



Meeting of the

Tower Hamlets Council

Agenda

Wednesday, 24 January 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

VENUE

Council Chamber,
Whitechapel Town Hall
160 Whitechapel Road,
London E1 1BJ

Meeting Webcast

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system.
<http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. The press and public are encouraged to watch the meeting on line.

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Chief Executive's Office

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To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL** at **7.00 p.m.** on **WEDNESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2024**

Stephen Halsey
Chief Executive



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

Public Information

Viewing Council Meetings

Except where any exempt/restricted documents are being discussed, the public are welcome to view this meeting through the Council's webcast system.

Meeting Webcast and Public attendance

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system. <http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> The press and public are encouraged to watch this meeting on line

Please note: It is also possible to attend meetings in person. Places in the public gallery are allocated on a first come, first served basis from the reception at the Town Hall on the day of the meeting.

Electronic agendas reports and minutes.

Copies of agendas, reports and minutes for council meetings can also be found on our website from day of publication.

To access this, click www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee and search for the relevant committee and meeting date.

Agendas are available on the Modern.Gov, Windows, iPad and Android apps.



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smart phone
users

Public Information

The meeting is being held at the Council's Town Hall.

Full Council is made up of the Mayor and the 45 Councillors. It's responsibilities include: deciding the Council's overall policies and setting the budget for the year. It also appoints the Council's Committees at the Annual Meeting. In addition, the Council provides opportunities to discuss local issues and is a means by which the Mayor and Cabinet can be held to account in public

The agenda for this ordinary Council meetings comprises:

- Apologies for absence from Members
- Declarations of Interests.
- Minutes of the previous meeting.
- Announcements from the Speaker or the Chief Executive of the Council.
- Petitions for presentation (over 30 signatures) or for debate (over 2000 signatures). A maximum of 4 Petitions that meet the criteria may be discussed taken in the order of receipt.
- Mayor's report followed by Opposition Leader's response. Written report (if any) to be published shortly before the meeting.
- Main Motion debates (including any amendments received)
- Reports requiring Full Council approval
- Member Questions (30 minutes). Questions not put to receive a written response.
- Motions from Members received on notice (including any amendments received). Consideration of these subject to time constraints.
- Any Urgent motions from Members.

Further details on the process for considering these items is set out on the covering reports in the agenda.

How can I watch the meeting?

Except when an exempt item is under discussion, the meeting will be broadcast live for public viewing via our Webcasting portal <https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. Details of the broadcasting arrangements will be published on the agenda front sheet.

Public Attendance and Conduct at Meetings

The public may also watch the Council meeting in the public gallery. To attend please collect a ticket from reception at the town hall. We request that you show courtesy to all present and do not interrupt the meeting. The intention is not to specifically webcast members of the public, however, it is possible that you may be filmed in the background. By attending the meeting you are agreeing to this condition.

Please also switch off mobile phones or turn them on silent.

If you are scheduled to present a petition in person at the meeting, please sit in the reserved seating in the front row. You will be called to address the meeting at the appropriate time

If the fire alarm rings please follow the instructions of the Facilities Staff who will direct you to the exits.



Procedure at the meeting.

Just before the start of the meeting, the macebearer will ask everyone to be upstanding for the Speaker. The Speaker of the Council is the Chair of the meeting and is in charge of the debate. Their role is to control the meeting, including the order of speakers, and to ensure that the business is carried out properly. The Speaker will confirm the expected meeting etiquette for Council meeting, including the following:

- The Speaker will determine the order of speakers - usually from a list of speakers.
- That any online participants must mute their microphones when not speaking.
- Such participants should also switch off their cameras when not speaking.
- All Members may contribute to the discussions, but only the Members physically present in the chamber may vote on items requiring a decision.

Order of business

The Speaker may agree to change the order of business at the meeting. In addition, the Speaker may adjourn the meeting for a period of time or agree an extension to the time limit for the meeting (by up to half hour beyond the three-hour limit). To change the order of business, a Member will need to formally move a motion seeking approval for the requested change. Any such motions will be put to the vote.

Voting

The items requiring a decision will normally be determined by a show of hands or an electronic vote (by Members present in the meeting room). If there are an equal number of votes for and against an item of business, the Speaker will have a second or casting vote.

Decisions and Minutes

The decisions will be published on the website 2 days after the meeting. The draft minutes will be published around 10 working days after the meeting.

Publication of Agenda papers.

Electronic copies of the Council agenda will be published on the Council's Website on the relevant Committee pages at least five clear working days before the meeting.

To view meeting papers and to be alerted when agendas have been published visit: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee. Council documents are also available on 'Mod.Gov' iPad, Android and Windows tablet apps downloadable for free from their respective app stores.

Publication of tabled papers

Any additional documents (such as the Mayor's report, amendments to motions and urgent motions) will normally be published on the Council meeting website either shortly before or during the meeting.



London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Council

Wednesday, 24 January 2024

7.00 p.m.

PAGE NUMBER

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

9 - 10

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. MINUTES

11 - 26

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 15th November 2023.

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

27 - 30

The Council Procedure Rules provide for a maximum of four petitions to be discussed at an Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

The attached report presents the received petitions to be discussed. Should any additional petitions be received they will be listed to be noted



but not discussed.

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Council's Constitution provides for the Elected Mayor to give a report at each Ordinary Council Meeting.

A maximum of six minutes is allowed for the Elected Mayor's report, following which the Speaker of the Council will invite the leaders of the opposition groups to respond for up to two minutes each should they so wish. Following those contributions, the Mayor may reply for up to two minutes.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE 31 - 34

To debate a Motion submitted by the Administration in accordance with Rules 11 and 13 of the Council's Constitution. The debate will last for a maximum of 30 minutes.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE 35 - 38

To debate a Motion submitted by the Opposition Group in accordance with Rules 11 and 13 of the Council's Constitution. The debate will last for a maximum of 30 minutes.

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

9.1 Report of the Executive: Youth Justice Board Annual Report 39 - 90

9.2 Report of the Executive: Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes 91 - 98

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Proportionality and Allocation of Places on Committees of the Council 2023/24 99 - 104

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 105 - 110

The questions which have been received from Councillors to be put at this Council meeting are set out in the attached report. A maximum period of 30 minutes is allocated to this agenda item.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL 111 - 116



The motions submitted by Councillors for debate at this meeting are set out in the attached report.



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 Monitoring Officer, Tel: 0207 364 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 COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.04 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman (Member)	Councillor Peter Golds (Member)
Councillor Faroque Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Iqbal Hossain (Member)
Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kabir Hussain (Member)
Councillor Leelu Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Kamrul Hussain (Member)
Councillor Musthak Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain (Member)
Councillor Saied Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Asma Islam (Member)
Councillor Shafi Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Sirajul Islam (Member)
Councillor Suluk Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Ahmodul Kabir (Member)
Councillor Ohid Ahmed (Member)	Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled (Member)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar (Member)	Councillor Ahmodur Khan (Member)
Councillor Amina Ali (Member)	Councillor James King (Member)
Councillor Asma Begum (Member)	Councillor Abdul Malik (Member)
Councillor Maisha Begum (Member)	Councillor Abdul Mannan (Member)
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait (Member)	Councillor Ana Miah (Member)
Councillor Rachel Blake (Member)	Councillor Harun Miah (Member)
Councillor Mufedah Bustin (Member)	Councillor Amin Rahman (Member)
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Rebaka Sultana (Member)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Maium Talukdar (Member)
Councillor Jahed Choudhury (Member)	Councillor Bellal Uddin (Member)
Councillor Abu Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Abdal Ullah (Member)
Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury (Member)	Councillor Abdul Wahid (Member)
Councillor Marc Francis (Member)	

The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Jahed Choudhury in the Chair

The Speaker of the Council provided his update to the Council. He noted that he had attended several events, including events to mark anniversaries of organisations such as the QVSR who had celebrated 180 years of service. Other highlights included:

- Welcoming new citizens to the borough at Citizenship ceremonies.
- Attending events to celebrate Black History Month. The speaker had attended the Living Legacies exhibition celebrating the 75th anniversary

of the Windrush generation. He had also attended the Grand Union Orchestra performance.

- The Speaker had attended the opening night of a Season of Bangla Drama, which he highly recommended.
- He had visited the charities that he is supporting – St Joseph’s Hospice and Eden Care UK and said he looked forward to the annual fundraiser being held in December 2023.
- He said he had attended the civic ceremony at Westminster Abbey and the Lord Mayor show.
- He had participated in the Annual Peace Walk which was organised by the National Hate Crime awareness week. He said that in Tower Hamlets the message was clear that there was No Place for Hate.

Lastly, the Speaker spoke of the ongoing tragedy in the Middle East. He said the Borough had always welcomed people from around the world fleeing persecution or seeking opportunity, who made Tower Hamlets their home. He said the ongoing death and destruction in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel was difficult to bear. He said the Council was working with its partners to ensure all communities can live safely side by side.

The Speaker expressed his condolences to Palestinians and Israelis who had lost loved ones and urged leaders to urgently call for a ceasefire and seek a lasting peace.

The Chief Executive, Mr Stephen Halsey also expressed his thoughts relating to the on-going destruction of Gaza and the steps the Council had taken to ensure community harmony, especially as tensions were running high.

The Chamber stood for a minute’s silence in recognition of the deaths of innocent civilians.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Amy Lee
- Councillor Ayas Miah

Councillor Sabina Khan was unable to join the meeting in person but joined remotely. It was noted that she would be unable to vote as she was not formally in attendance.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillors Ahmodur Khan, Bodrul Choudhury, Abdul Wahid, Abdul Mannan, Maium Talukdar and Abdal Ullah declared a non-disclosable other interest in

item 8, the Opposition Motion for Debate on Support for the Information and Advice Sector as they had links to the voluntary sector but not within the advice sector.

Councillor Mushtak Ahmed declared that as the Council's appointed representative on the East End Citizens Advice Bureau he had a non-disclosable other interest in relation to the advice sector but not in relation to the body referenced in the motion.

All Members remained in the chamber for the debate on the motion.

3. MINUTES

The Council **RESOVLED** to:

1. Agreed that the minutes of the extraordinary and ordinary Council meeting of 27th September 2023 be approved as a correct record of the proceedings and the Speaker was authorised to sign them accordingly.

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive, Stephen Halsey provided his regular update to the Council meeting, highlighting the following issues:

- He informed Council that the Annual Governance Statements were now available publicly for all four years up to and including 2022-23. He said this was important especially in the absence of the signed off accounts which were in the process of being reviewed and signed off by the Audit Committee.
- Mr Halsey provided an update on the Corporate Peer Review and said they were working with the LGA Peer Review Team, who would be publishing their report and action plan in December 2023.
- He provided an update regarding the Corporate Leadership Team and new appointments to it. He welcomed Mr Paul Patterson as the Corporate Director for Housing and Regeneration and wished Mr James Thomas, Corporate Director for Children Services the best in his new role at Birmingham's Children Trust.
- Finally, Mr Halsey reported the Covid rates were stable. He encouraged everyone to benefit from the current Covid-19 and flu vaccination programme which was launched in September 2023.

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

5.1 Petition requesting Public Space Protection Order to ban nuisance vehicles

Mr Andrew Wood presented his petition regarding Public Space Protection Order to ban nuisance vehicles. He asked the Council to introduce a Public

Space Protection Order (PSPO) to allow the Police and Council to deal with nuisance vehicles more effectively. He explained how noise disturbed residents with vehicles revving engines, performing tunnel runs and being a danger to residents. He said a PSPO could help control anti-social behaviour and should be applied across the borough of Tower Hamlets.

Members asked questions of the petitioner before Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities responded to matters raised in the petition. He said the Council and the Police were working closely together bringing different resources and enforcement powers to deal with issues. However, it was correct to state that the Council does have no specific power currently to deal with vehicles causing nuisance.

RESOLVED

1. That the petition be referred to the Interim Corporate Director for Communities for a written response within 28 days.

5.2 Petition requesting Refund for missed waste collections

Mr Micheal Bundy and Ms Lyn Misselbrook presented their petition requesting a refund of Council Tax for the missed rubbish and recycling collections during the summer. Mr Bundy said the missed collections resulted in rubbish being piled up, causing a health hazard and therefore council taxpayers ought to be compensated from the public purse.

Members asked questions of the petitioner before Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency responded to matters raised in the petition. He said the Council's Waste Operations were insourced in March 2020 from Veolia. No compensation payments had been paid to the Council for the one-week loss in service during the national strike action. He said the main factor for the strike was a national dispute on pay that affected Tower Hamlets unionised employees.

RESOLVED

1. That the petition be referred to the Interim Corporate Director for Communities for a written response within 28 days.

5.3 Petition regarding Tower Hamlets Housing Allocation system for single people

Mr Terry McGrenera presented his petition concerning housing allocation for single people. He said he had brought the petition following the fatal fire in Shadwell. He stated that the housing allocation system needed to be applied more fairly to those requiring social housing who were single and that the focus should not be just on families.

Members asked questions of the petitioner before Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding responded to matters raised in the petition. He said all residents who have lived in the borough for three years and who had recourse to public funds were able to register on the Council's Housing Register. He said there were currently over 24,000 applicants on the register, of which 10,444 require 1 bedroom accommodation. Last year the council allocated 476 1-bedroom homes to those on the register. Councillor Kabir stated that whilst single people were able to register and some would receive housing, there was a mismatch of supply and demand and unfortunately the council was unable to help all those requiring housing, however the Council endeavours to provide advice on other housing solutions that might be available.

RESOLVED

1. That the petition be referred to the Interim Corporate Director for Housing and Regeneration for a written response within 28 days.

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Lutfur Rahman presented his report to the Council.

The Opposition Group Leader, Councillor Sirajul Islam then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

Mayor Rahman provided concluding remarks.

7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE

LOCAL PLAN

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda on the Local Plan that had been moved by Councillor Kabir Ahmed and seconded by Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury.

Meeting Adjournment

During the debate on the Administration Motion the Speaker of the Council moved to adjourn the meeting for half an hour under Procedure Rule 14.2 (4) to allow for a discussion on how to best proceed with the business following challenges from Members. At the conclusion of the adjournment the Speaker agreed under Procedure Rule 14.1 (d) that the debate move straight to the right to reply and vote.

Following debate, the motion moved by Councillor Kabir Ahmed was put to the vote and was **agreed**.

RESOLVED**This Council notes:**

- That overcrowding in the borough had been left unchecked from the years 2015 to 2022, with over 14,000 residents now classified as living in acutely overcrowded conditions.
- That the development of new, affordable homes for rent has not kept pace with the rapid population growth and concomitant rise in said overcrowding, with some years during the period 2015-2022 seeing as little as 140 homes completed in a single year.
- That the development of affordable housing has always played a central role of critical importance to Mayor Lutfur Rahman and his team, who delivered thousands of affordable, social homes for rent during his previous administrations.
- That this commitment has continued into this current administration's first term, with at least 4,000 affordable homes for rent pledged to be delivered, and over 1,000 already built or in the pipeline.
- That the Council's current Local Plan is due for a refresh, with the first version of this refreshed Plan – regulation 18 – passing through Cabinet on 25th October 2023.

This Council believes:

- That the delivery of affordable rented homes has slowed over the past seven years.
- That restrictive policies have prevented a greater number of affordable homes from being built, due to a limitation on height, density and the percentage of affordable units that must be delivered per development, alongside the tenure mix between affordable rented homes and intermediate properties.
- That the previous local plan was not ambitious enough to meet the growing demand for affordable and sustainable housing in Tower Hamlets.
- That the current proposed refresh will revolutionise and expedite the way that affordable housing is delivered in the years to come, tackling the overcrowding crisis at a much greater pace and providing decent, affordable homes to the residents of Tower Hamlets.
- That this is demonstrated in the proposed commitment to raising the affordable housing criteria expected of developers from the existing 35% threshold to a more ambitious 40%; a redressing of the 70:30

affordable/ intermediate split of this 40% to a revised 85:15 ratio – guaranteeing more *genuinely* affordable homes for residents; and through the prioritisation of the development of 3 and 4 bedroom properties to accommodate the growing family-sized population of the borough.

- That this refreshed Local Plan will see height and density prioritised to help maximise the delivery of affordable housing, with the whole borough becoming a Tall Building Zone (TBZ) where this does not impact on cultural or heritage conservation areas. This will include a pushing of the maximum building height threshold to 23 storeys.
- That this refreshed Local Plan will be a catalyst for further social and economic development for all residents, as well as protecting and enhancing the borough's local environment and green spaces.
- That this refreshed Local Plan will respect, enhance and incorporate heritage and conservation areas into all new developments.
- That this refreshed Local Plan should be made accessible to all residents in the borough – regardless of language, race or background – to ensure that a fair and holistic engagement process is ensured, and all resident voices are heard.

