appendices

- None.

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

Ben Gladstone, Deputy Director, Ageing Well- Integrated Commissioning

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| <p>Cabinet</p> <p>29 November 2023</p> |  <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p> |
| <p>Report of: Lisa Fraser, Acting Corporate Director Children’s Services,</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Tower Hamlets Young People’s Supported Housing Pathway contract extensions</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Lead Member | Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor) |
| Originating Officer(s) | Layla Richards, Covering Director Commissioning and Youth |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Key Decision? | Yes |
| Reason for Key Decision | Financial threshold |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 26 October 2-23 |
| Exempt information | None |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | 3. Accelerating education 5. Investing in public services 8. A council that listens and works for everyone |

Executive Summary

The Tower Hamlets Young People’s Supported Housing Pathway (four block contracts) is undergoing a transformative recommission to improve the Council’s placement and support offer for our children in our care and homeless young people. The service provides a safe alternative to housing 16/17-year-olds and young people aged 18-25 who are in and on the edge of care, as well as homeless young people. The service did not go out to tender by the end of the contracted period (30th July 2023) and contract extensions were not put in place in a timely manner. Nevertheless, the tender was published on the 18th September and closes on the 17th November 2023. An RCDA has been put in place from the 1st August 2023 until the 1st December 2023 to enable time to gain Cabinet approval for the remaining months (6 months) of the requested direct contract award. As a result, this report requests approval for direct contract awards from the 1st December until the 1st June 2024 to enable ample time to implement the newly transformed Tower Hamlets Young People’s Supported Living Pathway ensuring minimal disruption for our young people.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the direct contract award request for the Tower Hamlets Young People's Supported Housing Pathway (YPSHP) for six months from the 1st of December 2023 to 1st of June 2024 with a value of £675,892.43.
2. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 To ensure the Tower Hamlets Young People's Supported Housing pathway contracts are extended in line with the procurement timeline and start of new contract.
- 1.2 To ensure continued and high-quality services for our most vulnerable children and young people.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To not put direct contract awards in place. This option is not recommended as these are statutory services that the council must provide for our vulnerable children and young people.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 This Cabinet report is a direct contract award request for the Tower Hamlets Young People's Supported Housing Pathway (YPSHP) for six months from the 1st of December 2023 to 1st of June 2024 with a value of £675,892.43. The pathway serves the borough's Children's Social Care (CSC) and Housing Options and Support team (HOST) with accommodation-based and support services in single and shared units across the borough.
- 3.2 Service background
- 3.3 The council has full nomination rights to all properties and works collaboratively with the service providers to ensure that our young people are placed in suitable accommodation and support hours meet their needs. The service provides a safe alternative to accommodating 16/17-year-olds and young people aged 18-25 who are in and on the edge of care, as well as homeless young people (prioritising young people with Special Educational Needs) and meets the statutory responsibilities of all local authorities under the Children's Act 1989 and 2008.
- 3.4 The current YPSHP includes four block contracts:

| Contract Number | Service name | Annual Value | Contractors |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CS5273 | Young People Assessment & Support Service | £282,636 p/a | One Housing |
| AHS5147 | Tower Hamlets North Young Persons Support Services | £155,599.50 p/a | Providence Row Housing Association |
| AHS5146 | Mile End Road Young Person Support Services | £463,931 p/a | Look Ahead |
| AHS5145 | Tower Hamlets Campbell Road Young People's Support Services | £449,618.36 p/a | Look Ahead |
| | Total | £1,351,784.86 p/a | |

- 3.5 The Young People's Assessment and Support Service contract acts as the entrance to the YPSHP assessing young people unknown to Children's Social Care to identify their support needs. The other three services deliver a wide range of support, from high support placements, i.e. staff on site 24 hours, medium support placements, where staff are on site during the day only, and low support placements, where staff support is provided to young people by visiting their managed properties, and lastly a floating support provision.
- 3.6 The principle aim of the YPSHP is to support our most vulnerable young people in the borough. This varies from young people who may be at risk and /or leaving care and /or at risk of re-offending with a range of complex support needs. It also includes young people who may be homeless or excluded from the family or parental home where mediation has failed or require a supported environment as a step towards independent living. The pathway also ensures that our 16- & 17-year-old young people who are at risk of homelessness are assessed, housed and offered intense support to meet their needs and mediated back to their families if suitable.
- 3.7 The key service objective of the YPSHP is to enable young people to develop the independent living skills required to move on to longer term stable housing, explore life choice options, and become independent.
- 3.8 The YPSHP aims to achieve the following desired outcomes for our young people:
- Enabling young people to continue to work towards independence and achieve better life outcomes.
 - Maximising and improving opportunities for accessing education, training and employment,
 - Improving access to health services and ensuring service users are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles.
 - Helping to facilitate provision for service users in need of care.
 - Decreasing criminal activity and anti-social behaviour by supporting service users to address offending and re-offending behaviour.

- Supporting service users to understand and access sources of assistance in the community that will be able to continue to assist them in the future.
- Improving and encouraging the development of skills and confidence to negotiate safe healthy relationships and support young people to tackle issues affecting their physical, mental and sexual health and well-being.
- Promoting responsible parenting, enabling young people to make informed decisions as to parenthood and where required access appropriate accommodation.

3.9 Contracting approach

3.10 This contract was previously extended through Cabinet approval until the end of July 2023 to enable the commissioners to revise and complete the planning of a transformative recommission of the pathway including:

- Stakeholder consultation – meeting with internal and external stakeholders including Children’s Social Care (CSC), and service users.
- Revising the service specification into one block contract with several service lots that would best meet the needs of our young people and CSC and HOST.
- Revising and completing all tender documentation and completing the procurement of the existing pathway.

3.11 Due to unforeseen circumstances, the service did not go out to tender by the end of the contracted period (30th July 2023) and contract extensions were not put in place in a timely manner. As a result, the service contracts therefore require direct contract awards as the services are now out of contract.

3.12 The value of the requested direct contracts extensions are above the threshold value of £189,000 for a Record of a Corporate Director Action (RCDA) and therefore it must be referred to Cabinet for a decision. Interim RCDAs have been put in place from the 1st August 2023 until the 1st December 2023 to enable time to gain Cabinet approval for the remaining months (6 months) of the requested direct contract award. Cabinet approval is requested for a direct contract award from the 1st of December to the 1st of June 2024 under a value of £675,892.43.

3.13 Way forward

3.14 As of October 2023, commissioners are focused on ensuring a robust procurement timetable is followed and that incumbent providers are continuously supported and in agreement with the direct contract awards.

3.15 All recommissioning actions have been completed and procurement of the service is ongoing. Commissioners have worked closely with the Procurement and Legal team to identify the best way forward to ensure a quality recommission. The tender for the improved TH YP Supported Living Pathway

went live on 18th of September 2023 and is due to close on 17th of November 2023. See Procurement timetable below:

| Event | Date |
|---|--|
| Procurement documents issued | 18 th Sep 2023 |
| Deadline for receipt of Clarification questions | 3 rd November 2023 |
| Deadline for response to supplier questions | 10 th November 2023 |
| Tender return deadline | 17 th Nov 2023 @ 1pm |
| Evaluation | 20 th Nov – 11 th Dec 2023 |
| Moderation | 12 th Dec -15 th Dec 2023 |
| Award Governance | 9 th Jan 2024 |
| Successful bidder notification | 12 th Jan 2024 |
| End of Standstill Period | 22 nd Jan 2024 |
| Contract Award | 23 rd Jan 2024 |
| Contract start date | 1 ^s June 2024 |

- 3.16 Capacity within the service is being strengthened through recent permanent recruitment and staff have been identified to lead on the award and implementation of the tender and new contract with support of the permanent senior commissioning manager and Head of Service. In the interim, senior commissioners have supported the incumbent provider in their continued delivery and the provider has maintained good performance levels.
- 3.17 Moreover, additional governance is being put in place to ensure that the transformation of the YP Supported Living Pathway remains on track. Firstly, the Young People Placement Pathway Board is being reinstated. This will be co-chaired by the Director of Commissioning and Youth and the Director of Supporting Families. Managers from across Children’s Social Care, Housing, Finance, Procurement and Legal will be required to attend to oversee the evaluation, award, and implementation of the new pathway. Task & finish groups are also being set up that will report into this board to oversee the operational tasks ensuring the lives of our young people are minimally disrupted. In addition, monthly updates will be provided to the Children’s Services DLT which will provide greater oversight going forward.

- 3.18 It is vital that sufficient time and resource is allocated to complete the tender, tender evaluation, contract award and implementation of the transformed YP Supported Living Pathway ensuring the lives of our young people who live in the pathway are impacted minimally.
- 3.19 An implementation period of four months (1st February to 1st June 2024) is recommended as the transition to the new pathway will impact the lives of our young people. If new providers win the new contract, and/ or new properties are allocated to the pathway, providers need to ensure their properties are ready for move in and young people will have to be moved. Commissioners are anticipating that new properties as well as new providers will bid as the new pathway model is different to the previous pathway, and as a result, change in some shape or form will be inevitable. This will have a big impact on the lives of our young people as well as on our internal teams across CSC and HOST. It will require careful and timely planning to ensure that young people are consulted and given a choice to ensure their lives are minimally disrupted. The current pathway holds over 150 placements (including 16 & 17 years old, children in our care/ care leavers and young people at risk of homelessness) and if young people are not ready for move on to permanent accommodation by June 2024, the young people will require a placement in the new pathway. The new placements need to be agreed by CSC and HOST and will have to continue to meet their needs and offer them a new safe home. This realistically requires four months. These are some of our most vulnerable children and young people and we need to allow the time needed to support them appropriately. Initial conversations with CSC and HOST have started and we are beginning to map out the different needs and preferences of all young people currently placed in the pathway with the aim to have a clear plan early in the new year.
- 3.20 It would thus be in the best interest of the Council and service users to offer a direct contract award, from 1st December 2023 to 1st June 2024.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required at this stage as this direct contract award is to ensure continued service not a service change or recommission. The YPSHP supports our most vulnerable children and young people in our borough and ensuring equal housing and support for them is offered through these contracts lies at the heart it.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration.
- 5.2 The YPSHP is crucial to safeguard our most vulnerable children and young people offering them safe and homely housing and support that meets their needs.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The costs of these contracts are within the current revenue budget, if a extension of the contract was not agreed and we reverted to spot purchases cost are likely to increase significantly.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to undertake the activities detailed in this report.
- 7.2 The Council has a legal duty to subject these contracts to competition. However, the Council also has a legal duty to provide the services to the individuals and so a break in service provision would be untenable as this would breach the Council's statutory duty and leave vulnerable people at risk. Therefore, the most expedient measure is to extend the existing contracts in order to provide the time to deliver an appropriate tender exercise.
- 7.3 The Council is also required to demonstrate statutory Best Value in terms of economy efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of its functions. The contract awards will be subject to the existing terms and conditions which will support the Council when monitoring delivery of the services. Also, the award of the short term contracts in themselves represent Best Value as the award will prevent a breach of the Council's statutory duty.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- NONE

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

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| <p>Cabinet</p> <p>29 November 2023</p> |  |
| <p>Report of: Acting Corporate Director Children’s Services, Lisa Fraser</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Tower Hamlets Young People’s Advocacy Service contract extension</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Lead Member | Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor) |
| Originating Officer(s) | Layla Richards, Covering Director Commissioning and Youth |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Key Decision? | Yes |
| Reason for Key Decision | Financial threshold |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 26 October 2023 |
| Exempt information | None |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | 3. Accelerating education 5. Investing in public services 8. A council that listens and works for everyone |

Executive Summary

The Tower Hamlets Young People’s Advocacy Service is undergoing a service review to plan a transformative recommission to improve the Council’s support offer for our children in our care. The service offers independent and confidential advice, information, representation, and support to our children in our care. It plays a vital role in safeguarding children and young people, protecting them from harm and neglect and helps to empower them to reach their potential and uphold their human rights. The service did not complete the recommission by the end of the contracted period (30th June 2023) and contract extensions were not put in place in a timely manner. An RCDA has been put in place from the 1st July 2023 until the 1st February 2024 to enable time to gain Cabinet approval for the remaining months (6 months) of the requested direct contract award. As a result, this report requests approval for a direct contract award from the 1st February 2024 until the 1st of August 2024 to enable time to design and implement the newly transformed Tower Hamlets Young People’s Advocacy and Independent Visitors service ensuring minimal disruption for our children and young people.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the direct contract award request for the Tower Hamlets Young People's Advocacy service for six months from the 1st of February 2024 to 1st of August 2024 with a value of £55,572.
2. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 To ensure the Tower Hamlets Young People's Advocacy Service contract is extended in line with the transformative recommission timeline and start of the new Advocacy and Independent Visitors contract.
- 1.2 To ensure continued and high-quality service for our most vulnerable children and young people.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To not put a direct contract award in place. This option is not recommended as the Advocacy service is a statutory service that the Council must provide for our vulnerable children and young people.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 This Cabinet report is a direct contract award request for the Tower Hamlets Young People's Advocacy Service contract for six months from the 1st of February 2024 to 1st of August 2024 with a value of £55,572.5. The contract serves the council's children in our care with independent and confidential advice, information, representation, and support.
- 3.2 Service background
- 3.3 Advocacy is a statutory service required for all local authorities with social services responsibilities. The service offers independent and confidential advice, information, representation, and support to our children in our care. It plays a vital role in safeguarding children and young people, protecting them from harm and neglect and helps to empower them to reach their potential and uphold their human rights.
- 3.4 The service is currently delivered by Barnardo's with an annual value of £111,145. The provider ensures up to ninety children in our care (including children with disabilities) per year receive independent and confidential advice, information, and representation, while ensuring they have

their wishes and feelings heard and views responded to appropriately. The service aims to increase 'choice and control' of our children in our care and increase their safety and stability. Moreover, the service aims to consistently empower them by exercising their rights and having their voice heard when key decisions are being made regarding their lives. The service is also crucial in supporting our children in our care in their transition to adulthood.

- 3.5 Commissioners have been continuously working with Children's Social Care and it was identified that it would be in the best interest of, and best meet the needs, of our children in care if the Advocacy service contract was aligned with the Independent Visitors service and they were recommissioned as one integrated contract (this approach has already been approved by Cabinet in 2021).
- 3.6 The requested direct contract award extension period will enable an integrated review of the advocacy and independent visitors service provisions to take place prior to the procurement of an integrated service contract. The intention is to complete the consultations, service review and needs analysis over the next few months with a view of going out to the market in the Spring period.
- 3.7 Contracting approach
- 3.8 This contract was previously extended through an RCDA from 30/06/22 for 1 year to 30/06/23 (£111,145) to enable commissioners to review the current service provision and plan the transformative recommission of the service including:
- Joint service review with independent visitors
 - Market warming
 - Stakeholder consultation – meeting with internal and external stakeholders including Children's Social Care (CSC), and service users.
 - Service specification review – identify gaps in service and include service improvements.
 - Agree contract value and contract term with CSC
- 3.9 Due to unforeseen circumstances, the service did not complete the above actions by the end of the contracted period (30th June 2023) and contract extensions were not put in place in a timely manner. As a result, the service contract therefore requires a direct contract award as the service is now out of contract.
- 3.10 The value of the requested direct contract extension combined with the previous awarded RCDA is above the threshold value of £189,000 for a Record of a Corporate Director Action (RCDA) and therefore it must be referred to Cabinet for a decision. An interim RCDA has been put in place from the 1st July 2023 until the 1st February 2024 to enable time to gain Cabinet approval for the remaining months (6 months) of the requested direct

contract award. Cabinet approval is requested for a direct contract award from the 1st of February to the 1st of August 2024 under a value of £55,572.5.

3.11 Way forward

3.12 As of October 2023, commissioners are focused on ensuring a robust service review is conducted and that incumbent providers are continuously supported and in agreement with the direct contract awards.

3.13 Capacity within the commissioning service is being strengthened through recent permanent recruitment (due to start by January 2024). The newly recruited staff have been identified to lead on the service review, recommission, procurement and implementation of the new integrated contract with support of the permanent senior commissioning manager and Head of Service. In the interim, commissioners have supported the incumbent provider in their continued delivery and the provider has maintained good performance levels.

3.14 It is vital that sufficient time and resource is allocated to complete the integrated service review along with the independent visitor's service, consultations, market warming, procurement, and implementation of the transformed contract. Considering the capacity in the team (newly appointed staff due to start by January 2024), the ongoing transformation of the Tower Hamlets Young People's Supported Living Pathway that is ongoing simultaneously until Summer 2024, as well as the importance of ensuring a quality recommission that minimally disrupts the lives of our service users, commissioners recommend a direct contract award of at least six months.

3.15 Commissioners have held extensive meetings with Procurement and after careful consideration an extension as set out below is recommended. Procurement have advised that a minimum period of six-months is required to complete the procurement process, prior to which the service review, consultations, and service redesign must have been completed. The table below sets out a recommended procurement timetable:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Integrated service review | Nov/ Dec 2023 |
| Consultations with service users and internal and external stakeholders | Dec 23 / Jan 2024 |
| Pre-market engagements | Jan/ Feb 2024 |
| Final Specifications | Feb 2024 |
| Terms and conditions | Feb 2024 |
| ITT documentation | Feb 2024 |
| Tender stage | March 2024 |
| Evaluation & Moderation | April 2024 |
| Award report & approval | April 2024 |
| Contract Award | April 2024 |
| Mobilisation | May to July 2024 |
| Contract start date | 1 st August 2024 |

- 3.16 As set out in the table above, a mobilisation period of at least three months is recommended. During the mobilisation period, the service changes will have to be put into a clear operational plan with the service users, CSC, commissioners, and the winning provider ensuring the improved service offer will be implemented in a clear and visible manner that speaks to all our children in our care. Moreover, if a new provider wins the contract, young people will have to be (re)matched with new advocates and independent visitors. This will require careful and timely planning between the incumbent and new provider, service users and CSC to ensure that their lives are minimally disrupted.
- 3.17 It would thus be in the best interest of the council and service users to offer a direct contract award, from 1st February 2024 to 1st August 2024.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required at this stage as this direct contract award is to ensure continued service, not a service change or recommission. The Advocacy Service supports our most vulnerable children and young people in our borough and ensuring equal support for them is offered through this contract is of upmost importance.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 The advocacy service is crucial to safeguard our most vulnerable children and young people offering them support ensuring their voices are being heard and their needs are met.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This contract is funded through current budgets and offers a good value option compared to individual purchased cases.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to undertake the activities detailed in this report.
- 7.2 The Council has a legal duty to subject these contracts to competition. However, the Council also has a legal duty to provide the services to the individuals and so a break in service provision would be untenable as this would breach the Council's statutory duty and leave vulnerable people at risk. Therefore, the most expedient measure is to extend the existing contracts in order to provide the time to deliver an appropriate tender exercise.
- 7.3 The Council is also required to demonstrate statutory Best Value in terms of economy efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of its functions. The contract awards will be subject to the existing terms and conditions which will support the Council when monitoring delivery of the services. Also, the award of the short term contracts in themselves represent Best Value as the award will prevent a breach of the Council's statutory duty

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- NONE

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Cabinet</p> <p>29 November 2023</p> |  |
| <p>Report of: Robin Beattie, Acting Director Strategy Improvement and Transformation</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023 – 2028: A Tower Hamlets for All</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Lead Member | Mayor Lutfur Rahman |
| Originating Officer(s) | Abidah Kamali – Senior Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy and Improvement Service |
| Wards affected | All Wards |
| Key Decision? | No |
| Reason for Key Decision | N/A |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 21 April 2023 |
| Exempt information | N/A |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | All |

Executive Summary

The council’s Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026) sets out our commitment to develop a new partnership plan in collaboration with our key stakeholders which includes residents, faith, businesses, voluntary and community sector, and public sector organisations. A ‘Tower Hamlets for All’ our new Partnership Plan 2023-2028 provides an opportunity for our local strategic partnership to seize current opportunities and address the most pressing challenges for residents and the borough through partnership collaboration and leadership.

A growing population and austerity has already hit our public services hard. High needs and service pressures are further exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic, a housing crisis, climate emergency, and the cost-of-living crisis on a population with high pre-existing health inequalities and poverty. The new Tower Hamlets Plan brings partners together to harness opportunities and promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough and our residents, supported by a set of shared partnership outcomes.

This report provides a new shared vision for the borough which is ‘residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, advance equality and

opportunities and empower communities.’ The Plan sets out five key cross-cutting calls to action (priorities) which focus on the issues that matter most to residents and where the partnership can achieve most by working together. The Plan has been developed by a partnership Task and Finish Group and shaped by evidence and insight including key findings from the 2021 census data, a state of the borough paper and stakeholder and community engagement which included involvement of over 700 people through a range of mechanism including events and a survey.

The priorities in this plan will be delivered by the borough’s thematic partnership boards – with action plans developed supported by shared resources and identifying any costed delivery plans as appropriate. Thematic partnership boards will provide an update at least annually to the Partnership Executive Group, drawing out any opportunities or challenges which the wider partnership needs to come together to solve. Our success will be measured, and progress will be reported in an annual report.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Our local strategic partnership the Tower Hamlets Partnership brings organisations and communities together to improve services and outcomes for our residents. It aims to provide residents with opportunities to shape, influence and inform the development of the borough’s main partnership plans. It seeks to improve the way services are designed and delivered as well as achieving key outcomes.
- 1.2 The partnership's most recent Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-2023 to ‘build a stronger, more inclusive and fairer borough’ comes to an end soon. The council’s Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026) sets out our commitment to develop a new shared vision and ambition for the borough in collaboration with residents, businesses, faith, voluntary and community sector, and public sector organisations.
- 1.3 The Partnership is on a journey of transformation and improvement. A new shared vision and Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan for 2023-2028 will support a focused strategic partnership effort to seize current opportunities and address the most pressing challenges for residents and the borough through partnership leadership and delivery with the council. It will underpin effective collaboration across a range of partnership activities and extend and deepen relationships with residents and with community, voluntary and faith groups.
- 1.4 The new Partnership Plan demonstrates the council’s commitment to partnership and leadership of place and is also a starting point in making progress towards two recommendations made by the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, 2023.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not developing a new Partnership Plan for 2023-2028 will leave the Tower Hamlets Partnership without a clear vision and focus for collaboration to deliver better outcomes for residents. This might also hinder the Tower Hamlets Partnership's ability to seek collective agreement from its strategic partners on borough priorities to 2028 and result in missed opportunities to tackle social challenges, for growth and socio-economic development.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Community leadership is at the heart of the role of a modern local authority. The Local Government Act 2000 enables authorities to work in partnership with other bodies to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the local area, and its people. Whilst there is no longer a requirement in law for a local strategic partnership and a community strategy, most local areas have an overarching partnership and plan.
- 3.2 The Tower Hamlets Partnership is the borough's local strategic partnership. It is a coalition of public services (including council, health, police and education), voluntary and community sector, faith and business organisations committed to making Tower Hamlets a great place for all who live, work, visit and study here through a shared vision.
- 3.3 It brings together key stakeholders to improve outcomes for local residents, including through service redesign, and resident involvement in the development of the borough's main partnership plans. The Partnership is not a service provider in its own right. It works through the activities of all the partners, taking a systems approach, co-ordinating and facilitating improvements and joining up work where needed.
- 3.4 A new Partnership Plan helps us to extend our practical, community-oriented approach to seize new opportunities and address through partnership collaboration the challenges and ambitions of our residents. It also helps us agree on new shared system-wide improvement principles and priorities for partnership, including influencing decisions and holding each other to

account, and embedding the council's strategic plan priorities, where there is a cross-cutting partnership influence.

- 3.5 The 2021 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Revisit noted the importance of the partnership response to the pandemic and the partners' strong commitment to a shared ambition for Tower Hamlets. The most recent 2023 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge considered the local authority's 'Leadership of Place' role and its relationships with partners and external stakeholders, making two key recommendations.
- 3.6 The new Partnership Plan considers recent changes to bring policy and partnership arrangements into line with statutory, and national government requirements. For example:
- The role of the Tower Hamlets Together Board has evolved following the Health and Care Act 2022. An Integrated Care System is now in place in North East London. Tower Hamlets Together (THT) operates as a place-based partnership within this system, reporting into the borough's Health and Wellbeing Board. Additionally, the THT Board also functions as a sub-committee of the Integrated Care Board under the NHS Accountability Framework.
 - The Community Safety Partnership and its members will be expected to meet the requirements of a Serious Violence Duty introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.
 - A local Combatting Drugs Partnership has been formed in line with the requirements of the Government's 10-year drugs plan 'From harm to hope'. This partnership reports into the Community Safety Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
 - The government published an Improvement plan for SEND and alternative provision in March 2023, but decisions to legislate new SEND standards will only be made after three years following policy trials. Local SEND and alternative provision partnerships are to be introduced.
 - Specific reviews and task forces are underway or proposed involving partners to look at priority areas including homelessness, damp and mould, and crime reduction.
- 3.7 In Autumn 2022, the council and Partnership Executive Group agreed on the process for developing a new Partnership Plan for the borough, supported by a partnership Task and Finish Group.

A new Shared Vision

- 3.8 The strategic vision for the partnership and plan that the partnership will strive to achieve over the next 5 years working with the community is '**Residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, advance equality, opportunity, and empowered communities.**' This is developed in the context of population growth and demographic changes, inequalities, and the social, health, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities for our residents, the borough, and partnership over the coming years.

- 3.9 A set of shared values and system-wide improvement principles are introduced to guide the way we work, strengthen partnership working and collaboration and improve trust, accountability and outcomes for our residents and borough – these align with the most recent principles adopted for improving the health, care, and wellbeing of our residents.

System-wide improvement principles:

- Research-led and evidence-informed
- Data Sharing
- Better targeting
- Stronger networks
- Equalities and anti-racism
- Community first and coproduction
- Open and transparent
- Best use of assets and resources
- Celebrating place and promoting the borough (TH_IS)
- Sustainability and climate change

Our shared outcomes:

- Address inequalities between residents from different backgrounds reducing gaps in health, earnings, education, housing, and opportunity
- Improve our neighbourhoods, ensuring they are places for living, shopping and entertainment where communities feel safe and get on well together, and climate change is tackled

Our shared aims:

- More people are able to live, work, learn and play in ways that meet their needs in the borough
- Tower Hamlets has better neighbourhoods which support good health and wellbeing, and where all people feel safe, belong and get on well

Call to action 1: Tower Hamlets will be a fair, inclusive and an anti-racist borough.

What we will do together:

1.1 Work in partnership to reduce unequal life chances.

1.2 Fulfil our partnership ambition to make Tower Hamlets an anti-racist borough.

Call to action 2: Everyone in Tower Hamlets should be able to enjoy good mental health and wellbeing.

What we will do together:

2.1 Promote good mental health for adults, children and young people and our staff

Call to action 3: Everyone in Tower Hamlets should feel safe and live in good-quality homes and healthy, inviting neighbourhoods

What we will do together:

3.1 Support safer communities

3.2 A Public Health approach using guidance and insight

3.3 Address housing needs and improve our neighbourhoods

Call to action 4: Everyone in Tower Hamlets should have access to good work and skills and an income that meets their needs

What we will do together:

4.1 Promote inward investment and create wealth

4.2 Support skills development, good work and financial security

Call to action 5: A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to

What we will do together:

5.1 Improve the life chances and outcomes of our children and young people

Developing the Partnership Plan

- 3.10 A Partnership Task and Finish Group led work on developing the new Partnership Plan, comprising cross-sector representatives. The group met eight times to review evidence and insight, and discuss priorities, opportunities and options to add value to existing partnership work. This includes reviewing existing partnership strategies and benchmarking of neighbouring borough partnership plans, to help inform a shared vision and greater influence for the Mayor and partnership.
- 3.11 The group decided that the new Partnership Plan should focus on practical action that improves residents' lives. It has agreed on a 'call to action' approach – with a small number of cross-cutting priorities where the partnership can make a real difference working together. This will sit alongside the strategic priorities set by the thematic partnership boards.

Evidence for the Partnership Plan

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- 3.12 Our engagement of over 700 people has shaped the priorities for the new Partnership Plan. A full analysis report has been prepared as a background paper: this includes data from our stakeholder and community engagement, Annual Residents Survey 2023, new grants programme 2023, the Pupil Attitude Survey 2022, and other key sources of information about residents' and stakeholders' perspectives and priorities – 'What matters to residents', Appendix C.
- Around 24 engagement events were held involving more than 450 residents and stakeholders. These events have ranged from stalls in Idea Stores and Warm Hubs, to sessions with community, faith and youth groups, webinars for residents, and specific sessions with community equality networks.
 - A Tower Hamlets for All survey ran from 4 December 2022 to 30 January 2023, attracting 262 online and hard copy responses. 64% (168) of respondents are residents and 24% (63) work in the borough.
 - Additional engagements include with the Partnership Executive Group, chairs of partnership boards, council officers, cabinet members, a session

at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and discussions by request at management teams and partnership boards.

3.13 Through the various engagement residents have told us:

What people like most about Tower Hamlets

- The borough's diversity
- Arts, culture, shops, restaurants, and historical districts
- Tower Hamlets' location, transport connections to central London and proximity to River Thames and the canal
- Public spaces such as local parks and green spaces.

The issues people would like action on

- Housing conditions and the need for more affordable and family-sized homes
- Public spaces, air quality and transport
- Crime, violence, and anti-social behavior
- Poverty and the cost of living
- Access to health and GP services, better mental health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities
- More community spirit and neighborliness
- Opportunities for young people in education, employment and careers
- Equal access to opportunities for young people, women and all our residents from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic communities to learning, skills and job opportunities and career progression
- Celebrating the borough and its people
- Fairness, cohesion and opportunities for all
- Building personal and community responsibility
- Sharing the benefits from regeneration, growth and economic opportunities

3.14 Housing, poverty and cost of living, air quality, equality, and community safety are running themes of importance for people. A large proportion of people have cited a clean and green borough and improved air quality as their vision for Tower Hamlets in 10 years' time.

3.15 In November 2022, senior officers from the council, cabinet members and the wider partnership participated in a prioritisation exercise to identify their top priorities for partnership. Young people were asked to do the same and identified a child-friendly borough followed by tackling the housing crisis and tackling poverty and the cost of living as their top 3 priorities. Other priorities around jobs and skills, health, environment, joining up services and community activism scored lower.

3.16 In July 2023 a partnership theory of change workshop was held to support the partnership plan development. This helped to further develop the shared partnership vision identifying key aims, outcomes and development of evidence bases linked to key partnership strategies.

- 3.17 Our residents and partners agree that this new Partnership Plan should concentrate on a core set of priorities. Our five cross-cutting calls to action (priorities) focus on the issues which matter most to residents and where we can achieve most by working together. Each can add value to current work and prepare us for the challenges and opportunities of the future, supported also by a theory of change attached at Appendix B and the strategic plans of partnership boards.
- 3.18 Other priorities identified will be picked up by existing strategies and partnerships and background evidence papers will be shared to help shape new strategies and plans. Where this new Partnership Plan can add value to our current sector-specific strategies and improve cross-partnership working and collaboration on specific strategic plan or partnership priorities, this has been prioritised.

Evidence for the Partnership Plan: A State of the Borough paper

- 3.19 A 'State of the Borough' paper (Appendix D) was prepared in March 2023 as a background paper for the partnership plan. This document uses data available from Census 2021, alongside the most recent publicly available statistics to provide a short, factual overview of the borough's population, housing, health and socio-economic characteristics together with a narrative that focuses on the borough's assets and opportunities. It identifies the most important changes the borough's population have experienced in recent years.

Some of the messages arising from the paper about Tower Hamlets include:

- Fastest growing population in England (22 per cent rise between 2011 and 2021)
- Most densely populated area in England (15,695 residents per square kilometre)
- Youngest median age of any area (30 years)
- Disproportionately comprised of working age adults (71% of all residents were aged 20-64)
- Ethnically diverse with the largest Bangladeshi population in the country (107,333 residents, 34.6% of the population). A growing Somali population.
- A relatively large proportion of residents identify their sexual orientation as Lesbian Gay, Bisexual or other (7.2%) compared to England and Wales as a whole (3.1%) and about one per cent of residents have a different gender identity to their sex registered at birth.
- 70% of dwellings are rented, split roughly equally between social renters and private renters, with significant levels of overcrowding
- Lessening deprivation but highly deprived populations of older people and children, with significant need for support services
- Healthy life expectancy at birth increased by 11 percentage points for males and 2 percentage points for females between 2011-13 and 2018-2020, although this data pre-dates the pandemic
- A larger economy than the cities of Birmingham, Manchester or Leeds, with more jobs (291,000) than working age residents

Further detail also available in the Partnership Plan.