This Council resolves:

- To support and promote engagement with the Regulation 18 version of the refreshed local plan for all residents.
- To work with the BME media to help promote this engagement.
- To commend the Lead Member and Officers for their hard work in capturing the ambition of this administration regarding housebuilding within the document.
- To request regular updates on the journey of the refreshed Local Plan through the relevant stages of its progression.

8. OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE

MORE SUPPORT FOR THE INFORMATION AND ADVISE SECTOR

Council considered a motion as printed in the agenda on more support for the Information and Advice Sector that had been moved by Councillor Mufedah Bustin and seconded by Councillor Sabina Akhtar.

Council also considered the amendment proposed by Councillor Saied Ahmed and seconded by Councillor Kabir Ahmed as set out in the supplementary agenda.

Additions – Bold

Deletions – ~~Struck through~~

This council notes:

1. **That the administration is committed to helping our vulnerable and disadvantaged residents, especially those affected by the current cost of living crisis.**
2. The voluntary sector in Tower Hamlets provides critical support to our residents, particularly in times of crisis.
3. The council's support of the information and advice sector is unique: many council's have reduced grants for this vital service.
4. Despite government funding reducing by over £200M in 10 years, the previous administration continued to invest in the information and advice sector, providing £900,000pa per year to the advice consortium from 2018-2023.
5. **The current funding strategy has ensured a good spread of resources, better access to services for all that need them and value for money.**
6. The 2021 LBTH Poverty Review identified the impact of multiple factors effecting residents' livelihoods, including the pandemic, a reduced welfare state and Brexit.
7. The Cost of Living crisis, high inflation and increasing interest rates, as well as the increasing cost of rents, is having a detrimental impact on the livelihoods of Tower Hamlets residents.
8. The Poverty Review also identified the important of local intervention in creating a safety net, in particular:
"To make the biggest practical difference to residents, we recommend that the council works in partnership with other organisations and the community to achieve a step change....." through "early financial intervention - taking a whole systems approach to increasing incomes, reducing costs, and averting financial crisis and homelessness"
9. ~~That the 2023 Mayor's Community Fund has not increased the budgetary allocation for information and advice. Inflation means this is in effect a budgetary reduction, meaning reduced support for our residents.~~
10. **Despite budgetary challenges, administration has prioritised support for local information and advice services.**
11. **That the administration should be commended for maintaining current levels of funding to support the sector and service users.**

This council further believes:

12. That the information and advice sector is experiencing an increased demand on its services as more and more people are seeking support and advice on a range of matters.
13. That this demand will increase significantly once the rollout of Universal Credit is fully implemented in the next 12 months.
14. That cross-organisation initiatives such as Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network (THCAN) provides efficiencies of scale, training and up to date welfare information, as well as resource sharing across the sector.
15. THCAN also maintains the digital referral system which allows organisations and individuals to refer cases to advisors which reduces waiting times and ensure urgent issues can be dealt with, preventing residents from experiencing crises and destitution.
- ~~16. This is not the time to be reducing support to the information and advice sector, and the council should, instead be increasing support.~~
- 17. That resources have been protected by this administration to deliver critical information and advice provision across the borough.**

This council resolves:

- ~~18. To call on Mayor Lutfur Rahman and the Lead Member to review the allocation of funding to the information and advice sector and THCAN with a view to increasing it and ensuring ongoing support.~~
- 19. To work with the Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Lead Member to explore support arrangements for THCAN and the wider sector in future.**

Following debate the amendment moved by Councillor Saied Ahmed and the substantive motion as amended were put to the vote and were **agreed**.

RESOLVED

This council notes:

1. That the administration is committed to helping our vulnerable and disadvantaged residents, especially those affected by the current cost of living crisis.
2. The voluntary sector in Tower Hamlets provides critical support to our residents, particularly in times of crisis.
3. The council's support of the information and advice sector is unique: many council's have reduced grants for this vital service.

4. Despite government funding reducing by over £200M in 10 years, the previous administration continued to invest in the information and advice sector, providing £900,000pa per year to the advice consortium from 2018-2023.
5. The current funding strategy has ensured a good spread of resources, better access to services for all that need them and value for money.
6. The 2021 LBTH Poverty Review identified the impact of multiple factors effecting residents' livelihoods, including the pandemic, a reduced welfare state and Brexit.
7. The Cost-of-Living crisis, high inflation and increasing interest rates, as well as the increasing cost of rents, is having a detrimental impact on the livelihoods of Tower Hamlets residents.
8. The Poverty Review also identified the important of local intervention in creating a safety net, in particular:
9. "To make the biggest practical difference to residents, we recommend that the council works in partnership with other organisations and the community to achieve a step change....." through "early financial intervention - taking a whole systems approach to increasing incomes, reducing costs, and averting financial crisis and homelessness"
10. Despite budgetary challenges, administration has prioritised support for local information and advice services.
11. That the administration should be commended for maintaining current levels of funding to support the sector and service users.

This council further believes:

12. That the information and advice sector is experiencing an increased demand on its services as more and more people are seeking support and advice on a range of matters.
13. That this demand will increase significantly once the rollout of Universal Credit is fully implemented in the next 12 months.
14. That cross-organisation initiatives such as Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network (THCAN) provides efficiencies of scale, training and up to date welfare information, as well as resource sharing across the sector.
15. THCAN also maintains the digital referral system which allows organisations and individuals to refer cases to advisors which reduces waiting times and ensure urgent issues can be dealt with, preventing residents from experiencing crises and destitution.
16. That resources have been protected by this administration to deliver critical information and advice provision across the borough.

This council resolves:

17. To work with the Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Lead Member to explore support arrangements for THCAN and the wider sector in future.

9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

9.1 Report of the Standards Advisory Committee: Adoption of the Updated Member / Officer Relations Protocol

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning presented the report of the Standards Advisory Committee concerning the adoption of the updated member/officer relations protocol. Members of the Council commented on the report.

RESOLVED

Council **AGREED** to:

1. To adopt the revised Member/Officer Relations Protocol;
2. Agree that the updated Protocol be added to the Council's Constitution.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Nil Items.

11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The following questions and in each case supplementary questions were put (except where indicated) and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member.

11.1 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed

Could the lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for years under the previous administration.

Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

The 2018/19 and 2019/20 accounts are expected to be signed off at the end of November.

Following widespread speculation of the shape and form of a central government initiative to ensure that the backlog of previous years' accounts is addressed, the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts will all be published

early in the new year (re-presented in the case of the 2020/21 accounts). The hope and expectation is that the accounts will be able to go through the required statutory processes, although the precise shape and form of the audit is as yet unknown – there is speculation that government will issue special guidance for auditors.

Supplementary question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed.

How can we ensure delays to the accounts do not happen again?

Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

It's important to note that the 2016/17 and 2017/18 accounts have been certified and now with the appointment of a permanent Section 151 Officer, the council is working towards completing the accounts for the outstanding years. Officers have been applying the improvement and have vastly improved the processes involved. The Council is awaiting the guidance from Central government regarding how the delayed accounts should be dealt with.

11.2 Question from Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury.

A significant number of residents in Mile End, as well as throughout Tower Hamlets, are facing challenges when it comes to electric car charging. The availability of both slow and fast chargers is currently insufficient, leading to car owners driving around for extended periods in search of a charging station, which results in time-consuming charging processes. This situation is adversely impacting people's employment and daily routines. Could you please provide information about the council's strategy and plans for the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the area?

Response from Councillor Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency

The Council has published an EV strategy, which can be found at the following link <https://talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/evchargers>. The following sets out the numbers to be installed up to 2030

Year	2023/24 Delivery target	2024/25 Delivery target	2025/26 Delivery target	Total Target for 2026	Total Target for 2030
Slow	350	650	800	1800	5000
Fast	50	60	90	200	500
Rapid	10	10	15	35	100
Total	410	720	905	2035	5600

11.3 Question from Councillor Amin Rahman.

Can the lead member provide an update on the outcome of the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place between 18th and 22nd September of this year?

Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

The LGA Corporate Peer Review Process is a robust and rigorous assurance and improvement tool managed and delivered by the sector, for the sector. It is designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. The Review Process covers:

1. Local priorities and outcomes
2. Organisational and place leadership
3. Governance and culture
4. Financial planning and management
5. Capacity for improvement

As the last LGA Corporate Peer Review had been completed 5 years ago and it is good practice to ensure a full review is undertaken every five years, The LGA were invited back to undertake a corporate peer review of the Council by the Mayor and the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive asked that the peer review, when covering the above five areas, undertake a deeper review of leadership of place, finance and governance.

Supplementary question from Councillor Amin Rahman.

When is the LGA Peer Review going to be published?

Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

A formal report is scheduled to be published by the LGA in December.

A draft action plan will be prepared to draw together the actions necessary to address the recommendations emerging from the Peer Review. Following Council / Mayoral approval it is planned to be published alongside the LGA Peer Review Report in December.

11.4 Question from Councillor Marc Francis.

How many homeless families are still currently housed in B&Bs beyond the six-week limit?

Response from Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding

As of November 2023, we have 229 families in Bed and Breakfast. We have inherited a perfect storm. With increased mortgage and interest rates and lack of social housing, the numbers of families seeking suitable accommodation including temporary accommodation has increased. We are waiting for the government to legislate against this. It's not just Tower Hamlets who is struggling with this but Councils across the country.

Supplementary question from Councillor Marc Francis.

Can the lead member state why Tower Hamlets is such an outlier of the 6-weeks limit?

Response from Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding

Tower Hamlets is taking steps to address this and is supporting residents. We have accommodated families in specific Bed and Breakfast hotels rather than corporate hotels and have set up modular homes for the homeless. We have our new local plan and hope to increase the amount of social housing available to us.

11.5 Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain.

Could the lead member explain how he intends to generate much needed income from events in Victoria Park? Can he tell us how many events are being considered over the year, their capacities and how much does he expect to raise? I understand this money will go towards balancing the council budget as well as maintaining the park.

Response of Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

Victoria Park is a key asset of the Council. It is a green flag rated park and has millions of visitors each year. It's a significant cultural hub and as such we are looking to generate income from holding social events. The "All points East" events generated £3m for the council and this is key income that can be used to support residents. The commercial events policy has been revised and the threshold has been increased from 5,000 to 20,000 in line with other London Boroughs.

Questions 11.6 to 11.28 were not put due to lack of time. The written responses are attached at **Appendix A**.

12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL


Motions 12.1 was not considered due to lack of time.

The meeting ended at 10.30 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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Agenda Item 5

Non-Executive Report of the: Council 24 th January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Petitions to Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. This report sets out details of the valid petitions submitted for presentation and debate at this Council meeting. The text of the petitions received are set out in the attached report.
2. The Council's Constitution provides for up to four petitions to be heard at each ordinary Council meeting. These are taken in order of receipt, except that petitions for debate (those in excess of 2,000 signatures) will take precedence. Should more than four petitions be received, all remaining petitions will be listed to be formally noted by Council.
 - a. There are two petition to be heard:
 - Save THCAN
 - Restricting events in Victoria Park
 - b. There are no petitions to be debated or noted.

PETITIONS TO BE HEARD

3. For Petitions listed as to be heard:
 - a. Petitioners may address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
 - b. Members may then question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
 - c. Finally, the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the petition for up to 2 minutes. The petition will then be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will provide a written response within 28 days of the date of the meeting.
4. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.
5. Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.

5.1 Petition requesting Save THCAN

Statement

We the undersigned petition the council to fund THCAN

I am signing this petition to ask the council to fund THCAN to avoid the closure of THCAN work This project has been instrumental in supporting advice services in Tower Hamlets for many years. Without funding all of THCAN work will stop after the 31st OCTOBER 2023.

We agree with Island Advice Centre that the Local Authority should fund THCAN valuable work.

Signatures: 181x electronic and 69x paper copies

5.2 Petition on restricting events in Victoria Park

Statement

We, the undersigned residents, call on Mayor Rahman to reverse his decision to increase events in Victoria Park and consult with residents and partners on his plans:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman is planning to change the policy for major events in Victoria Park, which would allow him to close the park for two extra events per year and increase the number of people who can attend each event from 5,000 to 20,000.


This is a terrible idea that would ruin our park, our neighbourhood, and our environment. It would mean more noise, more traffic, more waste, and more pollution in our area. It would also mean less access and less enjoyment of the park for us, especially for our families and children who need the park during the summer holidays.

Mayor Rahman is doing this because he wants to make more money from the park, without caring about the impact on us and the environment. He has not consulted us, he has not given us any evidence or analysis, and he has not considered any alternatives. He is trying to push through a change at the expense of the people of Tower Hamlets.

We cannot let this happen. We need to stand up for our park, our rights and our voice. We are campaigning to keep the number of large events as it is with all the mitigating measures for residents in place.

Signatures: 160 electronic

Agenda Item 7

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 24 th January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motion for debate submitted by the Administration	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one specific Motion submitted by the Administration. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. The Administration Motion is submitted by the Aspire Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

ADMINISTRATION MOTION FOR DEBATE – MOTION ON COUNCIL’S PTS AND CFZ

Proposed by: Cllr Kabir Hussain

Seconded by: Cllr Kabir Ahmed

This council notes:

- The high levels of overcrowding in the borough, with over 23,000 residents currently on the housing waiting list, and 14,000 in acute overcrowding.
- The detrimental impact that such levels of overcrowding have on residents, affecting health; educational attainment; employment opportunities; and quality of life.
- That some residents rely on their cars and vehicles for business and familial duties of care.
- That despite this, Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest car ownership rates in the country, and the third lowest in London.
- That many residents refuse the chance to move to larger properties that could relieve some of these pressures associated with overcrowding, due to these properties’ lack of a parking space.
- That this has contributed to the growing list of residents waiting for suitably-sized homes.

This council believes:

- That the existing Permit Transfer Scheme (PTS) was unsuitable and incompatible with the needs of residents in Tower Hamlets.
- That the criteria to qualify for the Permit Transfer Scheme was too restrictive, and dissuaded residents from moving into new properties due to their fear of losing their car parking space.
- That a newer, bespoke approach to the scheme was required, and that this has been captured in the new PTS strategy adopted on 30th November.
- That the following principles will contribute to a reduction in overcrowding in Tower Hamlets:
 - Families will now qualify if they live in overcrowded properties and are moving into larger properties with two or more bedrooms, instead of three or more bedrooms.
 - A resident is no longer required to have held an on-street resident parking permit for 12 months prior to moving into a car-free property.
 - A resident no longer loses their right to a permit if it is cancelled or expires.
 - If one member of the household cancels their permit, then another member can apply for a new one.
 - An individual or family can now downsize and keep one resident permit under the PTS.


- That the related Car Free Zone (CFZ) scheme also unfairly punishes those residents who rely on their vehicles for work.
- That the proposed changes to the CFZ scheme being explored by the Mayor will complement the changes enacted by the review of the PTS scheme, where the new CFZ scheme would:
 - Apply to all residents living in car-free properties.
 - Allow for a maximum of three permits per household.
- That this new approach to the CFZ scheme – that would apply to residents who live in a car-free development who are not currently eligible to apply for an on-street parking permit, and their own vehicle is crucial to their livelihood and their ability to work, such as licensed mini cabbage (including Uber) – will halt the penalisation of those who rely on their vehicles to work, many of whom do so as second or third jobs.
- That this new approach to the CFZ scheme will contribute to the reduction of those numbers of residents currently on the housing waiting list and towards reducing overcrowding in the borough.
- That as well as implementing these new schemes to all future developments, the new provisions should be – where possible – applied retrospectively to existing developments, to ensure that opportunities to support the reduction of overcrowding in the borough, as well as those residents who rely on their vehicles for work, can be maximised.

This council resolves:

- To support and promote this new PTS scheme, with a view to encouraging a shortening of the housing waiting list.
- To thank the Lead Member and officers for their work on the revised PTS scheme.
- To support the Lead Member and officers in the continued revision of the CFZ scheme.

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Agenda Item 8

Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 24 th January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motion for debate submitted by an Opposition Group	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Council Procedure Rule 11 allows for time at each Ordinary Council meeting for the discussion of one Motion submitted by an Opposition Group. The debate will follow the rules of debate at Council Procedure Rule 13 and will last no more than 30 minutes.
2. The motion submitted is listed overleaf. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, submission of the Opposition Motion for Debate will alternate in sequence between the opposition groups. This Opposition Motion is submitted by the Labour Group.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council or its partners has a direct responsibility. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. Notice of any proposed amendments to the Motions must be given to the Monitoring Officer by Noon the day before the meeting.

MOTION

Set out overleaf is the motion that has been submitted.

OPPOSITION MOTION FOR DEBATE – LGA Peer Review

Proposed by: Cllr Marc Francis

Seconded by: Cllr Amina Ali

This council notes:

- An LGA Peer Review is designed to provide a critical-friend external support, rather than an independent audit or inspection of the quality and performance of local authority services.
- However, this did not inhibit the LGA peer group from providing some stark wording in the narrative of the report itself and offer serious recommendations to address concerning issues regarding the political and executive management of the council.
- That the LGA Peer Review found “there are ‘two councils’ in operation at Tower Hamlets which is impacting on the speed and effectiveness of decision making.”
- The LGA found “there is a lack of trust between the Mayor’s Office and senior officers, with examples of inappropriate questioning and pressure to feed things into the Mayor’s Office for ‘sign off””.
- That this had led to: “unnecessary delays, with an example of one service area waiting for four months to receive a decision on something which would have previously been a delegated decision to officers.”
- The report states “Some of the functions of the Mayor’s Office are duplicating existing structures within the council, and as a result is causing confusion regarding internal governance processes. The size of the Mayor’s Office is an outlier when compared to other mayoral authorities and this is largely because there are many officers there who would ordinarily be located elsewhere in the council.”
- Under the previous administration the 2021 LGA Peer review found that: “There is a strong and cohesive Senior Leadership Team well led by the Chief Executive, with all elements of the leadership team describing good member-officer relationships upon which decision-making is based.”
- The 2023 LGA peer review makes clear that there has been a very considerable churn in senior management since May 2022, which is potentially destabilising to the authority and unhelpful in securing improvements to performance.
- To note further departures of senior staff and the failure to find appointable candidates to the roles of Corporate Director of Children’s Services and Housing & Regeneration.
- In response to the LGA Peer Review, Labour councillors offered to work with the Mayor and Corporate Leadership Team to help devise solutions to address these concerns, but that this offer was simply ignored and so Opposition councillors have had no input into what a corporate response should be.


- The peer review was critical of how scrutiny is conducted and found “the chair of the scrutiny committee and all sub committees are currently from the ruling party (Aspire) which does not reflect best practice. This also means that all the Chairs are male.”
- Similarly, it draws attention to the absence of women in both the Cabinet itself and the political decision-making process as being ‘concerning’.
- The Action Plan put forward in November simply ignores the recommendation that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee should be Chaired by an Opposition councillor.
- Aspire councillors blocked the appointment of the Labour Group’s nominee to the Lead Scrutiny Member for Resources portfolio, preferring to leave this position vacant to avoid a Labour councillor having the power to lead the scrutiny of Tower Hamlets Council’s finances.
- That under this administration relationships with third sector/voluntary partners “have weakened” due to the introduction of the mayor’s community grant and that they “felt that they have not been properly involved in the co-design of the programme and as a result their confidence is low”.
- Under the previous administration, the 2021 LGA Peer Review stated that: “Those in the Council reflect that partnership working came to the fore during the pandemic and continues to go from strength to strength for the benefit of residents and businesses and it was made clear to the peer team that partners are strongly committed to the ambitions of the Place”.

This Council believes:

- The Action Plan’s proposal of a Tower Hamlets Women Commission is a completely inadequate response to the lack of female voices and those of people with different backgrounds to Aspire’s Cabinet members in decision-making.
- The Action Plan does not adequately address the LGA’s recommendation that in the case of both grants and property disposals there should be involvement and oversight from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with there also being an ability to ‘call in’ decisions.
- The process proposed for “reviewing” the Mayor’s Office will not do anything to end either the perception or the reality of a “council within a council” culture identified by many staff and the LGA Peer Review Team.
- In the absence of meaningful cross-party engagement or even discussions by the Corporate Leadership Team with Opposition councillors, residents can have no confidence in the draft Action Plan.

This council resolves:

- To withdraw the draft Action Plan and instruct the Corporate Leadership Team to engage with Opposition councillors about what would be a realistic and useful set of changes to meet the criticism of Tower Hamlets Council's governance and to bring back a new Action Plan to Full Council within three months.

Decision Report Cover Sheet: Council 24 January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: (Cover report of Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services) Main Report of Lisa Fraser, Acting Corporate Director, Children's Services	Classification: Unrestricted
Cover report of: Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-25	

Wards affected	All Wards
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


- 1.1 At its meeting on 29 November 2023, the Cabinet considered this report on the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-25.
- 1.2 As this forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework it now requires approval by Council.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

- 1. To agree the Youth Justice Plan set out in Appendix 1 to the Youth Justice Board report attached to this cover sheet.

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Cabinet 29 November 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Lisa Fraser, Acting Corporate Director of Children's Service	Classification: Unrestricted
Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2025	

Lead Member	Councillor Maium Talukdar, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
Originating Officer(s)	Kelly Duggan, Head of Service of Youth Justice and Young Peoples Service
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Reason for Key Decision	Significant impact on wards
Forward Plan Notice Published	19/07/2023
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Strategic Plan 2022-26 Priority 3. Accelerate Education Priority 6. Empower Communities and Fight Crime

Special Circumstances Justifying Urgent Consideration (Reason for Urgency)

Following further comments made on the YJS Strategy, it has been agreed that these do not need to be incorporated into this year's YJS Strategy. The YJS Strategy has already been approved by the YJS Executive Governance Board and all comments will be taken into consideration in the review of the Strategy in May 2024.

This report cannot wait for a future Cabinet date as there is an urgency to have the YJS Strategy published on the Council's website as per our Grant agreement with the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice.

Executive 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 Executive Board and operational frontline service delivery.

This report highlights the significant progress made since the HMIP inspection in May 2022. It also sets out our plan that supports the Youth Justice Partnership in delivering a consistently high-quality service for our children and their families, providing clear strategic goals and an ambitious plan for where we will be by 2025 and beyond.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the Youth Justice Annual Plan

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 It's a statutory process to support the grant funding for frontline service delivery.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 N/A

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2025 builds on the outcomes of our improvement plan following the HMIP Inspection in April 2022 and an external diagnostic review which took place in March 2023.

- 3.2 Our key achievements in 2022-2023 are:

- A redesigned and embedded governance model, ensuring that our committed partners take full ownership of their responsibilities to our children.
- A better understanding of the experiences of our children, supported by a new robust quality assurance framework and the creation of our Youth Participation Forum.
- Regular and reliable data reported on by our dedicated Senior Data Analyst that supports decision making.
- A continuation of the commitment made to our staff, recognising that they are our most valued resource, supported by staff away days to develop our Staff Charter and Vision.

- 3.3 In 2023-2025, our plan is focused on the following four cross-cutting themes:

- **Priority 1: Child First:** Embedding a Child First approach in every aspect of the Youth Justice Partnership.
- **Priority 2: Consistently Good Practice:** Continuous raising of practice standards which achieves improved outcomes for children.
- **Priority 3: YJS Health Offer:** Coordinated access and intervention to universal and specialist health provision to meet children's holistic health and wellbeing needs.
- **Priority 4: Post 16 Education Offer:** Increasing children's participation in post 16 education, training and employment which support children's aspirations, desistance and safety.

- 3.4 This plan sets out the approach on how the service and partnership will achieve meeting our 4 priority areas of focus to provide good outcomes for children.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Youth Justice Service disproportionality action plan sets out the activities to address inequalities within the Youth Justice setting.

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 No other statutory implications have been identified.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Details of budget and spend are included in the report Appendix, there are no other direct financial implications of this report.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires every local authority to formulate and implement a Youth Justice Plan every year, and to submit the Plan to the Youth Justice Board annually.

- 7.2 Non-statutory guidance dated 17 March 2023 sets out the required contents of the Plan.

- 7.3 This report and its appendix demonstrate the Council's compliance with the above requirements.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2025

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

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A



**YOUTH
JUSTICE
SERVICE**

Tower Hamlets and the
City of London

Tower Hamlets and City of London Youth Justice Service

Strategic Plan

2023-2025

Head of Youth Justice: Kelly Duggan

Chair of Youth Justice Executive Board: James Thomas



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1. Introduction

Foreword by Executive Mayor, Lutfur Rahman



Welcome to the 2023-2025 Tower Hamlets and the City of London Youth Justice Strategic Plan which is designed to ensure that every child grows up in a safe environment, that we provide the right support at the right time, and that every child is able to improve their outcomes and life chances.

The vision for Tower Hamlets is one that supports all children. throughout their formal and informal education, ensuring that their safety and wellbeing is at the forefront of our decision-making at all times. The Tower Hamlets and City of London Youth Justice Plan for 2023-2025 is set within a wider context of greater resources being provided to support our children and young people. Free school meals for all primary and secondary school children (making Tower Hamlets the first local authority in England to provide this), a substantial £13.7 million investment into our youth services, and the return of the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance and Mayor's University Bursary will shore-up the success of the Youth Justice programme by benefitting all children, including those who have, for whatever reason, made the wrong choices.

We are committed to truly treating children within our service as children, embracing Child First principles to ensure that children can make amends for the mistakes that they have made, gain new skills and experiences, and work with them and their families and support networks to encourage desistance. We value the voice and opinions of the children that we work with, and I would like to take this opportunity to launch our new logo, which was chosen by our current cohort of children. For those young people who participated – thank you for your honest opinions and thoughts in the development of this branding.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Youth Justice frontline staff whose commitment to improvement and willingness to embrace change to ensure that the children we work with receive the best service has been remarkable.

As Executive Mayor, I am pleased to present our Youth Justice Plan for 2023-2025.

Foreword by James Thomas, Corporate Director for Children and Culture

Our service is built upon strong partnership foundations and our most valuable resource lies in our staff who bring their passion and commitment to working with children in the Youth Justice System.

Following the HMIP inspection in May 2022, I have taken on the role as Chair of the Youth Justice Management Board and led the commitment from the Council and partners to address the weaknesses identified in that inspection. I am pleased that the Peer Review carried out in March 2023 has demonstrated significant progress and improvement and honed our focus now upon the consistent quality of core casework practice and management oversight.

Following on from a fast paced 12 months of improvement, we are confident that we are now able to develop a plan that supports the Youth Justice Partnership in delivering a consistently high-quality service for our children and their families, providing clear strategic goals and an ambitious plan for where we will be by 2025 and beyond.

Our key achievements in 2022-2023 are:

- A redesigned and embedded governance model, ensuring that our committed partners take full ownership of their responsibilities to our children;
- A better understanding of the experiences of our children, supported by a new robust quality assurance framework and the creation of our Youth Participation Forum;
- Regular and reliable data reported on by our dedicated Senior Data Analyst that supports decision making;
- A continuation of the commitment made to our staff, recognising that they are our most valued resource, supported by staff away days to develop our Staff Charter and Vision (see section 3).

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) and the wider partnership has worked hard this year following on from the inspection to refocus and strengthen our goals and ambitions for our continuous improvement. We have developed a new vision, in conjunction with the Partnership and YJS to start the next part of our journey and this report reflects the successes of the improvement plan and our plans for sustaining, and building upon, this improvement.

On behalf of the Youth Justice Executive Partnership Board, I am pleased to present our Youth Justice Plan for 2023-2025.

2. Vision

'My Worker is great; she helps me with anything I need done'.

Anonymous response from Child in YJ Strategy Survey

- 2.1. Throughout the spring of 2023, consultation with the Youth Justice and Young Peoples Service and Youth Justice Executive Board members took place to develop a new overarching vision for the service:

Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives

The Youth Justice Service is dedicated to empowering children, promoting positive change and creating a safer community.

- 2.2. We believe that every child has the right to live and grow up in a safe environment. We are committed to providing safe spaces and opportunities and making sure that the child always comes first. We seek positive experiences by creating opportunities to work together, to provide the right service at the right time, so all the children have equal access to support that will improve their life outcomes.
- 2.3. This vision reaffirms our commitment to Child First principles and practice as well as providing the Partnership with an overarching vision.

3. Local Context

- 3.1. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is commissioned to provide Youth Justice Services for children in the City of London.
- 3.2. Tower Hamlets is one of the UK's most culturally vibrant and diverse communities. However, deprivation and poverty are significantly present in the borough, providing a stark contrast to the wealth and prosperity that has grown around Canary Wharf and the City fringes that also lie within the borough. This will be exacerbated further with the rising cost of living nationally.
- 3.3. The population in Tower Hamlets is estimated at 325,000 with around 80,000 aged 0-19 years old and our population is the fifth youngest nationally with a median age of 31.9 years. 4 in 10 residents were born outside of the UK, 1 in 3 are Bangladeshi and 1 in 10 residents were born in the EU.
- 3.4. Tower Hamlets economy is the 3rd highest of that in the UK with 110,000 jobs expected to be created by 2026, a rate of 30 new jobs a day. However, the borough has the highest child poverty rate in England at 32% with 12% of residents earning below the London Living Wage as well as 20,073 families on the housing waiting list which is the 3rd highest in London.



- 3.5. Despite this context, we are extremely proud that 96% of our schools are rated either 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by OFSTED. There are 163 different languages spoken within our schools and pupils with SEN Support equate to 12.7% of the total population and 6% for those who are on an EHCP.
- 3.6. Within the local authority, we are committed to supporting families, having maintained 12 Children and Families Centres in the borough and an exciting programme of youth service development taking place over the next 12 months with an increased budget of £13 million for this service. The Youth Justice Service is integrated with the Young Peoples Service under a Head of Service which sits within the wider Supporting Families Directorate.
- 3.7. The City of London, also known as the Square Mile, is the financial centre of the UK. It has 8,600 residents, half a million daily commuters and 10million visitors a year. It sits at the heart of London and is surrounded by 7 local authorities including Tower Hamlets. The number of residents in the City of London has increased by 16% since 2011. The majority are working age but there are 765 children and young people.
- 3.8. Asian people are the largest minority ethnic group in the City of London accounting for 16.8% of the population; and 3% of the City of London population are Black according to the 2021 census. Portsoken, in the east of the City of London is the most ethnically diverse ward. This ward also has a higher percentage of children and young people.
- 3.9. Compared with the England average, overall, the City of London has significantly lower levels of income deprivation, child poverty and older people in deprivation. However, according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019, the City of London's most deprived ward, Portsoken, on the east side of the City of London, was among the top 20% in the country for levels of income deprivation, including income deprivation affecting older people. The Mansell Street & Petticoat Lane area is the most deprived in the City of London falling into the 40% most deprived in England.
- 3.10. There is one maintained school in the City of London – the Aldgate Primary School, which is on the east side of the City and there is also a family centre based at the school. There are no maintained secondary schools in the City of London. City children and young people go to around 80 different schools in other boroughs.
- 3.11. Despite the Tower Hamlets and the City of London being two individual communities and local authorities, our challenges are equally clear. The impact of the pandemic upon children, specifically on their emotional health needs, continues to be something that needs responding to. Our children from Black and Global majorities receive disproportionate outcomes in relation to being Stopped and Searched, School Exclusions and within the Criminal Justice System. We will continue to work with, and effectively challenge, our partners and ourselves in tackling this systemic and institutional racism. And more recently, we have seen a growing number of children being involved in Serious Youth Violence, resulting in an increase in children being placed in the custodial estate.

4. Strategy and Key Priorities

What was good about your intervention?

'Everything that came from it'.

Child response from Final Self-Assessment

- 4.1. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2025 builds on the outcomes of our improvement plan following the HMIP Inspection in April 2022 and an external diagnostic review which took place in March 2023.
- 4.2. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan has been developed alongside children, practitioners, partners, and board members. For Board Members, we utilised development session discussions to ensure we are confident of the priorities set. We have engaged our children in the creation of this plan via our Youth Justice Participation Forum and on a wider scale with a survey to capture their views and reflections on what is working and where improvements are required. For our practitioners and operational partners, anonymised surveys and staff workshops have been utilised to ensure we have captured their voice, setting out the vision of the partnership and providing key updates from the last 12 months alongside their priorities for the 2 years ahead.
- 4.3. In 2023-2025, our plan is focused on the following four cross-cutting themes:

- **Priority 1: Child First:** Embedding a Child First approach in every aspect of the Youth Justice Partnership.
- **Priority 2: Consistently Good Practice:** Continuous raising of practice standards which achieves improved outcomes for children.
- **Priority 3: YJS Health Offer:** Coordinated access and intervention to universal and specialist health provision to meet children's holistic health and wellbeing needs.
- **Priority 4: Post 16 Education Offer:** Increasing children's participation in post 16 education, training and employment which support children's aspirations, desistance and safety.