Partnership Plan Implementation

- 3.20 The priorities in this plan will be delivered by the borough's thematic partnership boards – with action plans developed supported by shared resources and identifying any costed delivery plans as appropriate. Thematic partnership boards will provide an update at least annually to the Partnership Executive Group, drawing out any opportunities or challenges which the wider partnership needs to come together to solve. Our success will be measured, and progress will be reported in an annual report.
- 3.21 We will communicate and challenge each other as organisations and partnership boards to raise standards and tackle the most difficult issues.
- 3.22 Every organisation in the partnership will contribute to delivering the priorities by building partnership objectives into their own strategic and corporate plans.
- 3.23 Twice-yearly Mayor's partnership congresses are also planned. The congresses will bring together a wide range of residents, stakeholders and partners to find solutions to the biggest issues that face Tower Hamlets, by leveraging partnership working in a more effective way. The first Partnership Congress was held on 14 November 2023, with a focus on community safety. Participants worked together to shape a set of tangible commitments and charter to improve outcomes around crime and anti-social behaviour.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Inequality and poverty is at the heart of the challenges and social issues that our residents face. The Tower Hamlets Partnership is determined to tackle this head-on, putting our communities first and placing equality, fairness, and justice at the heart of everything we do. We will work together so that everyone can benefit from the social, cultural and economic wealth of the borough.
- 4.2 The Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan is a broad plan of action which will help to reduce inequalities and ensure that partners fulfil their duties under the equality act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. It will also support the fulfilment of the council's equality objectives set out in priority six of the council's Strategic Plan 2022-26.
- 4.3 Its focus is on reducing inequalities and meeting the needs of our diverse communities, through five key cross-cutting calls to action (priorities), that are most important to residents and where the partnership feels it can empower action. It is also informed by two background evidence papers which include data and insight about groups with protected characteristic (where this is available) and about inequalities faced in the borough.
- 4.4 Action areas in the Partnership Plan to address inequalities include:

- A fair, inclusive and an anti-racist borough
- Tackling poverty and the cost of living
- Reducing health inequalities and improving healthy life expectancy
- Reducing the employment rate gap for women and other protected groups
- Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training
- Delivering more affordable homes, tackling overcrowding and its wider impact and implications
- Adopt a local community wealth-building approach
- Supporting the needs of our SEND and care experienced young people, safeguarding, and increasing family resilience
- Tackling childhood obesity

4.5 An equality impact assessment is attached at Appendix E.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 Best value authorities are under a general Duty of Best Value to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Partnership Plan supports this duty through leadership of place, partnership collaboration and review and implementation of system-wide improvement principles to improve the sharing of resources, and information, creating efficiencies for the council and across the partnership, whilst delivering better outcomes for the borough.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 Delivery of the Partnership Plan will be met through existing resources. Should any additional resources be required, these will need to be approved through the appropriate governance route.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1. In furtherance of the proposed plan the Council will need to comply with all

Relevant equalities legislation and with its best value duties to ensure continuous improvement. Partnership working may require the development of contractual relationships which may require formal documentation or appropriate memorandums of understanding to be drawn up.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- List any linked reports

Appendices

- A: Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028
- B: Theory of Change
- C: Background Paper: What matters to residents
- D: Background Paper: State of the Borough
- E: Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

Abidah Kamali, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer

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TH Partnership Plan - theory of change chart

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| AIM | Residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, advance equality, opportunity, and empowered communities | | | | | | | |
| | More people are able to live, work, learn and play in ways that meet their needs in the borough | | | | Tower Hamlets has better neighbourhoods which support good health and wellbeing, and where all people feel safe, belong and get on well | | | |
| SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES | Increased uptake in training, education and skills development and more people access the help and benefits that they are entitled to | More young people are able to access support and provision to help them learn, develop and achieve | More people access better, more effective and targeted physical and mental health support that they need | Housing provision in the borough improves and more people are able to access and benefit from local spaces and amenities | Community safety has a greater profile across the borough and work is more effective and efficient in addressing key issues. | More people in Tower Hamlets are aware of the anti-racist borough approach and wider anti-discrimination work and the work becomes more impactful over time | There are more opportunities for people from different backgrounds to meet and work together towards collective aims in Tower Hamlets | Action on the climate crisis becomes more effective and integrated into other policy areas |
| | People in the borough have a greater awareness of their options, entitlements and rights and partners are working more closely together to help people manage transitions and meet their needs | Support and provision for young people across the borough becomes more joined up, with fewer gaps in services and more referrals between partners | More joined up and evidence based health and wellbeing provision and referrals take place | There is a better and more efficient use of resources amongst partners and stronger collective voice in advocacy and change-making | An increase in cross-promotion of police and non-police work to make a more efficient use of existing community safety resource and capacity | Increased partner profile at events, less duplication of works and a more effective use of existing resources | There is a better and larger evidence base of community need in the borough and policies and actions better reflect these | A greater amount of joint working and advocacy on carbon emissions and air quality takes place between partners in Tower Hamlets |
| | Partners have a better actionable understanding of gaps in local support around employment, skills and aspiration and are more able to positively influence and support employers in the borough | Partners have a better actionable understanding of how to enable young people in Tower Hamlets around their rights, education and reaching their goals | Partners have a better collective understanding of local need, gaps and barriers to access and have a more awareness of their own strengths and existing resource | Partners have a clearer vision and better evidence base for addressing housing need and improving the built environment in Tower Hamlets | A greater evidence base for community safety issues across Tower Hamlets develops between partners and areas of joint interest are identified | There is common commitment to anti-racism across the partnership and a clear approach to addressing discrimination in Tower Hamlets in both policy and practice | The VCS and the voices of all in the borough are included and heard in more partnership working and events in the borough | Partners have a common and actionable understanding of climate crisis issues in the borough and have a more cohesive approach to working together on these |
| ACTIVITIES | Aspiration and financial resilience Growth and Economic Development Plan (2018-2023) | Children and young people Children and Families Partnership Strategy (2024-2029) | Health and Wellbeing Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2021-2025) | Housing and the built environment Affordability homes delivery Improving housing conditions Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy (under development) New Local Plan (under development) | Community Safety Community Safety Partnership Plan (2021-2024) | Anti-racism and discrimination Inequalities Commission Action Plan | Cohesion and active citizenship Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy (2020-2024) | Environmental sustainability Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan |

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Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

Overview of resident engagement

The engagement of the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan – ‘Tower Hamlets (TH) for All’ sought to gather views of those who live, work, study and visit the borough using various methods and wide-ranging channels to ensure the views of different groups in the borough are heard. Over 700 people were involved. This included: a Tower Hamlets for All Survey resulting in 262 responses over a period of two months (December 2022 – January 2023); virtual engagement events and a series of in- person events with 464 people engaged.

This background paper also draws on a number of other research and engagement exercises carried out with residents since 2020, with a focus on those exercises where residents shared their views on a wide range of topics. It includes information from the 2023 Annual Residents Survey which provides responses from a representative sample of 1,117 residents. In addition, it includes information from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey, the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review, the 2023 New Grants Programme Engagement, the 2021 Health and Wellbeing Strategy engagement, the 2023 Healthy Neighbourhoods project, and the Children’s and Families Strategy engagement.

The purpose of this is to help inform the priorities of a new Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028, by providing an overview of the issues that residents think are most important, what they do and don’t like about the borough and services, and the changes they would like to see.

It is important that the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan takes account of the views of residents from diverse backgrounds. The ‘Tower Hamlets for All’ engagement worked with younger and older residents from different backgrounds and communities, including groups which are part of the Equality Network. Where possible, this paper notes where specific groups of residents had a particular view of an issue, but this level of disaggregated information is limited.

What residents like about Tower Hamlets

Very positive varied views about what makes the borough a special place

Respondents to the Tower Hamlets for All engagement had varying things they liked about the borough and what they felt makes it special. Respondents could select multiple responses. 37% liked the arts, culture, shops, restaurants, and historical parts of the borough, 37% liked the diversity in the borough, 33% liked the location of the borough including the good transport links to central London

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and the proximity to River Thames and the canal, and 25% liked the public spaces in the borough such as the local parks and green spaces. Below were some of their responses:

“There’s growth and opportunities in the borough.” (Residents webinar)

“I like the sites and attractions.” (Residents webinar)

“It’s one of the oldest parts of London.” (Residents webinar)

“I like the Canary Wharf development and the growing arts, culture and restaurant scene. Excellent transport links and proximity to central London and Greenwich - best of both worlds.” (TH for All Survey)

“It’s History and cultural significance.” (TH for All Survey)

“The infrastructure that supports the needs of Muslims - mosques, restaurants range of halal cuisines, shops etc.” (TH for All Survey)

“The IDEA stores, markets, and the parks in Wapping.” (TH for All Survey)

“It’s a great part of London with lots of diversity, multiculturalism and unity, the skyline, the limitless food options and shops, open parks, and the sites and attractions.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“I like the youth centres and programmes.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“The schools and fun stuff to do, the local accessible youth clubs.” (Haileybury Youth Centre)

“The multiculturalism and history of the borough.” (Haileybury Youth Centre)

“The diversity and good sense of community.” (Youth Council)

“What makes Tower Hamlets a special place to live is the sense of community and community work.” (Residents webinar)

“The diversity, limitless food opportunities, and the MIND recovery pathway.” (MIND Activate Café)

“Neighbours and support systems, the opportunities to get involved in groups.” (MIND Activate Café)

“It is an incredibly diverse, exciting and resilient place to work in and has a council that supports inclusive growth.” (TH for All Survey)

“Diversity, sense of community, low traffic neighbourhoods, vibrant economy, good parks, and good public transport.” (TH for All Survey)

“The diversity of people living and working in the borough, who have access to much green space, the waterways and cultural activities that don’t cost anything to enjoy.” (TH for All Survey).

“I like the diversity and multiculturalism, this is a caring borough.” (TH for All Survey)

“The diversity of nationalities and social classes/economic groups.” (TH for All Survey)

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“Friendliness of the people, and that I know my neighbours, first time in all my stay in London. The Multi-cultural vibe (including all the different shops and restaurants). That it is near the Thames and has a lot of green space, including the Cemetery Park Woodland.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tower Hamlets is nice place to live, that’s a handy location for the city and West End, with good facilities and public transport links.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Proximity to the city, Victoria Park, River Thames, Canary Wharf, Brick Lane, Hackney Wick, Regents Canal.” (TH for All Survey)

“Closeness to city, green spaces, community events, good transport links.” (TH for All Survey)

“We love our local school, Victoria Park, cafes, the Bethnal green library, the book shops and the sense of community and neighbourliness.” (TH for All Survey)

“I love where I live! So many parks and green spaces, love the people and the community.” (TH for All Survey)

“I like the outdoor gyms and free football courts.” (TH for All Survey)

Similarly, results from the 2023 Annual Residents Survey reveals that a large proportion of residents (78%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Findings from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey show that 62% of children and young people think that the park and play areas in the borough are good. Even more so the case for primary aged children (65%), who were significantly more likely to think positively of their local parks and play areas than secondary aged young people (46%).

Feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement told us that 43% of residents feel somewhat proud of their neighbourhoods. When comparing different demographics, residents from Bangladeshi backgrounds were most likely to feel extremely proud of their local area, while LGBT+ people were most likely to feel not so proud. The majority of the people also told us that they are likely to continue to live in their area for the next 2 years due to being settled down, having grown up in the area, or generally being happy living in their neighbourhood. While the main reasons for people moving out included traffic and pollution, and the high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Top 3 challenges facing Tower Hamlets

This section describes the top three challenges identified by residents, organised in order of priority in the engagement responses.

Affordable and social housing

Housing was the biggest challenge in the borough raised by respondents to the Tower Hamlets (TH) for All engagement (36%). With some residents saying there’s a lack affordable housing for locals and felt they would have no choice

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but to move out of the borough. Some of these respondents also highlighted issues with overcrowding, saying that they know many single people who have multi-room housing while others are having to live in overcrowded homes. They suggested that there be a re-assessment of local authority rules around tenancy.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, over half of people (53%) said quality and affordable homes was extremely important to them.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 13% of people who responded to the question said housing was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

Below were some of their responses:

“Cost of living crisis will continue in the coming years, especially housing eviction rates.” (Equality Network)

“Cost of living and homelessness.” (MIND Activate Café)

“TH has become very overcrowded (in my area Bethnal Green) – really overcrowded and lots of construction.” (Youth Council)

“Lots of spaces in TH, but not used properly. If you can build houses and help the people who are most in need first. Use the space properly, have some actual grass and green areas with trees and nature... need to modernise and provide with more things for kids, games, benches, grass, toys.” (Youth Council)

“We’re having to move out of the borough, but not because people want to – due to housing costs.” (TH for All Survey)

“Housing – it’s a national problem but you have to start local.” (TH for All Survey)

“Locals are being priced out of housing.” (Resident’s Webinar)

“There is housing shortage for locals - gentrification.” (Resident’s Webinar)

“Overcrowding is an issue – multi-generations and families living together”
(Resident’s Webinar)

“Housing are supposed to do an annual stocktake of stock. Where I live, somebody passed away, they ripped out the adaptations, and gave it to able bodied tenants. They could have kept it and given it to my mum or another person with needs.”
(Carers Forum)

“Where I live, a lot of the 2- or 3-bedroom properties have been bought up in right to buy.” (Carers Forum)

“I’ve noticed a few people in 3-bedroom properties, their partners have died.”
(Carers Forum)

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“Housing has changed a lot. There isn't the accountability. They don't care about the HCA, not even scared of the ombudsman. It used to be more about community, now it's about profit.” (Carers Forum)

“The housing crisis is a public health crisis.” (VCS engagement event)

“We need more opportunities for getting social housing in the borough.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Lack of adequate social housing available, housing waiting lists are very long.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Crisp Street)

“Housing allocations system not working – unfair and properties misused.” (Warm Hub – Tarling Centre)

Findings from the recent 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review further reiterates that overcrowding and unaffordable housing is a challenge for some residents, with detriment to their quality of life as well as strong knock-on effects. The review's findings shows that people felt housing issues affected them in multiple ways. One of the most common issues - especially during the pandemic - was that participants had been unable to pursue other opportunities such as part-time work due to the lack of space at home to work. Children had insufficient space at home to do homework and teenagers said they had little privacy. Furthermore, some residents related stories of having teenage children move out or wanting to move out at 16 or 18 as there simply wasn't the space to accommodate them and their needs, which in turn led to having to support another precarious household over time.

One parent noted *“...all I keep saying is well wait till eighteen and see what you can afford ... it has such a knock-on effect”*. (TH Poverty Review)

Having larger homes where children could stay into adulthood was seen as preferable, both in terms of ensuring a better financial future for young people in the borough, but also in terms of freeing up smaller properties that those teenagers would have originally sought to move into.

The 2021 Annual Residents survey also indicates that the second top concern for residents was lack of affordable housing (36%). In 2023, residents cited the quality of housing as their sixth most top concern (18.2%), followed by homelessness (16.7%).

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement also supports this view, with a quarter of respondents (25%) saying that housing in the borough currently does not meet their needs, and only slightly more people (26%) said that it does. Respondents' comments on this centred on a lack of affordable housing in the borough and the poor condition of social housing.

Public spaces, air quality and transport

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The second biggest challenge highlighted by the TH for All respondents (34%) was air pollution, sanitation of the local environment and waste management. Some of which said it had a negative impact on their perception of the borough, their health, and sense of belonging.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, the most extremely important to people (71%) was good walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure. Also, extremely important (68%) was improved air quality, and cleanliness and beautification of all parts of the borough, not just the affluent parts.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 67% of people who responded to the question said air quality, transport and public spaces were areas we could all work in partnership to do differently.

Some of their responses included:

“Air pollution is a big challenge in Tower Hamlets.” (MIND Activate Café)

“Expansion of ULEZ and the impact of this.” (MIND Activate Café)

“More efforts to tackle road traffic and air pollution.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“More green spaces that improve air quality.” (VCS engagement event)

“More environmentally friendly decisions/initiatives and encouraging people to walk to the shop rather than drive.” (TH for All Survey)

“Encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tower Hamlets' streets and public spaces should be improved through ensuring consistent, high quality cycling and walking infrastructure.” (TH for All Survey)

“More needs to be done to introduce traffic calming and speeding deterrents.” (TH for All Survey)

“Air Quality is currently poor in Tower Hamlets due to current high levels of polluting vehicles using tower hamlets as a through route, and it affects all children badly.” (TH for All Survey)

“Making tower hamlets a greener place to visit will not only help local residents dealing with health impacts of living in inner city London but will encourage strong investment into the area.” (TH for All Survey)

“It depends on the area, how safe or clean the park is. If a park isn't clean it doesn't get used.” (Youth Council)

“We need a cleaner borough.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

Findings from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 engagement also reiterates these findings, where one of the main priorities of residents was wanting a local environment which consisted of better access to nature, green spaces, good air quality achieved through reducing car traffic, and cleaner and safer public spaces.

Furthermore, the 2023 Annual Residents Survey highlights that the third top concern for residents was the level of litter and dirt in streets (30%).

Feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates that over a third (36%) of the residents who responded said they would like to see an improvement in the overall cleanliness in public spaces by stopping littering and graffitiing, increasing the number of recycling facilities and improving the waste collection services and the maintenance of parks. They also would like to see more parks and the planting of trees and flowers. Making these changes would improve the overall image of the borough and enable residents to have more positive thoughts about the area they live in. It would also help to reduce pollution levels and encourage people to use public spaces to better maintain their health and well-being. 29% of respondents also told us they would like to see a reduction in motorised traffic is having a negative impact on residents' health and well-being through pollution and the inability to safely travel around the borough by cycling or walking. It was suggested that there should be more cycling and walking infrastructure put in place in the form of cycling lanes, bike storage spaces, and low-traffic neighbourhoods to encourage more people to cycle and walk.

Crime and safety

The third biggest challenge for TH for All respondents (31%) was wanting to feel safe from crime (especially for young people), domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, and trust in police service.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, the second most extremely important ambitions to respondents (70%) were low crime, violence and anti-social behaviour (ASB). People said they would like the borough to have safer streets, which they felt would be best can be achieved by providing more opportunities and things to do for young people, thus leading to less ASB and crime (especially gang and drug-related crime).

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 12% of people who responded to the question said community safety was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“Trust in police service is a challenge.” (MIND Activate Café)

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"Domestic abuse is a challenge facing the borough." (MIND Activate Café)

"Lack of women-only space where women can meet together and feel safe."
(Equality Network)

"Early education to reduce violence, especially VAWG." (VCS engagement event)

"Substance misuse is most visible in the borough, it's not a TH specific issue, but an ongoing cross border issue, and partnership working is need to tackle this issue."
(Resident's Webinar)

"Anti-social behaviour is a challenge for the borough". (Resident's Webinar)

"More youth centres – but with a lot of flexibility – spread more around – don't have to be like the conventional youth centres." (Youth Council)

"More policing – want to feel the presence of the police – police cars in the park. More police going around and checking that everyone is ok. Having a police car outside each school – can involve the military." (Youth Council)

"Old Bethnal Green road is going to be open – 4 schools on that road,.. but it's not really safe for the kids, so need at least local police outside the schools." (Youth Council)

"Youth need to feel safe from knife crime." (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

"More youth clubs, to help tackle knife crime e.g. sports clubs like football/boxing clubs, to keep the youth busy." (Warm hub – Idea Store Crisp Street)

"Life-course approach to crime needed, start changing youth mindset from an early age." (Warm hub – Idea Store Crisp Street)

"More youth activities/programmes/after school clubs, many of these closed down during covid and have not been re-opened." (Warm hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

"More work to address anti-social behaviour and drugs in the borough." (Warm hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

"Invest in more youth clubs and programmes, to prevent young people to involved in drugs, and more training and skill development programmes." (TH for All Survey)

"More action should be taken to make the streets safer and to reduce violence and drug related crime." (TH for All Survey)

"Low crime, violence and anti-social behaviour - This is very important as we have seen a high rise in crime and ASB, which has not been the case for many years. Within the last 15-20 years people have lived in LBTH without fear, now you have young men and teenagers carrying knives, open drug dealing, car thefts, burglaries and not forgetting the laughing gas that is being inhaled and thus increase in car

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crashes as a result. Lack of Police presence, on foot and in patrol cars as well as lack of joint work with housing providers is an issue.” (TH for All Survey)

“Everybody should feel safe to go about their daily (and nightly) business and enjoy their environment. Anti-social behaviour, including public drinking and drug-taking and the littering of nitrous oxide canisters, syringes, etc, has a depressing effect on the environment.” (TH for All Survey)

“It doesn't feel safe to be out at night.” (TH for All Survey)

Similarly, results from the 2023 Annual Residents Survey shows that the second top concern for residents was crime and anti-social behaviour (39% in 2023). Residents were less like to feel safe at night (66%) than during the day (94%). Only 47% of residents felt that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with safety issues in the borough.

Findings from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey also indicates that secondary aged young people (73%) were less likely to feel safe in their local area than primary aged children (86%).

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) was also a challenge highlighted by the Tower Hamlets for All respondents, with some saying that to overcome this there needs to be a coordinated response to domestic abuse, women's safety, parks need adequate lighting, police need to improve prosecutions for perpetrators of abuse against women, there needs to be enough health care for women in women-only spaces, flexible working for carers and job share opportunities need to be normalised. More public transport at night and well-lit areas and CCTV across the borough so that men cannot target women.

Additionally, more than half of respondents (55%) surveyed as part of the New Grants Programme Engagement revealed that VAWG is an extremely important issue. Many stated the importance of having a safe space for women and girls who have been abused or exploited should be accessible.

Feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates that majority of respondents (41%) told us that they feel safe in their local area, while more than a quarter (27%) said they do not feel safe. Residents mentioned the crime and anti-social behaviour as the main reason for feeling unsafe. LGBT+ people and people from White other backgrounds were most likely to say they do not feel safe. 41% of respondents said that they would like to see a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour, specifically around drug dealing and substance abuse, speeding, and rat-running. Residents also felt that there should be an increased police presence on the streets to help reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour.

One female resident said... *“As long as I stay where it's lit, I feel OK. Walking the dog at night feels less safe. I bought a rape alarm for the first time ever recently because of this.” (Healthy Neighbourhoods project)*

Views on key policy areas

This section describes the residents' views on other key policy areas, organised in order of priority in the engagement responses.

Tackling poverty and financial difficulty

Financial support and advice for those struggling financially

Another main priority raised by TH for All respondents was poverty and the cost-of-living crisis. With a quarter of them (25%) saying that support is needed for people facing financial hardship, as poverty has major implications for health, wellbeing and crime rate in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 42% of people said support for people in financial difficulty was extremely important.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 6% of people who responded to the question said support for people in financial difficulty was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“Poverty is a big challenge facing the borough.” (Residents Webinar)

“Poverty is driving the mental health crisis.” (LGBT Forum)

“Poverty needs to be addressed.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“More support for people in poverty, and support for residents with utility bills.”
(Warm Hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Tackling poverty (not just cost-of-living crisis, which is temporary), which will in turn help reduce crime.” (VCS engagement event)

“Growing poverty and inequalities in the borough.” (Equality Network)

“It’s important to help people in financial difficulty. Poverty can lead to worse health outcomes. It can also lead to increased crime rates by youth who have grown up in poverty and seek to make money for their families through any means necessary especially if not academically strong. They can be exploited easily.” (TH for All Survey)

“Support for people in financial difficulty because housing and living costs in Tower Hamlets are unaffordable for a large percentage of the community, many have restricted ability to access financial support due to language, learning, age, digital etc. Poverty is strongly linked to mental and physical health issues, and to child development and later life outcomes. Resolving financial issues would have a huge effect on the overall quality of life.” (TH for All Survey)

One of the main inequalities highlighted by the Health and Wellbeing Strategy engagement is that women, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, younger people, and parents of disabled children are less likely to be able to support themselves and their families financially.

As part of the New Grants Programme Engagement, when asked what was most important for supporting residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, almost two thirds (59%) of respondents felt crisis support was an extremely important. There are individuals and families in the borough currently facing real financial difficulties, and they need financial support, help with debt management, and managing life in general. 43% of respondents felt that advice and information services was also very important for tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, with many saying that people need advice and information around budgeting, buying and cooking healthy food, and staying warm on low income, and on where to get information on benefits, support with debt, and eviction notices.

Findings from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review indicates that stigma and lack of confidence are barriers. Many participants highlighted how issues compound when a low-income family faces a crisis. People feel unable to access help without shame, find it difficult to share that they are struggling, lose confidence in themselves, and many also experience worsening mental health as a result. Consequently, a more holistic approach was seen as necessary by participants, with a focus on integrating signposting and services into atypical places such as festivals to remove the barriers that stigma may create for someone going to a traditional support location. On top of this residents felt it was important to make sure that people who sought financial support were also given holistic wellbeing checks, since financial stress also creates wider mental and physical stress. Peer mentoring was also mentioned as an offer that would be useful in helping families and individuals who are struggling to unburden themselves of that shame.

Environment and climate change

Lower carbon emissions

19% of respondents said that climate change was a big challenge facing the borough.

60% of TH for All respondents felt that lower carbon emissions were extremely important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study, or visit.

1% of people who responded said climate change was something we could all work in partnership to do differently. Majority of people (24%) wanted air quality to be a priority and working together to tackle this.

“Climate change is a big challenge we need to address.” (LGBT Forum)

“Climate resilience is key and sharing information, setting up community energy infrastructure/farming/welcoming climate refugees will be important.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

“Society is on the road to climate/environmental catastrophe, and we fail to recognise the urgency to act now. Everything else will pale into comparison as this crisis gets worse and worse. At a local level, this is impacting on our health through air pollution. Taking this on could bring so much economic opportunity, and a chance to cut our long-term cost of living.” (TH for All Survey)

“Low carbon emissions as it's important for the planet's future, and it is also connected to cutting air pollution (and therefore residents' health).” (TH for All Survey)

Health and wellbeing

Improved access to health, social care and mental health services

15% of TH for All respondents said accessing health, social care, mental health and wellbeing support was a challenge in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 68% of TH for All respondents said high-quality health and social care services, and mental health and wellbeing support (including elderly people struggling financially and mentally) was extremely important to them. Some reported facing difficulties accessing the health care they need.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 16% of people who responded to the question said access to health and care services was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“More support and funding for mental health support services, they are struggling to support residents and lack enough funding.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“We need adequate mental health support – culturally appropriate.” (VCS engagement event)

“Better use of data and evidence: Healthy neighbourhoods – implement results from engagement (Healthwatch).” (Loneliness Connection Event)

“Lack of leaders, i.e. leadership and accountability who are willing to make needed changes in addressing health inequalities.” (Equality Network)

“Women's Health has only increased by 2 percentage point in 10 years, which is alarming, and needs to be addressed.” (Equality Network)

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“I really value having both emergency and routine health care when needed.” (TH for All Survey)

“Healthcare for me is a basic human right but access to medical attention is diabolical. I have been turned away from doctors as they are 'too busy', but as non-native English speaker I have issues understanding or knowing to do. You only have one GPs surgery close by you can register with due to catchment zones, you get turned away at the end of the day when you are on a call back list, you cannot see a doctor face to face, you can't make an appointment to see a doctor at a given time meaning people who work have to take days off just in case.” (TH for All Survey)

“We need more social care for elderly people that is free.” (TH for All Survey)

“We need to share more good practice/information on mental health, and more free counselling as it's currently a two-month waiting list.” (TH for All Survey)

The 2023 Annual Residents Survey asked residents questions on their perceived health and wellbeing, to which 81% of residents perceived themselves to be in good health, 13% felt lonely all or most of the time, and 42% of residents enjoyed doing physically activity in their spare time.

However, findings from the New Grants Programme engagement shows that over half of respondents (52%) felt that health and wellbeing support through tackling inequality is extremely important. Some felt that the borough should tackle residents' unhealthy lifestyle, poor mental health and the general impact on health and wellbeing after Covid-19. They reported that residents have dipped into unemployment, and many have lost friends and family to Covid, leaving society in a difficult situation. Half of the respondents (50%) also felt that developing community activities aimed at tackling loneliness and promoting active lifestyles was also needed for residents. They also felt that support for older and vulnerable people, including luncheon clubs, and meals on wheels was important (39%).

The 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey shows that secondary school pupils scored lower than primary pupils on a number of questions related to health and wellbeing. Secondary pupils (7%) were less likely to eat 5 or more fruit and vegetables in a day than primary pupils (27%), secondary pupils (31%) were less likely to find their school meals healthy than primary pupils (70%), secondary pupils (65%) were slightly less likely to have done something active after school than primary pupils (67%), and secondary pupils (43%) (down from 65% in 2017) were less likely to report feeling happy about their life than primary pupils (69%) (down from 75% in 2017).

Results from the recent Tower Hamlets Poverty Review in 2021 indicates that a common theme was that for many low-income residents, their financial situation proved a barrier for accessing spaces to pursue physical activities. Gyms, swimming pools and clubs all had costs that were often too high to justify regular use, leading to a decline in physical movement, especially during periods of bad weather. Developing spaces in the borough and creating funding for people to

pursue enjoyable activities, such as meditation or yoga, or work out was seen as important for maintaining positive emotional well-being as well as physical health.

The Poverty Review also found that residents felt that affordable, healthy eating should be a focus for maintaining wellbeing in the borough. Whether by improving access to healthy food, increasing education around healthy eating, or providing free community cooking classes, it was widely agreed that interventions are needed in this area. Some called for nutrition classes led by public services, while others favoured linking up learning about healthy eating and cooking, with building relationships with their neighbours, and wanted to see residents lead community cooking.

The findings from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates 34% of respondents said having better access to healthy and affordable food such as fresh fruit and vegetables within their local area instead of the multitude of fast-food shops on the high streets would help them to eat better. In addition, 27% of respondents told us that having access to affordable, local gyms and leisure centres, including free exercise equipment in local parks and access to local swimming pools, would encourage them to exercise more.

Inequality and discrimination

Equal opportunities for all

11% of TH for All respondents felt that inequality and discrimination was a challenge for the borough. With some saying deaf access, homophobia, lack of understanding of the LGBT+ community, women's equality, racism and equality between different ethnic groups were issues in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 47% of TH for All respondents said equality between different groups was extremely important to them.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 15% of people who responded to the question said equality was an area we could all work in partnership to do differently.

Some of their responses include:

“There are minorities within the BAME community in Tower Hamlets, which are usually left out. The Black African, Caribbean, and Somali population are not equally represented and not given equal opportunities (e.g., employment) as the Bangladeshi population, the larger ethnic minority group.” (Equality Network)

“Better support for women and mothers returning to work.” (Equality Network)

“Growing inequalities in the borough related to poverty.” (Equality Network)

“The homophobia from families and general society.” (LGBT Forum)

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“Better representation across social sectors in Tower Hamlets of Black and Somali community.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Employment and training fair access for everyone.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tackling inequality and discrimination should be a priority.” (TH for All Survey)

“Equality between different groups because I think there is still racism and Islamophobic acts being made.” (TH for All Survey)

“I see elements of racism and would like to stamp out.” (TH for All Survey)

The recent State of the Borough report indicates that a large proportion of our young people go on to higher education. In 2020/21, 71% of 18-year-olds sustained a level 4 or higher destination (such as degrees, higher apprenticeships, and national higher diplomas). This was higher than the rate for England of 66%. However, the rate of unemployment in the borough is higher than the national average, indicating unequal opportunities for residents in getting jobs after attaining qualifications. We are a net importer of workers.

Results from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review indicates several inequalities in the borough, to which a targeted approach may help reduce these inequalities. These include:

- Younger people and those in precarious housing find it harder to eat healthily and maintain healthy lifestyles.
- People in the borough's poorest wards experience more air pollution.
- Younger people and private renters feel less connected to their local area.
- Women and people living in housing association estates feel less safe.
- People with poor mental health are at higher risk of isolation.
- Women, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, younger people and parents of disabled children felt less likely to be able to support themselves and their families financially.
- Renters were less happy with their homes than homeowners; adults living with their parents were least happy with where they lived.
- People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, older people and those with more complex medical needs (particularly those with medical health issues) were less satisfied with services.
- Those who are digitally excluded find it hard to access services.
- Younger people (under 24), White respondents and parents of special needs children were less likely to think children get the best start in life.
- Children in overcrowded, deprived or digitally excluded households were more affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Local public services

Accessing public services

Some respondents felt that more accountability was needed for public services and easier access to local public and community services (11%). With some saying they had difficulty with accessing health, housing, social care, and council

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services. These respondents complained of digital barriers to accessing services, long waiting times for accessing health services, and not enough provision for care services. As well as finding it difficult to contact the council and speak to someone. Some of their responses included:

“Communication between services users and professionals (equal access).” (MIND Activate Café)

“It’s not just housing, the pressure on services is horrendous. Try and get a GP, or a dentist.” (Carers Forum)

“Long waiting times to access NHS services.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Accessing social support services is a challenge. The community is being left behind.” (Residents Webinar)

Better access to services (health, housing, employment, etc) to make a borough to be a better place to live. No fairness and equal opportunities/access, Bangladeshi residents have more access and support in the BAME community as opposed to other minorities e.g. Bengali speaking services in GP, with no Somali speaking services offered. Interpretation services are needed for non-Bangladeshi minority ethnic groups, e.g. Somali speakers. These will help reduce inequalities. (Equality Network)

“Language and Digital Barriers to accessing services need to be addressed, particularly for those who are elderly, and people with English as a second language.” (Equality Network)

“Lack of venue spaces available for VCS organisation to deliver their services to residents.” (Equality Network)

“Public services feel undervalued & unheard – strikes causing people to leave public service jobs – need to be paid fairly.” (LGBT Forum)

The 2023 Annual Residents Survey indicates that the highest-rated council services Primary education (79%), Idea Stores / Libraries (78%), Parks and open spaces (73%) and Nursery education (73%) all show improvement on 2019 results.

Results from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review indicates that people felt more positive about actual public services once they had received them, but when it came to accessing them or getting help it was very difficult. Many people felt like there were very long wait times to speak with someone. Once on the line, people felt they were being bounced around and having to retell your story multiple times to different people was a common experience. According to the participants, this has led to people becoming disillusioned and feeling like there might be a hidden agenda with the public services to prioritise saving money over helping them.

The 2021 Poverty Review also found that complex application processes are a significant barrier to people getting help. Many participants highlighted that complex and confusing forms, particularly those online, prevented them and those they knew from getting what they were entitled to, and that often the information requirements were disproportionate to the potential gain. Poor signposting prevents people from being aware of what they are entitled to, residents consistently noted that it was often only through informal networks that they had been able to find resources and help from the council. In some instances, people relied on knowing someone who could provide them with a direct contact at the council rather than going through the council's own helpline.

The findings from the 2021 Poverty Review also indicated that vulnerable people were consistently missed. Some residents highlighted that one of the key issues they faced was finding they were ineligible for certain kinds of support despite being on low incomes. In particular, this was common with "working poor" families who could just about afford basics, or workers who were self-employed as gig economy workers and had fluctuating incomes that were often lower than the minimum income floor. One participant shared how signposting to council help in her school was only passed on to those families who are eligible for the pupil premium, meaning that many families missed out on essential support during the pandemic.

The Poverty Review also highlighted that digital exclusion is more than a lack of digital skills: Along with lack of digital literacy, poor internet access, limited devices, and the fact that many low-income households used mobile data or pay as you go internet limited the time they could be online. Households in overcrowded accommodation prioritized schooling and work for computer use, meaning that looking for services online was difficult and of low priority.

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates 45% of residents said they would like to improve GP services due to difficulty booking an appointment, and Dental services because of difficulty finding an NHS dentist. Around 1 in 10 respondents told us they were not aware of any local community and voluntary organisations' services in their local area.

Community, cohesion, and diversity

More community spirit and neighbourliness

10% of TH for All respondents said people from different backgrounds getting along was a challenge in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 46% of TH for All respondents said stronger and more cohesive communities was extremely important to them.

When also asked what we could all do differently or how we can all work together to make Tower Hamlets a place for all, the second highest response (23%) was they would like cohesion-oriented initiatives such as more community

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spaces and inclusive activities, such as; festivals that help residents meet their neighbours and feel a sense of community, tackling inequalities, developing more collective /collaborative, and less individualistic/segregated thinking solutions towards building a cohesive community for all, together with more public spaces for communities to sit and gather together.

“Misunderstanding between communities – homophobia and lack of understanding of LGBT+ community.” (LGBT Forum)

“Community cohesion should be a priority.” (Residents Webinar)

“Cohesion to support common goals.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“A better sense of community in TH, which are very diverse borough, and there is a lot of loneliness. Need a space where all ethnicities can meet and share information, deliver/attend workshops etc.” (Equality Network)

“A stronger and more cohesive society can easily achieve other ambitions.” (TH for All Survey)

“A place isn't worth living in if there is no community. Without belonging and cohesion it isn't a community just a collection of selfish individuals or groups opposing each other.” (TH for All Survey)

“More community spaces and activities, to stop insular behaviours would be good.. even if you want to know more about your neighbours, it takes a lot to go over to someone and ask them about their life and culture.” (TH for All Survey)

According to the 2023 Annual Residents Survey, 82% of residents feel that people get on well together in the borough. 76% of residents have at least some friends from a different ethnicity. While 54% of residents have friends with similar education level as themselves.

Results from the Pupil Attitude Survey indicates that just over half of children and young people (55%) think that Tower Hamlets is a place where young people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Findings from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review – and particularly the peer led research carried out for the review - indicates that building community bonds was a priority for low income residents: Over and above any other intervention, low income residents of Tower Hamlets wanted the council to help build stronger and more integrated communities, noting that the friendships that came from this helped boost confidence and combat isolation, enabled residents to find out more about what was going on in the borough through signposting and informal connections, and also allow the development of support networks to enable simple things like free childcare when going for a job interview.

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement showed that just under a third (32%) of respondents told us they did not have good access to spaces where they could meet people. People told us that while they have

good access to green spaces, there is a need for more community events or centres, and affordable cafes and restaurants.

Jobs, the local economy, and education

Skills development, economic opportunities and local employment

Some TH for All respondents said jobs and the local economy (8%), and education and childcare (6%) were challenges in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, what was extremely important to some TH for All respondents was good schools and educational institutions (68%), tapping into new economic opportunities and industries in the borough and more job opportunities for local residents (48%), and opportunities for skills development and adult learning (32%).

Some respondents wanted more professional job opportunities for local residents, more opportunities for employment, training, careers advice, and more funding for those who want to open a business. People also said that they would like to see more support for people with special education needs and disabilities to get into higher and further education, and job opportunities. People also wanted more after-school and homework clubs.