- 4.4. The YJS Plan aligns with and provides support to the following strategies:
 - Children and Families Strategy 2019-2024
 - Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2019 - 2024
 - 14-25 Learning and Achievement Strategy 2019-2024
 - SEND Strategy - 2020-2024
 - Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy 2019-2024
 - Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-2025
 - Early Help Strategy 2023-2025
 - Fostering Strategy 2023-2025
 - Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025

5. Priority 1: Child First

What was good about your intervention?

'Even though we didn't know each other at the start we got a bond and I was able to trust my Case Worker and talk about how I felt – comfortable - genuinely open with her'.

Child response from Final Self-Assessment

- 5.1. We are committed to and passionate about continuously developing an offer with the guiding principles of Child First placed firmly at the heart of everything we do. By doing so, we recognise that children will achieve better outcomes and communities will be safer which is of priority and importance to the entire partnership. Similarly, to the Youth Justice Board's Strategic Plan 2021-2024, we believe in a Child First system that supports children to become the best version of themselves.
- 5.2. To achieve this vision, it is crucial that there is a clear understanding of the key principles of Child First, the evidence for it and the day-to-day implications in practice. We have committed to ensuring that everyone across the YJS has access to the Child First Effective Practice Award as part of achieving consistency in understanding. We aim to have the whole YJS to complete this programme by April 2024.
- 5.3. In addition, an end-to-end review of our local practice standards has taken place informed by the revised case management guidance and national standards for children in the Youth Justice System to ensure that practice reflects contemporary understanding of and is infused by Child First.

As Children

- 5.4. The 2022 HMIP inspection and external diagnostic review which took place in March 2023 acknowledged the staff team are 'enthusiastic and highly determined to help children to live more fulfilling lives'. This is further supported by feedback received directly from children themselves as part of quality assurance and participation activities which demonstrates that the best interests of children are firmly at the heart of practice with the children directly informing and shaping their assessments and interventions.
- 5.5. We recognise the need to do more to ensure that all work with children is developmentally informed and acknowledges structural barriers that children face. The service is planning to utilise the revised Youth Justice Skills and Knowledge Matrix that is being aligned with Child First by the Youth Justice Board as a tool to undertake a comprehensive skills and knowledge audit with the staff team and volunteers. This will help to inform what additional workforce development considerations are required as part of our aspiration for a service that is meaningfully informed by child and adolescent development.
- 5.6. In addition to all staff team members participating in the Child First effective practice award, a full programme of training has been commissioned including relational and development trauma as part of achieving a consistent understanding of what may lead to atypical development and how this should inform practice that in ways that are hopeful and optimistic for the future.

Building Pro-Social Identity

'Everything has been good and easy. I have learned to make better decisions and think more before doing something'.

Response from Child when about Tower Hamlets YJS in the Child Survey 2023

- 5.7. The YJS and partnership recognises the importance of promoting children's individual strengths and capacities as part of developing children's pro-social identities for sustainable desistance.
- 5.8. The outcome of quality assurance activities has identified strengths in practice regarding the implementation and delivery of services being rooted in constructive and future focused interventions underpinned by positive relationships which provide a vehicle enabling sustainable change which is also reflected in the reoffending rates of children. A significant proportion of children allocated in the YJS are aged 16-year-old and above therefore the importance of supporting children into education, training and employment is a strong feature of the service and reflected as a key priority within this plan.
- 5.9. The service and partnership acknowledge the need to take further steps from a culture of managing 'risk of offending' which holds children labelled as potential offenders towards a greater capacity and strengths-based approach. An example of a shift in this context is regarding the Risk Management and Resource Panel which has an 'enabling fund' which can be utilised in creative, innovative and future orientated ways to effectively support children's desistance and safety.
- 5.10. As part of the service training plan, all practitioners will have an opportunity to participate in a newly commissioned training regarding motivational interviewing as part of providing practitioners with additional skills which can be used in practice with children. We will continue to work with Wipers CIC, commissioning their Ether Groupwork programme that is specifically designed for boys from Black and Global Majority communities and develop our offer further by designing an individual Identity Programme, designed specifically for the communities that we work with.
- 5.11. We aim to learn from the good practice of other Youth Justice Services. We have partnered with Hackney YJS as part of the Metropolitan Police's Out-of-Court Scrutiny Panel. This has been highlighted in Hackney's recent HMIP Inspection as a clear strength. The Service will also be attending an event being facilitated by Swindon YJS regarding infusing pro-social identity into practice. We will continue to use resources such as Basecamp, HMIP inspection reports, guidance published by the YJB and the recently published 'Child First: Developing a New Youth Justice System' to ensure that we are forefront of best practice.

Collaborating With Children

- 5.12. The voice of children is essential and important in achieving positive outcomes for children being supported by the YJS and partnership. However, simply listening to the voices of children is not enough and we are committed to further strengthening this as part of our strategic plan.
- 5.13. In 2022, a Youth Forum was established for children receiving intervention from the YJS as part of a broader recognition of the importance for children to have opportunities to meaningfully participate. The Youth Forum is jointly facilitated by the Youth Justice and Young Peoples Service which provides a wider range of participation opportunities for children. Whilst relatively new, the group have participated in a range of strategic forums including a community safety spotlight chaired by the Police Borough Commander which children attended to share their views

regarding how the partnership could create greater safety for children in the borough as well as improve relationships between children and the police.

- 5.14. As part of our improvement journey, we have also collaborated with children as part of reviewing policies. An example is in relation to the creation of a new Out-of-Court disposal policy and children's input into this where a child expressed that children should be able to attend the panel if they wish supporting a '[nothing about me, without me](#)' stance which is currently being considered as part of the final sign off process.
- 5.15. Our success of collaborating with children is evident within our new branding of the YJS and the feedback that we received from children that they disliked the title of the service. This is something that we will be working with the Forum, and other children, to create something that reduces the stigma associated with 'Youth Justice'.

Diverting from stigma

- 5.16. As stated above, the associated stigma that children feel when working with 'Youth Justice' is clearly apparent. But we recognise that it is not just the overt stigmatisation that our children face, and we need to ensure that we are supportive of preventing this stigma to the best of our abilities.
- 5.17. Tower Hamlets Council has recently moved to the New Town Hall in Whitechapel. Not only does this building place us back in the heart of the community, but we were supported by the project to have two dedicated rooms just for the children that we work with. These rooms are large, light and airy and, most importantly, in the New Town Hall along with all of the other services available to the community. We have only been in the New Town Hall since February 2023 and have commissioned the Youth Forum with a task to ensure that these rooms are made to feel more accessible to children.
- 5.18. We are currently part of the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce and had a YJS Case Manager in the Pupil Referral Unit two days a week. Having reviewed this offer and reflecting on the stigma of a YJS Case Manager in a child's school, we have made the decision to replace this role with a member from our Prevention Team. Whilst the offer remains the same, we believe that the stigma will be reduced with this refined focus.

6. Priority 2: Consistently Good Practice

- 6.1. A comprehensive training plan has been developed for the service and partnership informed by the improvement plan which has been enabled by substantial financial investment. Below is an overview of the service wide training that has been delivered in the past year and forms part of the training plan for 2023/2024:

- Harm Outside the Home
- Introduction to Adultification
- Weapons Intervention
- AssetPlus Training
- Effective Practice Awards (Youth Justice Professional Framework)
- Relational & Development Trauma
- Motivational Interviewing
- Aspiring Future Leaders Programme
- Child First Effective Practice Award
- All new Referral Order panels have participated in a programme of training as well as ongoing developmental opportunities

- 6.2. A systematic process has been implemented to receive and review feedback from practitioners and managers regarding all service wide training. This is collectively reviewed by the YJS leadership and management team as part of a monthly Quality & Performance Board that has been established as part of the quality assurance arrangements in response to the inspection. This enables the leadership and management team to understand whether training has achieved the desired outcomes and informs decision making which shapes the continuous training offer. This information is also shared with the Youth Justice Executive Board as part of providing strategic oversight.
- 6.3. As part of the quality assurance arrangements, full case and dip-sample audits are undertaken monthly with themes identified to enable the quality of practice and provision to be explored through a particular lens. Examples of thematic audits have included girls, missing children, referral orders, custody, management oversight and out-of-court disposals. As part of creating a culture of learning and development as well as striving to continuously improve outcome for children where emerging training needs are identified these are promptly responded to and incorporated into the training offer.
- 6.4. The YJS and partnership benefitted from an independent external review one year on from the HMIP inspection which has enabled the service and partnership to take stock as part of understanding current strengths and areas of further development. The learning from this recent external review has already been harnessed and included into the training plan.
- 6.5. Below are examples of feedback received from participants in service wide training that has taken place over the past year.

'Going through racism and the definitions of Adultification and intersectionality'.
Adultification Training

'To be mindful of my language when describing harm outside the home and how to access support when there are exploitation concerns'.
Harm Outside the Home Training

'The programme is very good at providing a structure & framework to engaging with children around knife crime and weapons awareness. This relates to exploring the underlying factors and beliefs impacting upon behaviour and assessing the factors and facilitating positive change to keep young people safe'.
Knife Crime Intervention

- 6.6. An overarching Workforce Development Strategy has been developed for the entirety of the Supporting Families Division which the YJS is situated within. This will be tailored to specifically meet the needs and desired outcomes of the YJS and partnership workforce for the 2023/2024 period informed by a range of sources including the Youth Justice Board workforce development strategy for the youth justice system (2023-2025).
- 6.7. As part of identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviour required to support children's pro-social identities the service intends to utilise the revised youth justice skills and knowledge matrix aligned with Child First as part of informing an updated analysis of the workforce needs which will be incorporated into the training offer.
- 6.8. Our quality assurance framework and auditing activity enables the service to routinely identify examples of excellent practice. The outcome of auditing activity is reviewed by the leadership and management team as part of a monthly Quality & Performance Board which enables the sharing of excellent practice within full-service meetings as well as part of operational and strategic boards which staff team members have opportunities to attend and participate in.

7. Priority 3: YJS Health Offer

- 7.1. In December 2022, we held a Spotlight session for our Partnership Board members on the health needs of our children. The Spotlight was led jointly by Public Health partners and part of the information presented included a comprehensive health needs assessment, data analysis, children's focus groups and surveys, and staff focus groups. The data reflected needs from the previous 4 years and a total of 885 interventions were analysed. The data demonstrated that the levels of adverse childhood experiences was significant and nearly half of children reporting that they had some caring responsibilities for a family member suffering from mental health, substance misuse or a physical disability. The data analysis and consultation identified strengths in relation to children's health and wellbeing as well as areas to improve upon and considered the views of children of what would promote their health and wellbeing. These findings were supported by the External Diagnostic review team.
- 7.2. The key recommendations from the Health Spotlight were:
- The introduction of a specialist Nurse within the Youth Justice Service to provide a single holistic health and well-being assessment and coordinate the services around the child;
 - A multi-disciplinary meeting with health professionals to support the coordination, sequencing and delivery of health intervention for children;
 - Access to leisure activities to support physical and emotional wellbeing.
- 7.3. We have recently had agreement of funding from Public Health for a YJS Nurse to be recruited. The introduction of this role will enable the YJS to transform the health offer for children by providing a holistic health and wellbeing screening. Over the course of the next 12 months, we will seek to recruit and develop the offer in relation to this role and subsequently introduce a multi-disciplinary meeting chaired by a Health Professional.
- 7.4. Children have specifically stated that they wish to have greater access to provisions within the borough for their physical and emotional well-being. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has committed £13 million to increasing youth services in the borough. As the offer is being developed, we are ensuring that children at risk, or already involved in Criminal Justice, are able to access these provisions and have access to an effective universal and targeted provision.
- 7.5. Currently, we have health provision in relation to Speech and Language needs, sexual health, substance misuse and mild to moderate emotional health needs. Health partners provide clear support for the YJS at the relevant multi-agency decision making panels and we have a clear referral pathway for children with more significant emotional health needs. We are already in process of recommissioning our Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) offer to ensure that it suits the service and will be recruiting a CAMHS practitioner for the YJS.

8. Priority 4: Post 16 Education Offer

Child described that if it wasn't for their case manager, they wouldn't have had the opportunities they've been able to access particularly in relation to employment and training. The described the case manager as a 'legend' and 'always searching for opportunities'.

Feedback received from a Child as part of our Audit process

- 8.1. The links between education and positive outcomes in later life are well established. In Tower Hamlets, there is a clear focus by the YJS and education partnership to ensure that this cohort of children have their diverse educational needs met. Education has been consistently seen as a strength within the YJS, in the 2022 HMIP inspection and 2023 peer review.
- 8.2. Within the service there is a full-time education officer, a post which is joint commissioned by Tower Hamlets Virtual School. Line management responsibility is conducted via the Virtual School Assistant Headteacher for Children with a social worker (CWSW). Executive board membership is attended by the Virtual School Headteacher and wider Corporate School for Children Vulnerable Executive Headteacher. This represents a significant investment in children known to the YJS.
- 8.3. Within the service, the education officer role is well established. There is attendance and contribution at all Joint Decision-Making panels and Resettlement panels. The education officer is also the allocated teacher for all children looked after, completing termly PEPS. The risk management panel is attended by the Assistant Headteacher of Virtual Schools and we provide an education screening for all children entering the service to assist practitioners in their assessment and planning of intervention. The education officer also works with individual children for ETE support and guidance.

Attendance and Engagement

- 8.4. There is a clear focus on monitoring the attendance of children within the YJS. There are weekly attendance updates for all school aged children, and post-16 children who attend education with TH. Moving forward, there is a commitment to extended this for all children in any education or training. This regular reporting allows for areas of vulnerability in education to be quickly identified and addressed, both for individual child as well as strategically.

Post 16 NEET

- 8.5. Post 16 NEET figures have typically been at around 40% for children known to the YJS. We are committed to ensuring that this figure decreases by ensuring that 80% of children working with the YJS are in education, training or employment. Data suggests that majority of these children (>90%) are those which are on statutory interventions with the YJS. In line with the new KPIs, there will be an aspirational aim of ensuring all children are in ETE which has been defined as suitable for them by the end of their order.
- 8.6. As part of this, it has been determined that a barrier in accessing post 16 ETE is English and maths skills and qualifications. Therefore, there will be a focus on ensuring that all school aged children known to YJS have every availability to gain skills and qualifications in English and Maths. Additionally, there needs to be a commitment from the wider education, social care and youth service partnership to broaden the range of ETE options available for children in the post-16 cohort.

Education in custody

- 8.7. The Virtual School monitor attendance for all child on remand on custody, and there has been a consistent lack of educational provision provided in the secure estate. Learning is a habit, and if this habit is not fostered and promoted in custody, the resettlement of a child into ETE becomes much more difficult. The Secure Estate, particularly Young Offender Institutes, are struggling to engage with the PEP process which is a proven method of educational support for children looked after. This has been escalated and the YJS, alongside the Tower Hamlets Virtual School are committed to continuing to advocate for this challenge, and are lobbying at a national level, including to the Children’s Commissioner for England. In the experience of children within Tower Hamlets and the City of London, children in Children Secure Homes receive an excellent education offer.

9. Voice of the child

What do you think should be the main 3 priority areas for our YJS in the next 24 months?

‘Children, Children, Children’

Staff response to the YJS Staff Survey

- 9.1. As part of developing this plan, there have been various opportunities for children to participate in expressing their views which have directly shaped the priorities. This includes an online survey developed in partnership with speech and language therapist colleagues which has been accessible to all children via a QR code as well as the Head of Service meeting with children who are members of the youth forum. 85% of children reported that they really valued their relationships with the staff, and 80% found our ETE support effective and supporting them to stay safe. Our Youth Participation Forum described how the name ‘Youth Justice Service’ made them feel stigmatised and ‘othered’ and set us the challenge of changing it to something more accessible. We value the feedback from our children and their opinions have been key in setting our priorities of ‘Child First’ and education.

Child’s Voice in Quality Assurance

- 9.2. We have redesigned our quality assurance process over the last 12 months and when auditing case files the child and their parent/carer is contacted to discuss their thoughts and feelings on the intervention that has been provided which can be facilitated virtually or in person. This feedback is used to inform our assessment of where we need to improve and supports in identifying elements of good practice.

Youth Justice Participation Forum

- 9.3. We are committed to collaborating with children to hear their voice and ensure that they help us to develop the service further. Our key achievements this year have been the creation of our Youth Justice Forum – a safe space for children to challenge and support the development of the service in a meaningful way.
- 9.4. The forum started in January 2023 but already, we have a key group of highly committed children that want to make an impact. They have worked with designers to create the branding of the YJS and have challenged us on our use of language, specifically the team being called ‘Youth Justice’. And in the next 12 months, the group will be attending a residential, redesigning the meeting rooms and working with the Service to rename the service.