When also asked what we could all do differently or how we can all work together to make Tower Hamlets a place for all, people who responded said the economy and jobs (12%), high streets (4%), education (4%), and skills and adult learning (3%) were areas we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“Easier access to education and support for both youth and adults wanting to get a job/ change careers.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“More work experience opportunities, and more funding for career advice services.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Catering for special needs children need to be better addressed in schools.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“I would like Tower Hamlets to be a more thriving local economy with more local independent businesses and a thriving restaurant scene.” (TH for All Survey)

“A thriving borough, with job opportunities for local people, who have access to good quality housing, health services, community services.” (TH for All Survey)

“All residents are able to realise their potential. With existing and new communities working together for all.” (TH for All Survey)

“More pupil and youth services provision.” (TH for All Survey)

Findings from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey indicates that secondary pupils (69%) were less likely report that their school is giving them useful skills and knowledge than primary pupils (87%). Secondary pupils (41%) were less likely to report that their teachers make lessons fun and interesting than primary pupils (72%).

Results from the recent Tower Hamlets Poverty Review in 2021 indicates that as part of tackling poverty, residents felt that it's important to push for more investment from businesses and organisations based in the borough for the benefit of local people. As part of this, participants felt making links with organisations who have a community presence in the borough and who hire local residents should be prioritised, and when it comes to outsourcing and procurement there should be preference given to those companies who have strong connections with the local population. People felt that a better deal with local employers needs to be made to enable people to work in the borough they live in: participants felt strongly that there were too few opportunities for people who live within the borough to work within the borough, and that more needed to be done to push for employers to offer apprenticeships, internships, work experience opportunities, and training to local residents on low incomes. As part of this drive, participants felt that it's important to also advocate for local wages to rise to match the London Living Wage to reduce the issue of working households remaining in poverty. Some residents highlighted racism and discrimination as factors preventing low-income people in Tower Hamlets accessing jobs and felt that advocacy by the Council and its partners on this issue could help improve the situation.

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates 33% of respondents state that the education and learning facilities in the borough Fully or Mostly meet their needs. They told us that while local libraries and Idea Stores are good learning resources, more affordable educational courses for adults would be appreciated.

Opportunities for children and young people

More children and youth services provision

7% of TH for All respondents said opportunities for children and young people was a challenge in the borough.

Most young people's concerns from the TH for All engagement related to wanting to feel safe from crime, and wanting more provision for youth and sports clubs, after school and school holiday activities, and help in planning their future. Youth clubs and activities should not be restricted only to children from particular backgrounds but be genuine cross-community hubs. Another priority for residents was children's centres, early years support, support for children with special education needs, and support for new parents. People also said that a life-course approach to crime is needed to start changing youth mindset from an early age.

When also asked what we could all do differently or how we can all work together to make Tower Hamlets a place for all, 9% of people who responded said providing more support and opportunities for children and young people was an area we could all work in partnership to do differently.

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“More after school and school holiday clubs to learn skills. Every child from my primary school left knowing how to play an instrument. Another school – every girl left having horse-riding or karate.” (Youth Council)

“More youth clubs, days to attend youth club, mentorships and educational talks for the youth.” (Coffee Afrique – Youth Hub)

“Lack of opportunities for young people in the borough.” (Residents Webinar)

“More youth activities/programmes/after school clubs, many of these closed down during covid and have not been re-opened.” (TH for All Survey)

“Pro-active provision of opportunities for the young and disenfranchised.” (TH for All Survey)

“Invest in more training and skill development programmes. More youth programmes - to prevent young people getting involved in drugs.” (TH for All Survey)

Similarly, the same views were iterated by both children and young people’s responses in the latest Pupil Attitude Survey undertaken in 2021. When asked what would make their life better, the top three responses for primary pupils were: more places where I can go to spend time with my friends (40%), more interesting school lessons (33%), and more help to plan for my future (33%). While the top three responses for secondary pupils were: more interesting school lessons (41%), more help to plan for my future (41%), and more places where I can go to spend time with my friends (36%).

Findings from the New Grants Programme engagement also supports these views, where just over third (36%) of respondents felt access to youth provision is extremely important. The young people in the borough need free / affordable activities, many of whom are struggling to get into employment. Respondents felt that targeted outreach will help the youth to get into the appropriate jobs. It will also help ensure the young residents do not get involved in crime and are engaged in productive activities. 34% of respondents felt that supporting young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) was also important.

Results from the recent Tower Hamlets Poverty Review in 2021 indicates that residents felt that the removal of certain youth-focused services has had a negative knock-on effect on young people: For instance, it was significantly highlighted that lack of investment in youth centres had placed extra burdens and restrictions on households living in overcrowded conditions, making it hard for people (especially during the pandemic) to pursue work as they lack room to focus, and making teenagers more vulnerable to crime as they went on the streets in the evening to have more space and not feel confined. The lack of youth services and opportunities in the borough contributes to a negative perception of young people: Many residents felt that young people are seen as a problem rather than an asset to the borough, and that this stigmatisation of youth is exacerbated by the lack of facilities available to them. Participants wanted more places dedicated specifically for young people under 25 to socialise and

learn skills. It was felt that a lot of the negative stereotypes around young people contributed to a greater lack of confidence and pushed some young people towards more anti-social behaviour.

As part of the 2023 engagement for the Children and Families Strategy, children and young people in the borough told us where we need to focus our efforts in order for Tower Hamlets to be a genuinely child-friendly borough:

- Online safety, including mobile phones (scams, fake websites, accessing content without adult supervision – importance of education for children and parents).
- Safer communities (more cameras, perpetrators are sad/depressed – more enrichment would help with this).
- Reducing pollution.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Mental health (removing stigma (sometimes cultural), offer is rich but hard to navigate and can seem disjointed, feeling dismissed, online appointments are a barrier, establishing trusted relationships very important, training should be co-produced with young people).
- Bullying (peer pressure, reputations, importance of/encouraging kindness, trusted adults).
- Reducing child poverty.
- Cultural capital (exposure to areas outside of Tower Hamlets as young people are culturally deprived due to their disadvantaged background).
- Standard of social housing.

Hopes for the future

Residents' vision for Tower Hamlets in 10 years' time

When asked what their vision was for Tower Hamlets in 10 years' time, residents' responses were:

1. Air quality, transport and carbon emissions - They would like it to be a cleaner and greener borough, with clean air, more green and open spaces, a tidier local environment, less motor traffic, and for it to be a place where walking, cycling and public transport is prioritised over cars, and improved health for people who live, work and study in the borough. Many said that there should be focus on improving walking (more walkable streets), cycling and transport infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions, and improve air quality and health. As part of achieving this, people said that there should also be more green spaces in the borough, and transport policies that don't just benefit car drivers, but pedestrians and those that use public transport. People said they would also like the borough to have more education for people on recycling, provision for adequate recycling facilities, improved energy efficiency, decarbonisation, and net-zero emissions.

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“I think good walking, cycling and public transport is the most important because it is the backbone of every other ambition. You need good infrastructure to fight poor air quality, carbon emissions, to improve public spaces and high streets, to help people get to school, medical care and high-quality jobs.” (TH for All Survey)

“The long-term ambition should be investing in the future of the borough, good housing, improving air quality and open spaces.” (TH for All Survey)

“I would like the borough to be the leading London borough for Net Zero, retrofit and decarbonisation. A centre of expertise for skills that can be deployed internationally.” (TH for All Survey)

“Better energy sustainability in buildings.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“Climate resilient community and more networking/sharing to combat climate pressures.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

2. Community safety – They would like to feel safe at all times in the borough, with less crime, drugs and ASB. With more opportunities for youth to be occupied, more and approachable policing and better street lighting.

“Help each other to make community safe.” (Inter-Faith Forum)

“Safe for all.” (LGBT Forum)

“A safe borough where parents and families are not scared of experiencing and engaging in activities.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“A safer borough for young people and vulnerable people.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“More youth centres and youth engagement to help motivate them to navigate their way, and more police presence.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Life-course approach to crime, to start changing youth mindset from an early age.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

“Police officers that are more approachable.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Better signposting – want victims of crime to know where to go.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Street lighting, and CCTV to tackle drugs.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“A safer borough – no drugs.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

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"More policing, and better lighting." (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

"More community police to keep women and girls safe." (VCS Engagement Event)

3. Housing - They would like the borough to have more affordable homes with quicker access to social housing for those in need.

"Build homes that locals can afford so they can live in the borough and find hope." (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

"A roof for everyone, no homelessness." (Loneliness connection event)

"Less overall poor living standards and problems getting housing." (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

"Better housing." (Women's Inclusive Team)

"Better housing provided." (Inter-Faith Forum)

"Our young people able to access safe secure housing" (VCS Engagement Event)

"Housing crisis – reduced levels of overcrowding (for e.g. 5 people incl. 2 teenagers in 1 bed flat) and its impact on living a normal life and education. More housing options – including transfer opportunities." (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

"Addressing mental health and addiction when tackling homelessness, as well as addressing homelessness from the grassroots and holistically." (Loneliness Connection Event)

"Affordable homes and rents." (Community Leadership Engagement - Limehouse Project)

"Housing conversations to be face to face." (Community Leadership Engagement - Limehouse Project)

"Support for private renters." (Community Leadership Engagement - Limehouse Project)

4. Children and young people provision, and education – They would like more educational talks and mentorships for children and young people, more sports and youth clubs opportunities, after school activities, and more catering for SEND children.

"Youth centres being open on the weekend, Young people say they are more likely to go." (Youth Council)

“More awareness of different places, leisure centres, youth groups through school, online.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Free meals. More opportunities and help for the youth.” (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

“More sports clubs with better facilities e.g. better basketball courts.” (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

“More mentorships for the youth, and more educational talks about following the right path.” (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

“More after-school clubs, homework clubs (tuition centres are not affordable for all).” (VCS Engagement Event)

“More fun activities for children and young people e.g. pottery etc.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

“More pupil ad youth services, more after-school and school holiday activities and provision.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

“Better catering for special needs children in schools.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

“More schools availability.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

5. Cohesion – They would like more community spaces and activities to bring people together, reduce isolation and get to know more about other people living around them. Below were a few of their responses:

“More community celebrations – e.g. queen's birthday Tower Hamlets day, special occasion for each month.” (Youth Council)

“Age-appropriate parties and events – have a big event each month and during the whole month have little small events. E.g. Tower Bridge – Christmas fair. Sell tickets and buy tickets – but for specific ages.” (Youth Council)

“More free community activities.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Closer-knit community.” (Loneliness Connection Event)

“More community spaces and activities, to stop insular behaviours would be good... even if you want to know more about your neighbours, it takes a lot to go over to someone and ask them about their life and culture.” (TH for All Survey)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“A Tower Hamlets carnival, TH being voted the happiest borough to live, learn and work. community ambassadors and community centres run by local people.” (TH for All Survey)

“Public spaces where people from all cultures and communities can interact with each other.” (TH for All Survey)

“Encourage aspiration and a sense of pride within communities. Do more to help people integrate into the community.” (TH for All Survey)

6. Public services – They would like easier access to services, and more signposting of support available.

“Local health services – make more local dentists and GPs.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Information on support available.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“Easy access to support – young people can just walk in and ask for support – money, friendship., easy to access, quick, comfortable, can meet someone there. A manager to cover the whole area – feel like part of the family.” (Youth Council)

“Better access to services.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Less mental health challenges, back to better health – safe support.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Increased awareness (digitally and non-digital sign-posting) of where people can go to access support.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“More support and funding for mental health support services, they are struggling to support residents and lack enough funding.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Better access to NHS services – the waiting times are too long” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“More services for people with mental health.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

7. Economy, jobs and skills – They would like more employment and training opportunities for local people.

“Work more closely with local employers to provide upskilling and opportunities for local residents.” (TH for All Survey)

“More jobs for local people.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Local people into jobs and volunteering.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“Apprenticeships for women and those not active.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“Childcare support.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“SEND children and job opportunities.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

8. Equality - They would like greater equality in the borough with lesser segregation and equal opportunities for all. Providing equal opportunities for all residents and not for specific people, i.e., equal opportunities for jobs, funding, education, accommodation, and health. People said we need to work to reduce segregation between racial groups, and implement LGBT+ awareness training to increase understanding of the LGBT+ community needs. As well as the need for strong anti-discrimination policy and anti-racism strategy.

“Equal opportunities for all.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Anti-racism and funding equity.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Equal spread of wealth in Tower Hamlets.” (LGBT Forum)

“We need to make LBTH anti racism across every pathway, inequality is our biggest disease.” (TH for All Survey)

“I would like Tower Hamlets to be a place where people from all backgrounds can afford to live a good quality life.” (TH for All Survey)

“A leading equal borough that provides the best outcomes for children, young people and families. A borough with zero tolerance to all forms of discrimination.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tackle inequalities, build a sense of community and neighbourliness, everyone to be part of the journey. Building community responsibility.” (TH for All Survey)

9. Cost of living and financial support – They would like less people to be living in poverty, and financial support available for all who need it.

“Like it is now, but with less poverty.” (TH for All Survey)

“I would like everyone to be living above the poverty line.” (TH for All Survey)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Ideally no one goes without, having enough money and food to be able to sustain a good standard of living. No more food banks, communities growing their own.” (TH for All Survey)

“Cost of living – support for people, less poverty.” (VCS Engagement Event)

*“More grants and social funds for people who want to open a business.”
(Warm Hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)*

“Less unfunded families.” (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

References

- 'Tower Hamlets for All' Survey and Engagement 2023
- [State of the Borough 2023](#)
- 2023 Annual Residents Survey
- [2022 Pupil Attitude Survey](#)
- [2021 Poverty Review](#)
- [Consultation and engagement on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [2023 Healthy Neighbourhoods project](#)
- [2023 New Grants Programme engagement](#)



Tower Hamlets State of the Borough 2023

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1. Key points

This report was prepared in March 2023 to support development of a new Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan. It uses data from the 2021 census and other official statistics to describe some of the key features of Tower Hamlets and the borough's population, and some of the most important changes the borough's population have experienced in recent years.

Some of the most notable features of the borough's population are -

- Fastest growing population in England (22 per cent rise between 2011 and 2021)
- Most densely populated area in England (15,695 residents per square kilometre)
- Youngest median age of any area (30 years)
- Disproportionately comprised of working age adults (71% of all residents were aged 20-64)
- Ethnically diverse with the largest Bangladeshi population in the country (107,333 residents, 34.6% of the population).
- A relatively large proportion of residents identify their sexual orientation as Lesbian Gay, Bisexual or other (7.2%) compared to England and Wales as a whole (3.1%) and about one per cent of residents have a different gender identity to their sex registered at birth.
- 70% of dwellings are rented, split roughly equally between social renters and private renters, with significant levels of overcrowding
- Lessening deprivation but highly deprived populations of older people and children, with significant need for support services
- Healthy life expectancy at birth increased by 11 percentage points for males and 2 percentage points for females between 2011-13 and 2018-2020, although this data pre-dates the pandemic
- A larger economy than the cities of Birmingham, Manchester or Leeds, with more jobs (291,000) than working age residents
- But unemployment is higher than the national average for residents (4.6% compared to a national average 3.7%) and many lack the skills to succeed. Women in particular are much less likely to be employed (59.7% compared with 72% in Great Britain). While half of adult residents are highly qualified, 16% have no qualifications at all.

2. Overview

Tower Hamlets is a genuinely unique place. The population is the fastest growing in the country. This, combined with high population turnover, gives the area a constant sense of renewal. But it is also an area of considerable history and of settled communities with established roots.

The area is diverse and it is young, with the youngest median age of any area in England and Wales. It is a place people come to for many different reasons, but one of the key reasons is its huge economy and the employment opportunities that this brings. The area is home to Canary Wharf which along with the City of London is pivotal to London's status as a global financial centre. Other large industries include education (attracting a large student population to institutions including Queen Mary University of London) and health, while the constant development of the borough delivers a significant number of construction jobs. The area is named for its most famous and iconic building, the Tower of London, providing a measure of the history that has occurred here. A place of immigration for centuries, Tower Hamlets spent much of the twentieth century being battered and bruised by the ravages of war, population decline and the impact of deindustrialization before emerging as a place of economic renewal, albeit an area with considerable inequalities of opportunity. Some of our residents will have lived through it all, but many more are newer arrivals.

Such has been the level of development and growth that Tower Hamlets has become the most densely populated area in the country. There is a sense of hustle and bustle to much of the borough with busy high streets and markets and a teeming flow of commuters into Canary Wharf and the City fringe. For those seeking it, a degree of tranquility can be found alongside the borough's waterways including the Thames and the Limehouse Cut or in some of the popular parks, such as the historic and award-winning Victoria Park.

Another unique feature of Tower Hamlets is its Bangladeshi community, by far the largest in the country. Around this community we have seen dedicated voluntary organisations, charities, shops, restaurants, services, cultural events and much more abound. The Bangladeshi population partly accounts for the borough having the largest Muslim population (by percentage) in the country, with the East London Mosque on Whitechapel Road providing an opportunity for many to come and worship.

Many others have made the borough their home, with large communities from both eastern and western Europe as well as China and Africa, including a significant community from Somalia. All of this has contributed to the mix of cultures and created a shared history enjoyed by residents today.

A relatively high proportion of residents identify with a religion, with Tower Hamlets having the largest proportion of Muslim residents in England and Wales, while the proportion of Christian residents is the smallest nationally.

The proportion of older people is the smallest in the country and is characterized by high levels of need, with many older people requiring help with certain tasks or experiencing difficulty getting around.

Inequalities persist and addressing them are among the highest priorities for public services. Children and older people in particular are far more likely to be living in poverty in Tower Hamlets than those living elsewhere in the country. The Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have impacted disproportionately on our most vulnerable residents.

Despite the current challenges, outcomes for most have improved over the longer term; a large proportion of children from Tower Hamlets schools are going into higher education; there are better health outcomes; more people in employment, and higher incomes.

3. A very densely populated area where most people live in flats and pay rent

With a population of 310,300 as at the 2021 Census, Tower Hamlets has been the fastest growing area in the country over the past decade, with the population increasing 22% since 2011. Tower Hamlets is 19.8 square kilometres in size. As of 2021, there were 15,695 residents per square kilometre, making Tower Hamlets by some distance the most densely populated area in the UK.

Picture 1 – Density in Tower Hamlets per football pitch sized area of land



(Graphic taken from the Office for National Statistics website)

In addition, many people come to Tower Hamlets for work and for leisure, with the number of jobs in the borough exceeding the number of working age adults who live here.

Tower Hamlets housing stock is predominantly a mixture of surviving Victorian/Edwardian buildings, mid-twentieth century housing estates and modern apartment buildings, many of which have been built in the last 30 years.

Often all these examples of housing stock can be found near one another, but the mixture of stock also varies across the borough. Parts of Bow, Mile End and Bethnal Green retain a greater amount of older housing, although across the borough the amount of Victorian housing is small by the standards of other inner London boroughs.

In comparison, the areas along the Thames feature modern apartment buildings alongside some historic industrial buildings, many of which have been repurposed for housing. The Isle of Dogs has developed upwards with many tall residential buildings as well as office buildings. Increasingly, the city fringe area in the west of the borough is also experiencing more high-rise residential development. This move toward higher density continues. The New London Architecture's Tall Buildings Survey for 2022 reports that there are 95 tall buildings (20 storeys and higher) in the Tower Hamlets pipeline, the most of any London borough, comprising about a sixth of all tall buildings in the London pipeline.

There are a considerable number of social housing estates of varying sizes, and these are spread throughout the borough. In 2021, 34% of all housing stock in the borough was either Council housing or provided by a registered social landlord. This was the fourth highest proportion in London. Conversely the private rental sector was estimated to make up 36% of housing stock (2020), the fifth highest rate in London, whereas the proportion of owner occupied properties for the same year was 30% - the second lowest proportion in London after Hackney.

In relative terms, very few households in Tower Hamlets occupy a self-contained house with most residents living in flats or apartments. In 2021, just 12% of Tower Hamlets households lived in a whole house or bungalow compared with an England average of 77.4%. In Tower Hamlets, 87.8% of households live in some kind of flat or apartment compared with 22.2% in England.

With space at such a premium, it is unsurprising that overcrowding is an issue for many households. In 2021, 15.8% of households had at least one fewer bedrooms than they needed. This was significantly higher than both London (11.1%) and England (4.3%).

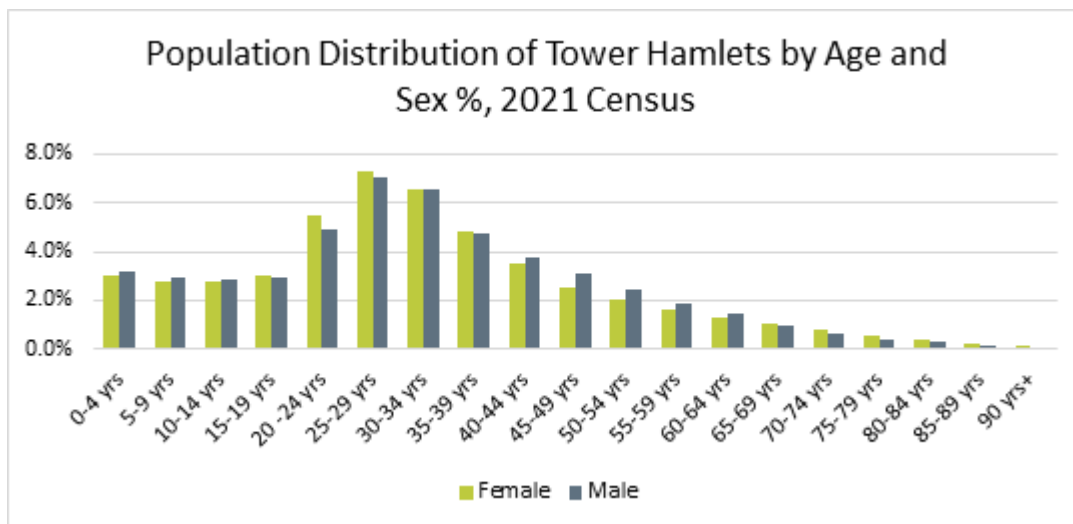
4. A diverse and constantly changing population with a particularly large proportion of younger adults

The importance of Tower Hamlets as a place to work is underlined by the type of people that choose to live here. Much of the population are aged between 20 and 44 years old, reflecting the attraction that the borough holds for people who

are seeking different kinds of employment opportunities. The median age of 30 years makes Tower Hamlets the youngest borough by median age in England and Wales. There is a very high level of population turnover with 227 persons per 1000 moving in or out of the borough in the most recent year (2019-20) – this was the 12th highest turnover rate in England.

Although the borough is often correctly described as ‘young’, the child population is not particularly high compared to London or England. It is the combination of many young adults and a small number of older people that sets Tower Hamlets apart from other areas. The proportion of children in the borough fell slightly between 2011 and 2021, as did the proportion of older people. However, both grew in absolute terms as a result of the rapidly rising borough population.

Chart 1 – Population by age and sex, 2021



Tower Hamlets is unusual in having slightly more males and females within the population (50.2% of residents are male) and this is probably related, at least in part, to the age structure and the specific economic opportunities that attract residents to come and live in the borough.

In common with much of London, most residents from Tower Hamlets are not from a White British ethnic background and the 2021 census reveals that almost half (47%) are born outside of the UK. Beyond this, Tower Hamlets has a very distinctive ethnic mix due to its longstanding and very large Bangladeshi population (34.6% in 2021). Tower Hamlets has by far the largest proportion of Bangladeshi residents in the UK with one in six people of Bangladeshi origin in England and Wales living in the borough. The 2021 census has revealed that 43,561 Tower Hamlets residents were born in Bangladesh making it by far the largest country of birth of residents behind the UK.

The borough also has significant Black African populations, with a particularly notable Somali population. 5% of the population is now from a Black African

background and these populations have grown rapidly in recent years. Among this population, the number of residents from Somali and Somalilander communities totals 6180 residents– 2% of the borough's population.

Between the turn of the century and the UK's exit from the European Union, there was a high level of immigration from Europe into the borough. The new arrivals comprised of many different communities and nationalities. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU in 2007 hastened this migration, creating significant populations from those countries. The 2021 census reveals an almost fivefold increase in the number of Romanian born residents compared with the 2011 census.

There has also been significant immigration from western Europe. The 2021 census revealed that Tower Hamlets has the highest number of Italian born residents anywhere in England (more than 10,000), with the significant Italian-born Bangladeshi community almost certainly a major contributing reason for this.

In addition, there are smaller and longstanding populations of Black Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani residents and one of the largest Chinese populations in the country.

Table 1 - Ethnic Groups in Tower Hamlets, 2021 and 2011

| Ethnic Group | 2021 | 2021% | 2011 | 2011% |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| White British | 71177 | 22.9% | 79231 | 31.2% |
| White Irish | 3567 | 1.1% | 3863 | 1.5% |
| White Gypsy Traveller | 110 | 0.04% | 175 | 0.07% |
| White Roma | 2225 | 0.7% | N/A | N/A |
| White Other | 45187 | 14.6% | 31550 | 12.4% |
| Asian Bangladeshi | 107333 | 34.6% | 81377 | 32.0% |
| Asian Chinese | 10279 | 3.3% | 8109 | 3.2% |
| Asian Indian | 10135 | 3.3% | 6,787 | 2.7% |
| Asian Pakistani | 3341 | 1.1% | 2,442 | 1.0% |
| Asian Other | 6768 | 2.2% | 5786 | 2.3% |
| Black African | 15373 | 5.0% | 9495 | 3.7% |
| Black Caribbean | 4930 | 1.6% | 5341 | 2.1% |
| Black Other | 2390 | 0.8% | 3793 | 1.5% |
| Mixed White and Asian | 4374 | 1.4% | 2961 | 1.1% |
| Mixed White and Black African | 2236 | 0.7% | 1509 | 0.6% |
| Mixed White and Black Caribbean | 3593 | 1.2% | 2837 | 1.1% |
| Mixed Other | 5206 | 1.7% | 3053 | 1.2% |
| Other Arab | 3588 | 1.2% | 2573 | 1.0% |
| Other ethnic group | 8494 | 2.7% | 3214 | 1.3% |

Unlike some London boroughs where minority communities tend to be concentrated in specific localities, most ethnic minority communities in Tower Hamlets can be found throughout the borough. For example, Brick Lane is world famous for its Bangladeshi population and its many restaurants (the wider area is also known as Banglatown), but parts of Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Stepney, Bromley-By-Bow, Mile End, Shadwell and Poplar have similar or larger Bangladeshi populations. In 2021, thirteen of Tower Hamlets' twenty wards comprised at least 30% Bangladeshi residents and these were spread from the east to the west of the borough.

The only community that was relatively concentrated in a specific part of the borough was the Chinese community where around 42% of all Chinese residents can be found in the three wards that make up the Isle of Dogs (Canary Wharf, Island Gardens, Blackwall and Cubitt Town) in 2021. There was also a substantial Chinese community in Whitechapel.

The diverse backgrounds of Tower Hamlets are reflected in the number of faiths followed by residents. Tower Hamlets has the largest Muslim population in the country (39.9% of residents) while it has the smallest proportion of Christians in the country (22.3% of residents). A significant and growing proportion of residents have no religion (26.6%)

The new census data on sexual orientation tells us that 7.2% of residents over 16 identified with an LGB+ orientation. Of these 4% identified as gay or lesbian, 2.5% identified as bisexual and 0.7% identified as having another (non-heterosexual) sexual orientation. Based on this, Tower Hamlets had the ninth highest proportion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Other sexual orientation residents in England and Wales with more than 18,000 residents identifying their sexual orientation as not heterosexual. A total of 1% (2,643) of residents over 16 identified their gender as being different from their sex registered at birth, which included residents identifying as trans men, trans women, non-binary and other gender identities.

5. An area with many different people living different lifestyles and having different needs

Around 32% of Tower Hamlets households were people living alone in 2021. This is slightly higher than the London average of 29% and higher than the England average of 30%. While most will be choosing to live alone, it is important to consider how the impacts on mental health, particularly in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Just over a quarter of households (27%) have dependent children, which compares to 31% in London. Families with dependent children are amongst those that engage with some public services the most – for example, health, education and parks and cultural services.

About 17% of households are married or cohabiting couples with no children. These are often amongst the residents that engage with local services the least, although some older couples will have health or care needs.

Lone parent households make up 10.7% of households in Tower Hamlets, which is lower than the London average of 13.3% of households. Cost of living pressures can be particularly acute for lone parent families, often living on a single source of income, and many experience financial difficulty.

In 2021, 33,067 residents aged 16+ were full time students which was 13.1% of adult residents. By the nature of their courses of study, students are often transient and may have different expectations of the area in which they live.

6. A burgeoning economy, driving growth across the region

The sheer size and scale of the Tower Hamlets economy is difficult to overstate. Tower Hamlets had 291,000 employee jobs in 2021. To put this in context, the neighbouring borough of Newham which has a larger resident population, had 127,000 employee jobs and another neighbouring borough, Hackney, had 145,000 employee jobs.

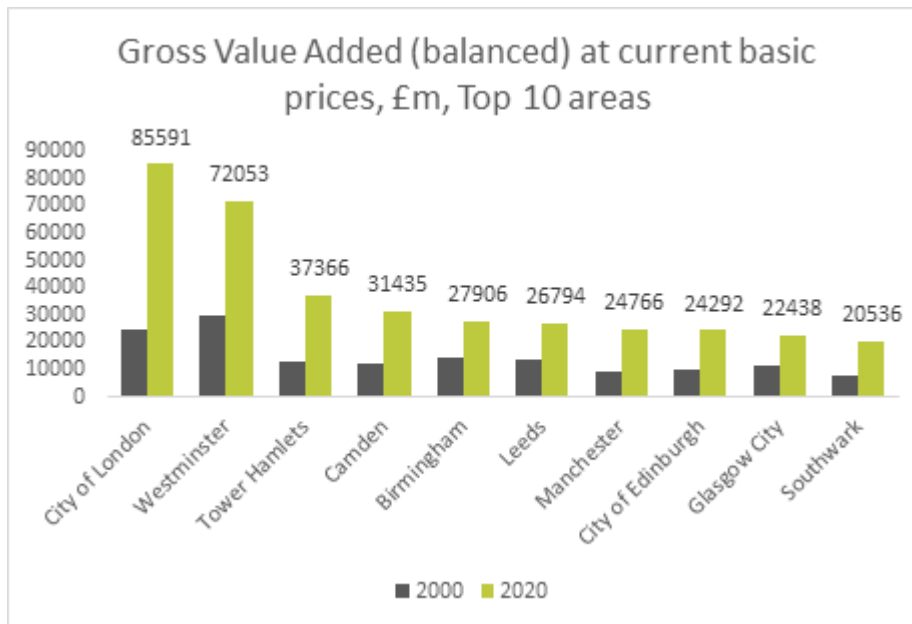
Tower Hamlets has a far higher number of jobs than the total number of economically active adults (182,500) making Tower Hamlets a significant net importer of workers. These employees worked for businesses of all sizes, including 115 large businesses (250+ employees) and almost 15,000 micro businesses (0-9 employees).

The number of jobs available in 2021 was a slight decline on the peak of 304,000 jobs in 2019, perhaps reflecting the impact of geopolitical events including the Covid 19 pandemic and Brexit.

Of these jobs, almost a quarter (23.7%) were in the finance and insurance industry and a further 16.8% were in professional, technical and scientific industries. 7.6% of employee jobs were in human health and social work activities and 6.2% of employees worked in education.

One measure of the size of an economy is Gross Value Added (GVA). In 2020, Tower Hamlets produced £37.4bn GVA. This was the third highest local authority in the UK behind the City of London and Westminster and was higher than all the major regional cities. It was more than three times higher than the borough's GVA in 2000. Tower Hamlets has also grown more quickly than other areas – GVA was less than that of Birmingham and Leeds in 2000 but was higher by 2020.

Chart 2 - Gross Value Added, 2020

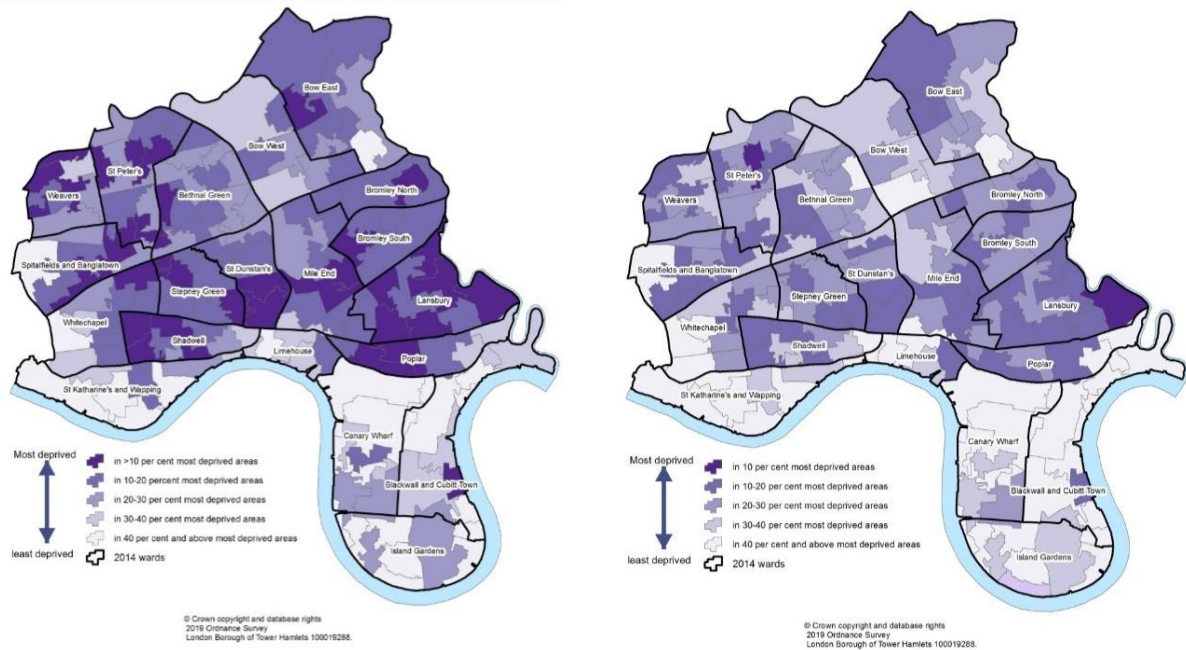


7. Improved outcomes for some of the most vulnerable, but further to go and some big challenges ahead

Throughout its history, the east end of London has been notorious for its poverty and attendant challenges such as crime. The many colourful stories (some fictitious, some based on real events) add to Tower Hamlets' rich cultural history and help attract visitors to destinations such as the Tower of London and Whitechapel. However, they have perhaps contributed to a caricature of the borough that does not reflect modern reality. This said, the area has experienced great hardship and difficulty over its past and to some extent these challenges persist, albeit they present differently in the twenty first century.

In 2019, Tower Hamlets ranked as the 50th most deprived local authority district (rank of score) in England (of 317). Deprivation in Tower Hamlets (measured through a combined set of health, education, crime, housing, environmental, employment and income measures), while still high, has been improving relative to the rest of the country in recent years.

Picture 2 - Indices of Multiple Deprivation, most and least deprived small areas in Tower Hamlets 2015 2019



Note: As of 2022, two ward names used in this map have now changed. St Peters ward is now Bethnal Green West and Bethnal Green is now Bethnal Green East.

As these maps illustrate, deprivation relative to other parts of England has decreased throughout the borough. Whilst significant parts of the borough ranked within the most deprived tenth of households in 2015 there were only two areas remaining in this group by 2019.

The specific reasons for this change in relative deprivation are difficult to precisely trace from the data but we have seen rising wages and rising levels of employment in the borough which will have helped many residents improve their circumstances. The employment rate has fluctuated over the years and was impacted by the pandemic and other factors, but the broad trend for working aged people has been upwards – rising from 53% in 2004 to 72.8% in 2022. Women, disabled residents and residents from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are less likely than average to be in work. In 2022, 59.7% of women were in employment and 62.5% of ethnic minority residents were in employment. 4.6% of residents were unemployed compared with a national average of 3.7%.

Amongst those who are working, we have also seen a significant rise in wages at all levels. Median gross weekly wages for full time working residents in 2021 were just under £800. This was significantly higher than both London and Great Britain and represented a rise of 25% since 2011. Wages also rose for those in the lowest earning quartile – from £459 to £582 – a rise of 27%. However, this does

not account for inflation and in particular inflation in housing costs. It also fails to recognize the large number of under-employed residents – in 2021, there were 54,000 part time employee jobs in the borough.

Another likely reason for the relative decline in deprivation is the inward migration of highly skilled professional people into the borough and the outward migration of low- and medium-income residents who can no longer afford housing costs in the area (particularly those living in the private rental sector and the children of long-term residents who are seeking to establish themselves and buy a home). The rapidly rising population potentially obscures some of the ingrained poverty that some residents in Tower Hamlets continue to experience.

Income data collated by the company CACI provides information about overall household income, including earnings from employment and other household income such as welfare payments. This demonstrates that even the least well – off quarter of households have improved their incomes relative to income levels in the country with lower quartile incomes in Tower Hamlets rising by 31% between 2010 and 2022 compared with 27% for Great Britain. Unfortunately, this does not necessarily mean that these lower income households will *feel* better off or find life to be more affordable than it did several years ago. The Annual Residents Survey in 2021 highlighted lack of affordable housing as a concern for 36% of respondents and rising prices/interest rates as a concern for 11% of respondents. The significant price inflation that 2022 has seen will undoubtedly have heightened those concerns for many more.

Table 2 – CACI Lower Quartile Income

| CACI Lower Quartile Household Income Data 2010 - 2022 | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2022 | % rise 2010 - 2022 |
| Great Britain | £16,925 | £17,036 | £17,749 | £21,560 | 27% |
| Tower Hamlets | £17,631 | £17,911 | £18,326 | £23,021 | 31% |

One other potential reason for the lessening deprivation is the impact of direct intervention amongst the poorest households, leading to measurable improvements in a variety of areas such as housing conditions and health outcomes. Tower Hamlets Homes has regenerated much of its own Council housing stock and other housing associations have also invested in social housing in the borough. The local NHS bodies have also invested heavily in both infrastructure and services. This included a complete rebuild of the Royal London Hospital with the current building opening in stages between 2012 and 2016.

Tower Hamlets is a central London inner city borough with all the issues that such areas experience, including crime. As a result, crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour are all issues that our residents highlight as key concerns. The

crime rate for total notifiable offences was 106.9 per 1,000 residents, higher than most London Boroughs but below other central London boroughs such as Hackney, Islington, Camden and Westminster. Relative to London, Tower Hamlets had high rates of sexual crimes and stalking and harassment crimes. Drug offences fell between 2021 and 2022 but were still among the highest in the country.

The last Annual Residents Survey (2021) showed that the single biggest concern of residents was crime and anti-social behaviour with 47% of residents citing this concern. Over a quarter of respondents (26%) said they feel unsafe after dark and 31% disagreed with the statement that 'police and public services are successfully dealing with safety issues'.

Anti-social behaviour is a particular issue. The Mayor's Office for Crime and Policing dashboard records that there have been almost 15,000 reported ASB Calls in the past year equating to a rate of 45.3 per 1,000 residents. This was the second highest rate in London after Westminster. Reports of harassment were also higher than most other areas. Reports of burglary, assault, robbery and criminal damage were relatively consistent with neighbouring inner east and southeast London boroughs, and in some cases below other areas.

8. Good schools and better prospects for young people, but not all adults have the skills and opportunities they need to succeed

Local schools are successful and highly regarded with 97% being rated as good or better by Ofsted. In 2020/2021, schools in Tower Hamlets achieved results that were above the England average on both average attainment 8 for GCSE and the proportion of children who achieve strong and standard passes in Maths and English. There are variations across different ethnic groups with children from Asian/Asian British backgrounds achieving better results on average than children from White, Mixed and Black backgrounds. Children from Chinese backgrounds do particularly well.

Children whose first language is not English (about two thirds of the cohort) achieve better results than children whose first language is English. Children who are eligible for free school meals perform less well than other children, but the difference is relatively small compared with other areas. The long-term impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic and the disruption this caused to the education of many children will not be fully understood for some time, with the impact on children from income deprived backgrounds and children with special educational needs being a particular concern.

A large proportion of young people go on to higher education. In 2020/21, 70.9% of 18-year-olds sustained a level 4 or higher destination (such as degrees, higher apprenticeships and national higher diplomas). This was higher than the rate for England of 66%.

However, some young people are falling through the cracks with survey data from the annual population survey from the last five years suggesting that between 3,000 and 6,000 18–24-year-olds may be unemployed at any one time. Some young people are particularly vulnerable, making them more likely to experience adverse outcomes. For example, the borough had 332 children who were being looked after as at March 2022.

Whilst speaking a first language other than English does not seem to be a major barrier for most young people making their way through the education system, it can be much more challenging for adults moving to the borough and seeking work if their proficiency in English is not good. In the 2021 census, 5.2% of residents aged 3 and over reported not being able to speak English well and 1.0% reported not being able to speak English at all. This may, for example, be one reason why only 36.3% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi females aged 16-64 were in employment in the year to March 2022 compared with an overall employment rate of 71.4% and an employment rate for all females of 59.2%.

Many adults are unskilled or under skilled. The ONS annual population survey estimates that in 2021, 6.5% of working age adults had no qualifications (higher than the London average of 5.5%) and more than a third of working age adults were not educated to NVQ3 level (equivalent to A-Levels or a BTEC level 3).

9. Improving health outcomes but increasing need, especially amongst older people. Persistent health and care challenges even before the pandemic

Health and social care services have always been extremely important to residents, but a global pandemic has brought them to even greater media and public attention at a time when delivery has been its most challenging.

Under the Indices of Multiple Deprivation Health Domain, Tower Hamlets ranked 98th of 317 in 2019 having been 56th in 2015, illustrating that health outcomes had been improving overall relative to other parts of England prior to the pandemic.

In 2018-20, healthy life expectancy at birth was 65 years for males and 58 years for females. This represented a significant increase for males since 2011-13 when healthy life expectancy was 54 years but only a very small increase for females when healthy life expectancy was 56 years. This data dates to well before the pandemic, of which the full impact on life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is unlikely to be known for many years.

Rates of disability within the borough vary significantly depending on age with roughly one in eight people having a disability. Children are much less likely to have a disability while disability is much more common among older people.

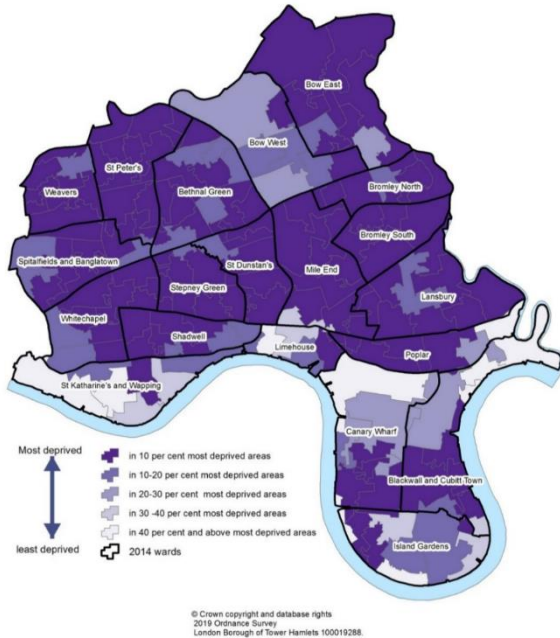
Table 3 – Disability by Age, 2021

| Disability by age, 2021 census | % |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 0-15 years | 5.2% |
| 16-24 years | 9.2% |
| 25-34 years | 7.6% |
| 35-49 years | 13.0% |
| 50-64 years | 28.4% |
| 65+ | 44.3% |
| All Ages | 12.9% |

There are more and more pressures on health and social care services. Working age adult care needs are rising. PANSI (Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information) projects that the number of working age adults with severe or moderate learning disabilities will rise from 1300 in 2020 to 1600 in 2040 while the number of people with autistic spectrum disorders will rise from 2500 to 3000 in the same period. They project that the number of working age people with two or more mental disorders will rise from under 17,000 to over 20,000. The number of working age people with impaired mobility is expected to rise from 9000 to 12,500.

The group in Tower Hamlets with the highest level of health and care need is older people. Tower Hamlets has a relatively small population of older people, but it is by some distance the most deprived group of older people in the country with 44% living in income deprivation. with clear implications for health outcomes and care needs.

Picture 3 - Income Deprivation Affecting Older People, 2019



According to POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information System), the number of older people requiring assistance with at least one domestic task will more than double between 2020 and 2040 from less than 6,000 to over 12,000. The number of older people with dementia is also expected to more than double from 1,360 to 2,840. The number of people unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own will likewise also double from 3,700 to 7,700.

May 2023

Corporate Strategy and Improvement Team

Equality Impact Analysis Template

Section 1: Introduction


| Name of proposal |
|--|
| For the purpose of this document, 'proposal' refers to a policy, function, strategy or project |
| 2023-2028 Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan |
| Service area and Directorate responsible |
| Corporate Strategy and Improvement Service; Strategy, Improvement and Transformation Division |
| Name of completing officer |
| Onyekachi Ajisafe |
| Approved by (Corporate Director / Divisional Director/ Head of Service) |
| Yes |
| Date of approval |
| Date to be inserted |

Where a proposal is being taken to a committee, please append the completed EIA(s) to the cover report.

Conclusion – To be completed at the end of the Equality Impact Analysis process

This summary will provide an update on the findings of the EIA and what the outcome is. *For example, based on the findings of the EIA, the proposal was rejected as the negative impact on a particular group was disproportionate and the appropriate actions cannot be undertaken to mitigate risk. Or, based on the EIA, the proposal was amended, and alternative steps taken.*

The focus of this is to analyse the impacts of the proposal on residents, service users and the wider community that are likely to be affected by the proposal. If the proposed change also has an impact on staff, the committee covering report should provide an overview of the likely equality impact for staff, residents and service users and the range of mitigating measures proposed.

| Conclusion | Current decision rating (see Appendix A) |
|--|--|
| <p>The Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan aims to reduce inequality and improve outcomes for all who live, work, study and visit the borough. Extensive engagement has been conducted to understand the needs of service users, and we have used the findings to promote positive impact on any particularly protected characteristic groups in the Plan's outcomes.</p> <p>The Plan does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share protected characteristics, but will instead have a positive impact, hence no further actions are recommended at this stage.</p> | <p>Green - Proceed</p>  |

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them
- Foster good relations between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them

This Equality Impact Analysis provides evidence for meeting the Council's commitment to equality and the responsibilities outlined above. For more information about the Council's commitment to equality, please visit the Council's [website](#).

Section 2: General information about the proposal

Describe the proposal including the relevance of proposal to the general equality duties and protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

The Tower Hamlets Partnership is a coalition of public services (including council, health police and education), voluntary, faith and community and business organisations committed to making Tower Hamlets a great place for all who live, work, visit and study here through a shared vision. Through civic engagement and participation, and through leadership of place we remain ambitious to improve the lives of our residents and create a Tower Hamlets that delivers for everyone. With Partners working together, and with residents, to improve services and outcomes and provide strategic leadership on complex cross-cutting issues through shared resources and collaboration.

The 2023-28 Partnership Plan embraces the new shared vision for the borough for the next 5 years: *'Residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, advance equality, opportunity, and empowered communities.'* As well as our shared outcomes:

- Address inequalities between residents from different backgrounds reducing gaps in health, earnings, education, housing, and opportunity.
- Improve our neighbourhoods, ensuring they are places for living, shopping and entertainment where communities feel safe and get on well together, and climate change is tackled.

While developing this Partnership Plan over the last year, we heard from residents about their aspirations for the borough and the biggest issues they face. This Partnership Plan focuses on what matters most to residents and on the practical difference residents, young people, public services, community, faith and voluntary groups and businesses can make when they work together empowering collective action.

To achieve these, the Plan outlines a set of priorities and underlying outcomes:

Priority 1 - Tower Hamlets will be a fair, inclusive and an anti-racist borough.

What we will do together:

- 1.1 Work in partnership to reduce unequal life chances.
- 1.2 Fulfil our partnership ambition to make Tower Hamlets an anti-racist borough.

Priority 2 - Everyone in Tower Hamlets should be able to enjoy good mental health and wellbeing.

What we will do together:

- 2.1 Work in partnership to reduce unequal life chances.
- 2.2 Fulfil our partnership ambition to make Tower Hamlets an anti-racist borough.

Priority 3 - Everyone in Tower Hamlets should feel safe and live in good-quality homes and healthy, inviting neighbourhoods.

What we will do together:

- 3.1 Support safer communities.
- 3.2 A Public Health approach using guidance and insight.
- 3.3 Address housing needs and improve our neighbourhoods.

Priority 4 - Everyone in Tower Hamlets should have access to good work and skills and an income that meets their needs.

What we will do together:

- 4.1 Promote inward investment and create wealth.
- 4.2 Support skills development, good work and financial security.

Priority 5 - A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to.

What we will do together:

- 5.1 Improve the life chances and outcomes of our children and young people.

Section 3: Evidence (consideration of data and information)

What evidence do we have which may help us think about the impacts or likely impacts on residents, service users and wider community?

The Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan used a wide range of engagement, as well as service, local and national data and information, to help inform the Plan. The Plan's background evidence paper details the key evidence base for the plan, these include:

Tower Hamlets State of the Borough 2023

This report was prepared in March 2023 to support development of a new Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan. It uses data from the 2021 census and other official statistics to describe some of the key features of Tower Hamlets and the borough's population, and some of the most important changes the borough's population have experienced in recent years.

Some of the most notable features of the borough's population are:

- **310,300:** number of residents, the fastest growing population in England.
- **22%:** the population increase between 2011 – 2021.
- **15,695:** residents per square kilometre. Most densely populated area in England.
- **30 years:** the median age of our residents, the youngest of any area.

- **71%:** of all residents aged 20-64, disproportionately comprised of working-age adults.
- **34.6%:** the proportion of residents of Bangladeshi origin, the highest in the country.
- **2%:** the proportion of residents from Somali and Somalilander communities.
- **39.9%:** the proportion of residents identifying as Muslim, the highest in the country.
- **50th:** the 50th most deprived local authority district (rank of score) in England (of 317).
- **£37.4 billion:** The Gross Value Added produced by Tower Hamlets economy in 2020. A larger economy than the cities of Birmingham, Manchester or Leeds, with more jobs (291,000) than working age residents
- **16,855:** Number of businesses in Tower Hamlets.
- **291,000:** employee jobs in 2021, but unemployment higher than the national average, and women are less likely to be employed
- **46,000:** the number of residents aged 16 and over who have never worked.
- **47.5%:** children estimated to be living in relative low-income families in 2021 (after housing costs – highest in England).
- **46,000:** the number of residents aged 16 and over who have never worked.
- **96.8%:** the proportion of schools and nursery rated ‘good’ or better in December 2022.
- **65 years:** healthy life expectancy at birth for males in 2018-20.
- **58 years:** healthy life expectancy at birth for females in 2018-20.
- **45%:** proportion of children aged 10-11 (school year 6) who were overweight or obese in 2021/22.
- **70%:** of dwellings are rented, split roughly equally between social renters and private renters.
- **38.2%:** Proportion of households in private rented accommodation, 5th highest in England and Wales (2021).
- **15.8%:** proportion of households with at least one fewer bedroom than they require, 4th highest in England and Wales (2021).
- **47%:** proportion of residents citing crime and anti-social behaviour as a top concern (2021).
- **106.9 per 1,000 residents:** crime rate for total notifiable offences, below some central London Boroughs, but higher than most London Boroughs.

‘Tower Hamlets for All’ Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan Engagement

The engagement of the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan – ‘Tower Hamlets for All’ sought to gather views of those who live, work, study and visit the borough using various methods and wide-ranging channels to ensure the views of different groups in the borough are heard. Over 700 people were involved. This included: a Tower Hamlets for All Survey resulting in 262 responses over a period of two

months (December 2022 – January 2023); virtual engagement events and a series of in- person events with 464 people engaged. Some of the notable things residents told us are:

What people like most about Tower Hamlets

- The borough's diversity.
- Arts, culture, shops, restaurants, and historical districts.
- Tower Hamlets' location, transport connections to central London and proximity to River Thames and the canal.
- Public spaces such as local parks and green spaces.

The issues people would like action on

- Housing conditions and the need for more affordable and family-sized homes.
- Public spaces, air quality and transport.
- Crime, violence, and anti-social behavior.
- Poverty and the cost of living.
- Access to health and GP services, better mental health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities.
- More community spirit and neighborliness.
- Opportunities for young people in education, employment and careers.
- Equal access to opportunities for young people, women and all our residents from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic communities to learning, skills and job opportunities and career progression.
- Celebrating the borough and its people.
- Fairness, cohesion and opportunities for all.
- Building personal and community responsibility.
- Sharing the benefits from regeneration, growth and economic opportunities.

The evidence for the Partnership plan also draws on a number of other research and engagement exercises carried out with residents since 2020, with a focus on those exercises where residents shared their views on a wide range of topics. These include:

2021 Annual Residents Survey

The resident survey provides a snapshot of the views of 1,108 residents representative of the Tower Hamlets population, on a range of topics including the council, local services, and their local area.

2022 Pupil Attitude Survey

The survey capture views of 1,526 primary school and 271 secondary school pupils' views and experiences about learning, health and well-being, staying safe, and plans for the future.

2021 Poverty Review

The review heard from over 300 residents and partners, as well as council staff, through 6 themed review meetings; 5 partnership groups; 3 resident workshops, 10 focus groups, an online call for evidence on the online 'Let's Talk' portal, in-person call for evidence boxes in Idea Stores.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Consultation and engagement on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy provides views of 240 residents in face-to-face neighbourhood conversations, phone and online engagement survey with 354 residents, and a range of 25 face-to-face meetings and workshops with resident groups, boards, and professionals.

2023 Healthy Neighbourhoods project

The Healthwatch project heard the views and opinions of 361 local people via an online survey, face-to-face street surveying, and 2 focus groups.

New Grants Programme engagement

The New Grants for the Voluntary and Community Sector Captured the views of 155 people through 6 workshops delivered across the borough at different times of the day, face-to-face and virtual sessions, 7 pop-up engagement events across the borough, and an online survey.

Section 4: Assessing the impacts on different groups and service delivery

| Groups | Positive | Negative | Neutral | Considering the above information and evidence, describe the impact this proposal will have on the following groups? |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Protected | | | | |
| Age (All age groups) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on people of all age groups. |
| Disability (Physical, learning difficulties, mental health and medical conditions) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on disabled people. |
| Sex | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on all gender groups. |
| Gender reassignment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on this group. |
| Marriage and civil partnership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on this group. |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Religion or philosophical belief | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on people of all religions and philosophical beliefs. |
| Race | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on people of all races. |
| Sexual orientation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on people of all sexual orientations. |
| Pregnancy and maternity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on pregnant women, and those on/returning from maternity. |
| Other | | | | |
| Socio-economic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on people of different socio-economic backgrounds. |
| Parents/Carers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on parents and carers. |
| People with different Gender Identities e.g. Gender fluid, Non-Binary etc | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on all gender identities. |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| People with Care Experience | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact on carers, people in care, and those trying to access care services. |
| Any other groups | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Plan's priorities aim to have a positive impact several other groups in the borough not listed here such as people of different ethnicities, job/skill seekers, businesses and voluntary organisations, etc. |

Section 5: Impact analysis and action plan

| Recommendation | Key activity | Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress | Officer responsible | Update on progress |
|----------------|--------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | |

Section 6: Monitoring





What monitoring processes have been put in place to check the delivery of the above action plan and impact on equality groups?

The 2023-2028 Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan has undergone extensive range of engagement, based on the findings, the Plan identifies priorities for the Tower Hamlets Partnership to improve outcomes for of all who live, work, study and visit the borough.

Once the Plan has been approved, an action plan will be developed for the implementation of its priorities, with the delivery monitored by the Partnership Executive Group (PEG), ensuring that the stated outcomes and objectives are met, to which an annual report will be published on the Partnership's progress towards these.

Appendix A

EIA decision rating

| Decision | Action | Risk |
|---|--|--|
| <p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that a disproportionately negative impact (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act and appropriate mitigations cannot be put in place to mitigate against negative impact. It is recommended that this proposal be suspended until further work is undertaken.</p> | <p>Suspend – Further Work Required</p> | <p>Red</p>  |
| <p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that there is a risk that a disproportionately negative impact (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is a genuine determining reason that could legitimise or justify the use of this policy.</p> | <p>Further (specialist) advice should be taken</p> | <p>Red Amber</p>  |
| <p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that there is a risk that a disproportionately negatively impact (as described above) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, this risk may be removed or reduced by implementing the actions detailed within the <i>Impact analysis and action plan</i> section of this document.</p> | <p>Proceed pending agreement of mitigating action</p> | <p>Amber</p>  |
| <p>As a result of performing this analysis, the policy or activity does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> and no further actions are recommended at this stage.</p> | <p>Proceed</p> | <p>Green</p>  |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Cabinet</p> <p>29 November 2023</p> |  |
| <p>Report of: Lisa Fraser, Acting Corporate Director, Children’s Services</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Accelerate! The Tower Hamlets Children and Families Partnership Strategy, 2024 - 2029</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lead Member | Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor) |
| Originating Officer(s) | Layla Richards, Head of Strategy and Commissioning |
| Wards affected | All |
| Key Decision? | No |
| Reason for Key Decision | N/A |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 15 August 2023 |
| Exempt information | None |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tackling the cost-of-living crisis 3. Accelerating education 5. Investing in public services 6. Empowering communities and fighting crime 8. A council that listens and works for everyone |

Executive Summary

The new Children and Families Partnership Strategy – ‘Accelerate!’ sets 8 agreed priorities for the partnership for 2024 to 2029. Cabinet are asked to note the report.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the strategic priorities set out for the Tower Hamlets’ Children and Families Partnership in the Accelerate! Children and Families Partnership strategy.
2. Note that the priorities identified in Accelerate! are reflected in the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan.
3. Note the Equalities Impact Assessment set out in paragraph 4.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

1.1 This is a noting report.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.1 The Council could choose not to endorse the Children and Families Strategy; however as one of the largest partners on the Children and Families Partnership Board this would undermine the work and direction agreed by the Partnership for the next five years.

2.2 The strategy provides a framework for delivering on joint priorities for children and families in the borough. Without this strategy it would be difficult to map a clear, coherent direction towards important outcomes for children, young people and families in Tower Hamlets.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 Tower Hamlets' Children and Families partnership brings together organisations from public services (including the council, different NHS organisations, police, and probation) and the voluntary and community sector to work together for better lives for young people in Tower Hamlets. Children, young people and their families are at the heart of our partnership and represented on many of the partnership groups. Our Every Chance for Every Child Forum provides strategic oversight of the partnership and reports into the borough's Partnership Executive Group. It is co-chaired by the Cabinet Member and a representative from the Young Mayor's team.

3.2 The partnership's current strategy Every Chance for Every Child comes to an end in 2024. A refreshed agenda is required in response to a new context: a new elected Mayor with an ambitious agenda for children and young people, changing national policy on children's services, SEND and health and social care integration, tackling the housing and cost of living crises that affect so many families, and the lasting impact of the pandemic on children's lives.

3.3 The new strategy is called Accelerate! It draws on extensive engagement with children, families and professionals carried out for recent partnership strategies in early help, safeguarding and the wider Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan. Development was led by the Every Chance for Every Child Forum and built on young people's presentations to the forum about their priorities in early 2023. Two workshops with forum members generated high level priorities. Priorities were tested with families attending In the Neighbourhood and a Family Fun Day in summer 2023, and the Children and Families Executive.

3.4 The strategy consists of a vision, eight priorities and a set of shared partnership values. Alignment to the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan for 2023 to 2028 will support delivery and accountability.

- 3.5 The vision is *A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to.*
- 3.6 The eight priorities are for every child and young person to have a great start in life; enjoy the best possible health; get support for good mental health and wellbeing when they need it; get the right support at the right time if they have special educational needs or a disability; feel safe and secure; achieve their best in education and have opportunities to develop a career. The partnership will also work together to support families to be resilient in the cost of living and child poverty crisis and address the impact of overcrowding and poor housing conditions on families; and to champion co-production, equality and anti-racism.
- 3.7 Implementation will begin in April 2024, and will be preceded by a period of delivery planning. The strategy itself does not have earmarked costs: the council and partner organisations will contribute through their own programmes and planning cycles.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached. Ensuring that all children and young people can thrive in Tower Hamlets is a priority for every partner and the strategy includes a specific commitment to promote equality and tackle discrimination and racism.
- 4.2 The development of each priority will be informed by equality analysis, considering issues of intersectionality.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 Effective partnership working and community engagement is an important way for councils to deliver their best value duty. Draft guidance on best value standards is clear that “Authorities should have a clear understanding of and focus on the benefits that can be gained by effective collaborative working with local partners and community engagement in order to achieve its strategic objectives and key outcomes for local people”. This strategy

supports the delivery of the Best Value duty for partnership work with children and families.

- 5.3 The strategy also incorporates the priorities of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership as developed with statutory partners, wider stakeholders and children and young people.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no direct Finance implications to this report. Any strategies that developed from this report with financial implications would be presented for separate decision.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Sections 17-19 of the Children Act 1989, and Schedule 2 Part I of the same Act, place wide-ranging duties on local authorities to support children living with their families and to provide appropriate services.
- 7.2 This report demonstrates the Council's work to comply with these duties.
-

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

None

Appendices

- Appendix A: Accelerate! The Tower Hamlets Children and Families Partnership Strategy 2024 to 2029
- Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

Frances Winter, frances.winter@towerhamlets.gov.uk



THIS ACCELERATE!

The Tower Hamlets Children and
Families Partnership Strategy
2024 – 2029



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Foreword

We want Tower Hamlets to be a place where every child fulfils their potential.

Tower Hamlets is investing in the next generation. We're the first place in the country where every primary and secondary school pupil gets a free school meal. Our new Young Tower Hamlets programme will bring a youth centre in every ward. Children and their families will get access to the different services they need in new Family Hubs across Tower Hamlets. We're increasing investment in services for young people with Special Educational Needs, children we care for, children who need protection and those in trouble with the law. Our ambitious programme to deliver homes for the future, tackle overcrowding, help with the cost of living and boost leisure, sports and culture, will make Tower Hamlets a better place to raise a family.

But there is still much to do. That's why we are committed to working in partnership to deliver for families. With dedication, focus and a relentless commitment to putting babies, children and young people at the heart of our services, we will work together so that Tower Hamlets is a truly child-friendly borough.

Lutfur Rahman,
Executive Mayor and
Chair of the Partnership Executive Group

Cllr Maium Talukdar,
Deputy Mayor and Co-Chair of the
Every Chance for Every Child Forum





Message from members of the **Every Chance for Every Child Forum**

We are proud to be members of the Every Chance for Every Child Forum, the Tower Hamlets Children and Families Partnership. As individual organisations and working together, we strive every day to deliver the very best opportunities and support to families and children.

This strategy is driven by what children and young people have told us. They love the diversity and the range of things to do in our borough, and quality of education offered in our schools. But young people are worried about cost of living and housing pressures. They want more support for their mental health and wellbeing. Too many young people are concerned about bullying and safety, discrimination and racism, and whether their achievements in education will translate into career opportunities. We know from statistics that the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and poor housing has had a lasting and negative impact on many aspects of children's lives.

The eight priorities in Accelerate! set out how the partnership will respond to the challenges that young people have set us. Our shared values – being child focused, family centred and collaborative; strengths-based and trauma informed; and focused on equality and anti-racist practice – will inform everything we do. Together we will deliver real change for children.

Members of the Every Chance for Every Child Forum

Children and young people in Tower Hamlets: the context

Our babies, children and young people are the future of our borough and its greatest strength. After increasing over the past decade, the number of children in Tower Hamlets is expected to remain at current levels until 2030. The number of school age children is likely to fall, while pre-schoolers are likely to increase. Our children are from diverse backgrounds and faiths. More than half are of Bangladeshi heritage, with significant numbers of children from White British, mixed heritage, and African including Somali heritage.

Tower Hamlets has become a world-class hub for financial, technological and creative industries. This growth brings opportunities, but also stresses. We are the most densely populated area in the UK, with pressures on services and open space, and high levels of population turnover.

High child poverty is exacerbated by housing costs and undermines children's wellbeing, health and opportunities. Overcrowding amongst families with dependent children is very high in Tower Hamlets and many aspects of children's lives - health, study, play and friendships - suffer as a result.

The borough has excellent schools, and children make good academic progress from the time they start school. Despite having the highest proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the country, analysis from the Education Policy Institute shows that the 'disadvantage gap' for Tower Hamlets pupils is amongst the smallest of any local area.

There is more to do. Our youngest children are less likely than their peers elsewhere to start school with a good level of development, and take up of free education entitlements is low. In our schools, historically high rates of attendance declined in the wake of the pandemic. We want more young people to stay in education after 16, to fulfil their potential from birth onwards and progress to training, further and higher education.

A healthy childhood is the foundation for a healthy adulthood. Despite concerted focus, the effects of the pandemic, austerity and poverty are seen in a number of key child health measures. Children and young people tell us that mental health is a priority, reflecting national trends showing a rise in probable mental disorder in children.

The number of children and young people with additional needs is higher compared to other areas, with many children requiring support for Speech, Language and Communication, as well as Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

For young people, like their parents, safety in their neighbourhoods, schools and at home is an important concern. A significant minority of children say they do not feel safe in their local area, or have experienced bullying in the past year. Rates of the most serious violence affecting young people declined sharply between 2018 and late 2019, and have been largely steady since: we must continue to do all we can to reduce these rates and protect our children and young people from harm.



Children and young people in Tower Hamlets



There were **64,200** 0-17 year-olds in 2021. That's **21%** of the population, and an increase of 8,855 between 2011 - 2021.

More than **1 in 4 children (27%)** are living in relative low income families. (2022 Children in Low Income households). This figure rises to around 1 in 2 children when housing costs are taken into account.



61% of children under 18 live in a couple family household, **21.5%** live in a lone parent household, and **16.5%** live in another kind of household.



53% of eligible children took up the free education entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds: the lowest figure in London (2022) **60.5%** of 5 year olds have a good level of development, below the London (67.8%) average (21/22)



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9 in 10 children were born in the UK.

44% of households with dependent children are overcrowded.



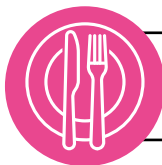
58% of children in the borough are from a Bangladeshi background, **15.5%** from a White background, **8%** from a mixed heritage background, and **7%** from a Black background. **2.5%** of children under 16 years are of Somali heritage.



98% of primary pupils and **89%** of secondary pupils in the borough are in schools rated good or outstanding (2021/22)



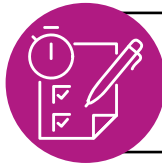
4 in 10 school pupils are entitled to means-tested free school meals. (2023 school census)



66% of pupils in year 6 met the expected standard in reading writing and maths, equal to the London average (66%) (2022/23)



Children and young people in Tower Hamlets



54.5% pupils achieved grade 5+ in GCSE English and Maths, slightly lower than the inner London average (56.6%) (2021/22)

18% of pupils have a special need or disability. (2022/23)



The average A level result in Tower Hamlets is **C+**, compared to B for London as a whole. (2021/22)



73.8% of five year olds received two doses of the MMR vaccine, below the London average of 74%, and well below the 95% coverage required to achieve herd immunity (2022/23).



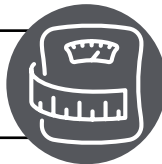
26.5% of pupils were persistently absent from school in autumn 2022/23, slightly above the inner London average of 23.8%.



There were **142** first time entrants to the criminal justice system for every 100,000 10-17 year olds, below the London average of 167. (2022)



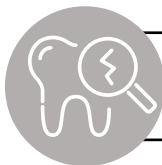
20.5% of reception age children, and **46%** of year 6 children were overweight or obese (2021/22).



301 children were looked after, including **31** unaccompanied asylum seeking children (March 2023). The through care service was working with **459** young people aged 14 to 25.



29.5% of five year olds have visually obvious decay, above the London average of 25.8%. (2021/22)



84% of pupils felt safe in their local areas. **28%** of pupils reported that they had been bullied at school during the past year. (Pupil Attitude Survey 2022)



The Children and Families Partnership

The organisations that make up the Children and Families Partnership are proud of the work we do together and with the borough's children and families.

The new Mayor and his administration were elected in 2022 with an ambitious agenda for children and young people and a ground-breaking programme of support. This includes being the first local area to expand universal free school meals to secondary as well as primary schools, introduction of Education Maintenance Allowance and bursaries, and investment in youth, leisure, and community language services for young people.

Tower Hamlets has one of the largest and most diverse voluntary and community sectors in London, with an active inter-faith network and a network of equality-focused organisations. 96% of our schools are good or outstanding. Health partners have a track record of innovative work with families and children. The new Integrated Care System offers an opportunity to bring resources and a focus on children's health at the heart of partnership working.

Tower Hamlets was hugely affected by the pandemic, with a significant impact on children, families and the workforce. Public sector, voluntary organisations, faith and community groups and local volunteers came together with a determination to support all families in the borough with a focus on the most vulnerable children.

Since the pandemic, the partnership continues to work closely to meet new challenges: the cost of living crisis, the legacy of the pandemic for vulnerable children, responding to the Black Lives Matters movement, and children and young people's involvement in shaping our priorities.

We have deepened our relationships through our Safeguarding Children Partnership, a new Play Charter, development of an Integrated Care System, and integrated services for families through our new Family Hubs and our Early Partnership Strategy. At the same time, we have been collaborating to address some of our shared challenges as organisations, including recruiting

and retaining the best children's workforce, the quality and use of data we hold, and the impact of austerity and funding pressures on our work.

Our previous strategy – 'Every Chance for Every Child' – saw many important developments. The pandemic disrupted progress. This new strategy will take a responsive approach, with clear timebound delivery plans, and flexibility to adjust priorities.

We will constantly look for ways to empower children and families, to improve and innovate, and to intervene early when children are in need of extra support.



How we developed Accelerate!

To develop Accelerate!, the partnership drew on discussions with children, young people and families which informed our new Early Help, Safeguarding Partnership and Tower Hamlets Partnership Plans. The Pupil Attitude Survey 2022 provided important evidence about children's lives and experiences.

- Summer 2023: A high-level synthesis of data, evidence and feedback from young people was carried out on behalf of the partnership by the organisation Basis.
- July and September 2023: Basis led the Every Chance for Every Child Forum in two Theory of Change and action planning workshops.
- July and August 2023: the team held further stakeholder consultations, and attended Family Fun Day and In the Neighbourhood events to find out what families felt about the strategy priorities.