Child Survey 2023

- 9.5. In March 2023, we launched a survey to capture the thoughts and reflections of the children that we are currently working with in order to develop this strategy. Below is an overview of the results. Our children appreciate the staff that we have and our offer, but it is clear from their feedback that the changes that they wish to see include a better development of our victim and reparation offer and continuing to support with making children feel safe and achieving their full potential in ETE.

I rate my YJS Worker 8.5/10	YJS support with Education 4/5	Helping me keep the relationships that are important to me 4/5
Supporting me to get a job 4/5	Helping me keep safe in the community 4/5	Helping me with my health needs 4/5
Supporting me to find the help that I need 7.5/10	Victim Awareness Intervention 6.5/10	Has the YJS seemed useful to your life? 7.5/10

Next steps: ‘Nothing about me, without me’

- 9.6. The next step is to ensure we support the workforce to fully understand, embrace and implement the principles of Child First to improve the outcomes for children. For our children, they have already supported the service in the development of the re-branding and the services dedicated rooms. However, now we must listen to them, and we need to take the challenge that they have set us to see how we can improve having their voices heard at an operational and strategic level.

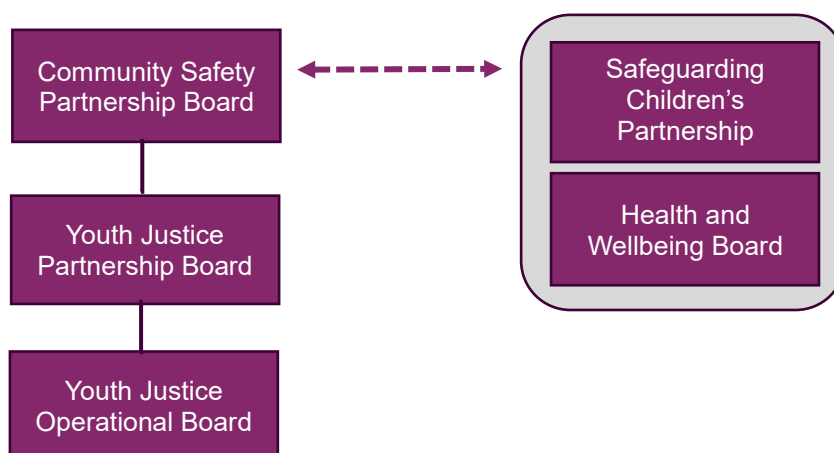
10. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

What has been the highlight of being a Board Member over the last 12 months?

‘Ensuring a child’s voice is heard at every board meeting and is at the heart of what we do as a Board’.

Feedback from Executive Board member

- 10.1. The Youth Justice and Young Peoples Services is located in the Childrens and Culture Directorate, within the Supporting Families division. As part of the divisional management team, the YJS works in partnership with services including Young Peoples Service, Early Help, Safeguarding, Children Looked After & Through Care, Exploitation, Quality Assurance and the Learning Academy. In addition, the YJS service has strong links with Education, Community Safety, Police and Health.
- 10.2. The governance of the Youth Justice Service is provided by the Youth Justice Executive Board that meets bi-monthly with direct accountability to the Community Safety Partnership Board, as well as strong links to the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Youth Justice Executive Board is chaired by the Corporate Director for Children and Culture. Reporting into the Youth Justice Executive Partnership Board is the Youth Justice Operational Board, chaired by the Director of Supporting Families to oversee the delivery of the Youth Justice Continuous Improvement Plan and operational practice, these boards have been operational for 12 months.
- 10.3. The below diagram sets out the governance arrangements to ensure there is clear accountability, line of sight and information flow.



- 10.4. The Youth Justice and Young People's Service has been led by their permanent Head of Service since December 2021. The Head of Service has bi-monthly meetings with all Board members and quarterly meetings with Operational Partners to ensure that the partnership is effective in its delivery. The Head of Service is a member of the Corporate Parenting Board, the Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership and the Health of the Children in Our Care.
- 10.5. The YJS Senior Management Team meets routinely with key partnership stakeholders on a quarterly basis to discuss strategic and operational matters, to ensure that practice is to a high quality, common objectives are achieved, and remedial action is taken where issues are identified.
- 10.6. Tower Hamlets and City of London governance arrangements and membership of the Youth Justice Partnership Board can be found in appendix 1.
- 10.7. In our 2022-2023 Youth Justice Plan, we made a commitment to the improvement of the Governance Boards and significantly redesigning the board to ensure that it was fit for purpose following the recommendations set out by HMIP. Following the developments, we are confident that our governance arrangements are supporting and driving the strategic oversight and ensuring that a high-quality service is provided to all children. By separating the Board into Operational and Executive functions, this allowed for the Executive agenda to be driven by the strategic needs of the partnership, supported by the Operational Partnerships work on the actions needed to be completed.
- 10.8. The Board cannot, and should not, work in isolation from the frontline practitioners. At both the Operational and Executive Boards, members of the YJS attend, providing the opening agenda item of 'Voice of the Child'. We believe that ensuring that the child is at the opening of each partnership meeting ensures the correct focus and allows staff to highlight areas of good practice or where support is needed. Board members attend the YJS team meetings to keep open communication amongst all partners in the service and to ensure that staff are aware developments.

11. Progress on previous plan

- *'Practitioners are committed, passionate, and know their children well';*
- *'The diversity section of assessments viewed are 'outstanding', they take into account the demographics of Tower Hamlets and reflect the needs of the child. These are some of the best we've seen';*
- *'Practitioners place the child's safety and well-being at the heart of practice'.*

Highlighted Strengths and Promising Progress from the YJS Diagnostic Review, commissioned in February 2023

- 11.1. Over the last 12 months, we have focused on building the 'infrastructure' for the team, recognising that without viable foundations, our staff are unable to provide high quality interventions with children. The following information is a highlight of our achievements thus far which will now allow us to consistently achieve good outcomes and practice in the year ahead.

Objective	Progress
<p>Membership to ensure that the right people, at the right level of seniority, are included to engage actively in achieving better outcomes for YJS children.</p>	<p>Changes in the structure of the Board, new Chairs, revised handbook, terms of reference and induction plan for all members.</p> <p>Embedded the frontline practitioners and the voice of the child throughout the Board. This includes the opening agenda item being a child-focussed item presented by the frontline practitioner.</p> <p>Highlight reports developed for all partners to share at Board meetings to ensure the 'buy-in' from all.</p> <p>Service Manager's report re-design to provide the correct information to be provided to the Board to support strategic decision making</p>
<p>Ensure that there is a comprehensive review of the Governance Board's membership to ensure that the right people, at the right level of seniority, are included to engage actively in achieving better outcomes for YJS children quality assurance arrangements to understand performance and respond to the profile and needs of all children supervised by the YJS.</p>	<p>A new quality assurance framework for the YJS has been developed and implemented. This includes routine full-case, dip-sample and group audits which includes auditors undertaking a comprehensive review of children's files, case discussion with the allocated practitioner as well as receiving feedback directly from the child as well as their parents/carers.</p> <p>A monthly quality assurance and performance board has been developed and implemented as a partnership between the YJS and divisional learning academy. The outcome of audits, feedback received from evaluations of training and learning reviews following serious incidents are reviewed by members of the quality assurance and performance board. This enables areas of good practice to be shared as well as well as developing improvement actions for areas of practice which requires improvement to be good.</p> <p>A Practice Standards guide has been developed by, and with, the service to support a consistent understanding of expectations.</p> <p>A new interim Deputy Head of Service Development role has been created to drive forward sustainable improvements this area. This post will also ensure the relevant policies and procedures are in place to support safety and quality of practice as well as coordinating workforce development.</p>
<p>Make sure that all data and management information is accurate, reliable, and enables informed decision-making.</p>	<p>A comprehensive cleanse of all data was completed in 2022 to ensure that our recording and reporting was accurate to inform strategy and workforce development.</p> <p>Recruitment of additional Business Support Officers specifically for the service as well as a training offer relevant to the role to support with accurate recording.</p> <p>Purchase of one day a month's support from CACI (Childview) to offer immediate support to staff and training on specific issues.</p> <p>Recruitment of an experienced Senior Data Analyst.</p>

	<p>Monthly staff performance reports re-introduced with individualised weekly reports provided to staff.</p> <p>Greater information shared in the Performance Report shared with the Partners.</p>
<p>Review its out-of-court provision to ensure that the arrangements are effective and support diversion.</p>	<p>Redesign of the staff structure enabled by additional funding provided by Turnaround creating a new Team Manager to lead and manage the out-of-court disposal offer as well as additional practitioners.</p> <p>New out-of-court disposal policy developed in collaboration with children, YJS practitioners and managers as well as multi-agency partners.</p> <p>Data relating to Out-of-Court is routinely shared with the Board.</p> <p>Quarterly Metropolitan Police Scrutiny Panel chaired by Hackney YJS Manager and the Tower Hamlets Head of Service chairs their scrutiny panel for better oversight and support.</p> <p>Training has been provided for the Out-of-Court Disposal Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) members, refreshing their understanding of diversionary offers available.</p> <p>Significant reductions in First Time Entrants with a greater focus on Triage.</p> <p>Training several hundred local police officers regarding eligibility of out-of-court disposals for children as well as the offer as part of ensuring that children eligible for this outcome are routinely referred to the service.</p>
<p>Improve the quality of assessment, planning and service delivery work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others.</p>	<p>In response to the inspection a comprehensive training offer has been developed as part of addressing recommendations and requirements for improvement. All training is evaluated by participants and reviewed as part of the quality and performance board to analyse if training has achieved desired outcomes and inform future training offer.</p> <p>The outcome of quality assurance activity enables the service to identify and share areas of good practice as well as identify areas for development. This directly informs the continuous development plan for the service.</p> <p>Risk Policy and Procedures have been launched with the team allowing for standards to be set.</p> <p>Risk Management and Resource Panel is now live and has an attached 'enabling fund' allowing case managers to think innovatively in the needs of their children and access funds to support these ideas.</p> <p>Seconded Probation Officer is now in post</p>
<p>Ensure robust contingency plans are in place for all</p>	<p>Greater partnership delivery between the YJS and Exploitation.</p>

<p>children that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.</p>	<p>Harm Outside the Home training provided alongside Adulthood to support staff's understanding of contextual risks.</p> <p>Good practice examples highlighted and shared at monthly Team Meetings.</p> <p>Quality Assurance and Audit process embedded and actions arising from areas of development are being dealt with.</p>
<p>Make sure safeguarding and public protection arrangements are comprehensive and understood by staff.</p>	<p>Practice Standards developed and shared with the team.</p> <p>New Risk Management Policies and Procedures developed with the team and launched.</p> <p>Enabling fund created in order to support our children who are at the greatest risk.</p> <p>New Serious Incident Processes and protocols created and developed within the Supporting Families division as well as undertaking learning reviews when serious incidents have occurred.</p>

11.2. In February 2023, an external diagnostic review was commissioned of the service, undertaken by two experienced Heads of Service. We requested the following key lines of enquiry to be looked at:

- Child's voice and experience;
- Governance and leadership;
- Assessment, planning and intervention;
- Out-of-Court Disposals and;
- Court ordered work, including custody and resettlement.

11.3. The review allowed for the service and partnership to reflect over the progress that has been achieved in the last 12 months and to consider areas for further development moving forward. The reviewers found that our improvements, as highlighted above, had made significant positive changes to the service that we are delivering and supported us in identifying the key areas for our next steps. This has contributed to informing the development of our priorities and our Continuous Improvement plan for 2023-2025. Our critical friends provided us with a strong insight as to where we have progressed and provided challenge for where we can go even further. This is demonstrated throughout our Plan for the next 2 years and we aim to have a formal Peer Review within the next 12 months to provide another opportunity to reflect on our progress.

12. Resources and services

12.1. Our total budget for the year is £1,745,391. This is based on a Youth Justice Grant amount of £610,443, £969,031 from Tower Hamlets and Turnaround Funding of £147,292. Additional contributions will also be received from the Probation Service, Early Help and City of London.

- 12.2. As in previous years, the core Youth Justice Budget will be used to fund a number of substantive and partnership posts within the service structure. It will continue to fund evidenced based interventions, projects to address disproportionality and prevention, reparation and a continued 7-day weekly support from the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance programme. New for 2023-2024 is our commitment of financial support to the Youth Justice Participation Forum providing them with an opportunity to control their own budget to support us in developing services and their skills.

Funding Description	£ Income	Comments
Local Authority Funding	924,031	General Fund
Local Authority Funding	45,000	Growth bid
Grant	610,443	YJB Grant confirmed figure
Turnaround Grant	147,292	
Police Contributions	0	Need to confirm amount?
Probation Contributions	0	
Other	18,625	Early Help
Total income	£1,745,391	

Expenditure Description	£ Expenditure	Comments
Employee Costs	1,617,291	
IT	11,000	IT Maintenance & Recreational equipment
Activity Costs	92,600	£80K SALT & £16K Translation Services
Accommodation	10,000	
Overheads	10,000	
Transport	4,500	
Total expenditure	£1,745,391	

Variance	£0
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**The YJB have yet to confirm our grant for 2023-2024, however they have written to state that we should plan our finances based on the exact amount we received in the previous financial year.*

13. Performance

'Being there when I need him'.

Child response to the Child Survey 2023 about his caseworker

Our Children:

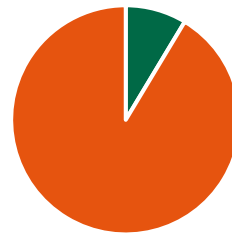
- 12.3. Our cohort of children mainly consists of boys aged 16 – 18 years old. This focuses our attention even further on the transition period for these children into adulthood, and the importance of accessing education and gaining qualifications.

Age at time of sentence



■ 13 ■ 14 ■ 15 ■ 16 ■ 17

Gender of children



■ Female ■ Male

- 12.4. Our disproportionality concerns are clear. Children who identify as being of Mixed Heritage are significantly disproportionality represented in our YJS followed by White children. Conversely, our Asian and Black children are disproportionality underrepresented within the cohort and we need to have a greater understanding of our successes in order to understand why this is.

Ethnicity	Tower Hamlets 10-17 population	Sentenced Outcomes 2022/23	Total Sentenced Outcomes 2022/23
Asian	67%	54%	41
Black	11%	4%	3
Other	4%	4%	3
Mixed	6%	13%	10
White	13%	25%	19

Characteristics of our children:

- 12.5. The characteristics below demonstrate that the children that we work with is an increasingly complex cohort who are likely to have experienced exploitation, trauma and abuse within their care histories. The most identified characteristics of the children that we work with can be amalgamated into three broad areas – their vulnerability, their health and their achievements. This links directly to our most common offences being Violence Against the Person and Drugs. With the development of our YJS Health Offer, we believe that with better assessments by Health Colleagues, we will have a better understanding of the needs of our children in the next 12 months and will then be able to devise more intense intervention to target these needs to allow children to flourish. This will be further supported by the increased Education offer which will support those children with SEND to understand their needs and have those needs met more effectively.

Children by assessed characteristics of concern	
At Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CCE)	47
Children in Need (current or previous)	43
Substance Misuse concerns	38
Mental Health concerns	25
Child Protection plans (current or previous)	21
Children looked after (CLA) (current or previous)	17
Speech and Language, Communication and Neuro-disability concerns	16
Children not in employment, education, or training (NEET)	16
Special Educational Needs or Disabilities Identified	10

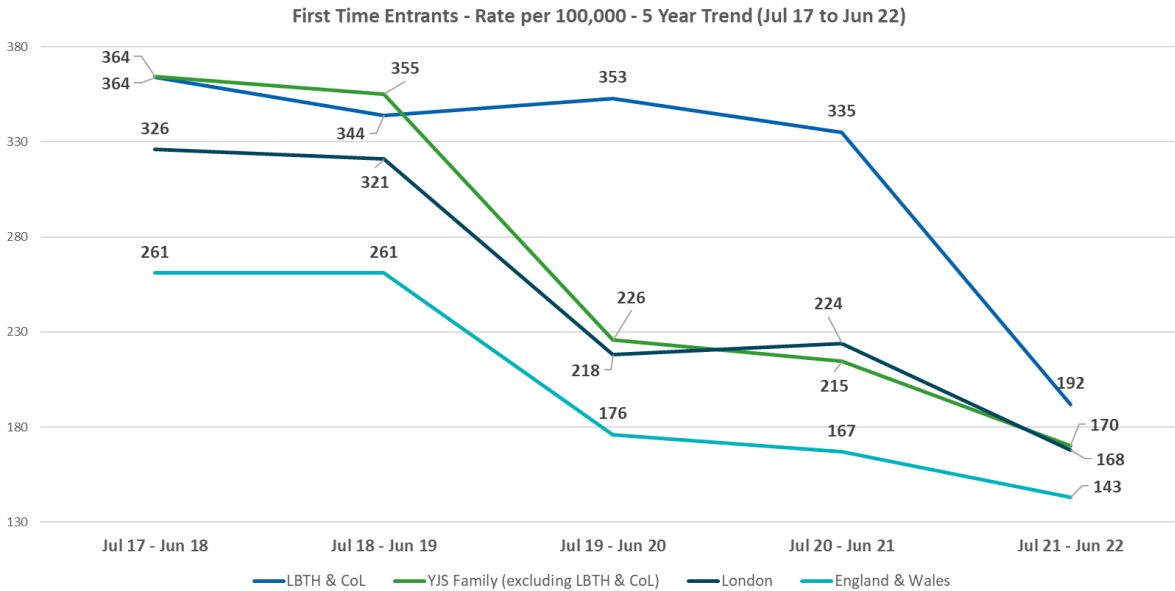
Offences by type	
Violence Against The Person	225
Drugs	149
Motoring Offences	80
Theft And Handling Stolen Goods	46
Robbery	43
Public Order	35
Vehicle Theft / Unauthorised Taking	29
Criminal Damage	24
Sexual Offences	18
Breach Of Statutory Order	18
Non-Domestic Burglary	14
Racially Aggravated	13
Other	12
Domestic Burglary	10
Fraud And Forgery	8
Breach Of Bail	1
Breach Of Conditional Discharge	1
Arson	1
Total offences	727

- 12.6. It is clear that for our children, the world in which they navigate within is dangerous and there are concerns about their chances to build upon their strengths whilst vulnerability concerns are so apparent and there is a lack of opportunities to engage in education. This data supports our focus on Child first (treating children as children), a YJS Health offer (to support the emotional trauma) and the YJS Education Offer (to support building strengths).

National Key Performance Indicator: First Time Entrants

- 12.7. The number of children as First Time Entrants is the lowest ever in Tower Hamlets and the City of London with our current rate being 192 per 100,000 or 59 individual children.
- 12.8. We have seen a significant reduction in the number of children becoming First Time Entrants with a 43% reduction in the per 100,000 rate. As well as being the lowest rate that we have ever achieved as a service, it also brings us more in line with our family, London and National averages. This achievement is something that we are particularly proud of considering the HMIP Report in April 2022 correctly criticised our effectiveness in diverting children away from the formal criminal justice system. This has been achieved by a redesign of the Out-of-Court process, retraining our partners on the Joint Decision Panel Meeting about the options available and with the support of our seconded YJS Police Officers.

12.9. We have recently started a training programme for our local Police Officers in regard to diversions and have trained approximately 200 frontline officers in the interventions that we can offer children without the need to charge to Court. The feedback is positive and we hope that this, in conjunction with the Turnaround programme, will see the numbers of children becoming formal First Time Entrants reduce to a rate of less than 150 per 100,000.



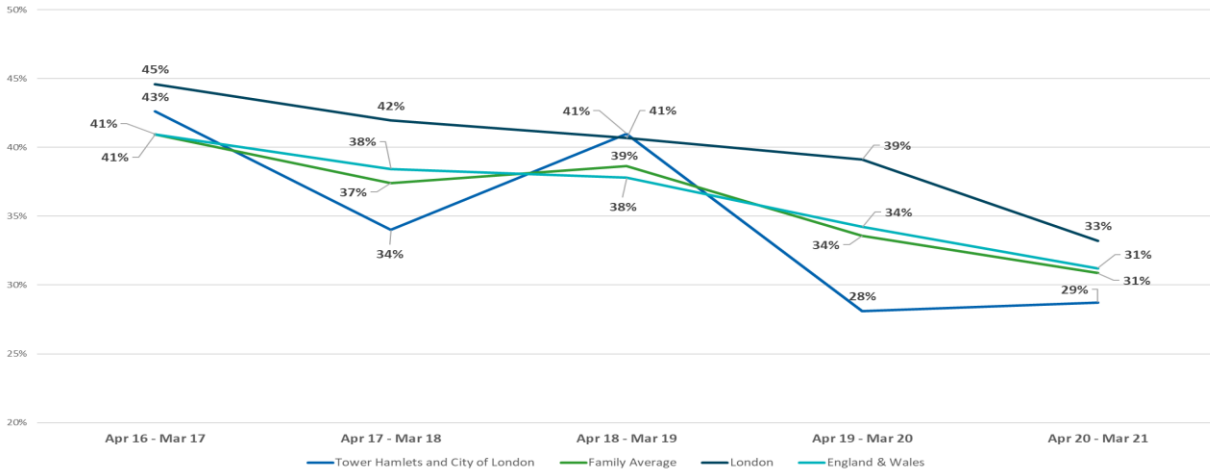
National Key Performance Indicator: Re-offending

12.10. Reoffending is measured in two areas: the percentage of children who go on to reoffend within 12 months of receiving a disposal (the binary reoffending rate), and the average number of proven offences associated with children who reoffend (reoffending frequency/reoffences per reoffender).

12.11. The latest return for the annual re-offending rate was 29% of children re-offending. This is a slight increase of 1% compared to the previous data. Whilst our numbers are positive in relation to our Family, London and National averages, we believe that the impact of the Education and Health offer, combined with our Child First approach will have a further positive impact on the outcomes for children.

12.12. We aim to utilise the live re-offending tracker within the next 3 months to ensure that we have a greater oversight of our children that are re-offending and be able to identify trends in behaviours quickly and efficiently.

Reoffending Binary Rate (Apr 17 to Mar 21)



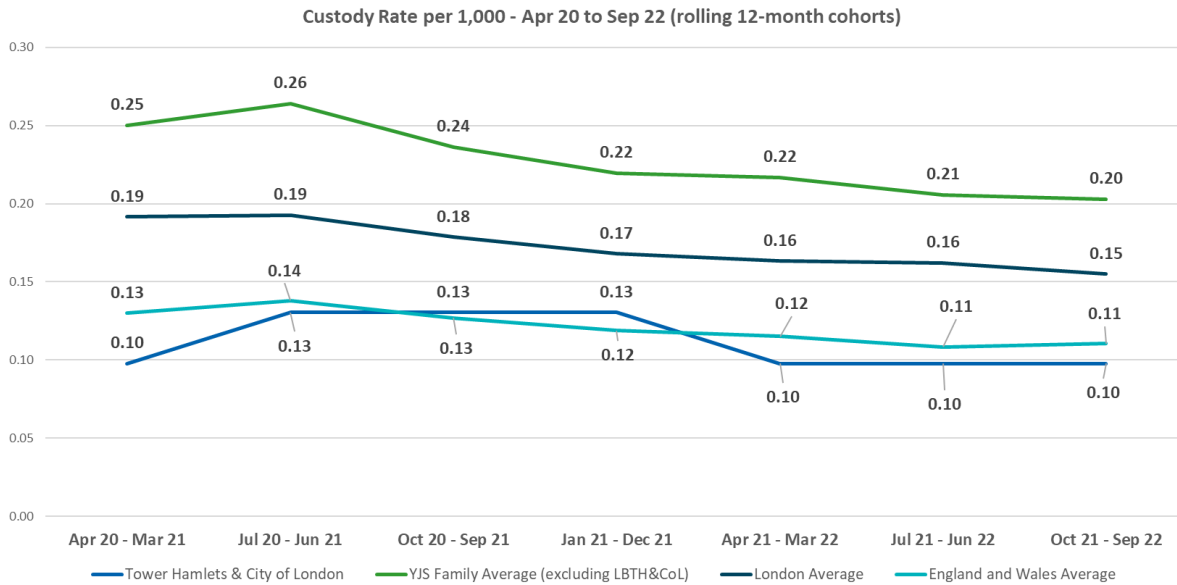
Binary reoffending rate	Apr 16 - Mar 17	Apr 17 - Mar 18	Apr 18 - Mar 19	Apr 19 - Mar 20	Apr 20 - Mar 21
Tower Hamlets & City of London	43%	34%	41%	28%	29%
YJS Family Average (excluding LBTH & CoL)	41%	37%	39%	34%	31%
London Average	45%	42%	41%	39%	33%
England & Wales Average	41%	38%	38%	34%	31%

12.13. The number of offences committed by children already known to us reached its lowest point in April 2019 – March 2020. We aim to return to a rate of less than 3 reoffences per child within the next 2 years by using our developing offer and ensuring that the live tracker supports us in doing so. However, we also recognise that due to our significant decrease in First Time Entrants, this rate may continue to appear high as the cohort that it tracks becomes a smaller group of children whose needs are significantly more complex and require more specialist intervention and support.

Reoffences per reoffender	Apr 16 - Mar 17	Apr 17 - Mar 18	Apr 18 - Mar 19	Apr 19 - Mar 20	Apr 20 - Mar 21
Tower Hamlets & City of London	3.42	3.53	3.15	2.56	3.02
Family Average	3.66	3.78	4.10	3.59	3.24
London	3.68	3.51	3.61	3.10	3.15
England & Wales	3.91	4.05	3.91	3.64	3.54

National Key Performance Indicator: Use of custody

12.14. As of the data from December 2022, we had 2 children serving custodial sentences, a rate of 0.07%. This is a further decrease from the same period the year before where our rate was 0.14 per 1,000, equating to 4 children in custody.



Youth Custody Rate per 1,000 - Rolling 12 Months	Jul 20 - Jun 21	Oct 20 - Sep 21	Jan 21 - Dec 21	Apr 21 - Mar 22	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Oct 21 - Sep 22	Jan 22 - Dec 22
Tower Hamlets & City of London	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.07
YJS Family Average (excluding LBTH & CoL)	0.26	0.24	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.20	0.20
London Average	0.19	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.15
England and Wales Average	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.11

12.15. Whilst we are proud of our low custody numbers, we are concerned with our growing number of children remanded into the secure estate. The Secure Estate is not a protective environment serving the best interests of children. As of March 2023, we currently have 5 children in the secure estate on Remand, an increase of 20% from the same period the previous year.

12.16. We have introduced Remand Rescue meetings to the service, a meeting that takes place with the team around the child within a week of them being placed in the Secure Estate. The aim of this meeting is to find resources across the partnership to support a more viable bail package, working with the child’s Social Worker and the family to seek alternative options that may have not been available when the original decision to remand was made. Whilst this is newly embedding, we have already had positive outcomes with some children serving less than 2 weeks on remand before they were successful in their application for bail. This practice is only supported by ensuring that we continue to provide a holistic and effective Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Bail programme. In the next 24 months, we are committed to enhancing this offer with further resources, specifically in education provision for children on ISS Bail and our ongoing commitment to the London Accommodation Resettlement Programme which will further support resettlement and community bail packages.

Our Local Performance

- 12.17. The data below demonstrates that the largest group of children that we are working with are engaged in the Triage offer, closely followed by Referral Orders.
- 12.18. However, we believe that there is further scope in the children that receive Referral Orders missing the opportunity to engage with the Out of Court disposals via a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution as both include an admission of guilt. Although both a Youth Conditional Caution and a Referral Order result in a child receiving a criminal record, it will prevent the child, and their family, from going through the traumatic experience of attending Court and placing them at a greater risk of receiving a disproportionate outcome. We currently have a weekly pre-Court meeting to ensure that we have every opportunity to divert children away from Court where appropriate, but we need to develop this offer further and continue to report to our Board in order to hold ourselves accountable on this target.

Total number of disposals/substantive outcomes received by children in 2022/23	157
Informal Action (Triage)	55
Community Resolution	17
Youth Conditional Caution	8
Youth Caution	2
Total out of court disposals received by children	82
Referral Order	37
Youth Rehabilitation Order	19
Conditional Discharge	8
Fine	5
Youth Rehabilitation Order ISS Requirement Band 1	3
Detention + Training Order (Custody)	2
Section 250 (was Section 91 Order	1
Youth Rehabilitation Order ISS Requirement Band 2	1
Total court disposals received by children	75

Triage

- 12.19. 80% of children that receive a Triage intervention from our service do not reoffend compared to 62% of children that receive a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution. We have extremely promising results coming from our Triage offer. Not only have we increased the number of Triages that we are providing to children, but we are having a greater impact in relation to their risk of committing further offences.

	Total Triages	Already FTE before Triage	Not previously an FTE	Became FTE	FTE within 1 year
2020/21	60	1	59	18	13
2021/22	29	18	11	11	9
2022/23	55	9	43	1	1

Children at risk of serious youth violence in Tower Hamlets and the City of London:

12.20. Serious Youth Violence offences are all offences which fall under the categories of Violence Against the Person, Robbery, or Drugs, with a seriousness score of 6 or above.

SYV offences, year ending December								
YJS family	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Number of SYV offences	Rate of SYV offences	Number of SYV offences	Rate of SYV offences	Number of SYV offences	Rate of SYV offences	Number of SYV offences	Rate of SYV offences
Tower Hamlets & City of London	50	17.2	32	10.6	30	10.8	27	9.8
Family average	77	22.3	54	15.7	46	13.5	51	15.1
London	1407	10.3	1143	0.0	1151	17.2	1038	13.6
England and Wales	4040	5.3	3464	0.0	3140	7.4	3522	6.3

12.21. The data outlined above indicates the rates of serious youth violence incidents decreased significantly from pre-pandemic figures and have continued to slowly decreased in the years following. The figures for Tower Hamlets and the City of London are below our family and London average but are 1.5 times than that of the England and Wales average. This will continue to be a priority of the Partnership.

New Key Performance Indicators April 2023:

12.22. The additional Key Performance Indicators became effective from April 2023 with the first submission due in August 2023. The following table shows for our preparation for this. At present, there are no foreseeable risks to providing this submission on the first date and in order to prepare for the first submission, we will work closely with our YJIMS provider, our team and partnership, to ensure that everyone is aware of the additional recording and what is expected from them.

KPI's	Current Position	Actions
Suitable Accommodation	Fully captured by existing recording processes.	Regular reviews of data on the system, monthly and quarterly.
ETE Suitability	Captured by Virtual School colleagues.	Regular reviews of data on the system, weekly and quarterly.
SEND/ALN	Captured by case workers, Virtual School & SaLT colleagues.	Matching of UPNs with local school data to identify children who may not have their SEND needs recorded.

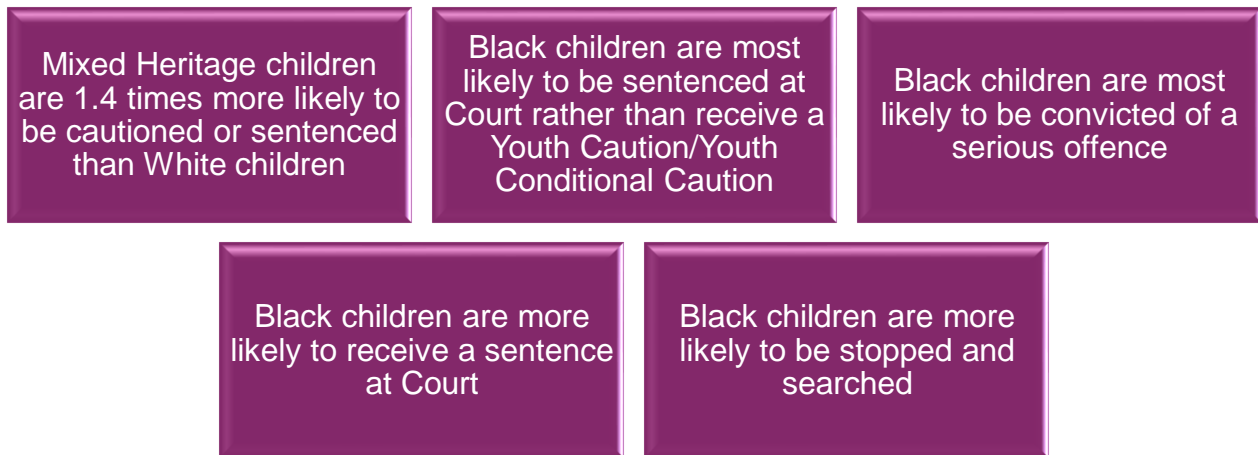
Mental Health care and Emotional Wellbeing	Data captured by case workers and specialist partners from CAMHS and Barnardo's.	Partner agencies have been granted access to the case management system to enable oversight of referral details.
Substance Misuse	Data captured by case workers and specialist partners from Safe East.	Partner agencies have been granted access to the case management system to enable oversight of referral details.
Out-Of-Court Disposals	Fully captured by existing recording processes.	Reviews of data entry processes and regular monthly reporting on out-of-court decision recording.
Links to Wider Services	Social care data is regularly matched with YJS data using social care IDs.	Plans for a unified business information system to enable automatic matching of records across systems in the Children and Culture Directorate.
Management Board Attendance	Captured alongside minutes at Operational and Executive board meetings.	Live attendance register maintained by business support staff following each Operational and Executive board meeting.
Serious Violence	Automatically captured when offences are recorded on the case management system.	No challenges or additional requirements.
Victims	Police provide victim data to the YJS Victim Worker for all those who consent to support.	New victim process recording requirements implemented for the Victim Worker to ensure adherence to the new victim KPIs.