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Secondary pupils and priorities: presented to Every Chance for Every Child Forum at January 2023 takeover session. Mental Health (removing stigma, trusted relationships, information about available support, training co-produced with young people) Bullying (peer pressure, reputations, kindness and trusted adults)

The most common free time activities for pupils were visiting a park or playground, and reading a book or newspaper. **Pupil Attitude Survey 2022**

I've just moved here I like it. It's a cool area. I like the aesthetics. It's very youth, very street. Although it's very, very overpriced. Housing's a real problem. **Teenage girl, In the Neighbourhood**

When I had my son, it was in Covid and things were weird. I had lots of different health visitors. Now I have an excellent health visitor. She did things like check my older child had had his two year check. She also told me about the Children's Centre, that was really good. **Mother of a toddler and baby**

34% of primary pupils and 56% of secondary pupils would like to do a professional job in the future. **Pupil Attitude Survey 2022**

28% of pupils reported they had been bullied at school in the last year. **Pupil Attitude Survey 2022**

(Social media) is something I'm really worried about. We didn't have it in my day. When you left school, it was like it was over, but these kids are bullying them (online). **Parent at the Family Fun Day**

The top three things that pupils said would make life better were: more places where I can go to spend time with my friends; more interesting school lessons, and more help to plan for my future. **Pupil Attitude Survey 2022**

69% of primary school, and 43% of secondary school pupils reported that they 'feel happy about life at the moment'. **Pupil Attitude Survey 2022**

Youth council: feedback on priorities to Children and Families Executive April 2023: Child poverty, Mental health services, Cultural capital, Standards of social housing

I didn't know any of this existed. It was only because my sister said there are children's centres. Maybe... when you're in hospitals (midwives) come and at the very earliest stages (and shows) what's available for you. You just need to make yourself a bit more visible. **Mother of toddler, Family Fun Day**

I'm in temporary accommodation right now. It's really hard pressure. (My son's) getting older...he's growing, he needs his own kind of space, his own room. **Parent at the Family Fun Day**

We go to the children's centre a lot for stay and play. They were brilliant in detecting my daughter's speech issues and getting her a bit of extra support. It helped a lot. **Mother, Family Fun Day**

Accelerate! Our Children and Families Strategy

OUR VISION

Every organisation in the Children and Families Partnership works towards our shared vision:

A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to.

This vision has been developed collectively, and co-production with children, families and partners will always be a core principle for how we work in Tower Hamlets.

OUR VALUES

As partners working with children and families, relationships are at the heart of our work. Our shared values are:

- being child-focused
- working with the whole family, with a collaborative and co-production approach
- being strengths-based and trauma-informed
- recognising and working actively to combat discrimination and racism.

These values reflect the partnership principles set out in the wider Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan, and are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

OUR AMBITIONS

To achieve our vision, the partnership has agreed six ambitions, based on what children and families told us matters most and where partners can make the biggest difference working together. Equality and co-production will guide our work in each area. We want every child and young person to:

1. Have a great start in life
2. Enjoy the best possible health during childhood
3. Get support for good mental health and wellbeing when they need it
4. Get the right support at the right time if they have special educational needs or a disability
5. Feel safe and secure
6. Achieve their best in education and have opportunities to develop a career

As a partnership, we will also tackle the wider barriers in society that stop children fulfilling their potential. We will work alongside families, children and the wider Tower Hamlets partnership to:

7. Support families to be resilient in the cost of living and child poverty crisis
8. Champion co-production, equality and anti-racism

Delivering Accelerate!

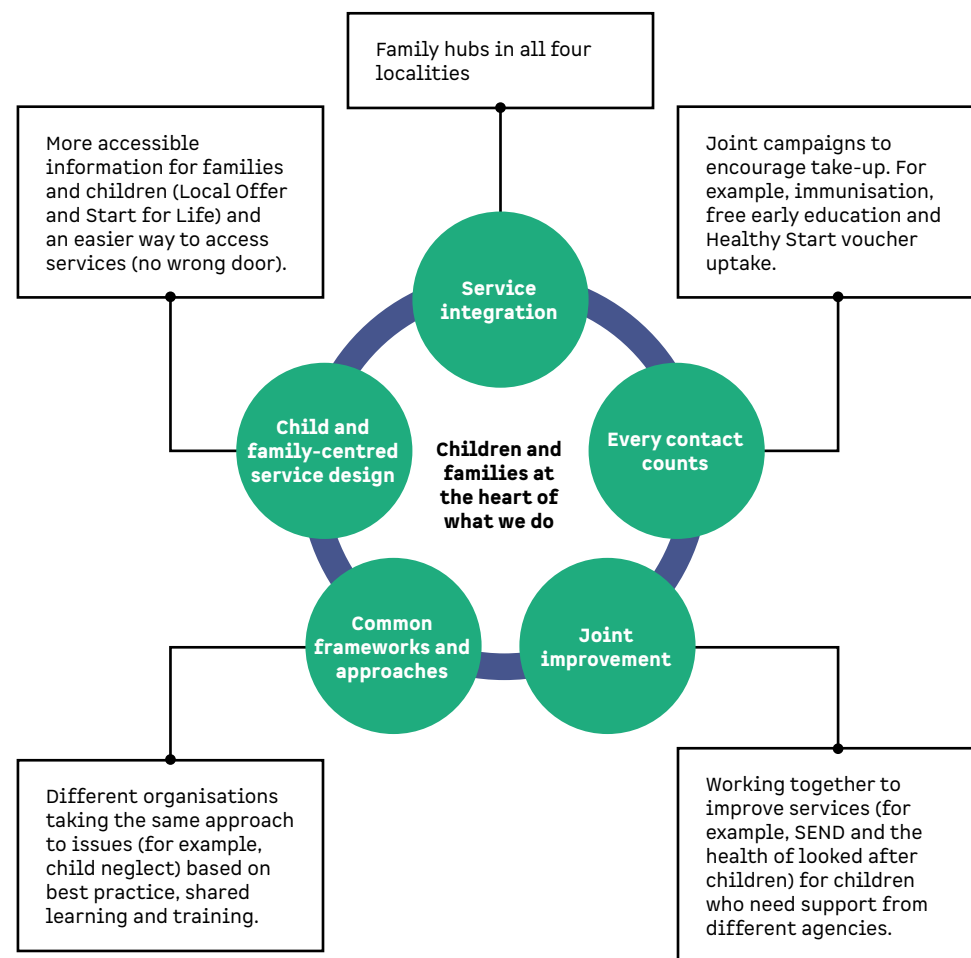
The needs and aspirations of children and young people are the focus of our partnership. Although partners come from different organisations with different mandates and funding streams, we aspire to work as one partnership with an emphasis on early intervention, prevention and achieving the very best outcomes for every child.

We will work together to improve children's lives and reduce inequalities with the same urgency that we used to respond to Covid. As individual organisations and as a partnership, we will be advocates for children and families and the funding, good housing, play spaces and high quality workforce that they need to thrive.

We will adopt a range of approaches - shown by the diagram - underpinned by our shared partnership values. The Covid pandemic and cost of living pressures have shown that partnerships work best when they are responsive and focused. We will take a flexible approach, building on a strong foundation of trust and collaboration, and regularly take stock of how our partnership is working.



HOW WE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP



Governance and reporting

Delivery and oversight of the strategy is summarised in the diagram on the right. Each delivery group will report on progress to the Children and Families Executive on a rolling basis at one of the Executive's bi-monthly meetings. There will be an initial review of the groups as part of delivery planning for the strategy.

A summary of progress against the strategy outcomes will be reported to the Partnership Executive Group annually.

Each year, a short annual stocktake will review whether the strategy priorities are still correct, using feedback from children and families as well as data and inspection outcomes.

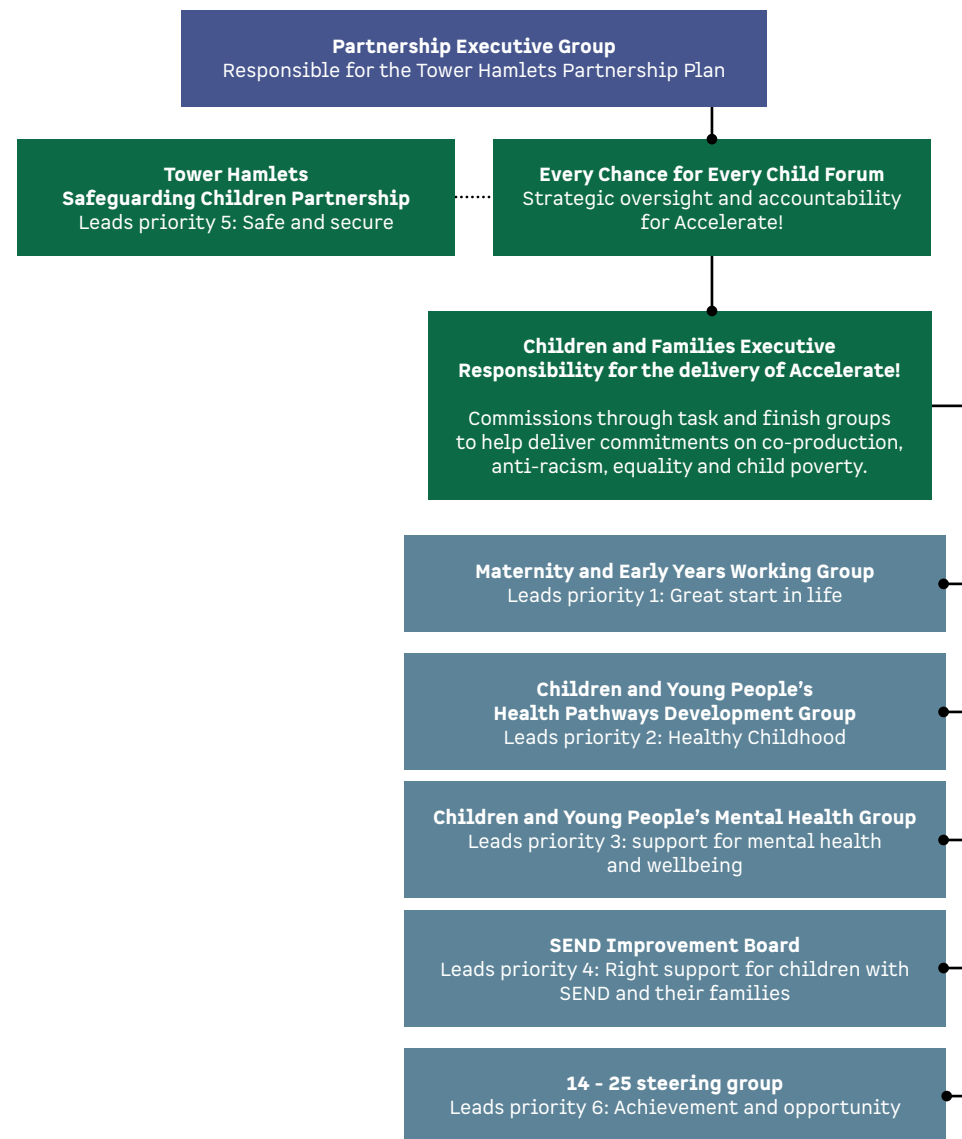
The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership will lead the delivery of the safe and secure priority. Its published annual report will provide progress updates and highlight new work programmes.

See Annex B for an overview of the wider Children and Families partnership

Partners have agreed **six principles for improvement**. These are shared in common with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

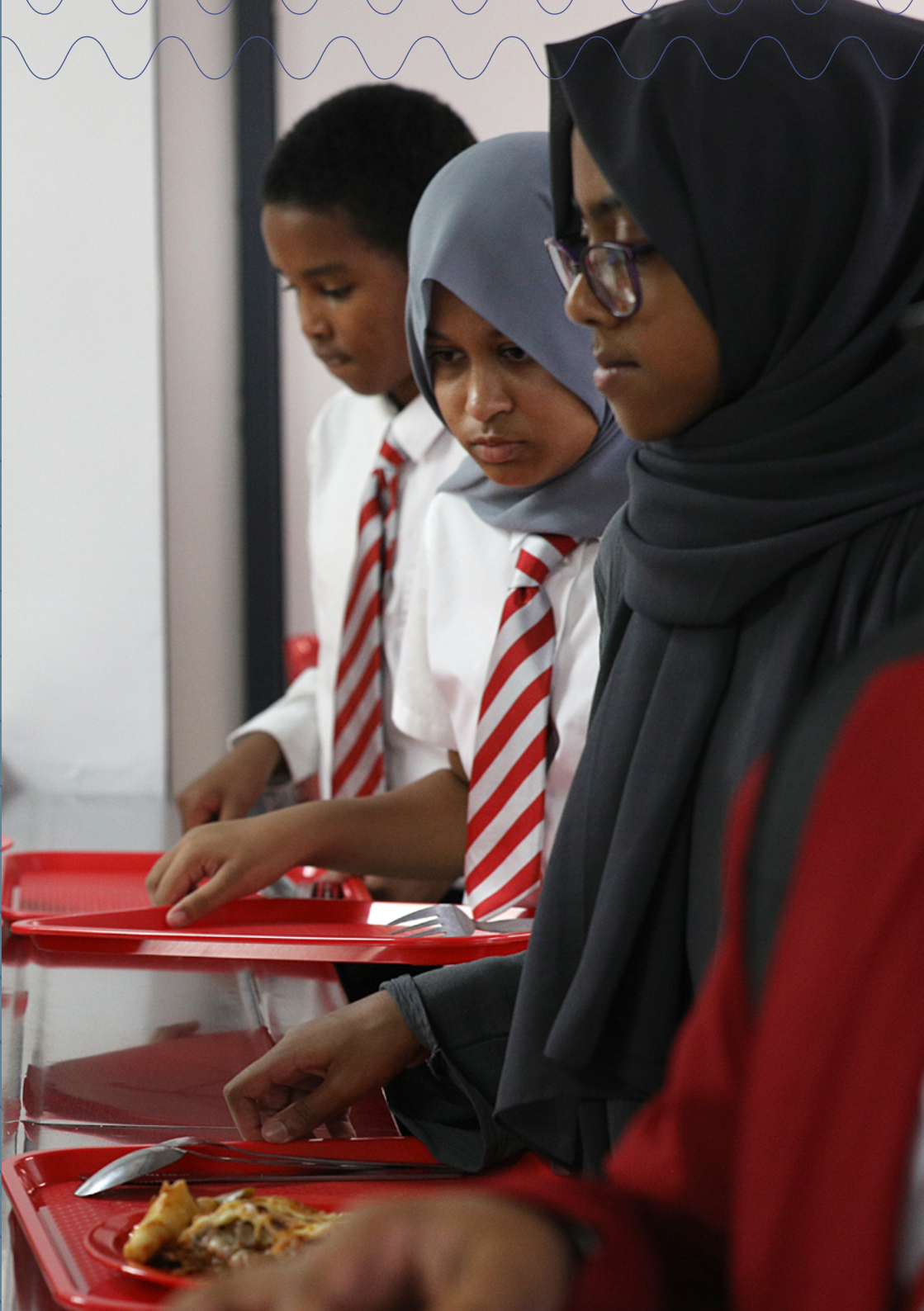
1. Resources to support children and families should go to those who most need them
2. Feeling connected and included is a foundation of wellbeing and the importance of this should be built into services and programme
3. Being treated equally, respectfully and without discrimination should be the norm when using services
4. Information and advice for children and families should be clear, simple, and produced with those who will benefit from them
5. Children and families should feel that they have equal power in shaping and designing services and programme
6. We should all be working together to make the best use of the assets we already have that support children and families.

Delivery and oversight of Accelerate!



Annex A: our partnership ambitions in detail

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Ambition 1: A great start in life Led by the Maternity and Early Years Working Group

The first 1001 days of life, from conception to age two years, are critical for children's development and set the foundations for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing. Babies and young children need secure attachment to their primary caregiver, a safe environment, and plenty of play and stimulation.

There are lots of services for Tower Hamlets families with babies and young children, with a network of twelve well-attended Children and Families Centres, a new Start for Life offer, and a host of excellent community-based and voluntary sector services. Our ActEarly research collaboration is providing important insights into what makes a difference for the youngest children. Infant safety and safe sleeping are priorities for our safeguarding partnership.

However, focused work is needed so that the youngest children thrive. Priority issues include support for maternal wellbeing and health, making sure parents access the full range of social, health and early years services on offer including GP registration, and identifying early when young children need extra help with issues like speech and language. Our partnership Early Help Strategy - encompassing our Start for Life offer - will guide our support for families with babies and young children.

What children and families say

Families involved in developing the Early Help Strategy told us that they wanted an accessible single point of access for services, flexible services which broke down language and access barriers, widely available information on services, and comprehensive support that works with families so that there are not multiple workers per family and families don't need to retell their stories.

What we will do together

1. Introduce Family Hubs in the four localities of Tower Hamlets delivering Early Help to support children and families in a fully integrated service and ensure children are accessing universal services.
2. Develop our integrated 'Start for Life' offer as part of delivery of our Early Help Strategy, including the antenatal pathway to identify pre- and perinatal maternal problems early, offer support and signpost.
3. Equip the 'Start for Life' workforce (pregnancy to 2 years) to better support perinatal emotional wellbeing, immunisation uptake, communication development and social prescribing by implementing, evaluating and rolling-out innovative workforce models.
4. Support increased take up of free early education entitlements for two and three year olds.
5. Support parents to make informed choices around breastfeeding, and strengthen practical support, including for starting solid foods.
6. Ensure families and professionals are aware of the range of services available for young families in the borough

How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Increased percentage of babies born at a healthy weight
2. Increased percentage of babies breastfed at 6-8 weeks.
3. Increased percentage of eligible disadvantaged two year olds accessing the free early education entitlement.
4. Increased percentage of children in reception assessed as a good level of development

Ambition 2: A healthy childhood

Led by the Children & Young People Pathway Development Group; and Healthy Weight Programme

Every child and young person should have the best possible standard of health. Our partnership has a history of working together to support healthy families: from our award winning asthma and wheeze project 'Stopping the Monster Days' to taking on junk food advertising with our Healthier Food Advertising Policy.

We are the only area where all primary and secondary pupils receive free school meals. Our 'Health Determinants Research Collaboration' will place evidence on health inequalities at the heart of services and investments. Children's needs are a priority workstream for the new North East London Integrated Care System.

We have significant challenges in a number of dimensions of children's health where progress has stalled or reversed since the pandemic, including childhood immunisations, healthy weight, and dental decay. Respiratory conditions are also an issue, and pupils have identified reducing pollution as a priority.

What children and families say

According to the Pupil Attitude Survey data, a significant number of children and young people in Tower Hamlets fall short of the recommended daily fruit and vegetable intake, with many expressing worries about maintaining a healthy weight.

What we will do together

1. Implement our joint children's healthy weight programme, expanding opportunities for children to play, keep moving and eat well, making the best use of our leisure services and planning powers
2. Deliver a joint plan to increase immunisation uptake, including new places where immunisations can be given.
3. Develop innovative partnership approaches to tackle poor air quality, overcrowding and damp and mould and their impact on children's health, building on insights from the Health Determinants Research Collaboration.
4. Improve information sharing between schools, local authority and health services to more effectively support families.

How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Increased percentage of children who have received two doses of the MMR vaccine at age 5
2. Increased percentage of children in reception at a healthy weight
3. Increased percentage of children in year 6 at a healthy weight

Ambition 3: Support for good mental health and wellbeing

Led by the Children and Young People's Mental Health Group

Good mental health is part of a healthy childhood. National data shows a rise in probable mental disorder in children since 2017, and this reflects what young people have told us about the impact of lockdown, anxiety, isolation and loss of coping mechanisms. Tower Hamlets has above average prevalence of mental illness in school aged children and mental health admissions for children.

There are a range of local services available, from Kooth online, the Emotional Wellbeing Service in schools, to clinical programmes and tailored interventions. We will work to create a borough where children have fun and feel happy and supported. We want all children and young people to receive timely, appropriate support and have a choice of services, acting early when problems emerge or children face difficult life events, trauma or bereavement. Our support needs to be flexible and culturally competent, because children have different experiences and changing needs.

What children and families say

Young people tell us how much mental health matters to them. Only 40% of secondary school pupils surveyed in the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey reported feeling happy in their lives. Primary and secondary pupils told the partnership about the need to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, trusted relationships with professionals and access to quality services. The Youth Council highlighted the impact of long waits for mental health services.

What we will do together

1. Implement the 'Thrive' framework as the cornerstone of our partnership approach to mental health services for young people. We will work as a system to expand and invest in early intervention and prevention, and work towards integrated referral pathways.
2. Improve mental health support for children and young people with SEND and with learning disabilities, those we look after, children in trouble with the law or children who are bereaved.
3. Improve well-being for all our children and young people by introducing the evidence-based 'five ways to wellbeing' into play, youth, leisure and culture services.
4. Ensure more children, families and professionals are aware of how to support mental health in Tower Hamlets.

How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Increased percentage of children feel happy in their lives (Pupil Attitude Survey)
2. Reduction in waiting times for key services (including CAMHS)
3. Young people report improvements in service access/'no wrong door' for mental health services, and experience of services

Ambition 4: The right support for children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families

Led by the SEND Improvement Board

In Tower Hamlets, the number of children and young people with additional needs is higher than average with a growing number of families requesting support.

As a partnership, we are committed to getting support right for children with SEND and their families. Since 2021, partners have worked together and increased funding to improve services in areas identified in an inspection of SEND support. Good progress has been made, for example in the quality and timeliness of plans to support young people, and communication with the SEND young people's 'Our Time' youth forum and parent carer forum. We will continue to make improvements, and to identify and support children who have additional needs at an early stage so they get the support they need to thrive.

We also want to make sure that Tower Hamlets is a child-friendly borough for every child, by making sure our rich play, sport, culture and youth services offer is accessible and inclusive for all.

What children and families say

Feedback from the 'Our Time' youth forum, Independent SEND parents' forum, and 'Let's Talk SEND' events is shaping the partnership's improvement agenda. Families have told us they need better systems to avoid the need to keep repeating their story, more support while waiting for a diagnosis, and assistance with life skills, work experience and transitions to adult services.

What we will do together

1. Deliver and sustain improvements to support for children and young people with SEND.
2. Agree and deliver a new SEND strategy for 2024 - 2029 which embeds our co-production and wider inclusion agenda

How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Feedback from the Our Time Youth Forum and SEND Parent Carer Forum
2. Outcome of SEND area inspection
3. Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans issued within statutory timescales (20 weeks)
4. Average Autism Spectrum diagnosis waiting times

Ambition 5: Safe and secure Led by the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership

We have been working hard to make sure all children and families feel safe and secure, but with new dangers arising online, and an increase in domestic abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is more to be done to protect them from all kinds of harm.

Public services, voluntary, community and faith organisations have a vital role in working together keeping babies, children and young people safe: from the support provided by schools, to health services' support for prevention and health promotion, the work of the police in tackling the risk of serious youth violence, to relationship-based practice in children's social care. Over the past two years, focused work by Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership on online safety, exploitation and domestic abuse has led to improvements in practice across different agencies.

The partnership's work in this area will be led by the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Partnership, with an evolving set of priorities designed with children and young people.

What children and families say

Safeguarding priorities have been informed by a design process led by the Young Scrutineers, working with the young people's CAMHS participation group, the young carers group and the Barts Health youth empowerment squad. Young people highlighted sexual harassment, bullying, and the relationship between police and young people as key issues.

What we will do together

1. Continuously improve our safeguarding partnership building on 2023's Six steps for independent scrutiny report.
2. Implement the 2023 - 2025 Safeguarding Children Partnership priorities to improve safeguarding practice in relation to neglect; peer-on-peer harm including bullying and sexual harassment; infant safety; and anti-racism and cultural competence. Refresh priorities to reflect experience and young people's and partners' input.
3. Support young people at risk of exploitation or of becoming in trouble with the law, using our investment in youth services, youth justice and early help.
4. Focus on safeguarding young people and early intervention in our Community Safety Partnership's Serious Violence Strategy and collaborate with Violence against Women initiatives to protect children and older girls.

How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Achievement of the outcomes agreed by the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Plan 2023-25
2. Improvements in outcomes for children and young people measured as part of the Violence against Women Girls strategy and Serious Violence Strategy.

Ambition 6: Achieve their best in education and opportunities to develop a career

Led by the 14 to 25 Learning and Achievement Group

We are proud of our children and young people's achievements, and of the families, and excellent schools and colleagues that nurture their development and ambition.

The pandemic lockdowns and time away from school disrupted children's education. The Mayor's programme of financial support for young people through the extension of Free School Meals, Educational Maintenance Allowance and bursaries will support young people to thrive, to progress to further and higher education, and fulfil their potential. There is more to be done to ensure young people can explore opportunities across different employment sectors, and build a meaningful future for themselves.

What children and families say

The Youth Council highlighted that a lot of young people feel confined in Tower Hamlets due to their disadvantaged background.

What we will do together

1. Support families and schools to raise attendance.
2. Work to retain more students in Tower Hamlets in Key Stage 5 and increase the number of youngsters who are supported to access further and higher education.
3. Collaborate to deliver careers guidance, mentoring, life skills and work experience with a focus on building the confidence, connections and experience of young people who face barriers to accessing opportunities
4. Work together so that care-experienced young people and young people with SEND are supported into adulthood as part of delivering our Corporate Parenting and SEND strategies.

How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Reduced absence and persistent absence from school.
2. Improved attainment in post 16 education
3. Increased percentage of residents studying in the borough in post 16 education
4. Reduced percentage of care experienced young people and young people with SEND who are not in education, employment or training

Ambition 7: Support families in the cost of living and child poverty crisis Led by the Children and Families Executive working with the wider partnership

As a partnership, we believe that high levels of deprivation do not inevitably lead to poor outcomes. Children in Tower Hamlets achieve well in school despite the levels of child poverty in the borough. However, the cost of living crisis and pressure on housing is hitting families hard.

Combatting child poverty is a priority for the partnership, building on a cost of living package, universal free school meals, bursary and EMA programmes. Working together through our Combatting Poverty task and finish group we will use our reach into communities and provision of information to support families to increase their incomes, reduce living costs and take advantage of youth, leisure, and voluntary sector-led activities for young people. We will advocate for children so they are a priority in housing, economic and regeneration partnerships and we will urgently seek solutions to reduce and mitigate the impacts of overcrowding and poor housing on children.

What children and families say

The pressing nature of this issue has been acknowledged by various groups, such as the Youth Council, who have identified child poverty as a top priority. The impact of the cost of living crisis on young people is profound, with significant levels of stress and worry affecting their mental health and ability to concentrate in school. A notable 40% of pupils surveyed in the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey said they worry about money. Families tell us it can be difficult to find out about support.

What we will do together

1. Increase opportunities for families using our services to access their entitlements
2. Support parents into good work through links with training, employment and volunteering providers
3. Adopt 'poverty-proofing' so that services across the partnership are inclusive
4. Develop innovative and impactful approaches to reduce the harmful effects of overcrowding on children, working across our partnership to ensure that children's safety, development and play is at the heart of housing, planning and environmental programmes.

How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Implementation of measures to reduce the impact of overcrowding on children's wellbeing and the number of children in unsuitable housing conditions or temporary accommodation.
2. Increased percentage of eligible families taking up Healthy Start vouchers
3. Services for children adopting elements of poverty proofing programmes
4. Increased number of parents (especially mothers) who access entitlements, training, volunteering and employment.

Ambition 8: Champion co-production, equality and anti-racism

Led by the Children and Families Executive working with the wider partnership

Our borough's strength lies in its diversity and the different communities and cultures living side by side. As a partnership we are committed to standing up for social justice. This means tackling racism and discrimination head on, and we will work with young people and families to develop plans and ideas together.

Tower Hamlets Early Help, Youth Services and Statutory Children's Service are adopting a new set of principles and practices for working together with children and families, focussed on valuing families' experiences and empowering people. We also need to pay attention to how children and families' different backgrounds play a role in the way we interact with them and ensure that no one is disadvantaged because of this. Our youth justice service, for example, has an action plan to address disproportionality and discrimination. Building on this promising start, we all can do more to ensure all children and families' voices shape services in Tower Hamlets, and these are responsive to their diverse needs and contexts.

What children and families say

Young people taking part in discussions about safeguarding priorities drew attention to experiences of racism. They also wanted to develop better relations with the police.

What we will do together

1. Develop best practice so that children and families are involved in co-producing programmes and strategies consistently and well. We will work alongside the Tower Hamlets Together Engagement Leads group and develop shared approaches (for example on reward and recognition).
2. Including a 'you said, we did' section in partnership reports.
3. Develop and build on our programme of anti-racism in schools and school governance
4. Implement the Youth Justice Service Disproportionality Action Plan
5. Champion the rights of care experienced children and young people, including through adopting care experience as a protected characteristic
6. Ensure all services record and analyse protected characteristics of service users to tackle inequalities.

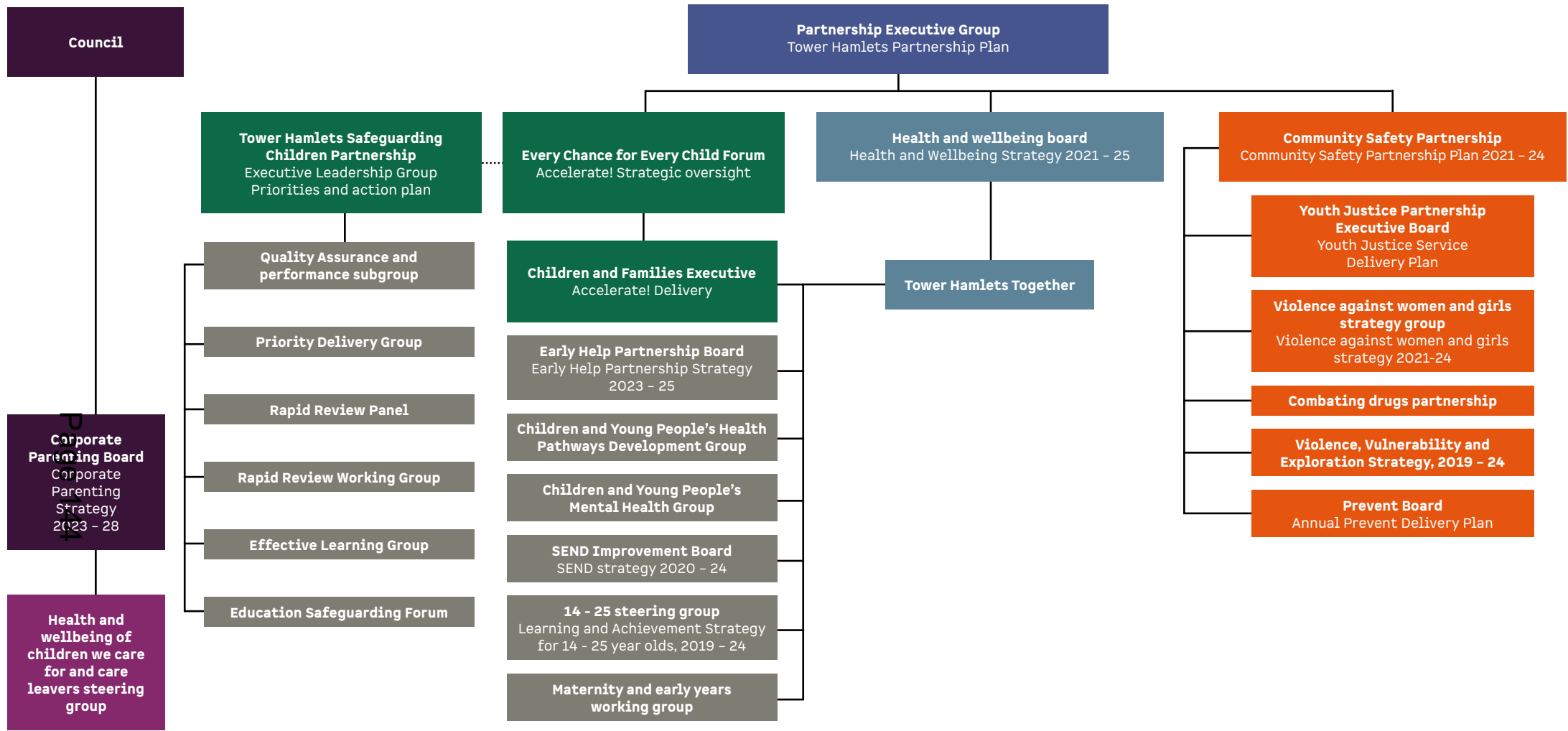
How will we know we are making a difference?

1. Increased percentage of children say people from different backgrounds get on well in borough (Pupil Attitude Survey)
2. Inequalities addressed in each partnership priority
3. Service and strategy design demonstrates the input of children, young people and families.

Annex B: Our Children and Families Partnership

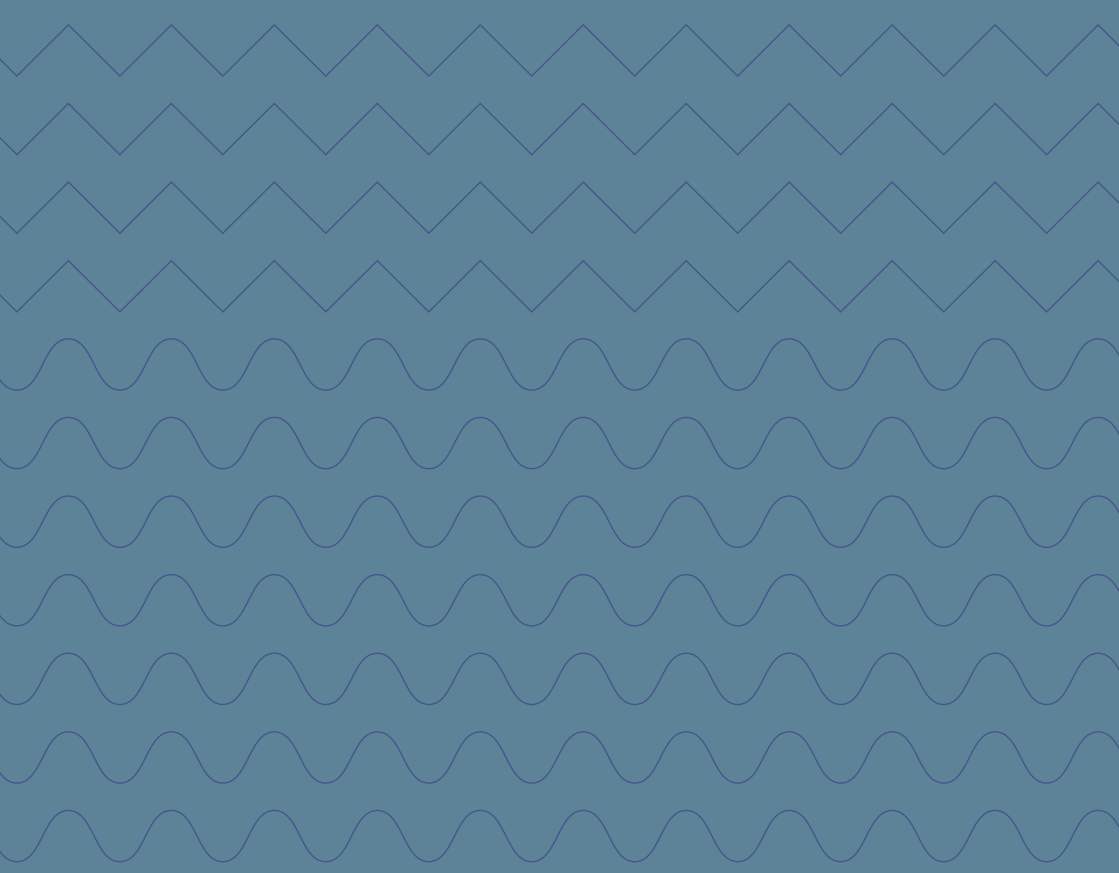
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Schools, early years settings, voluntary, community, faith organisations and many others

Babies, children, young people and their families



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Equality Impact Analysis Template

Section 1: Introduction

| |
|--|
| Name of proposal |
| For the purpose of this document, 'proposal' refers to a policy, function, strategy or project Accelerate! The Tower Hamlets Children and Families Partnership Strategy |
| Service area and Directorate responsible |
| Strategy and Commissioning service, Children's Services Directorate |
| Name of completing officer |
| Frances Winter |
| Approved by (Corporate Director / Divisional Director/ Head of Service) |
| Layla Richards |
| Date of approval |
| 25/10/2023 |

Conclusion

| Conclusion | Current decision rating (see Appendix A) |
|--|--|
| <p>The Equality Impact Assessment concludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a high level strategy and there is no specific decision to be assessed. • Improving outcomes and experiences for all children and young people in Tower Hamlets, with a particular focus on children who are at risk of poor outcomes, is an integral part of the strategy. • Specific cross-cutting objectives commit the partnership to working together to promote equality, become an anti-racist borough, and tackle child poverty. • Section 4 below sets out the areas of the strategy relevant to children by protected characteristic. The development of each priority will be informed by equality analysis, considering issues of intersectionality. | Green |

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those with ‘protected characteristics’ and those without them
- Foster good relations between those with ‘protected characteristics’ and those without them

This Equality Impact Analysis provides evidence for meeting the Council’s commitment to equality and the responsibilities outlined above. For more information about the Council’s commitment to equality, please visit the Council’s [website](#).