13. Children from groups which are over-represented

'The youth justice service case manager did a very good job. My son does not listen to anyone, but he listened to them and I liked him a lot. Initially my son did not get up to see him, but as weeks progressed, he worked very well with them and they bonded very well. They always arranged interpreter to speak to me'

Feedback from Parent as part of our Audit process

- 13.1. The Youth Justice Partnership are committed to eradicating disproportionate outcomes for the children that we work with. Disproportionality is a key area in our Child First priority as it directly challenges the Adultification of certain children due to their ethnicity. We regularly use and review our disproportionality data, ensuring that we are making an impact and reflecting on our Disproportionality Action Plan throughout the year when new data and evidence-based practice is highlighted and identified.

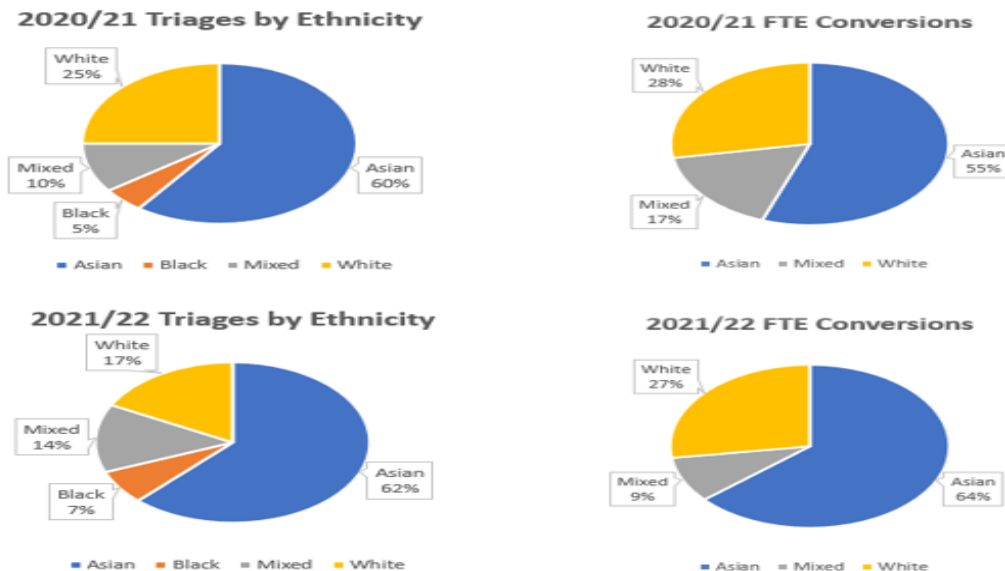


13.2. We are already aware of the disproportionate outcomes received by Black and Mixed Heritage children, in Tower Hamlets and the City of London YJS. The data above provides a clear snapshot of our disproportionality concerns:

- Mixed Heritage children are overrepresented in our cohort by 5%.
- Other children are underrepresented by -1% (not statistically significant due to the low numbers)
- White and Asian children are not significantly over/underrepresented in our cohort.
- Although Black children are not significantly over/underrepresented in the Ethnic Disparity Toolkit provided by the Youth Justice Board, we are aware of disproportionate outcomes that these children face.

Achievements:

- Our YJS Diagnostic Review in February 2023 highlighted our assessment and understanding of the child's identity and diversity needs as an area of 'outstanding' practice;
- Continuation of the Ether Programme, a group-based intervention specifically for Black and Mixed Heritage boys;
- Development of specific girls intervention;
- Disproportionality Spotlight with the Governance Board and the YJ team to ensure that all are aware of our areas of focus and;
- The impact of our Triage intervention with Black children has seen a 100% success rate with no Black children who received a Triage between 2020 and 2022 becoming a First Time Entrant.



Areas of challenge:

- The Stop and Search Data provided by our Police partners shows that Black children are disproportionality stopped and searched in the borough. We need to continue to work with our partners to tackle this figure;
- There continues to be an overrepresentation of Mixed Heritage children received negative outcomes as highlighted in our Disproportionality Spotlight;
- Mixed heritage children that receive Triage intervention are disproportionately re-offending and therefore missing the opportunities that the diversion offer provides. However, it should be noted that our numbers of children that re-offend after receiving a Triage are very small (20%);

The year ahead:

- As part of our significant growth of the Youth Service, we will be developing a specialist girls provision in the Youth Service to support the specific needs of girls, alongside our continual development of our girls offer in the service;
- We will be developing with our Police Partners a Stop and Search QR Code. Once live, all children that are stopped and searched by the Police will receive a card with a QR code on that takes them to the Tower Hamlets YJS website page which explains their rights during this process;
- Better understanding of the cohort of Black children that we have worked with to see if there is anything that can be replicated;
- Better understanding of the cohort of Mixed Heritage children to identify specific needs, or themes, in order to allow us to build on their strengths and support desistance and;
- Development of identity programme for Girls, Mixed heritage children
- We have trained over 200 Police Officers since February 2023 on the Diversion offer to see if we can have a positive impact on this journey. This will be a key indicator of success
- Ensuring that disproportionality is at the forefront of our new quality assurance process

14. Prevention and Diversion

'It has made me look at things in a different way, not like before. I have tried things that I wouldn't have before – like I didn't have the chance to do the activities I now do'.

Feedback from a Child as part of our Audit process

Break the Cycle:

- 14.1. Our prevention offer is provided by the Break the Cycle team which sits in the Youth Justice and Young Peoples Service. Break the Cycle provides early intervention for those children that we are the most concerned about, specifically in relation to becoming involved in the criminal justice system. As part of the expansion of our diversionary offer, as supported by the Turnaround funding, the Break the Cycle have started to work with children who receive Conditional Cautions.

Out of Court and Turnaround:

- 14.2. With the additional funding from the Turnaround programme, we have been able to recruit two additional Case Prevention Officers and provide additional capacity within the Management team via a secondment post, allowing us to provide greater oversight of the offer. The Team Manager will take the lead on the diversion offer and support the wider YJS Partnership in reducing the number of children that become First Time Entrants as well as developing a specific programme of interventions for these children and supporting them to access the Youth Service, Health and Education.

The year ahead:

- The Youth Service growth will see a continued focus on the targeted youth offer, receiving referrals and working with children that are at risk of not achieving their full outcomes;
- Continue to deliver training to our Police Officers on Out-of-Court disposals;
- Development of the 'Adolescent Offer', a resource for all partners and service users to access that highlight all of the provision available from Universal to Tier 4 services. This is a project that is being completed in line with our Health colleagues and we envisage it going live within the next 12 months;
- The development of the ENGAGE programme with Hackney YJS across our joint BCU which will provide youth work support at the Police Station at a 'teachable' moment;
- Development of the Turnaround project, increasing the offer for children when they are at risk and ensuring that they are supported in achieving their goals;

15. Detention in Police Custody

- 15.1. We want to ensure that children who are held in Police custody are provided with the support, and the appropriate outcome during this period of detention.

- 15.2. At present, we are working with the partnership to ensure that we have regular access to this data so that we can identify any gaps in the support that the children, and the police need, to ensure an appropriate outcome. In the interim, we are working closely with Hackney YJS and the Police to have ENGAGE Youth Workers in Police Custody Suites to be available for children during this time and are working with the Police to provide a more 'trauma-informed' custody suite.

16. Constructive Resettlement and the Use of Custody

Case Manager has been really good. She has supported us at court with everything. She talked to us about everything, and we knew what to expect. I couldn't ask for a better person. I think that my child's mindset has changed because of the work or conversation that his Case Manager has had with him. It's been good and even though he is where he is, he is still working with her. She lets me know what is going on. I couldn't ask for anyone better.

Feedback from Parent whose child is in custody as part of our Audit process

Remands and Use of Custody

- 16.1. The Secure Estate is not appropriate for children. They do not thrive in that environment, nor does the current system allow for children to have their basic needs met. A period in custody is a traumatic event for a child and we want to support children from avoiding this option wherever we can.

Remands 2021-2022

- 453 bed spaces used
- 4 individual boys
- 2 Asian children and 2 Black children

Remands 2022-2023

- 953 bed spaces used
- 9 individual boys
- 4 Asian children, 3 Mixed Heritage children and 2 White children

- 16.2. From September 2022, we recognised an increase in our use of remands, due to a spate of serious offences over the summer period, coupled with children who were on remand for significant violence offences and were waiting for their trial to be heard at Crown Court. From this point, we introduced the Rescue Remand meetings, prior to the child's initial court appearance when charged with very serious offences and remand is likely.

In addition, if remanded another meeting held within a week to look at other options for children. These meetings have resulted in two children being offered Bail Packages after 37 and 7 days in custody respectively.

Case Study

Child had been working with the YJS for a period of 5 weeks for low level offences when he was arrested for further offences and placed in Youth Detention Accommodation due to the serious nature of these offences and the Court's concern that he would commit further offences should he be in the community.

Within 6 days, a Rescue Remand meeting took place with all relevant professionals, including the staff from the child's community placement and the child's strengths were identified and a holistic package was put together to present to Court.

The following day, the Bail Package was provided to Court at a pre-arranged Bail Hearing with the allocated YJS Officer, Social Worker and staff from the child's placement in attendance. The Court agreed to the Bail Package meaning that the child only spent one week in custody. He was sentenced 2 months later to a Youth Rehabilitation Order.

- 16.3. To continue reducing our numbers of children in custody, we need to ensure that our bail packages are robust with appropriate intervention for children to build on their strengths and support desistance. We have continued to have dedicated Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Officers who work intensively with children alongside their allocated Case worker and staff have access to youth clubs during the day to meet children in the community and use the facilities. Our priority this year for an improved Education and Health offer will further strengthen this.
- 16.4. In the next 12 months, we will provide further specialist training for staff that work with children remanded to custody and work with our Court Users Group once the London Accommodation Pathfinder to provide trauma informed, therapeutic support in a local accommodation for children. This would be to provide a direct alternative to a Youth Detention Accommodation. The project is due to go live in Summer 2023 and this should have a significant impact upon the numbers of children that spend time on remand and custody.

Constructive Resettlement

- 16.5. In Tower Hamlets, we have a lead officer for Constructive Resettlement who supports their peers in ensuring that good practice guidelines are followed in relation to constructive resettlement. Effective resettlement starts from the moment a child enters the custodial setting, whether on remand or once sentenced and it is our role to ensure that the transition back to the community is effective. Our staff are extremely skilled at recognising the importance of starting resettlement immediately and we will continue to support them with training and our Practice Standards, recognising that due to low numbers, staff may need support in the finer nuances of resettlement.

- 16.6. We are developing our Resettlement offer further by ensuring that all staff are trained in the new offer with the resources that we have and that we hold our partners in the Secure Estate to account, particularly regarding Education and Health. We want to ensure that children, whether on remand or sentenced, have a smooth transition back to the community that supports their growth. However, we hope that with the dedicated education offer within ISS, coupled with the London Accommodation Pathway, our numbers of children in need of being resettled will significantly reduce and the focus of resettlement will be as part of the Rescue Remand Meetings.



17. Standards for children in the justice system

- 17.1. Since February 2023, the YJS has undertaken a YJS Diagnostic Review undertaken by two experienced Heads of Service as well as completing a self-assessment as part of the preparation for this document. This feedback, in conjunction with our monthly Audit process, has been incorporated into our plan.
- 17.2. The results of the Diagnostic Review were extremely promising with the feedback being that the service has travelled a great distance since our HMIP Inspection. Although we recognise that there is still improvements to be made, we want to positively reflect upon our achievements and our focus on our standards is about consistently achieving good for our children and our continuous development as a service.
- 17.3. Our Audit process supports our vision of continuous development and our interactive Practice Standards for staff re-enforces the high standards that we have set for ourselves to ensure that staff are supported to deliver an excellent service.

17.4. The Youth Justice Board have directed all YJSs to complete a self-assessment in October 2023 which will be our next opportunity to forensically assess our delivery and we have applied for a Peer Review via the Youth Justice Service Improvement Partnership (YJSIP) in Spring 2024.

18. Restorative approaches and victims

18.1. Tower Hamlets and the City of London YJS are committed to delivering a high-quality service for our victims and the children that have caused them harm. This includes having an effective offer for our victims and valuable learning opportunities for children to engage with reparation that supports this learning.

Our support to Victims

18.2. We recruited a new Restorative Justice and Victims Officer in June 2022, who has been able to offer a fresh insight into our practice and develop the offer. The RJ and Victims Officer and the YJS Police have worked effectively in improving the service:

- 100% of victims have been contacted (an increase from 34%);
- Our average turnaround from referrals received to victims contacted is 6 days (a reduction of 20 days);
- Restorative Justice assessments are taking place with children and their victims to assess the suitability of direct restorative justice;
- Development of an RJ 'script' by the YJS and provided to Police to support informing victims of our offer;

18.3. Since the appointment of the Restorative Justice officer (RJ) in June 2022, there has been an improvement in the offer for the victims and recording. The YJS police and the RJ officer have worked closely to ensure that the victims views are captured and the offer of support whether through direct or indirect RJ work was delivered. The YJS is working closely with the police to reduce the number of days in contacting the victims whilst acknowledging that this may be out of our control due to delays in the court process.

Community Panel Members

18.4. The volunteers that we have are dedicated to supporting children in achieving positive outcomes and engaging the victim's views. The Restorative Justice officer now attends relevant panels to share the victim's views with the panel members so that we can hear their voices. To have more reflection of the community that we serve, we contacted local organisations, specifically the Bengali and Somali communities to share the opportunity of being a panel member to support this. As a result, we recently completed a new recruitment and training round of Panel Volunteers.

18.5. We now have 20 panel members, and although the gender breakdown is more female (80%) to male (20%), the self-identified ethnicity of these volunteers is becoming more reflective of the community: Asian (40%), Black (20%), White (30%) and Other (10%).

- 18.6. To support volunteers, we ensure that they receive continuous training to support them in delivering service to the children and families. Since 2022, the YJS have ensured that all panels have resumed to face to face contacts as we recognise how important it is for children and family to go through this process in this manner.

19. Serious Violence and Exploitation

- 19.1. The exploitation of children and serious youth violence is a priority for Tower Hamlets and we have developed our processes and support offer for children, families and staff throughout the last 12 months. We recognised that the relationship between the Exploitation Service and the YJS was not effective in delivering support and positive outcomes for children and this is something that has been a priority for the partnership.
- 19.2. The Exploitation Service provides a co-ordinated whole system response to prevent serious youth violence and exploitation and to support and disrupt the harm happening to children in LBTH through exploitation and or violence. The Service aims to ensure every intervention and change is made intentionally by professionals, communities, and organisations to contribute to reducing serious youth violence and exploitation. The offer is designed to support and ensure that the changes we make are most likely to reduce and prevent serious youth violence and exploitation and effectively support children being harmed outside the home. The Exploitation Service has developed a Harm Outside of the Home framework which was launched in January 2023. The Service consists of specialist practitioners who support change across Children's Social care and the wider partnership system.
- 19.3. In order to support the children that we work with and the wider partnership, the YJS and Exploitation have developed new ways of working closer together. Daily and weekly intelligence meetings support practitioners in understanding the information that has been received quickly and efficiently whilst the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel provides a reflective space to discuss individuals, groups and places in a wider partnership context. Both are attended by members of the YJS Management team as well as frontline practitioners thus ensuring closer opportunities of working together.

Next Steps:

- 19.4. Our data demonstrates that the numbers of serious youth violence incidents have been increasing over the last 12 months, something that is of obvious concern to the partnership. We are working on developing an even greater offer to meet these growing concerns, focusing on prevention with the delivery of the Family Hubs strategy and the redesign of the Youth Service. The mayor has been explicit in regard to at least one safe space in every ward in the Borough as being a priority, with a financial commitment to support this of £13 million. As well as new safe spaces for children and young people, 'Young Tower Hamlets' will have a greater detached youth work offer which will support incidents in the borough with long term youth work support and a greater targeted youth work offer to support children and young people at risk of being exploited.

- 19.5. The development of the Serious Youth Violence Duty is a priority for the partnership in the immediate 6 months. Work has already begun in order to develop the offer and ensure that the partnership, led by Community Safety, is knowledgeable in relation to expectations and able to commit to the duty.