Section 2: General information about the proposal

Describe the proposal including the relevance of proposal to the general equality duties and protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

Accelerate! is a broad strategy which aims to set overall priorities for the children and families partnership over the next five year period (2024 – 2029).

There is no specific proposal or decision against which an equality impact assessment is required. However, the public sector duty is relevant to all aspects of the strategy: this impact assessment provides an overview of key equality considerations to which partner organisations will have regard in their work. Specific proposals taken to implement the strategy will be subject to their own EQIA.

The vision for all partners is of “A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to.”

The strategy priorities are as follows:

1. A great start in life
2. A healthy childhood
3. Good mental health and wellbeing
4. Support for children with SEND
5. Safe and secure
6. Achievement and opportunity

With two cross-cutting priorities:

7. Tackling child poverty and the cost of living crisis
8. Co-production, equality and anti-racism

Promoting equality is embedded in the vision for the strategy, and a specific objective. The sections below provide some more detail about key issues for children and young people with different protected characteristics.

Section 3: Evidence (consideration of data and information)

What evidence do we have which may help us think about the impacts or likely impacts on residents, service users and wider community?

The development of the strategy has drawn on a range of evidence, including:

- Qualitative information about children and young people's views and experiences gathered through co-production and activities at Takeover meetings of the Every Chance for Every Child Forum
- Census data from 2021 and 2011: information about the number and characteristics of children and young people in the borough.
- Pupil Attitude Survey: information about school-age children's views and experience on a wide range of issues including education, safety, wellbeing and health, leisure and transport.
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessments conducted with a focus on children and young people
- Research carried out as part of the Act Early research project and other research
- Service level data and topic-specific data informing the development of improvement programmes and strategies (for example, Corporate Parenting, SEND, Early Help Partnership).

Section 4: Assessing the impacts on different groups and service delivery

| Groups | Positive | Negative | Neutral | Considering the above information and evidence, describe the impact this proposal will have on the following groups? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------|--------------------|------|------------------------------|------|---------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------|------|---|------|--|------|----------------------------|------|
| Protected | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Age (All age groups) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>The strategy focuses on children, aged under 0-17 years, and 0-24 for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It includes priorities relevant to children and young people of different ages.</i></p> <p>There were 64,250 0-17 year-olds in Tower Hamlets in 2021, 21% of the resident population. The number of children increased by 8,855 between 2011 – 2021. The child population is expected to remain at current levels until 2030, with an increase in pre-school, and declines in school age children.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disability (Physical, learning difficulties, mental health and medical conditions) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Improving the lives of children and young people with Special Educational Need and Disabilities (SEND) is a specific focus of the strategy.</i></p> <p>18.6% (8619) of school age children and young people are reported in the 2022/23 school census to have special educational needs or disabilities:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Primary identified need</th> <th>% pupils with SEND</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</td> <td>14.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hearing Impairment</td> <td>2.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderate Learning Difficulty</td> <td>6.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multi- Sensory Impairment</td> <td>0.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Difficulty/Disability</td> <td>2.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical Disability</td> <td>1.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty</td> <td>2.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Severe Learning Difficulty</td> <td>1.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Primary identified need | % pupils with SEND | Autistic Spectrum Disorder | 14.5% | Hearing Impairment | 2.3% | Moderate Learning Difficulty | 6.3% | Multi- Sensory Impairment | 0.2% | Other Difficulty/Disability | 2.2% | Physical Disability | 1.7% | Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty | 2.1% | SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need | 3.8% | Severe Learning Difficulty | 1.2% |
| Primary identified need | % pupils with SEND | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Autistic Spectrum Disorder | 14.5% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hearing Impairment | 2.3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Moderate Learning Difficulty | 6.3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Multi- Sensory Impairment | 0.2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Difficulty/Disability | 2.2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Disability | 1.7% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty | 2.1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need | 3.8% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Severe Learning Difficulty | 1.2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



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| | | | | <p>Social, Emotional and Mental Health 18.4%</p> <p>Specific Learning Difficulty 6.0%</p> <p>Speech, Language, Communications needs 40.5%</p> <p>Visual Impairment 0.8%</p> <p>100.0%</p> <p>In comparison to other areas, children and young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets achieve good outcomes at school, exceeding national averages at year 1 phonics level and at GCSE or equivalent. Children at SEN Support perform above the national average across all KS1 and KS2 assessments, with a similar picture for children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan. Attendance rates for children and young people with SEND also out-perform national averages at primary and secondary level, with low exclusion and suspension rates below national levels.</p> <p>We know there is more to do through improving support for children with SEND and are developing a SEND strategy, supported by a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment focusing on children and young people with SEND. This will assess outcomes for children with SEND in a range of areas and help to identify priorities for tackling inequalities.</p> |
| Sex | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Implementation of the strategy will consider the views and needs of girls and boys throughout, and tackle gender inequalities, including in the areas of education, safety, and wellbeing.</i></p> <p>Amongst children aged 0-17 in Tower Hamlets, 50.9% are male and 49.1% are female.</p> <p>Girls and boys have different experiences and outcomes on average in many aspects of childhood. These are shaped by other aspects of their identity, and change over time. For example, the Tower Hamlets Pupil Attitude Survey (2022) does not point to major differences on average in the experiences or views of girls and boys at primary school age. However, amongst secondary school pupils, there were some notable difference (note that the sample sizes were small) in how safe and how happy girls and boys felt.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing:</p> |

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| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pupil Attitude Survey (2022) found that girls at secondary school age were more likely than boys to disagree with the statement – “I feel happy about life at the moment”, and consistently less likely than boys to agree that they often/all of the time had had positive feelings over the previous two weeks (feeling optimistic; useful; relaxed; dealing with problems well; thinking clearly; feeling close to other people; able to make up my mind about things). • Boys were also more likely than girls to report they had been active before and after school and at breaktimes. • Boys are more likely to be overweight than girls by year 6. <p>Safe and secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys are more likely than girls to be involved in the criminal justice system and make up a large majority of children cautioned or sentenced. • Boys and girls have different perceptions of safety: amongst secondary school pupils responding to the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey, boys were more likely than girls to say they felt ‘very safe’ in a number of different locations (in their local area, on their way to school, in school, outside their local area, on public transport) and girls were more likely than boys to say that somebody had shared a video or photo that had made them feel uncomfortable. <p>Achievement and opportunity:</p> <p>On average, girls achieve better outcomes than boys in Tower Hamlets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67.5% of girls and 53.6% of boys have a good level of development at reception age (2021/22) • 70.6% of girls and 63.7% of boys meet the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key stage 2 (2021/22) • 56.1% of girls and 52.9% of boys achieve a grade 5+ in GCSE English and maths (2021/22) |
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| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At age 16-17, boys are consistently more likely than girls to be not in education, employment or training. (3.9% compared to 2.1% in 2023). <p>The strategy also needs to take into account inequalities in life chances and outcomes for adult women and men in Tower Hamlets and identify whether these could be addressed by interventions during childhood. The most striking differences are in healthy life expectancy (where female healthy life expectancy in Tower Hamlets is much below regional averages and females can expect to live 7.5 fewer years in good health than males) and in the high proportion of long term unemployed females in Tower Hamlets. Recent analysis by the public health analysis team suggests that long-term unemployment is a driver of the gender gap in healthy life expectancy. Supporting girls to translate their high achievement at school into good careers has the potential to improve incomes and health.</p> |
| Gender reassignment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Data on the number of children and young people who are trans in Tower Hamlets is not available. The focus on equality and anti-discrimination in services, as well as the focus on safety and tackling peer-on-peer harm, should contribute to a safe and supportive environment where young people who identify as trans can thrive. |
| Marriage and civil partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Marriage and civil partnership status is not a specific dimension of the strategy.</i></p> <p>Fewer than twenty 16 and 17 year olds were (or had been) married or in a civil partnership in 2021.</p> |
| Religion or philosophical belief | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>The strategy includes a focus on tackling discrimination and inequality.</i></p> <p>In the 2021 census, two thirds of 0-17 year olds (67%) were reported to be Muslim, 15% Christian, and 11% with no religion, just over 1% were Hindu, and small number of children reported to be Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish and other religions.</p> |
| Race | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Tackling racism and promoting equality is a specific focus of the strategy.</i></p> <p>Children in Tower Hamlets come from a diverse range of backgrounds. The composition of the child population is different from Tower Hamlets residents as a whole: a much higher</p> |



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| | | | | <p>proportion of children come from a non-White background (84.5%), compared to residents of all ages (60%).</p> <p>63.5% of 0-17 year olds children come from an Asian background (58.3% of the child population are Bangladeshi). 9.1% are from a Black background; 8.4% of children are from a mixed heritage background; 15.5% are from a White background. 2.5% of 0 to 15 year olds are from a Somali background.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from Black and Asian ethnic groups in Tower Hamlets are more likely to have excess weight at age 10/11 (2013/14 – 2018/19). • There is limited local data on ethnic disparities in health outcomes amongst children. Analysis of national evidence by the Association for Young People’s Health concludes that : “young people aged 10-25 from ethnic minority groups are likely to face inequalities in a range of health outcomes and within the social determinants that are related to health outcomes. Though the patterns are not always clear and consistent, White British young people in the UK tend to be in better health and are living within healthier environments than their peers from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are particular concerns arising for the disparities faced by Gypsy and Traveller young people and Black young people” (AYPH: Themes from available data The importance of ethnicity for understanding young people’s experiences of health inequalities, February 2023) <p>Safe and secure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally, Black and Mixed ethnicity young people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system: Black, Asian and other ethnic minority children are nearly three times more likely to be in custody compared to their share of the population. Children from BAME backgrounds also have different experiences of services, including support services, and of stop and search. A survey for the Endowment Foundation found that “Black children are disproportionately affected by violence. 33% of Black children were |
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| | | | | <p>victims of violence in the last 12 months, compared to 13% for White children and 11% for Asian children.” (Youth Endowment Foundation: Children, Violence and Vulnerability 2022).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Tower Hamlets, amongst stop and searches of under 18’s in the past two years, young people whose ethnic appearance was recorded as Asian or White were roughly proportionate to the young population, young people whose ethnic appearance was recorded as Black were stopped and searched more relative to the population. <p>Opportunity and achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children from Asian and Black backgrounds (and particularly boys) are less likely than children from White and mixed backgrounds to be assessed as having a good level of development at Reception age. However, at Key Stage 2 and Key stage 4, this pattern has reversed and children from Asian and Black backgrounds outperform their peers from White and Mixed backgrounds. At age 16-17, the proportion of young people from White and mixed backgrounds who are not in education, employment or training is higher than those from Asian and Black Backgrounds. |
| Sexual orientation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Key areas of the strategy have the potential to support and protect children who identify as LGB.</i></p> <p>We do not hold information on the proportion of young people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual in Tower Hamlets. Across England, younger people aged 16 – 24 are more likely than older age groups to identify and LGB+ (Census 2021) The focus on equality and anti-discrimination in services, as well as the focus on safety and tackling peer-on-peer harm, should contribute to a safe and supportive environment where young people who identify as trans can thrive, and are supported to achieve.</p> |
| Pregnancy and maternity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Support for expectant and new parents is a specific focus of the strategy as this is key to a better start in life.</p> |

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| <p>Socio-economic</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Tackling child poverty and responding to the cost of living crisis is a specific priority for the strategy.</i></p> <p>26.5% of children under 16 years in Tower Hamlets are living in relative low income families. This figure rises to close to 1 in 2 children when housing costs are taken into account.</p> <p>19.2% of the Tower Hamlets population was income-deprived in 2019. There are inequalities within the borough: with 2.5% of people estimated to be income-deprived in the least income deprived neighbourhood, and 31.8% of people estimated to be income-deprived in the most income deprived neighbourhood.</p> <p>Nationally, 46% of children in households from a Bangladeshi or Pakistani ethnic group were in poverty in the period 2019/20-2021/22, and 62% of children in households from a Bangladeshi ethnic group were in poverty after housing costs in the same period. 35% of children in households from a Black ethnic group were in poverty before housing costs, and 53% were in poverty after housing costs. Children in families with a disabled member were more than three times as likely to experience low income and material deprivation (20%) than children in families where no one is disabled (6%).</p> <p>Employment is an important contribution to household income. In Tower Hamlets, there is a lot of variation in which residents are likely to be employed. Most male groups have higher rates of employment than most female groups. The male group with the highest rate of employment was white other at 81.5% and the male group with the lowest rate was Bangladeshi at 52.9%. The female group with the highest rate of employment was White Other at 72.6% and the lowest group was Bangladeshi at 28.6%. Seven female ethnic groups had an employment rate below 50% while no male ethnic groups did. Muslim residents were the least likely to be in employment (both males and females). (House of Commons Research Library: Poverty in the UK: Statistics, 2023)</p> |
| <p>Parents/Carers</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Support for parents and carers is a specific focus of the strategy.</i></p> |
| <p>People with different Gender</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Key areas of the strategy have the potential to support and protect children who have different gender identities. The focus on equality and anti-discrimination in services, as well as the</i></p> |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Identities e.g. Gender fluid, Non-Binary etc | | | | focus on safety and tackling peer-on-peer harm, should contribute to a safe and supportive environment where young people with different gender identities can thrive. |
| People with Care Experience | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p><i>Ensuring that children who we care for, and care experienced young people are able to thrive, achieve and have opportunities in life is an important cross-cutting priority for the strategy.</i></p> <p>Adults, children and young people who are care-experienced often face significant barriers in life, including access to equal education, training, and employment opportunities. They are more likely to experience discrimination and stigma and are disproportionately represented in terms of poorer health outcomes, social mobility and the criminal justice system. As a result, they are at a higher risk of experiencing poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>Supporting children and young people we care for is a key element of the children and families partnership, and the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Corporate Parenting Pledge will support partnership working to ensure children who are looked after are supported to thrive. This work is led by the Corporate Parenting Board, working in close partnership with the Children and Families partnership.</p> |
| Any other groups | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Section 5: Impact analysis and action plan

| Recommendation | Key activity | Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress | Officer responsible | Update on progress |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Implement priority 7: support families to be resilient in the cost of living and child poverty crisis | Agree delivery plan | By June 2024 | Chair Children and Families Executive | |
| Implement priority 8: champion co-production, equality and anti-racism | Agree delivery plan | By June 2024 | Chair Children and Families Executive | |
| Monitor equality impacts | Annual stocktake to address equality | Annual stocktake | Chair Children and Families Executive | |





Section 6: Monitoring

What monitoring processes have been put in place to check the delivery of the above action plan and impact on equality groups?

Annual stocktake to include equality analysis of data.

Appendix A

EIA decision rating

| Decision | Action | Risk |
|---|--|--|
| <p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that a disproportionately negative impact (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act and appropriate mitigations cannot be put in place to mitigate against negative impact. It is recommended that this proposal be suspended until further work is undertaken.</p> | <p>Suspend – Further Work Required</p> | <p>Red</p>  |
| <p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that there is a risk that a disproportionately negative impact (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is a genuine determining reason that could legitimise or justify the use of this policy.</p> | <p>Further (specialist) advice should be taken</p> | <p>Red Amber</p>  |
| <p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that there is a risk that a disproportionately negatively impact (as described above) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, this risk may be removed or reduced by implementing the actions detailed within the <i>Impact analysis and action plan</i> section of this document.</p> | <p>Proceed pending agreement of mitigating action</p> | <p>Amber</p>  |
| <p>As a result of performing this analysis, the policy or activity does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> and no further actions are recommended at this stage.</p> | <p>Proceed</p> | <p>Green</p>  |

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| <p>Cabinet Decision</p> <p>29 November 2023</p> |  |
| <p>Report of: Raj Mistry, Corporate Director, Communities</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Major Events Policy for Events in Victoria Park</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Lead Member | Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet member for Culture & Recreation |
| Originating Officer(s) | Catherine Boyd, Head of Arts, Parks and Events |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Key Decision? | Yes |
| Reason for Key Decision | Significant impact on two or more wards |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 27/06/2023 |
| Exempt information | N/A |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | 4. Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure |

Executive Summary

The Arts, Parks and Events team manages a range of community, commercial and corporate events across the Council’s parks and open spaces.

This report sets out the current Major Events Policy for Victoria Park. Benchmarking against other local authorities and venues in London that hold major outdoor events has been undertaken and a review of the Major Events Policy (for events in Victoria Park) is recommended to enable the Council to broaden the range of well managed events that can be considered for Victoria Park.

It is proposed that the number of major event days in Victoria Park increases from ten to twelve per calendar year; that the capacity threshold of major events is altered in line with other local authorities and comparable venues; and that the categorisation of major events is amended to allow a wider variety of events to take place in addition to the major commercial events programme.

The proposed amendments to the Major Events Policy would enable the Council to programme more events in Victoria Park, increase opportunities for residents to

access high quality events and cultural programmes, benefit the local economy and support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) through revenue generation.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to allow for up to 12 Major Event Days per calendar year as set out in paragraph 3.13 of this report.
2. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to increase the capacity threshold for a major event from 5,000 persons at any one time to 20,000 at any one time, and amend the thresholds for small, medium and large events accordingly as set out in paragraph 3.16 of this report.
3. Amend the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park to change the categorisation of events considered to be major events, thereby allowing a broader range of events to take place in addition to the major events programme.
4. To note the Equalities specific considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Under the current policy for major events in Victoria Park, approved by Cabinet on 6 January 2021, up to ten major commercial event days are permitted per calendar year in Victoria Park; the policy allows for six major event days with a capacity of up to 49,999, and four major event days with a capacity of up to 39,999 per annum.
- 1.2 A major event is currently defined as an event with an attendance of more than 5,000 at any one time. Major events are generally held in Victoria Park, which is the largest park in the borough.
- 1.3 A review of the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park is recommended in terms of the number of major event days, thresholds for major event days and categorisation of major event days. This will enable the Council to programme a higher number and broader range of events in Victoria Park that support income generation, the local economy and provide cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors.
- 1.4 With a growing population, there is an increased need for well-maintained parks and open spaces. As a result of ongoing reduction to government funding, the Council, like other local authorities, has continued to face budget pressures that have been further impacted by the rising cost of services and cost-of-living crisis. As a result, local authorities have to

identify alternative income streams to continue to be able to fund non-statutory services including parks and open spaces.

- 1.5 Tower Hamlets Council, like other London local authorities including Haringey, Lambeth and Southwark, has utilised parks and open spaces to generate income from events including large scale commercial events since 2005. The live events economy is an important source of income for boroughs to be able to maintain parks and contributes to the wider local economy as well as providing opportunities for local engagement.
- 1.6 As part of the budget setting process for 2023/34, Full Council approved an income target of £1,588,000 from commercial event activity in parks and open spaces. This is likely to increase in future years.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not alter the existing policy, therefore restricting the number and range of events that can be considered for Victoria Park.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 In January 2021, Cabinet approved an amendment to the Major Events Policy for events in Victoria Park to allow for up to ten commercial events, with four event days at a capacity of up to 39,999 and six event days at a capacity of up to 49,999 per calendar year in Victoria Park.
- 3.2 All of the major event days are currently allocated through the Major Events Concession, which allows for ten event days per calendar year. This excludes Council organised events and mass participation runs.
- 3.3 A Major Event is currently defined as an event that has or is expected to have more than 5,000 attendees (capacity) at any one time. Any reference to a capacity in this report is to actual or expected capacity.
- 3.4 Under the current Major Events Policy for events in Victoria Park, the Council is unable to consider third-party community, cultural or commercial events that have a capacity of more than 5,000 attendees at any one time in Victoria Park beyond ten event days per calendar year.
- 3.5 A benchmarking review has been undertaken by the Arts, Parks and Events team of other London outdoor venues, including local authorities, to review the number of major event days, capacity thresholds and event categorisations.
- 3.6 Details of the benchmarking review are provided in Table 1 below, which gives an overview of the number of major event days permitted by other local authorities and comparable venues.

3.7 Table 1: Major Event Days permitted at other comparable London venues

| Venue | Number of Major Events |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Crystal Palace Park (Trust) | Six event days per annum |
| Finsbury Park (LB Haringey) | Six event days for 2023 |
| Hyde Park (Trust) | Nine event days per annum |
| Brockwell Park and Clapham Common (LB Lambeth) | Six major event days per annum |
| Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (London Legacy Development Corporation) | Six event days per annum |
| Tottenham Hotspur Stadium | Six event days per annum |
| Victoria Park (LB Tower Hamlets) | Ten event days per annum |
| Wembley Stadium | Nine event days per annum |

3.8 Further details of the benchmarking review are provided in Table 2 below, which compares Tower Hamlets' current event capacity thresholds against other London outdoor venues that hold major events.

3.9 Table 2: Comparison of Event Capacity Thresholds

| Park / venue | Event Category | Capacity Threshold |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Victoria Park, Tower Hamlets Council (current) | Major | 5,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 2,000 – 5,000 |
| | Medium | 500 – 2,000 |
| | Small | Up to 500 |
| Brockwell Park, Lambeth Council | Major | 20,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 5,000 – 20,000 |
| | Medium | 500 – 5,000 |
| | Small | Up to 500 |
| Crystal Palace Park (trust), Bromley Council | Major | 20,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 5,000 – 20,000 |
| | Medium | 1,500 – 5,000 |
| | Small | 500 – 1,500 |
| | Minor | Up to 500 |
| Finsbury Park, Haringey Council | Major | 10,000 – 50,000 |
| | Large | 2,000 – 10,000 |
| | Medium | 500 – 2,000 |
| | Small | Up to 500 |
| Hyde Park, (trust), Westminster Council | Major | 19,999 – 64,999 |
| Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park London Legacy Development Corporation | Major | 19,999+ |
| | Large | 5,000+ |
| | Medium | Up to 4,999 |

- 3.10 The Tower Hamlets Council capacity threshold for a major event in Victoria Park is currently significantly lower than other comparable venues. Events with an attendance of more than 5,000 are classified as large events rather than major events by other comparable local authorities and venues.
- 3.11 Following the review of other comparable London venues, officers recommend that Cabinet approves the alteration of the capacity threshold of a major event from being an event with a capacity of 5,000 or more to being an event with a capacity of 20,000 or more at any one time for events in Victoria Park.
- 3.12 It should be noted that events with an audience size of 20,000 require road closures to safely disperse audiences. Road closures are considered high impact and create significant disruption to local residents as well as diversions for bus services and the wider traffic network. Events with audiences exceeding 20,000 at any one time are also more likely to require high impact noise levels which can cause more significant disruption to local residents.
- 3.13 Should the proposed capacity thresholds be approved, the maximum number of major events in Victoria Park is recommended to increase to up to twelve per annum (eight event days with a capacity of up to 49,999 at any one time and four event days with a capacity of up to 39,999 at any one time). A maximum of twelve major event days is recommended due to a number of commercial and statutory considerations including:
- 3.13.1. Event organisers would need to be able to clearly demonstrate how they would manage noise and adhere to the general principles of the Noise Council Code of Practice 1995.
- 3.13.2. There is a limit to the number of ticketed music events that one venue can commercially sustain and therefore a more significant increase to the number of major event days under the policy would not necessarily equate to more income to the Council.
- 3.13.3. Increasing the available number of major event days could be detrimental to future tenders/licences, as bidders/licensees are unlikely to take the commercial risk of buying more dates than they can sell tickets for. If bidders/licensees cannot gain exclusivity by buying out all of the available major event days, it would make any future tender/licences less commercially attractive.
- 3.14 Regardless of whether an event is classified as major, large, medium or small, the Safety Advisory Terms of Reference would apply alongside statutory regulations (e.g., Licensing Act 2003). Therefore, event organisers would need to demonstrate that they have sufficient resources and adequate plans to safely deliver their events programme and minimise impact to the park and residents.
- 3.15 Table 3 below compares the current capacity thresholds against the proposed new thresholds for Victoria Park.

3.16 Table 3: Proposed new capacity thresholds for Victoria Park

| Category | Current | Proposed |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Major | 5,000 to 49,999 | 20,000 to 49,999 |
| Large | 2,000 – 5,000 | 5,000 to 19,999 |
| Medium | 500 – 2,000 | 500 to 4,999 |
| Small | Up to 499 | Up to 499 |

- 3.17 If the new capacity thresholds are adopted, events classified as major or large would remain subject to an enhanced planning process in line with the Council’s Safety Advisory Group terms of reference. Note that these terms of reference would need to be updated and approved by the Safety Advisory Group members.
- 3.18 Any event with an audience of 5,000 people or more would still be required to attend multi-agency planning meetings (a sub-group of the Safety Advisory Group). This includes representation by the emergency services (including the Metropolitan Police Service) and the Council’s Environmental Health, Environmental Protection, Community Safety and Licensing teams. Through this process the event organiser will be required to demonstrate how they will uphold the licensing objectives; public safety, the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.
- 3.19 In addition, an enhanced planning process, including attendance at a multi-agency planning meeting would continue to apply, as per the current Safety Advisory Group Terms of Reference to:
- 3.19.1. Events with alcohol sales (if 500 people or more, i.e., requiring a Premises Licence) that are deemed likely to have a higher risk of anti-social behaviour or associated issues due to nature of the event (i.e., hours of operation, programme, audience profile, location etc); and
- 3.19.2. If the proposed event, regardless of capacity, is likely to be high impact on local residents, businesses (i.e., traffic and parking restrictions, significant noise or other disruption).
- 3.20 In addition to the increase in number of major event days, and the changes to the capacity thresholds, it’s also proposed that classification of major events is amended in order to allow for a higher number of major event days and a broader range of events to take place in Victoria Park.
- 3.21 It is recommended that the Major Events Policy for Victoria Park is updated to exclude the following categories of events from the policy restrictions (i.e., outside of the twelve major event days):
- 3.21.1 Council managed events (as per current policy);

- 3.21.2 Mass sporting events (as per current policy);
- 3.21.3 Commercial and corporate events that are not music focussed (i.e., food, comedy and theatre festivals, trade exhibitions, galas etc) (New addition to the policy); and
- 3.21.4 Free to access community event days as part of a commercial events programme using existing infrastructure (New addition to the policy).
- 3.22 For all events, the latest event running times would be up to 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays and up to 10.30pm on other days, subject to licensing conditions.

Corporate and commercial events in other parks

- 3.23 Officers will be undertaking a review of the policy for corporate and commercial events in parks and will report back to Cabinet in 2024.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Events income contributes significantly to the maintenance and provision of parks and open spaces across the borough, and the delivery of free to access community cultural events. Parks, open spaces and events are open to all residents from all backgrounds and protected characteristics.
- 4.2 Income generated from a well-managed events programme in Victoria Park enables the Council to continue investing in parks and open spaces and free community events at a time of reducing budgets, thereby benefitting all residents.
- 4.3 Events have localised, time limited impacts. These are not considered to affect any particular protected characteristic disproportionately. Localised impacts are minimised through contractual requirements to continuously improve event management arrangements.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications
 - Consultations
 - Environmental (including air quality)
 - Risk Management
 - Crime Reduction
 - Safeguarding
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 **Best Value Implications:** the Major Events Policy for events in Victoria Park will increase to twelve major event days (for events with capacities of more than 20,000 and up to 50,000 at any one time) per calendar year. These events are typically held between May and September. Under the current Major Events Policy, the Council is unable to consider other events (i.e., events with a capacity of more than 5,000 at any one time) across the year that would provide additional income, provide additional cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents and contribute to the local economy. If the proposed amendments to the Major Events Policy are approved, events that could be considered would include winter fairs, theatrical/multi-arts events, comedy festivals, food festivals, exhibitions/fairs, mass participation sporting events and corporate events. Furthermore, free-to-access community events delivered as part of a commercial events programme using existing infrastructure will be permitted in addition to the number of major event days.
- 5.3 **Consultations:** event applications with an attendance of more than 499 at any one time which have regulated entertainment and or the provision of alcohol, require a Premises Licence. It is a statutory requirement for Premises Licence applicants to undertake a 28-day public consultation. Aside from organised running events, the majority of large events under the new policy would require a Premises Licence and would therefore be subject to public consultation. In addition, officers will consult the Corporate Director of Communities in respect of any events that may or will be high impact e.g., events that may require road closures, or operate over several days and remove large areas of the park from general recreational use for a prolonged period.
- 5.4 **Environmental (including air quality):** events held in public open spaces, including those held in Victoria Park, are required to demonstrate through their event planning documentation (including risk assessments), how they will reduce impact to residents and the park. For large and major events, event organisers will be required to provide detailed site plans, demarcating ground protection measures, plus details of site services (including effective waste management and recycling). Organisers will also be required to provide a sustainability plan, detailing arrangements for reducing waste, promoting sustainable practices, and reducing air pollution. Events are required to promote the use of public transport and cycling; no customer vehicle parking (aside from Blue Badge) will be considered. With regards to noise pollution, event organisers will be required to provide detailed Noise Management Plans that will be subject to review by agencies including Environmental Protection to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties and following best practice. It is acknowledged that events can have short term impacts on the park in which they take place. These impacts are minimised through contractual arrangements and licensing conditions. Event income also contributes significantly to the Council's budget for maintaining and improving parks and open spaces.
- 5.5 **Risk Management:** all events, regardless of audience capacity, are subject to the Council's Park Hire Application process. As part of the application process, all applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the

resources and experience to safely plan and deliver their event with minimum impact to the park and residents. This includes providing, relative to the size and risk of the event: Event Management Plans; Crowd Management Plan; Noise Management Plan; Risk Assessment (including fire); Safeguarding Policy; Sustainability Plan; and insurance. In relation to the proposed increase of the major event threshold from more than 5,000 to 20,000 at any one time, this will not adversely impact on risk management of large or major events. The same principles, as covered by the Safety Advisory Group's Terms of Reference (see 3.17 and 3.18) will apply, ensuring that any event that is over 5,000 at any one time (or high impact if under 5,000) will be required to go through an enhanced multi-agency planning process.

- 5.6 **Crime Reduction:** as described in 5.5, all event organisers for large, major and / or high impact events will be required to provide a Crowd Management Plan, which will be subject to review by the multi-agency planning group, which includes representatives from the Metropolitan Police Service. Through this process, event organisers will need to adequately demonstrate how they will meet the Licensing objectives (Licensing Act 2003). Detailed plans must be provided to document on site (event footprint) and off site (park and key external walking routes) arrangements to and from Victoria Park.
- 5.7 **Safeguarding:** through the licensing and multi-agency planning process, event organisers must provide detailed and robust arrangements and measures to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. These plans are subject to review by the multi-agency planning group. As part of the Premises Licence application and multi-agency planning process the Council's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service team reviews safeguarding measures.
- 5.8 **Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment:** event organisers do not manage sensitive data held by the Council. They are responsible for compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2426) and this responsibility is covered via the Park Hire Contract.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Additional income generation from maximum utilisation of LBTH assets can support the Council in long-term saving requirements, increasing the capacity of large events would facilitate that maximisation.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 This report does not give rise to any particular legal implications in respect of planning, licensing, etc. Specific advice on licensing, planning and other issues will be given on a case-by-case basis to the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee, as required.
- 7.2 Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives local authorities a power to do or arrange for the doing of anything necessary or expedient for the

provision of any entertainment. This power includes the power to set aside or enclose any part of a park or pleasure ground that they own or that is under their control. This includes the power to allow such a part of a park or pleasure ground to be used by some other person, on payment or such other terms as the authority thinks fit and allows that other person to make charges for admission.

- 7.3 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the authority, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the 2010 Act, to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, and to foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. The duty must be complied with at the time that the decision under consideration, in this case the recommendation to adopt the Policy, is taken. It is not a duty to achieve a particular result.
- 7.4 This has been identified as a key decision i.e., an executive decision which is likely to be significant in terms of the effects on communities living or working in an area comprising of two or more wards. That requires, among other things, at least 28 days' clear notice having been given of the intention to make that decision.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- Major Events Policy, Cabinet - ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 06/01/2021 17:30 \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendices

- NONE

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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Catherine.boyd@towerhamlets.gov.uk

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Cabinet Decision</p> <p>29 November 2023</p> |  |
| <p>Report of: Raj Mistry, Corporate Director, Communities</p> | <p>Classification: Unrestricted</p> |
| <p>Parks and Open Spaces Improvement Programme</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lead Member | Cllr Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet Member for [Post] |
| Originating Officer(s) | Catherine Boyd |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Key Decision? | Yes |
| Reason for Key Decision | Financial threshold and Significant impact on wards |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 03/11/23 |
| Exempt information | N/A |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure Priority 7: A Clean and Green Future |

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval of capital funding to support priority capital investment projects for parks and open spaces, including some housing estate sites. The investment will enable the Parks Service to improve parks and open spaces, existing outdoor sporting facilities (and provide some new facilities) and enable playgrounds at a number of sites to be upgraded and have a minimum of 50% accessible play equipment.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Parks and Open Spaces Capital Programme and the allocation of Capital funding from s106. The estimated amount requested is £5,246,000 (including £627,000 reallocation of budget provision within the existing programme) and is subject to funding being confirmed through the Capital Governance Process.

2. Authorise the Corporate Director of Communities, after consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources (or their nominee) to agree and enter into the terms and conditions of any agreements required to implement the programme.
3. To note the health and safety consideration in Paragraph 3.10 and risk management section in 5.5.
4. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 From 2018 to 2023, a Parks Capital Programme was in operation to improve facilities in parks and open spaces. This has been particularly important as COVID-19 increased public use of parks throughout the period. This report requires approval to extend this programme to ensure the continued improvement of parks and open spaces for residents.
- 1.2 The borough is poorly provided with open space and has one of the highest levels of population growth in London. As a consequence, it is essential that Tower Hamlets makes best possible use of the open space we have, and where possible, invests in improvements to enhance our parks, gardens and open spaces.
- 1.3 The Council's Local Plan (September 2017) recognises that Tower Hamlets is a place of extremes and contrasts. While relative poverty has declined, deprivation remains widespread, particularly in central and eastern parts. The health of people in Tower Hamlets is significantly worse than the London and England averages, as are levels of physical activity. Rates of childhood obesity are also significantly higher in the borough than the London and England averages.
- 1.4 At the same time, the overall provision of publicly accessible open space is low compared to other inner London boroughs, as well as being below national standards. Critically, Tower Hamlets is amongst the most densely populated boroughs in London. It is experiencing the highest levels of population growth and is projected to experience continued housing and population growth over the Plan period.
- 1.5 The protection and enhancement of open spaces is therefore a key priority for the Council, which is further set out in the Open Space Strategy, September 2017- 2027. The aims of the strategy are to Protect, Create and Enhance parks and open spaces in the borough. This commitment is reflected in the Council's capital programme, which includes substantial funding for improving the quality, usability and accessibility of existing public open spaces.

- 1.6 This programme addresses one of the key aims of the Open Space Strategy: Enhance - Improving the quality, usability and accessibility of existing publicly accessible open spaces.
- 1.7 The programme links to the following strategic priorities and Mayoral Pledges:
- Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure including - *Maintain awareness that many groups rely on parks and other Council facilities to play sport and audit these facilities to ensure they are meeting need.*
 - Priority 7: A Clean and Green Future - *Look after our parks and other open spaces, ensuring that they are accessible for the whole community.*

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not invest in parks and open spaces, which would have a detrimental impact on communities. Residents would not benefit from increased and improved access to sports, play and recreational facilities that support childhood development, the reduction of childhood obesity and the improved health and wellbeing of all residents.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Capital improvement programme is split into four programme strands with an estimated £5,246,000 required from s106 funds (including the reallocation of £627,000 from the current capital programme budget provision for Quality Parks).
- 3.2 Table 1: Programme strands and estimated allocations:

| Programme | Amount |
|---|-------------------|
| Improving Sports Facilities in Parks | £2,300,000 |
| Inclusive Playgrounds Programme | £1,456,000 |
| Housing Estates Improvement Programme | £705,000 |
| Park Improvements (Quality Parks extension) | £785,000 |
| TOTAL | £5,246,000 |

Sporting Facilities in Parks overview

- 3.3 This programme will enable the Council to further enhance sports facilities in parks and open spaces, improving the offer to local residents. A sports facilities audit is being carried out and although not completed, there is a shortage of Council managed sports facilities. This project would also enable the first natural turf cricket pitch to be installed in Victoria Park. External match funding is being sought for a number of projects.

- 3.4 The Mayor is committed to improving sports facilities, particularly adding new activities targeted at women and introducing minority sports. This is evident in the manifesto and pledge to establish a ‘Mayor’s Cup’ borough-wide tournament, beginning with football but expanding to other sports such as badminton and cricket, with an ambition to ‘harness competitive spirit, promote active healthy lifestyles, and celebrate sporting achievement’. As such, the mayor is seeking to install additional astroturf pitches and improve cricket provision in the borough.
- 3.5 It is recognised that many groups rely on parks and other Council facilities to play sports, and it is necessary these facilities meet residents’ needs. The service has undertaken condition surveys of paved kickabout areas to identify sites in need of investment. The service is submitting a ‘Playzones’ programme bid, which will enable the Council to secure up to 75% match funding for sites to be resurfaced. The Council would have to fund 25% and undertake community consultation.
- 3.6 In collaboration with the Lead Member of Culture & Recreation, the Parks Service has prioritised the following sites that are most in need of upgrades for inclusion in the PlayZones funding application. Please note that the list below may alter pending feedback from Sport England and feasibility report outcomes:
- Ropewalk Gardens
 - Ravenscroft Park (noting this has recently been refurbished)
 - Haileybury Youth Centre
 - Limehouse Youth Centre
 - Mile End Leisure Centre (tennis courts and netball)
 - John Orwell Leisure Centre (tennis courts and netball)
 - Middleton Green (noting this has been recently refurbished)
- 3.7 The indicative sites and estimated programme costs are provided in table 2 in paragraph 3.8. It should be noted that all projects will be subject to planning permission (where required) and feasibility studies.
- 3.8 Table 2: indicative sites and estimated programme costs

| Improving Sports Facilities in Parks | | |
|--|--|--|
| Site / project | Estimated capital s106 allocation | Estimated external match funding |
| Playzones match funding. Indicative sites (final sites subject to feasibility studies): | £500,000 | Potentially releasing £1.275m external funding via London Sport. |
| Stebondale Pitch – 9 v 9 astroturf pitch proposed | £350,000 | Potentially releasing c£800k |

| | | |
|--|-------------------|---|
| | | external funding from Football Foundation for pitch improvements. |
| King Edward Memorial Park 9 v 9 astroturf pitch proposed | £1,000,000 | NA |
| Cricket practice nets at Millwall Park and Stepney Green Park, and natural turf cricket pitch at Victoria Park | £200,000 | Potentially releasing £200k in external funding |
| Project Management and fees | £250,000 | NA |
| TOTAL | £2,300,000 | |

Inclusive Playgrounds

- 3.9 This programme will improve the quality, safety and accessibility of parks, which will lead to an improved offer to all children and families, and reduced expenditure from general reactive maintenance budgets. Without this investment, as play equipment reaches its end of life, it will be removed and not replaced.
- 3.10 This programme is driven by health and safety and equality considerations. The sites identified have been chosen based on priority of improvements required against condition surveys and inspection reports and in line with the Parks Play Inspection procedure.
- 3.11 The programme will improve the quality and accessibility of parks across the borough, particularly those in areas with highest need and will include a minimum of 50% of accessible play equipment in parks and open spaces to support childhood development.
- 3.12 The indicative sites and estimated programme costs are provided in table 3 in paragraph 3.13. It should be noted that all projects will be subject to planning permission (where required) and feasibility studies.
- 3.13 Table 3: indicative sites and estimated programme costs

| Inclusive Play | |
|--|--|
| Site / project | Estimated capital s106 allocation |
| Vallance Gardens | £100,000 |
| Gosling Gardens | £100,000 |
| Ropewalk Gardens Playground | £200,000 |
| Bethnal Green Gardens Playground | £250,000 |
| Mile End Playground interactive water feature | £500,000 |
| Brickfield Gardens -refurbish the playground and install a new outdoor gym | £150,000 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Project management and fees | £156,000 |
| TOTAL | £1,456,000 |

Housing Estate Improvements

- 3.14 This programme will improve the quality, safety and accessibility of open spaces within five housing estates, which will lead to an improved offer to all children and families.
- 3.15 The sites identified will provide new play equipment for residents, a minimum of 50% of which will be inclusive. There will also be some improvements to gym equipment and general upgrades to some of the sites.
- 3.16 The Housing Team will be responsible for the associated revenue maintenance costs and safety inspections once the sites have been returned post-improvement works.
- 3.17 The indicative sites and estimated programme costs are provided in table 4 in paragraph 3.18. It should be noted that all projects will be subject to planning permission (where required) and feasibility studies.
- 3.18 Table 4: indicative sites and estimated programme costs

| Housing Estate Improvements (former Tower Hamlets Homes estates) | |
|---|--|
| Site / project | Estimated capital s106 allocation |
| Chicksand Ghat (needs resurfacing and lighting) | £100,000 |
| Kingward House (refurbish play area) | £150,000 |
| Royal Mint Park | £100,000 |
| Tarling Estate (gym, potentially also some playground upgrades) | £80,000 |
| Trinidad House (playground upgrade) | £50,000 |
| Will Crooks Estate | £150,000 |
| Project management and fees | £75,000 |
| TOTAL | £705,000 |

Park Improvements (Quality Parks)

- 3.19 This programme addresses one of the key aims of the Open Space Strategy: Enhance - Improving the quality, usability and accessibility of existing publicly accessible open spaces.
- 3.20 The indicative sites and estimated programme costs are provided in table 5 in paragraph 3.21. It should be noted that all projects will be subject to planning permission (where required) and feasibility studies.
- 3.21 Table 5: indicative sites and estimated programme costs

| Park Upgrades (Quality Parks) | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Site / project | Estimated capital s106 allocation | Estimated external match funding |
| Shandy Park | £500,000 | NA |
| Alton Street Open Space | £100,000 | NA |
| Pennyfields Open Space | £100,000 | NA |
| Project management and fees | £85,000 | NA |
| TOTAL | £785,000 | |

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 4.2 The Council's Open Space strategy recognises the challenges that high population growth, high demand for housing and reduced public sector resources present for the provision and maintenance of publicly accessible open space; as well as the important role that access to green space plays in promoting health and wellbeing. Given the limited opportunities there are for creating new open space, the protection and enhancement of existing open space is of crucial importance.
- 4.3 The Parks and Open Spaces Capital Improvement Programme will provide all residents with increased access to high quality play, sports and recreation facilities.
- 4.4 The improvements resulting from the programmes will increase the quality and range of recreational facilities for children, young people and families and good quality open space is particularly important for lower income groups.
- 4.5 The Inclusive Play Programme will increase the amount of inclusive play equipment in parks and open space with a minimum of 50% of accessible play equipment being installed.
- 4.6 The Improving Sports Facilities in Parks Programme will increase the number of sporting facilities available to residents and improve existing facilities. A sports facilities audit is currently being undertaken. However, the Council's Open Space Strategy, based on modelling, identified that shortfalls of outdoor provision for football, 3G pitches, cricket, rugby union and hockey will increase as a result of population growth. Increased and improved provision will increase access for all residents and will, working in partnership with local sporting providers and national sporting bodies as part of the external funding that this capital programme will enable the Council to access, specifically lead to increased participation of underrepresented groups including women and girls.

Governance route

- 4.7 It is noted for a scheme to be included in the Council's Capital Programme it will need to progress through the Capital Governance Process. Funding Sources are identified by the Financial Assessment Group as part of this process.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications
- Consultations
- Environmental (including air quality)
- Risk Management
- Crime Reduction
- Safeguarding
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 Best Value Implications

The Green Team and Parks budgets are currently only able to address day-to-day reactive maintenance and high priority health and safety works. Therefore, these larger improvement and enhancement projects require additional capital funding to be provided. This investment will alleviate revenue budget pressures.

The budget will be monitored closely and reported on a monthly basis. If there are forecast overspends in excess of the tolerance boundary of 10%, they will be reported in accordance with standard reporting. Monthly highlight reporting will assist in ensuring that projects will be regularly monitored against quality, cost and timeframe. Any larger projects will have a built-in contingency of at least 10% or as appropriate due to the nature of the project.

The Council's procurement procedures will be adhered to ensure best value.

5.3 Consultations:

The programme features engagement with local stakeholders to ensure park improvements address the needs of residents. Resident and stakeholder involvement will help to increase local ownership of the park/ site in question, fostering community cohesion and ensuring that parks meet the needs of the local communities. Engagement will be done through onsite face to face consultation with park users, in conjunction with local user groups and national sporting bodies, resident tenant's associations, Friends groups and other interest groups. In addition, for projects that require planning permission, there is a statutory public consultation process. During any such

consultation period, the public can review proposed plans and make written representations about the proposal.

5.4 Environmental:

As part of the planning process for higher impact projects, biodiversity net gain will need to be considered as part of the planning application. Improved local facilities and amenities will encourage residents to walk or cycle to their local facilities, reducing vehicle use.

5.5 Risk Management:

Risks will be identified and reported to the project team, mitigations will be put in place, and risks will be properly monitored in line with the Council's risk management procedure. Issues will be extracted from highlight reporting and raised with the programme board for resolution.

Financial risk: the cost of the scheme is set at an early stage, and there are risks that costs may increase as the schemes are developed in detail, including through feasibility studies. All efforts will be made to ensure the costs are controlled, however in the instance that a significant change in plan, and consequently cost emerges during the scheme development, updated information will be provided for consideration by the AMCD board. Works will be procured competitively via the Council's RFQ system or via established frameworks.

Revenue budget pressures: the sports improvement programmes, including installation of new astroturf, Playzones and cricket facilities, will have revenue implications. Business modelling for covering maintenance and operational costs will be undertaken with some of the amenities generating income through pitch hire fees. All fees and charges will be agreed by Cabinet.

Project delays: there are inherent risks to the delivery of projects that could result from supply chain issues, planning permission or issues identified from feasibility studies and site assessments. Project management and works specification/ supervision will be undertaken by the Cultural Capital Delivery Team. Parks and Open Spaces will be the client. Monitoring and reporting will be by means of highlight reports from which scheme data will be extracted by Cultural Capital Delivery team for dashboard reporting, copied to the Capital Delivery Team using the agreed format for reporting through the Council's capital governance arrangements. Through this process potential risks to the delivery of projects will be identified early to minimise delays or increased costs.

Work not of satisfactory quality: works will be overseen by the Cultural Capital Delivery team, who will oversee site works and ensure works are completed to a satisfactory standard. All furniture or other equipment to be installed in line with the appropriate British Standard and inspected before handover.

Health and safety considerations: the Inclusive Play improvement programme will enable the Council to replace old equipment that is nearing end of use. The Parks Service, and Green Team, have an operating procedure through which regular safety inspections of play equipment is undertaken. As part of this risk management process, there is an annual external inspection survey and every three years there is an external condition report. Through this risk management process, the Parks Service has identified a number of sites which will be upgraded through the capital programme.

5.6 Crime Reduction

Upgrades to parks will help to reduce anti-social behaviour. Generally, the improvements will encourage more use of the sites by the general public, which will help make spaces feel safer to use by women, children, older and vulnerable residents.

5.7 Safeguarding:

There are no specific safeguarding issues attached to the capital delivery programme.

5.8 Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment:

Contractors will not manage sensitive data held by the Council. They are responsible for compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2426) via the terms and conditions of the contract award.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report is seeking approval for the Parks and Open Spaces Capital Programme and the allocation of Capital funding from s106 to fund it. The estimated amount requested is £5,246,000. £4,619,000 of this will be funded from s106 funds available and unallocated within the existing approved capital programme. The remaining £627,000 will be funded via a budget virement to reallocate s106 monies currently committed within the approved Parks programme, Quality Parks project budget. Post Cabinet approval the projects will need to have gone through the Council's capital governance process before spend is incurred.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Financial contributions may be secured through a s106 agreement if such contributions are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. S106 agreements entered into by the Council ordinarily contain confirmation from all signatories that these tests have been met. Any resulting spend of financial obligations collected pursuant to a s106 agreement must be spent in accordance with the terms of the s106 agreement in question. It is understood that a preliminary check has

indicated that the s106 monies can be used for the purposes specified in the report. If there is any doubt on a particular project this should be checked with legal and finance prior to monies being utilised.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- NONE.

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

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|--|---|
| <p>Cabinet</p> <p>Wednesday, 29th November 2023</p> |  <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p> |
| <p>Report of: Julie Lorraine Corporate Director, Resources</p> | <p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p> |
| <p>New fees for the Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall – Register Office</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lead Member | Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding |
| Originating Officer(s) | Raj Chand, (Director, Customer Services) |
| Wards affected | All Wards); |
| Key Decision? | No |
| Reason for Key Decision | This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria. |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | 20 September 2023 |
| Exempt information | N/A |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | Boost Culture, business, jobs and leisure, invest in public services, a council that works for you and listens to you |

Executive Summary

To agree new fees being introduced by the Registration Service for post wedding celebrations in the new Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall. This item is being proposed to allow customers and residents the opportunity to hire a new space within St. Georges Town Hall (the Register Office). The new room, called the Garden Suite, will be completed by October 2023 and it will be available initially for post wedding celebrations as part of wedding packages. This will mean that the room will only be available during office hours (including Saturdays and Sundays when weddings are booked) but not exceeding 6pm due to the close proximity of residents and noise disturbance. There will also be scope in the future, when the room is not booked out for post wedding celebrations, to dry hire the room at the weekends, for any other function within the community. A consultation with residents will take place in the future if it is decided to hire the room out beyond office hours.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Resources to agree new fees being introduced by the Registration Service for post wedding celebrations in the new Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall as set out in section 3.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This item is being proposed to allow customers and residents the opportunity to hire a new space within St. Georges Town Hall (the Register Office). The new room, called the Garden Suite, will be completed by October 2023 and it will be available initially for post wedding celebrations as part of wedding packages.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 N/A

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Registration service is based at St. Georges Town Hall in Cable Street. The building is used for the legal and statutory registrations of births, deaths, marriages, and civil partnerships as well as marriage, civil partnership, and citizenship ceremonies.
- 3.2 The newly decorated Garden Suite is based on the ground floor of St. Georges Town Hall and was originally refurbished to be rented out to a contractor for a café type facility. Unsuccessful tenders resulted in the prospect of renting out the space as not viable due to lack of interest. The Superintendent asked to take over the space and to use it as a post-wedding function room, to be offered to wedding parties after their ceremony for an additional fee over and above the cost of the statutory wedding ceremony.
- 3.3 The proposed fee structure is a basic dry hire fee. Once it becomes more established, we will investigate offerings for more bespoke wedding packages to include caterers, room decorations, flowers etc.
- 3.4 In the future, we are also intending on hiring out the Garden Suite beyond the registration service functions to include weekend events such as birthday parties, mehndi, and other celebrations which will benefit not only ceremony couples, but the local community and Tower Hamlets residents looking for a room to hire.

| | 3 Hour Hire (times in T&Cs below) |
|--|--|
| Monday – Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) | £400* |
| Saturday | £600* |
| Sunday and Bank Holidays | £800* |
| Late Exit Fee (min charge) | £100* |
| Cleaning/Damage (min charge) | £50* |
| Cleaning/Damage Fee | As invoiced |

*VAT included

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no implications specific to this report.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding,
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 There are no statutory implications.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The new fees would generate additional income for the Council. Current estimates suggest that the income could be £62k next year rising to £104k in three years. However, the actual income will depend on the level of demand for the new service.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 The Council has a wide discretion to set a suitable fee for the use of its assets.

7.2 However, any decision of the Council could be subject to judicial review on the grounds that such a decision was not a decision a reasonable Council might make in the circumstances. However, comparison with other venue

hire fees shown in the appendix suggests that the set fee is one which another reasonable authority might alight upon in the circumstances.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Benchmarking – Garden Suite August 2023
- Appendix 2 – Wedding Brochure Draft August 2023 (final copy in hard back now available)
- Appendix 3 – Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall Proposed Fees and Charges
- Appendix 4 – Financial Projection of Income for Fees from St. Georges Town Hall Garden Suite

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

Raj Chand, (Director, Customer Services)

APPENDIX 1

Benchmarking – Garden Suite August 2023

[The Angel Suite \(ante room\) - Say I Do Islington](#)

[Toast in the Garden – Morden Park House](#)

[Whitechapel Gallery \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)

| Venue | Where | Costs | Rate | Capacity | Size | Fee charged | Notes |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|---------------|------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Clissod House Dining Room | Hackney | £ 145.00 | hourly | 50 standing | 43m2 | weekday | |
| Clissod House Dining Room | Hackney | £ 168.00 | hourly | 50 standing | 43m2 | weekend | |
| Hackney Town Hall Committee Room | Hackney | £ 395.00 | hourly | 100 theatre | 11m2 | All week | |
| Hackney Town Hall Committee Room | Hackney | £ 650.00 | venue | 100 theatre | 11m2 | weekday | |
| Hackney Town Hall Committee Room | Hackney | £ 950.00 | venue | 100 theatre | 11m2 | weekend | |
| Stoke Newington Town Hall | Hackney | £ 865.00 | 100 mins | | | Weekly | and 1 glass per person |
| Stoke Newington Town Hall | Hackney | £ 990.00 | 100 mins | | | BH | and 1 glass per person |
| Angel Suite | Islington | £ 143.00 | 45 mins | 10 standing | | Tu-Sat | 45 mins before ceremony only |
| Angel Suite | Islington | £ 205.00 | 45 mins | 10 standing | | Sun | 45 mins before ceremony only |
| Assembly Hall | Islington | £ 620.00 | hourly | 500 reception | | Weekly | |
| Assembly Hall | Islington | £ 6,050.00 | Venue | 500 reception | | Weekly | |

APPENDIX 1

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------|---------|--|
| Toast in the garden | Merton | £ 195.0 0 | 2 hours | 30 guests | | Thu-Fri | 2 hours gazebo + Courtyard and 1 glass bubbles pp |
| Toast in the garden | Merton | £ 650.0 0 | 2 hours | 100 guests | | Sunday | 2 hours gazebo + Courtyard and 1 glass bubbles pp |
| Photoshoots | Merton | £ 200.0 0 | 2 hours | | | Mon-Wed | 2 hours gazebo + courtyard |
| 4th Floor Studios | TH | £ 175.0 0 | houly | | | | |
| Chisenhale Dance Space | TH | £ 60.0 0 | houly | | 100m 2 | | £30ph for smaller space. These are corporate rates |
| Whitechapel Gallery Spaces | TH | 400-900 | half days | | | | Different fee schedules |
| Kobi Nazrul Centre | TH | £ 28.0 0 | hourly | | | | Prices start from |

♥ Happily
Ever
After ♥

CIVIL CEREMONIES WITH TOWER HAMLETS REGISTER OFFICE





Introduction

Welcome to the Tower Hamlets Registration Service. We are in the heart of the East End and are known for having the best of London in one borough. Our register office is located in St Georges Town Hall, Shadwell, with several historic landmarks nearby such as the iconic Cable Street Mural on the side of our building.

Tower Hamlets is a vibrant and exciting part of the East End of London. This guide will take you on a journey from the beginning point of the booking of your ceremony, onto to the legal requirements, and right through to the day of your ceremony.

Within this guide you can find all the information on our celebratory services offered here in Tower Hamlets. Whether you decide to have your ceremony at St Georges Town Hall, at one of our approved venues, or in a place of worship, we will be delighted to assist you.

Our ceremonies are unique and tailored to our couple's needs, as we want you to have your ceremony, your way; some choose to keep it very small and have just two witnesses, whilst others wish to be surrounded by family and friends.



PAUL GAPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

Choosing and booking your Venue

You must first decide where and when you wish to get married or have a civil partnership. For ceremonies in England and Wales you have the choice of register offices, licensed approved premises, and places of religious worship or you may decide that you wish to be married abroad.



PAUL GAPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

You may choose to have your marriage or civil partnership celebration at any Register Office or Licensed Approved Premises in England and Wales. Please note for any ceremony you will need to plan with the venue in advance to ensure that the date you would like is available.

You may wish to have a religious ceremony in a Church of England or Church of Wales, you should speak to the vicar about arrangements. For religious ceremonies of any other denomination please speak to the appropriate person at your religious building. This could be a priest, Iman, Minister, Rabbi, or Authorised person to discuss your requirements before contacting your local register office to complete legal preliminaries.

For ceremonies abroad please contact the register office via email with your contact details, and we will advise you further.

register.office@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Notices of Marriage and Civil Partnerships



DAN MCCURRY PHOTOGRAPHY

This is a legal requirement which must be completed at least 29 days prior to the ceremony. In certain cases, depending on your immigration status, this may be extended to 71 days. Therefore, we advise that wherever possible you give notice at least three - six months prior to your ceremony.

You can only give notice after you've finalised your date and location. A notice of marriage is valid only for the venue named on the notice. While it may be possible to alter the date of your marriage, a change of location would require a fresh notice and fee.

Please make sure that you have selected and checked availability for both the venue for your ceremony and registrars **before** placing your notices of marriage.

Sometimes people may get confused between marriage and civil partnership, thinking that civil partnership is the same as a civil marriage. Please ensure you **know the difference** between a marriage and civil partnership before making a booking.

Please check by visiting the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marriage-and-civil-partnership-in-england-and-wales>

Both parties must make an appointment at the register office to give their legal notice of intention to marry or intention to enter a civil partnership. Please refer to our website for the requirements.

Our ceremony suites



PAUL GAPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

Our ceremony suites are housed within the recently renovated St Georges Town Hall, a listed building dating back to 1860. The ceremony suites at St Georges Town Hall vary in size and style. As you enter our building you will see centre stage is a beautiful staircase for those must-have photographs.

a flower arch and adorned walls. The room can accommodate 200 guests, and there is a large aisle for couples to make their grand entrance.

The Tower Suite also has a dressing room for couples wishing to make those final finishing touches before they make their grand entrance.

The Tower Suite

The Tower Suite is the largest of the three rooms set in the historic St Georges Town Hall. It is located on the first floor, an elegant room decorated in a traditional style; the room has dark wooden panelling and features



THE TOWER SUITE



The Hamlet Suite

The Hamlet Suite is a smaller, more contemporary ceremony room, also located on the first floor. It accommodates 20 guests and can be made smaller for more intimate ceremonies accommodating up to 10 guests. It has a fun element to it, with a neon light sign confirming your Happily Ever After. Behind the signing table there is a backdrop flower picture frame for more of those celebratory photographs.

To book your ceremony, please visit our website.

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/HappilyEverAfter

Coming Soon

The Garden Suite

You may like the idea of having your whole event and celebration in the same venue. Coming soon here at St Georges Town Hall in autumn 2023, in addition to our ceremony suites, we have our Garden Suite. This will be available for hire to host your reception and celebration for up to 100 guests. A beautiful modern, airy, space with a balcony area overlooking St Georges Park. For further details please contact the ceremonies team via email.

ceremonies@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Choosing the type of ceremony



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY

It would be our privilege to manage and attend your ceremony and we want to ensure that your ceremony is tailored to your needs. We would be delighted to be part of your celebrations and will guide you through your choice of ceremony.

Most importantly, we want you to have a fabulous ceremony in Tower Hamlets and create lifelong memories; ones that you will recall in years to come with family and friends, with unique little details that made your ceremony so special and personal to you as a couple.

There are four types of ceremonies here in Tower Hamlets, the enhanced ceremony, the simple ceremony, the registration only ceremony, and the register office ceremony.



PAOLA DE PAOLA PHOTOGRAPHY



THE ENHANCED CEREMONY

Choosing the enhanced ceremony option is a wonderful way to personalise your ceremony. You may wish to include a grand entrance; you will need to decide who will accompany you. You could walk in together or with your parents, some couples have a whole entourage, bridesmaids, grooms' men and page boys, the choice is yours.

There may be special pieces of music that are important to you and remind you of key events as a couple. You can choose pieces of music to accompany you down the aisle, signing the legal paperwork, and at the close of ceremony. You may have friends or family that are musically talented, you could have a live singer or musicians playing.

Readings are also a wonderful way to further enhance your ceremony, and to involve family and friends in the celebrations. You may have a favourite poem or a passage of prose, you would like to include, or the reader may decide to write some words.

Will you exchange rings or gifts, who will present the rings/ gifts? At this point in the ceremony, you will say your vows, or make promises to one another. You could write your own vows or have the enhanced ceremony option.

Please note readings and music cannot contain religious content, our ceremonies team will be happy to advise you further.

SIMPLE CEREMONY

Some couples opt for the simple ceremony, which is still a short ceremony however you have the option to exchange rings and include music chosen by us. Our most popular option, it allows you to celebrate your way without the pressure of organising a larger celebration, so you can focus on you.

REGISTRATION ONLY CEREMONY

There is also a registration only ceremony, this is often a preferred choice wherein the couple are having a blessing later. Please note this is a very short ceremony with the legal words only, there is no music, no vows, and no readings.

REGISTER OFFICE CEREMONY

The register office ceremony is our most basic option, the ceremony is very short with the legal words only and no embellishments. The register office room has limited availability, and two witnesses only can attend.

Please refer to our website to view all ceremony options, here you will find more detailed information, including the number of guests that can attend.

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/HappilyEverAfter

On the Day



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY

ARRIVAL

If you're getting married or having your Civil Partnership at St Georges Town Hall, we ask that you and your guests arrive 15 minutes before the ceremony. Please note there is step free access at the rear entrance of the building.

For ceremonies at outside approved premises, we ask that you to arrive 30 minutes before the ceremony. Please see our pages on ceremonies at venues in Tower Hamlets. www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/HappilyEverAfter

Please allow plenty of time for your journey, as there will be other ceremonies on the same day. If you are late for your ceremony, we may not be able to proceed as planned, so to avoid any disappointment please ensure that you allow enough time to get ready and arrive at the venue calmly and promptly. (Please see our terms and conditions www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ROTC)

WITNESSES/GUESTS

On the day of your ceremony, the law requires that you bring two witnesses with you. They will witness the ceremony and sign the schedule with you. They may be friends or relatives; they must be able to speak and understand English and comprehend what is taking place and testify to what they have seen and heard.

In addition to your witnesses, you may wish to invite family and friends to your celebration. Each ceremony room is licensed for a specified number of guests, please check with your venue for guest capacity. Please note you must adhere to these numbers, photographers and videographers won't be included in these numbers.

If you require a translator for your ceremony, they must also be a witness to your celebration.



PRE CEREMONY INTERVIEW

Whilst your guests are being seated, the registrar will conduct a private pre ceremony interview with you both. This is to ensure that all your details are recorded correctly, and to affirm any changes.

You will be asked to confirm all the details given at the time of your notice, once all the preliminaries have been completed, the officiating registrar will guide you through your chosen ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHS, FILMING AND LIVE STREAMING

You may choose to bring a professional photographer to your ceremony or nominate a friend or family member to take your photographs throughout the ceremony. You may also wish to film the ceremony; we will direct them to the most suitable position within the ceremony room. Your guests will have an opportunity to take photographs at the end of the ceremony.

After your ceremony there are plenty of photo opportunities available to you. The grand staircase is the most popular backdrop, and guests usually spill out into St Georges Gardens at the rear of the building for the traditional garden shots. There's also the Cable Street mural on the side of the building for a quirky backdrop.

Tower Hamlets prides itself as having the best in London in one borough and the location couldn't be better for those heading into central London for further photographs at iconic landmarks. For your wedding reception there's also a huge range of restaurants and venues nearby there's Docklands, Tobacco Dock, Tower Bridge and St Katharine's Dock and the Tower of London to name a few.

CONFETTI

We understand that confetti is a traditional part of celebrations with any ceremony. Please remember that there may be other ceremonies taking place after yours. Please refrain from throwing confetti in the building. Please ask your guests to wait until you are outside before scattering biodegradable confetti.

PARKING

We regret to inform you that there is no parking at to St Georges. There is limited pay and display parking in the area, or local car parks. Please note at weekends there are no parking restrictions. We are well located by bus, DLR ,and overground and recommend reaching us by public transport, walking or private hire vehicles.

Ceremonies at other Venues in Tower Hamlets



You may choose to have your marriage or civil partnership celebration at any Licensed Approved Premises in England and Wales. Here at Tower Hamlets as part of our commitment to maximising choice we have approved a vast array of venues, whether you're a history buff, a fan of musicals, the arts and films or you love life's luxuries we are more than sure you will find the perfect venue in Tower Hamlets.

These range from quirky hotels to the more traditional, we also have the magical Wilton's Music Hall, cinemas, pubs, Trinity Buoy Wharf the iconic Tower Bridge, and the nearby historic Tower of London.

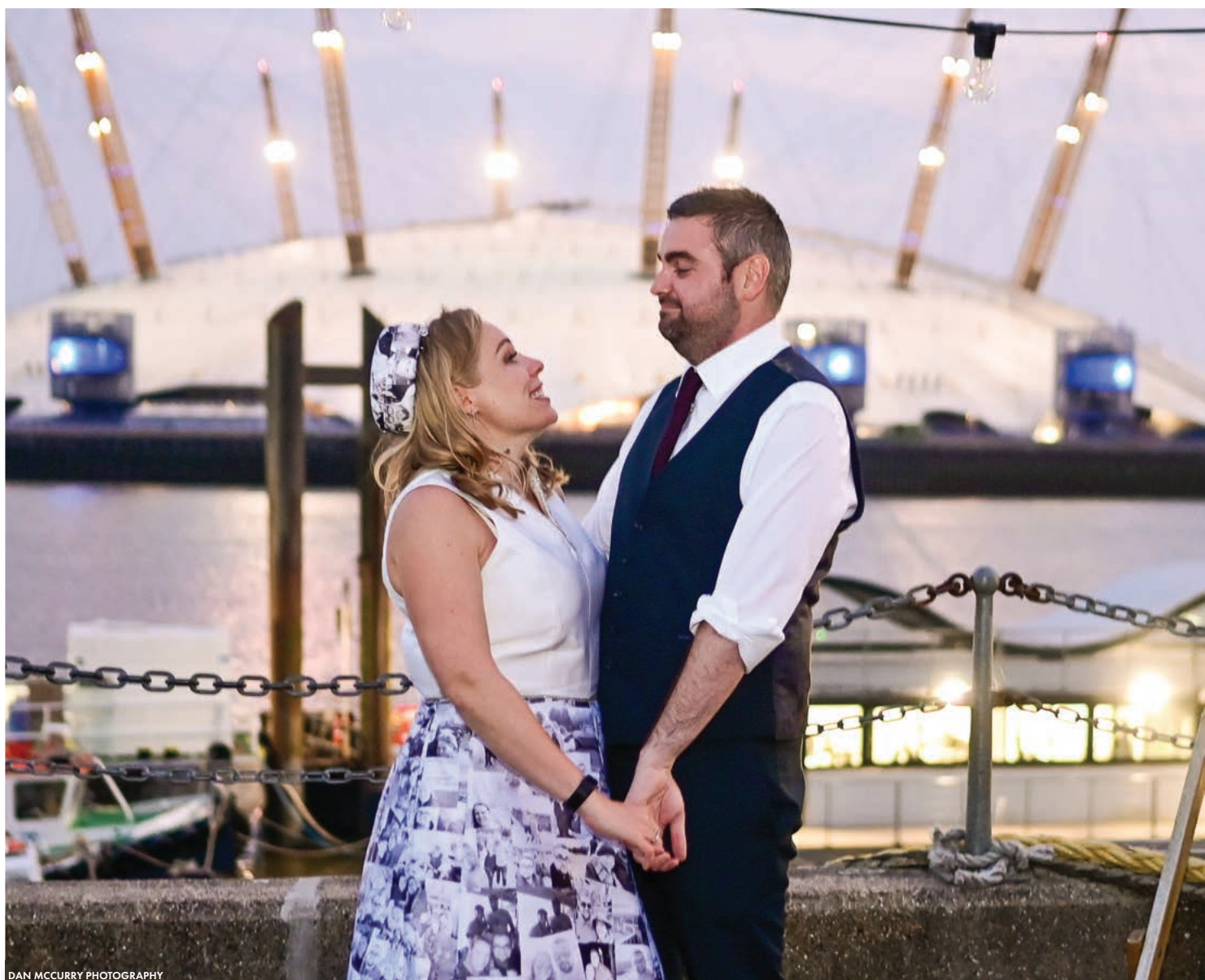
Our venues span from Bethnal Green through to the Docklands, Wapping, and Canary Wharf, further along the Thames to St Katharine's Dock. Many are blank canvases waiting for you to create your perfect ceremony.

Please see our venues page for more information and the website. www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/HappilyEverAfter

If you are interested in having your ceremony at one of our approved premises, please contact the venue directly to arrange a viewing and discuss their availability. Once you have chosen your venue, please log onto our website to check for availability of your chosen date and time. You can then reserve the date and time.

Please then refer to the notice of marriage and civil partnership section in this guide to arrange to complete the legal preliminaries which enable you to proceed with a legally recognised ceremony.

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/HappilyEverAfter



DAN MCCURRY PHOTOGRAPHY

"Thank you for conducting a most wonderful ceremony. We are still overwhelmed with the atmosphere of love and joy that was palpable at the whole wedding and I particularly wanted to thank you for making the ceremony both sincere and joyous."

Approved venues



Bethnal Green Library

Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 0HL
Tel: 020 7364 4180 Web: www.thvenues.co.uk

Canary Riverside Plaza Hotel

46 Westferry Circus, London E14 8RS
Tel: 020 7510 1999
Web: www.canaryriversideplaza.com/en

Dickens Inn

Marble Quay, St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1UH
Tel: 020 7488 2208 Web: www.dickensinn.co.uk

Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre

235a Westferry Road, Mill Wall Dock,
London E14 3QS
Tel: 020 7537 2626 Web: www.dswc.org

Dock Vaults

Ivory House, St Katharine Docks, London E1W 1AT.
Web: www.docksidevaults.com

East Wintergarden

43 Bank Street, Canary Wharf, London E14 5NX
Tel: 020 7418 2782
Web: <https://eastwintergarden.com>

Ecology Pavilion

125 Grove Road, London E3 5RP
Tel: 020 7346 7910 Web: www.thvenues.co.uk

Hilton London Canary Wharf

South Quay, Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH
Tel: 020 3002 2300
Web: www.hilton.com

London Marriott Hotel Canary Wharf

22 Hertsmere Road, London E14 4ED
Tel: 020 7093 1000 Web: www.marriott.co.uk

Mama Shelter London

437 Hackney Road, London E2 8PP
Tel: 020 7613 6500
Web: <https://Mamashelter.com/London-Shoreditch>



AMA SHELTER LONDON



RADISSON BLU EDWARDIAN NEW PROVIDENCE WHARF HOTEL



THE DICKENS INN



DOCKLANDS SAILING & WATERSPORTS CENTRE



MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS



DOCKSIDE VAULTS

Museum of London Docklands

No 1 Warehouse, West India Quay, London E14 4AL
 Tel: 020 7814 5632
 Web: www.museumoflondon.org.uk

Queen Mary University of London

Queen's Building, 327 Mile End Road London E1 4NS
 Tel: 020 7882 5555 Web: www.qmweddings.co.uk

Radisson Blu Edwardian Hotel

New Providence Wharf 5 Fairmont Avenue,
 Blackwall Way, London, E14 9PQ
 Tel: 020 7987 2050 Web: www.radissonhotels.com

Rich Mix

35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA
 Tel: 020 7613 7495 Web: <https://richmix.org.uk/hire-us/>

St Georges Town Hall

236 Cable Street, London E1 0BL Tel: 020 7364 7880
 Web: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/HappilyEverAfter

The Art Pavilion

Mile End Park, 93 Clinton Road London E3 4QU
 Tel: 020 7364 7910 Web: www.thvenues.co.uk

The Dock Gallery

Tobacco Dock, Tobacco Quay, Wapping Lane, London
 E1W 2SF. Tel: 020 7680 4001 Web: <https://www.tobaccodocklondon.com/dock-gallery>

The Tower Hotel

St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1LD
 Tel: 020 7481 2575 Web: www.guoman.com

Tower Bridge

North Tower, Tower Bridge, London SE1 2UP
 Tel: 020 7403 3761 Web: www.towerbridge.org.uk

Tower of London

Tower Hill, London EC3 4AB Tel: 020 3166 6226
 Web: <https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london>

Town Hall Hotel and Apartments

8 Patriot Square, London E2 9NF
 Tel: 020 7871 0460 Web: www.townhallhotel.com

Toynbee Hall

28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS
 Tel: 020 7392 2998 Web: www.toynbeehall.org.uk

Trinity Buoy Wharf

64 Orchard Place, London E14 0JW
 Tel: 020 7515 7153 Web: www.trinitybuoywharf.com

Troxy

490 Commercial Road, London E1 0HX
 Tel: 020 7247 1909 Web: <https://troxy.co.uk>

Wiltons Music Hall

1 Graces Alley, London E1 8JB
 Tel: 020 7702 9555 Web: <https://wiltons.org.uk/visit>

“Thank you so much for our ceremony on Sunday. We were both so grateful for your calm, friendly and happy approaches – we had such a lovely time and without fail our guests said how much they loved that part of the day. So, a huge thank you for starting our marriage on such a delightful note!”





WEDDINGS AT MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

Bespoke wedding celebrations.

As well as packages, they also offer dry hire of their events spaces for weddings to allow a completely bespoke experience within the museum.

No matter the size of your wedding party, there are some beautiful spaces available for your ceremony. From the intimate Quayside Room overlooking West India Quay with capacity for 70 guests to the warehouse-inspired Wilberforce Room and Riverside Room for 200 guests.

For larger receptions and evening parties, they can offer exclusive use of the

entire ground floor, which includes the Riverside Room and Muscovado Hall, as well as the beautiful waterside terrace for up to 600 guests standing. It's the perfect mix of indoor and outdoor spaces with backdrops that will wow your guests and ensure a standout wedding celebration.

Museum of London Docklands

Tel: 020 7814 5789

Email: weddings@museumoflondon.org.uk

Web: www.museumoflondon.org.uk



DOCKLANDS SAILING & WATERSPORTS CENTRE

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

Set against the serene waters of Millwall Dock in the heart of Docklands, and with views of Canary Wharf skyline, the venue offers a striking setting for an unforgettable wedding. The alpine-inspired clubhouse, full of character with exposed beams and floor to ceiling glass windows, fits up to 200 guests. Be enchanted by its personal and friendly service supported by a talented catering team, making your day truly extraordinary.

Docklands Sailing & Watersports Centre,
235a Westferry Road, London E14 3QS
Tel: 020 7537 2626 Email: info@dswc.org Web: www.dswc.org

TOYNBEE HALL

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

The bold choice for a wedding with impact. Home to an iconic charitable organisation; Toynbee Hall is a unique Grade II listed building, nestled in the heart of London's Whitechapel. Built to resemble a manorial residence in Elizabethan style, two of their stunning halls remain post-war and they have recently undergone redevelopment to add fresh & modern accents to the building's historic charm. Passion lives in these walls.

Toynbee Hall 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS
Tel: 020 7392 2920 Email: events@toynbeehall.org.uk
Web: <http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/events/>



RADISSON BLU EDWARDIAN NEW PROVIDENCE WHARF HOTEL

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

Light, spacious and on the river, New Providence Wharf makes an instant impression. Whether you picture an intimate gathering or lavish reception, the versatile spaces and flexible menus at New Providence Wharf provide endless possibilities.

New Providence Wharf has its own ceremonies licence, so you can hold your ceremony and reception in one place. The Ontario Suite accommodates 180 guests for dinner, perfect for a larger wedding, and The River Room, overlooking the Thames River and The O2, can accommodate 80 guests for a standing reception or 60 guests for a sit down dinner.

Take the hassle out of your wedding preparations by talking to their events team.

Radisson Blu Edwardian New Providence Wharf Hotel,
5 Fairmont Avenue, London E14 9JB. Tel: 020 7987 2050
Email: npwcb@edwardian.com Web: www.radissonblu-edwardian.com



TROXY

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

An East-London jewel, Troxy is the perfect blend of old meets new. You'll be surrounded by 90 years of history and original art-deco architecture with the latest event facilities to bring your event to life.

As one of the capital's most flexible venues, and conveniently located between central and Canary Wharf, Troxy is a memorable backdrop for all wedding celebrations. A fantastic roster of award-winning caterers, unrivalled AV equipment and a late licence makes Troxy the perfect setting for the most glamorous occasions.

Troxy's dedicated event team are on hand at every step to ensure seamless event delivery from start to finish.

Troxy, 490 Commercial Road, London E1 0HX
Tel: 020 7790 9000 Email: enquiries@troxy.co.uk Web: www.troxy.co.uk



THE DICKENS INN

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

The Dickens Inn is a picturesque 18th century venue nestled in St Katherine's Dock. It boasts a range of food, drink and entertainment packages tailorable to your occasion. It is fully licensed for ceremonies, offering a private bar, dining room, dance floor space and late music licence. With unrivalled views over the dock towards Tower Bridge and the Shard, The Dickens Inn ensures a stunning setting for the most memorable occasion.

The Dickens Inn,
Marble Quay, St Katherine's Way,
London E1W 1UH.
Tel: 0207 488 2208
Email: dickens.bookings@ssp.uk.com
Web: www.dickensinn.co.uk



TOWER VENUES

Tower Venues are pleased to offer multiple amazing venues to host your ceremony, reception and celebrations. They work closely with a wide selection of suppliers to ensure your event runs smoothly allowing you and your guests to enjoy the occasion. All of their venues are conveniently located close to great transport links.

BETHNAL GREEN LIBRARY

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

Surrounded by wonderfully extended leafy green gardens, the function rooms at Bethnal Green Library are as delightful as the listed building itself. Built in 1922 these rooms have all their original features including vaulted ceilings and historic 19th century windows to create that perfect romantic setting.

BOW COMMUNITY HUB - A12 BUILDING

Spread over two floors, this beautiful modern building is perfect for your special event. You can receive your guests in a comfortable lounge setting downstairs and have formal dining upstairs. The upstairs can then quickly be transformed into a party and dancing experience, while your guests have a drink in the relaxed area downstairs.

Tower Venues

Tel: 020 7364 6308 Email: Facilities.EventsTeam@towerhamlets.gov.uk



LONDON MARRIOTT CANARY WHARF HOTEL & EXECUTIVE APARTMENTS

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

In the heart of London's Dockland with its quayside location and cityscape, the London Marriott Hotel Canary Wharf is a unique destination for those celebrating special occasions. The newly refurbished function rooms with their sleek, clean lines and high-quality design can be transformed for all occasions. However big or small your event ideas, your dedicated Events Team is on hand to organise your day down to the finest detail so that you can simply relax and enjoy.

22 Hertsmere Road, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4ED
Tel: 020 7517 2881 Email: Canarywharf.sales@marriott.com
Web: www.memoriesmademarriott.co.uk/londoncanarywharf



TRINITY BUOY WHARF

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

The historic Chain and Buoy Store venue is a Grade II listed brick building on the banks of the river Thames in East London. Built in 1864, and connected to London's only Lighthouse, The Chain and Buoy Store is a large Victorian warehouse space with brick walls and original wooden beams, feature sliding doors, alcoves and curved windows. The Buoy Store's exposed brick and atmospheric lighting makes for the perfect ceremony space whilst the white brick walls of the Chain Store can be used as stand alone reception and dancing space or for both the ceremony and reception with the use of dividing drapes. You can even arrive by boat for that really unique touch.

64 Orchard Place, London E14 0JW
Tel: 020 7515 7153 Email: events@urban-space.co.uk
Web: www.trinitybuoywharf.com





MAMA SHELTER LONDON

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

Mama Shelter is your home from home. Welcoming and warm for you and your guests, for your magical celebration. 194 bedrooms to host a stay, private dining for the Wedding Breakfast, Ateliers for the ceremony and our ethereal Garden Bar for the reception. Make it extra fun by booking our karaoke rooms too. Stylish and informal, Mama is perfect for the more contemporary and modern Bride and Groom's special day.

Mama Shelter London, 437 Hackney Road, London E2 8PP
Tel: 020 7613 6500 Email: events.eastlondon@mamashelter.com
Web: www.mamashelter.com



TOWN HALL HOTEL

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

This is your special day coupled with Town Hall Hotel's special services. From the gorgeously photogenic, award-winning art deco interiors, to their experienced wedding planning team; you'll receive the wedding you dreamed of and you won't have to lift a ring finger. A selection of event spaces are licensed for marriage, so couples can hold both their ceremony and reception within the stunning building - from the formal splendour of the Council Chamber to the elegance of Bethnal Hall.

Town Hall Hotel Patriot Square, London E2 9NF
Tel: 020 7871 0460 Email: events@townhallhotel.com
Web: www.townhallhotel.com



DOCKSIDE VAULTS

(Licensed for Civil Ceremonies)

Redefining weddings with its extraordinary charm. Step into 10,000 sq. ft. of revealed brickwork and raw architecture, where privacy and enchanting atmosphere await in ten cavernous cellars. Nestled beneath St. Katharine Docks' historic Ivory House, this venue combines contemporary elegance with 160 years of whispered history.

With a capacity of up to 450 guests (250 for weddings), Docksider Vaults offers a blank canvas for experiential entertainment, live music, and unforgettable weddings. Flexible packages cater to diverse budgets, ensuring a perfect fit for your special day. Fresh from a six-figure renovation, this venue boasts premium amenities, a Michelin trained chef and all sound and lighting included.

Choose Docksider Vaults—an elegant and flexible venue that weaves your wedding dreams into unforgettable memories.

Contact Docksider Vaults on hello@docksidervaults.com for more information and date availability.

Docksider Vaults, Ivory House, St Katharine Docks, London E1W 1AT
Web: www.docksidervaults.com



*"A very emotional ceremony!
Everything was perfect. The staff, the
location, the guests, and the music. A
big thank you to the marriage officer.
She is so kind, sweet, and professional
person. Her voice is lovely. She made
this experience unique. We wish to every
couple a civil ceremony like this. Thank
you Tower Hamlet Register Office. We
won't forget you."*



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY



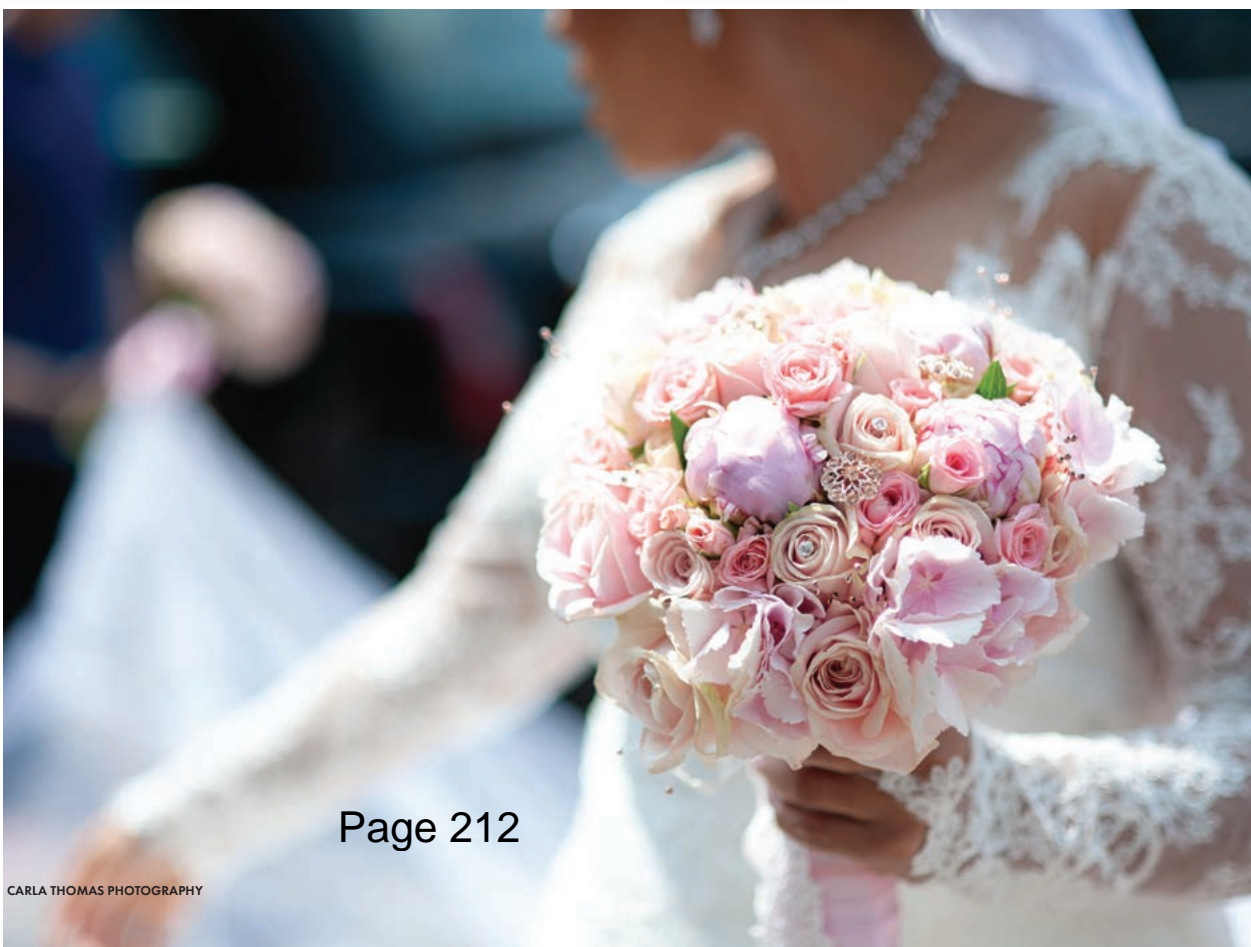
CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY



PAOLA DE PAOLA PHOTOGRAPHY



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY



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PAOLA DE PAOLA PHOTOGRAPHY

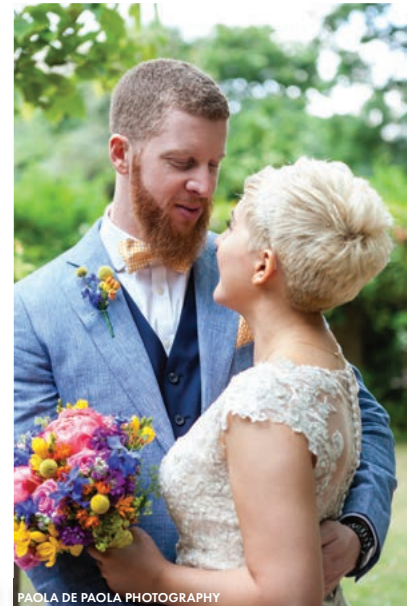


CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you both for yesterday, for your help and kindness for making this part of the journey so lovely. We are both very excited now, the date matches the date we meet and thus makes our day even more special to us. We both have our family roots in this borough hence the wish to have our ceremony here."



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY



PAOLA DE PAOLA PHOTOGRAPHY



PAUL GAPPER PHOTOGRAPHY



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY



CHIRINGUITO

Chiringuito offers the perfect spot to celebrate your special day. Nestled in the corner of Museum Gardens, with terraces spilling out onto the park, and the crowning glory being the roof terrace overlooked by the fabulous Grade I listed St. John's Church.

The venue offers the perfect blend of inside and outside spaces, and the retractable roof cover provides shelter if rain tries to spoil your day. Full bar and catering packages are available, including an open air BBQ not to be missed!

Chiringuito, Museum Gardens,
Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9PA
Tel: 020 8037 9563 Email: info@chiringuito.co.uk
Web: www.chiringuito.co.uk IG: [chiringuito_ldn](https://www.instagram.com/chiringuito_ldn)



BARGE EAST

Barge East offers a fresh, unique & super trendy new venue for your wedding. The stunning & unique location makes Barge East an incredible space to celebrate your big day. With a capacity of 120 across both decks of the Barge, the venue makes an ideal spot for smaller weddings.

Barge East, 98 White Post Lane, Hackney Wick, London E9 5EN
Tel: 020 3026 2807 Email: info@bargeeast.com
Web: www.bargeeast.com





HAWKSMOOR WOOD WHARF

HAWKSMOOR WOOD WHARF

Hawksmoor Wood Wharf is housed in an eco-friendly floating pavilion in a new riverside neighborhood in Canary Wharf. The restaurant boasts a beautiful private dining room; seating up to twenty people. The room is named after the local legend Queenie Watts – singer, actor and self-confessed bawdy landlady. This space is perfect for intimate and special occasions that requires a personal touch.

There are a range of sharing menu options, featuring the classic Hawksmoor dishes and the very best dry-aged beef, sustainable seafood and seasonal farm produce. (V, VG available).

THE LOWBACK

Gently rising and falling with the tide, the restaurant dock-level is joined by a waterside – The Lowback, the water-level bar will be the ideal spot for a glamour night. The bar can host a variety of events - special celebrations, wedding parties, and other festivities – you can hire a semi-private area or go all out and hire the whole bar and summer terrace for sun-drenched celebrations.

Hawksmoor Wood Wharf, 1 Water Street, London E14 5GX

Tel: 020 3988 0510 Email: woodwharf@thehawksmoor.com

The Lowback, 1 Water Street, London E14 5GX

Tel: 020 3988 0510 Email: thelowback@thehawksmoor.com

Web: <https://thehawksmoor.com/private-dining-wood-wharf-lowback/>

WEDDINGS & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS RECEPTIONS AT BOISDALE OF CANARY WHARF

Boisdale of Canary Wharf is available to hire for weddings and civil partnerships during the week and at weekends. For larger wedding parties it is possible to hire both the first floor and/or the second floor. Alternatively, the whole venue can be booked for up to 230 for a sit-down meal or 500 for canapé and drinks parties. Get in contact with them to discuss your requirements (events@boisdale-cw.co.uk; 020 7715 5818).



PAUL GAPPER PHOTOGRAPHY



THE LOWBACK



AB CHAUFFEURS

AB Chauffeurs takes great pride in going above and beyond with their customers and are known for their outstanding reputation as a Classic Wedding Car hire company in London. Choose from a Classic London Taxi (5 seater), Beauford Convertible (3 seater), Bramwith Landalette (7 seater) or a 4 seater Rolls Royce Silver Cloud. Prices start from £150.

Tel: 0798 442 1542 Email: info@abchauffeurs.co.uk
Web: www.abchauffeurs.co.uk





PAUL GAPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

Each & every wedding is unique, beautiful & full of the detail that make you both such an amazing couple!! Paul is a well-established Documentary, LGBTQ+ friendly wedding photographer based in London supporting inclusion, diversity and sustainability, capturing the moments you never want to forget.

If you are looking for a wedding photographer that you can truly trust to tell your unique story then he would love to connect!

Tel: 07949 088 854 Email: info@paulgapper.com
Web: www.paulgapper.com



PAOLA DE PAOLA PHOTOGRAPHY

Is a well-established alternative wedding photographer based in London supporting inclusion, diversity and sustainability.

Her style is relaxed, documentary and warm. What she likes the most is capturing your big day's magical energy. Her friendly, non-judgemental personality will allow you to relax and enjoy your beautiful day.

Today more than ever, she believes in the importance of being inclusive, embracing diversity and fighting for being more eco-and sustainable.

Let's celebrate plastic-free weddings and Love is love always!

Tel: 07966 191 977 Email: paola@paoladepaola.com
Web: www.paoladepaola.com FB: PaolaDePaolaPhotography
IG: @paoladepaolaphotos Twitter: @Paola_De_Paola



CARLA THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY

MARTINS FLOWERS

Martins Flowers offer free wedding consultations to discuss all your requirements for your special day, catering for all types of weddings, from opulent, simple, fun, intimate or modest celebrations.

An independent run family florist, Martins Flowers provide clients with fresh, top quality flowers. Their team of skilled florists are passionate about flowers and are always on hand to provide help and advice to ensure your wedding day is that extra bit special and memorable.

Martins Flowers, 151 East Ferry Road, Isle Of Dogs, London E14 3BT.
Tel: 020 7531 1131 Email: info@canarywharfflowers.co.uk
Web: www.martinsflowerslondon.co.uk



RAZZMATAZZ CAKES

Razzmatazz Cakes is a bespoke celebration cake specialist. Razz, the baker and brains behind the creative confections, is adept at using her skills and artistry to reflect the personalities of each couple. Designing and baking deliciously delectable cakes for over twenty years, Razz has developed a flair and artistry for helping couples realise their unique and beautiful wedding cake vision. Razzmatazz Cakes sets itself apart from the competition with its attention to detail, quality, exceptional customer service and commitment.

Razzmatazz Cakes, Cephass Street, Tower Hamlets, London E1 4AX
Email: razzmatazzcakes22@gmail.com Web: www.razzmatazzcakes.co.uk



Other ceremonies

NAMING CEREMONIES

A naming ceremony is an occasion for parents, family, and friends to pledge their love and commitment to a child. It is an opportunity to celebrate the birth of a new baby or to welcome an adoptive child or stepchild into their new family. Supporting adults, grandparents and older siblings can make their promises to the child and you can choose poems or readings to enhance the ceremony.

Naming ceremonies can be arranged by anyone, from any cultural background and with any spiritual or religious beliefs. There is no age limit to a naming ceremony and more than one sibling may be named at the same time. Naming ceremonies have no legal recognition.

COMMITMENT CEREMONIES

This is an opportunity for couples wishing to have a ceremony where they may declare their love and commitment for each other in front of family and friends. Commitment ceremonies have no legal recognition.

RENEWAL OF VOWS CEREMONIES

This is a special ceremony for couples who wish to renew their vows in a unique and personal way. Often a renewal of vows ceremony is associated with a special

anniversary, but the ceremony is just as appropriate for couples at any stage of their union. This occasion is a wonderful opportunity for couples to reaffirm their love for one another and one which their family and friends can share in.

Please remember however that renewal of vows ceremony has no legal recognition.

Please contact our ceremonies team for further information:

ceremonies@towerhamlets.gov.uk





"A very emotional ceremony! Everything was perfect. The staff, the location, the guests, and the music. A big thank you to the marriage officer. She is so kind, sweet, and professional person. Her voice is lovely. She made this experience unique. We wish to every couple a civil ceremony like this. Thank you, Tower Hamlet Register Office. We won't forget you."



TOWER HAMLETS

Tower Hamlets Register Office,
St Georges Town Hall, 236 Cable Street, London E1 0BL.

Email: register.office@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Web: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Garden Suite at St. Georges Town Hall Proposed Fees and Charges

| | 3 Hour Hire (times in T&Cs below) |
|--|--|
| Monday – Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) | £400* |
| Saturday | £600* |
| Sunday and Bank Holidays | £800* |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Late Exit Fee (min charge) | £100* |
| Cleaning/Damage (min charge) | £50* |
| Cleaning/Damage Fee | As invoiced |

*VAT included

Terms and Conditions

General

- Bookings for the Garden Suite can only be made if there is a relevant booking on the same day for a marriage, civil partnership, or citizenship ceremony in Tower Hamlets Register Office at St Georges Town Hall.
- Bookings are subject to availability and operating restrictions of Tower Hamlets Register Office.
- Basic cleaning is included. More detail below.
- The final guest must have left the room before the end time of the booking or a late exit fee will be charged.
- A morning and afternoon session can be booked by the service user and two fees charged as applicable.
- Access is via the external door for all functions.
- Audio is not to exceed suitable levels for the terms of licence.
- Food and drink provided by the couple must be consumed in the room.
- Access to the garden is available to the public. The balcony can be used by the service user only.
- Biodegradable confetti must be used outside only.
- Pets are allowed but a disclaimer form must be signed and we must be notified in advance.
- Anti-social behaviour will result in the immediate termination of the event with no refund given

Fees

- All fees to be paid in advance in one instalment.
- Any cancellation within 2 weeks of the booking will not be eligible for a refund.
- Any cancellation over 2 weeks before the booking will be eligible for a full refund.
- Reschedules are included in the amendment fee charged for the ceremony (as long as 2 weeks' notice is given as above).

Cleaning and Damage

APPENDIX 3

- Rooms will be cleaned in between slots via FAs and COs.
- Any excess cleaning will be invoiced to the couple and an admin fee payable
- Any damage will be invoiced to the couple and an admin fee payable.

Times of Hire

- The Garden Suite can be hired for the timeslots below:

| | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Monday – Friday | 09:30 – 12:30 | 13:30 – 16:30 |
| Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays | 09:00 – 12:00 | 13:00 – 16:00 |

- These times are fixed in line with ceremony timings and therefore we are unable to change them currently. However, as we develop the service offer, we will review the timings in the future.

Financial Projection of Income for Fees from St Georges Town Hall Garden Suite

Overview

The implementation of the proposed fees is projected to make the following:

- £62,400 (£52,000 exc. VAT) in Year One (based on 3 bookings a week)
- £83,200 (£69,333 exc. VAT) in Year Two (based on 4 bookings a week)
- £104,000 (£86,666 exc. VAT) in Year Three (based on 5 bookings a week) (see calculations of max potential bookings in the table overleaf)

The above figures are a conservative estimate for weekday bookings only, based on initial take up of room bookings. As we grow the business, the potential is for a maximum of 14 bookings per week.

The above figures assume no annual fee increase or any additional expenses should there be any.

Background

Tower Hamlets Register Office is in the newly renovated St Georges Town Hall, Shadwell. The building had a space designated as a café, but after a failed tender process, the SR suggested taking on the room as a space for couples to hire after their ceremony to make further income.

In 2022/23 over 750 ceremonies were conducted in St Georges Town Hall. In 2023/24 over 900 are projected thanks to competitive pricing and a range of ceremony options unmatched in London.

Fees were benchmarked competitively against neighbouring/other London Boroughs and kept lower to account for the community and to ensure we are assisting people in the cost-of-living crisis, whilst also having net positive impact on the service budget.

A simple fee structure is proposed as below:

- £400 Weekdays
- £600 Saturday
- £800 Bank Holidays

A cleaning administration fee is also proposed, with customers being invoiced any extra cleaning costs incurred to the service to be made clear in terms and conditions at the time of booking.

The service will be bookable online, and staff will have limited involvement in the hire process. As a result, expenses surrounding the hiring of the Garden Suite are minimal. Additional staff costs for weekends are considered in the increased fee.

Financial Projection of Income for Fees from St Georges Town Hall Garden Suite

This projection is for the hiring of the Garden Suite for 3 hours only. This projection does not include any extra packages or ceremonies which we hope to offer in future stages of use.

Calculations

Methodology

We have estimated that utilisation will rise steadily as word-of-mouth spreads about the offering, with many people already requesting such a space, as Shadwell has few places for people to go after their ceremony.

Once fees are agreed, we are expecting one weekday booking a week to begin with, reaching three on average for the 2024/25 financial year.

We expect this number to increase year on year to 4 on average in 2025/26 and 5 on average 2026/27. Based on this assumption, utilisation rates would be as below:

| FY 2024/25 | FY 2025/26 | FY 2026/27 |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 25% | 33% | 42% |

This would give income projections as below:


| Year | FY 2024 /25 (inc. VAT) | FY 2024/25 (exc.VAT) | FY 2024 /25 (inc. VAT) | FY 2024/25 (exc.VAT) | FY 2024 /25 (inc. VAT) | FY 2024/25 (exc.VAT) |
|--------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Income | £62,400 | £52,000 | £83,200 | £69,333 | £104,000 | £86,666 |

We have not projected weekend income as this would be reflected in the weekly average figure above.

Tables

The projections in the previous sections were taken from the calculation tables below. **Weekday only projections:**

| Scenario | Utilisation Rate | FY 2024/25 (inc. VAT) | FY 2025/26 (inc. VAT) | FY 2026/27 (inc. VAT) |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 a week | 25% | £62,400.00 | £62,400.00 | £62,400.00 |
| 4 a week | 33% | £83,200.00 | £83,200.00 | £83,200.00 |
| 5 a week | 42% | £104,000.00 | £104,000.00 | £104,000.00 |
| 6 a week | 50% | £124,800.00 | £124,800.00 | £124,800.00 |
| 10 a week | 100% | £312,000 | £327,600 | £343,200 |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Cabinet</p> <p>Wednesday, 29 November 2023</p> |  <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p> |
| <p>Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer</p> | <p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p> |
| <p>Nominations to Outside Bodies</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Lead Member | Mayor Lutfur Rahman |
| Originating Officer(s) | Joel West, Democratic Services Team Leader (Committees) |
| Wards affected | All Wards |
| Key Decision? | No |
| Reason for Key Decision | N/A |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | Accelerating education |

Executive Summary

It is the responsibility of the Mayor to nominate representatives to certain Outside Bodies on behalf of Tower Hamlets Council.

This report proposes one change to nominees to outside bodies for the Mayor to consider. Although all appointments are reviewed regularly, they are, unless stated elsewhere in this report, valid until such time as they are amended or renewed by a Mayoral decision.

Recommendations:

The Mayor is recommended to agree the following nominations to outside bodies:

1. To replace Councillor Abdul Wahid with Councillor Amin Rahman as the Council’s nominee to Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf Further Education Trust.
2. To replace Juned Khan, with Shenaly Miah as the Council’s nominee to Stepney Relief in Need Charity.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Having representatives on outside bodies increases the Council’s engagement with the local community and improves its potential to offer leadership and guidance in relation to activities taking place in the borough.

- 1.2 London-wide initiatives can also offer considerable benefits that promote delivery of the Council's key priorities. Conditions of some London-wide partnerships and trusts are that the Council is represented on their boards.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Mayor could decide not to make appointments to outside bodies at all. However, this is not recommended as it would reduce the Council's opportunity to be involved in and to support good work within the community and it would also reduce the Council's leadership opportunities. There are also a number of bodies where the Council is required or expected to provide a representative.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Participating in the work of outside bodies is an important part of the role of elected Members and officers, but is different in nature from other aspects such as being a member of a local authority executive or sitting on regulatory committees. In some cases it will involve actively representing and defending the authority's interests on local authority associations. In others it will involve becoming a trustee of a charity or a director of a company limited by guarantee. In this case Members and officers have a duty to act in the best interests of the organisation to which they have been appointed rather than exclusively pursue the authority's interests. There are potential tensions in carrying out this role effectively. To this end guidance will be sent to all those nominated to outside bodies.
- 3.2 A key part of this role is ensuring that information about the activities of outside bodies is communicated to the Council. Much of this may take place through day to day contact with colleagues or with officers responsible for that area of work.
- 3.3 The nominations to be made to Outside Bodies are:

Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf Further Education Trust

- 3.4 The Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf Further Education Trust exists to promote the advancement of further, higher and postgraduate education and vocational training among Tower Hamlets residents, with an emphasis on supporting vocational courses that lead to employment..
- 3.5 It is proposed to replace the current nominee, Councillor Abdul Wahid, with Councillor Amin Rahman.

Stepney Relief in Need Charity

- 3.6 Stepney Relief in Need Charity describes its aims as relieving Either Generally or Individually Persons Resident In The Area Of Benefit Who Are In

Conditions of Need, Hardship Or Distress.

- 3.7 It is proposed to replace the current nominee, Juned Khan, with Shenaly Miah. Both are laypersons (i.e. not member or officer) which is permitted under the requirements of the outside body.

Guidance to nominees

- 3.8 Cabinet is asked to note that the Council's Standards Advisory Committee recently reviewed and made suggestions for amending the Council's Guidance for Members and Officers on Outside Organisations. The Guidance is designed for members and officers. It sets out general expectations of nominees and the duties of directors/trustees as set out in law. It also sets out the various types of organisations that members may typically be appointed to. The draft Guidance will be presented to General Purposes Committee in December for approval and if approved, will be circulated to all persons nominated to outside bodies. In the meantime, the draft guidance is available on request from Democratic Services.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Nominating representatives to outside bodies increases the Council's engagement with the local community and improves its potential to offer leadership and guidance in relation to activities taking place in the Borough

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

Risk Management Implications

- 5.2 Where appropriate it is important that any training/support needs of new appointees are identified by the bodies concerned and that appropriate training and support is delivered.
- 5.3 The nomination of representatives to outside bodies enables the Council to strengthen links with the community. The nomination of representatives also contributes to the Council's leadership role in the community.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 This report requests the Mayor in Cabinet to agree nominations to outside bodies as indicated in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.7 and as such there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 The appointments in this report are the responsibility of the executive. The Mayor therefore has responsibility for these appointments under the Constitution and is legally entitled to make these appointments. This is under s.1 Localism Act 2011, the general power of competence.

7.2 Annual appointments should normally be made at the Annual General Meeting, but in-year appointments can be made by the Mayor. Although the power is expressed to be a one-off appointment, this is assumed to include the power to remove if it is felt to be necessary (*paras. 19 and 20 Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000*).

7.3 When considering appointments or the approach to be taken to appointments, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't (the public sector equality duty). It is important to be satisfied that any process followed is supportive of equal opportunity.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

None.

Appendices

None.

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

None.

Officer contact details for documents:

Joel West, Democratic Services Team Leader (Committees) 020 7364 4207