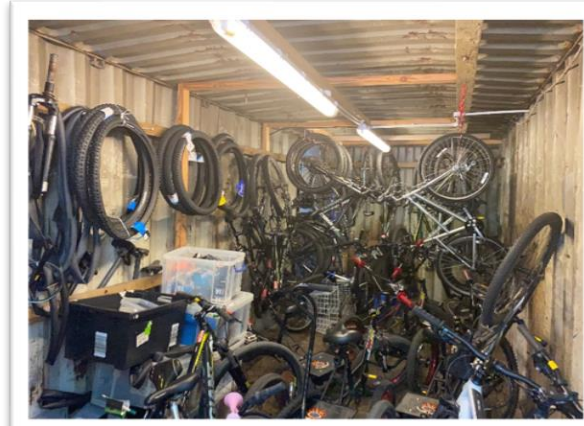
20. Evidence-based practice & innovation

Reparation

- 20.1. Over the past year the service has transformed the reparation offer throughout the borough for children who are required to undertake this as part of their intervention. This has been guided by Child First principles to ensure that children are provided with meaningful opportunities to repair harm as well as utilising reparation as opportunity to develop their pro-social identity, empower children to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their communities. Our reparation projects were also nominated for an award at our Young People's Award 2022. Winners of the awards, which are designed completely by the Young Mayor's Team, are chosen by other young people. We were extremely proud that our children's impact was recognised by their peers and that the participants had an opportunity to be celebrated at a formal event for their contribution to the Stepney Green City Farm.



Our winners from the Young Peoples Awards 2022 with (L-R) Cllr Abdul Wahid, the Deputy Mayor (and Youth Justice Executive Board Member) Maium Tallakdar, Bilal Awan (Lead on Youth Participation Forum) and Tyrelle Ritchie (Team Manager)



Case Study 1

The Osmani Trust specialise in criminal justice work and provide a range of services for children in the borough. The YJS collaborated with the Osmani Trust and the Utilize Project to co-produce a reparation project on the Isle of Dogs which built upon the interests and skills of children enhancing employability as well as revitalising much needing community spaces. Whilst participating in the reparation project, children also received additional support from a Youth Worker at the Osmani Trust which also enabled children to access and benefit from the wider services available from the Osmani Trust beyond their involvement with the youth justice service.

Children who participated in the reparation project successfully completed their reparation hours but also with support from the Osmani Trust also worked towards and successfully completed CSCS Cards (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme), developed skills in painting and decorating as well as pathways to set themselves up as sole traders with Osmani Trust providing enterprise skills such as marketing and the knowledge to set up their own businesses.


Quote from Child

“Thanks to Sean and Bilal, I’ve had the chance to reflect through this journey and now recognise the impact my former choices have had not on me and my family but my community. I hope to be better now and no longer look back, I have something to look forward to and I am confident I will be a success in my career in construction”.

Quote from Stakeholder

“We at Utilize Project are proud to be involved in Osmani Trust’s Reparation Project, our site at Pepper Street has benefitted from the young people giving our “meanwhile” spaces a much needed spruce up, whilst they’ve gained employability skills and the chance for a fresh start, to flourish. Young people have painted and decorated our entrances and community spaces, used by other youth groups that benefit residents of our community here on the Isle of Dogs, saving us money and giving us the resource to do these jobs that otherwise we would not have been able to do. Many thanks to the young people for giving back, to a much needed and loved cause”.

Work with girls:

- 20.2. Although only a small part of the cohort that we work with, we understand that girls need intervention that is specific to their needs and these need to be considered. We have created an Arts Based programme that supports girls to talk about their identity and what is important to them. This project has had extremely positive feedback from the participants, with their work being something that they are very proud of. Children understanding their identity is extremely important, and a first step in supporting a pro-social identity and using art is a key engagement tool, ensuring that this is achievable. Therefore, over the next 24 months, we will be developing this further, using Haileybury Youth Club as a base and the funding that we have received from a private organisation who are committed to supporting non-traditional users of Youth Services to engage in the provision.
- 
- 20.3. Over the next 12 months, we have exciting plans for projects that we can use as tools to engage our children and provide them with new experiences, or to support them in challenging situations. We are developing a communication passport for children to use when they have additional needs and need to explain to an adult how to engage with them. We are also working with our local Police and Fire teams to provide opportunities for children to work with the mounted Police and to experience the work of the Fire Service. These initiatives will be starting in Summer 2023 and it is hoped that they will feature regularly in our intervention offer.

Our key highlights of 2022-2023 are captured and demonstrated below:



21. Evaluation and ongoing commitment to continuous improvement

- 21.1. In 2022-2023, we focused on redesigning the supporting infrastructure for our staff and children, ensuring effective training, support structures such as risk management, resettlement and remand panels. This is governed by a Board that is committed to making effective change. Throughout this plan, we have reflected upon the developments and recognising the next steps that we need to take. Our data, coupled with the information that we are receiving from the audit process has allowed us to continue from the start of the journey that our HMIP report provided. By requesting an external review by two experienced Heads of Service, we were provided with an independent view of the progress that we have made and where we need to focus our efforts moving forward. As we continue our improvement journey, we are committed to ensuring that we engage with a Peer Review within the next 12 months.
- 21.2. There are clear challenges when improving at pace – staff can feel that they are ‘done too’ rather than engaged in the process, change can happen without an opportunity to ensure that it is embedded effectively, and we need to ensure a balanced approach. We will continue our improvement journey by collaborating with our children, team and partners to ensure that our progression brings everyone along and that all voices are heard, understood and reflected upon to achieve the aims that we have set out for ourselves.

22. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of Youth Justice Executive Board	James Thomas
Signature	
Date	

23. Appendixes

1: Governance Board Membership

Tower Hamlets and the City of London Youth Justice Operational Partnership Board Membership

Name	Department	Job Title	Contact Details
Susannah Beasley-Murray	Children's Services	Divisional Director, Supporting Families, LBTH	Susannah.Beasley-Murray@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Kelly Duggan	Children's Services	Head of Youth Justice and Young People's Services, LBTH	Kelly.Duggan@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Rachel Talmage	City of London	Service Manager Children's Social Care and Early Help	Rachel.Green@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Katie Cole	Children's Services	Associate Director of Public Health for Children and Families, LBTH	Katie.Cole@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Alex Nelson	Voluntary and Community Sector VCS	Voluntary Sector Children and Youth Forum Coordinator	alex@vcth.org.uk
Mohammed Jolil	Children's Services	Head of Early Help, Children & Families LBTH	Mohammed.Jolil@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Abzal Ali	Children's Services	Deputy Head, Young People's Service, LBTH	Abzal.Ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Giulia Romita	Youth Justice Board	Youth Justice Practice and Innovation Manager Youth Justice Board	Giulia.Romita@yjb.gov.uk
Kien Luong	Children's Services	Data Analyst, Strategy, Policy and Improvement, LBTH	Kien.Luong@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Annick Keble-Cross	Children's Services	Deputy Head of Youth Justice, LBTH	Annick.keble-cross@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Luke Norbury	Children's Services	Deputy Head of Youth Justice, LBTH	Luke.Norbury@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Nancy Stewart	Children's Services	Team Leader, Youth Justice, LBTH	Nancy.Stewart@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Cherie Oktem	Children's Services	Team Leader, Youth Justice, LBTH	Cherie.Oktem@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Jai Singh	Police	Chief Inspector, Neighbourhoods and Partnerships, Met Police	Jai.Singh@met.police.uk
Danielle Lexton	Children's Services	Interim Improvement Consultant, LBTH	Danielle.Lexton@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Charles Griggs	Health, Adults, Communities	Head of Community Safety, LBTH	Charles.Griggs@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Joe Piper	Children's Services	Assistant Headteacher, LBTH	Joe.Piper@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Will Firminger	Children Services	Senior Data Analyst, LBTH	Will.firminger@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Tower Hamlets and the City of London Youth Justice Executive Partnership Board Membership

Name	Department	Job Title	Contact Details
James Thomas (Chair)	Children and Culture	Corporate Director of Children and Culture	james.thomas@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Jai Singh (Deputy Chair)	Met Police	Chief Inspector	jai.singh@met.police.uk
Councillor Maium Talukdar	Mayor's Office	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning	maium.talukdar@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Susannah Beasley-Murray	Children and Culture	Director of Supporting Families	susannah.beasley-murray@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Kelly Duggan	Children and Culture	Head of Youth Justice and Young People's Service	kelly.duggan@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Lucy Satchellday	Probation Services	Head of Probation Service	lucy.satchellday@justice.gov.uk
David Cregan	Children and Culture	Virtual Head Teacher for CLA	david.cregan@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Ann Corbett	Health, Adults and Community	Director of Community Safety	ann.corbett@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Appendix 2: Staffing Structure


The full staffing structure showing details of the staff roles in the YJS and the reporting arrangements for the Head of Service should be included as an appendix within the plan. A separate table should also be included as an appendix recording the ethnicity, sex and known disability of staff.

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Referral Order Panel Volunteers		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian					1		1	1	2	6	4	7
Black				1	2	6			1	3	3	10
Mixed			1			1		1			1	2
White	1	1		1	3	3	1		1	5	6	10
Any other ethnic group		1								2		3
Not known												0
TOTAL	1	2	1	2	5	10	2	2	4	16	14	32

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager		Operational Manager		Practitioner		Administration		Sessional	Students	
	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	
Permanent		1		2	1	9		1			
Fixed Term		1		1				3			
Outsourced											
Temporary		1				2					
Vacant						1					
Seconded Children's Services											
Seconded Probation						1					
Seconded Police			1			2					
Seconded Health (Substance Misuse)					1						
Seconded Health (Physical Health)											
Seconded Health (SAL)					2						
Other Seconded Health											
Seconded Education						1					
Seconded Connexions											
Seconded Other											
Total											
Disabled (Self-Classified)				1		2					



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Decision Report Cover Sheet: Council 24 January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: (Cover report of Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services) Main Report of Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources	Classification: Unrestricted
Cover report of: Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes	

Wards affected	All Wards
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


- 1.1 At its meeting on 13 December 2023, the Cabinet considered this report on proposed Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes.
- 1.2 As this forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework it now requires approval by Council.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Reduce the current 100% discount awarded to unoccupied and unfurnished and uninhabitable dwellings to zero (0%) for the financial year 2024/25 onwards.
2. From 1 April 2024, amend the application of the levy of 100% premium for long-term empty properties to 1 year reducing this from the current 2 years.
3. From 1 April 2024 levy an additional premium on long-term empty property vacant for over 5 years at the maximum permitted level of 200%. The resulting charge will be 300% of the standard Council Tax.
4. From 1 April 2024 levy an additional premium on long-term empty property vacant for over 10 years at the maximum permitted level of 300%. The resulting charge will be 400% of the standard Council Tax.
5. Council be given the discretion, delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to reduce or waive the long-term empty premium charge in exceptional circumstances.
6. Give 12 months' notice that the Council will introduce a second home premium of 100% from 1 April 2025.

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Cabinet/Council	 TOWER HAMLETS
13 December 2023	
Report of: Julie Lorraine – Corporate Director of Resources	Classification: Unrestricted
Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes	

Lead Member	Councillor Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Originating Officer(s)	Chris Boylett – Interim Head of Revenues and Benefits
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Reason for Key Decision	Significant impact on wards
Forward Plan Notice Published	02/11/2023
Exempt information	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Investing in public services.

Executive Summary

This report seeks to gain agreement for the Council to amend the current Council Tax discounts and exemptions applied to empty properties from 1st April 2024. The reason for this decision is to encourage owners to bring properties back into use and increase the availability of homes in the borough.

The proposal also seeks to provide notice that the Council will introduce, from 1st April 2025, additional Council Tax premium on second homes in the borough.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to;

1. Reduce the current 100% discount awarded to unoccupied and unfurnished and uninhabitable dwellings is reduced to zero (0%) for the financial year 2024/25 onwards.
2. From 1st April 2024, amend the application of the levy of 100% premium for long-term empty properties to 1 year reducing this from the current 2 years.
3. From 1st April 2024 levy an additional premium on long-term empty property vacant for over 5 years at the maximum permitted level of 200%. The resulting charge will be 300% of the standard council tax.
4. From 1st April 2024 levy an additional premium on long-term empty property vacant for over 10 years at the maximum permitted level of 300%. The resulting charge will be 400% of the standard council tax.
5. Council be given the discretion, delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to reduce or waive the long-term empty premium charge in exceptional circumstances.
6. Give 12 months' notice that the Council will introduce a second home premium of 100% from 1st April 2025.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The removal of the empty property discount will enable the Council to ensure that property owners are incentivised to return properties to occupation as soon as possible. With the ongoing shortage of housing across the borough it is important that the availability of housing is maximised. At the same time this will reduce the administrative burden of awarding relatively small discounts.
- 1.2 Increasing the premiums on long term empty properties will again seek to incentivise owners to return these properties to the market. Although this will not impact many properties it does reinforce the Council's messaging about tackling empty homes.
- 1.3 Introducing the second home premium is also aimed at encouraging owners to potentially return properties to long term and permanent use increasing the availability of homes.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The alternative considered was to keep the empty home premium at its current level and not to introduce the second home premium but given the priority to increase the availability of affordable housing in the borough this would not help to utilise this measure to encourage owners to bring properties back into occupation.

- 2.2 In relation to the removal of the empty and unfurnished discount against the alternative considered was to retain the 1-month discount, but this is administratively burdensome and would result in a continued loss of income to the council.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 For council tax purposes, empty is defined as unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. Currently long-term empty properties, those empty over 1 month do not receive any discount and a full council tax is charged. The level of discount for unfurnished properties up to 1 month remains the maximum permitted amount (100%). Each billing authority has the discretion to give a discount of any amount from 0% to 100% in respect of empty properties.
- 3.2 As at the 2nd October 2023 – the most recent Council Tax base (CTB) return the Council identified 232 properties receiving the 100% discount on that day. A further 1,751 were still empty after 6 months. These would have all receive the 100% discount for a month. All of these properties would be impacted by the removal of the discount. In general, empty discounts are granted for short periods and are of relatively low value given the fast turnaround of rental properties in the borough. During 2022/23 a total of 3,696 discounts were given with an average value of £56.93. With a total of £187,604 awarded over the financial year, including the GLA's share.
- 3.3 The Council currently applies a long-term empty property premium of 100% of the charge to all properties empty and unfurnished over 2 years. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 allows Councils to charge this premium after a property is empty for 1 year. As at the beginning of October 2023 the Council has identified 719 properties that would fall into this category.
- 3.4 In 2019 the Government permitted Council's to increase the premiums charged for properties empty for more than 5 and 10 years to 200% and 300% respectively. This option has not yet been exercised by the Council an additional 50% of the council tax charged.
- 3.5 At the beginning of October 2023, the Council's annual CTB return identified 184 properties that have been empty for over 2 years. Of these 27 have been empty over 5 years and a further 8 over 10 years. Initially it will be these properties that will be impacted by the increase in premium.
- 3.6 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 gives Council's the powers to levy a premium of 100% on second homes. Second homes being those that do not have permanent occupant(s) and are 'substantially furnished'. The Council currently records 2,318 properties as second homes. During the next year the service will review all cases to ensure its records are accurate before applying the levy. This will also allow owners to make an informed decision before the levy is charged. This could result in a change in use of the property and increase the availability of housing in the borough.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The data available to understand the equality impacts of these proposals is limited. Those properties that may have benefited from the empty property discount or will be impacted by the empty or second home premiums will not be by definition the sole or main residence of the owner or may be owned by an organisation such as the Council, RSL or private business and as such it is unlikely would be impacted unfairly as they have more than one property.
- 4.2 When looking at historical awards the properties are geographically spread across the borough and with the data held (Name and forwarding address) it is not possible to demonstrate that the proposal is impacting any group more proportionally than any other. It is less likely that individual owners of properties empty over 1 years will fall within the lower income groups.
- 4.3 To allow private landlords to move a property into occupation and avoid having to pay the proposed premium the Council offers opportunities to private landlords to let the property to the tenants through the Council. This offers potential landlords the opportunity to positively impact upon homeless people and families within the borough.
- 4.4 By giving 12 months' notice to those who own a second home within the borough of the Council's intention to levy a premium those owners will have the opportunity to change the way in which the property is used. Again, this may lead to additional properties to be made available to rent or sold to buyers who intend to use the property as their main residence.

5 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 5.1 The additional income the Council is estimated to received from the changes outlined in the report is shown in the table below:

	24/25 £000	25/26 £000
Empty Property Premium	546	546
Empty Property Exemption	135	135
Second Home Premium	-	2,000
Total Additional CTAX Income	681	2,681

6 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 6.1 The percentage levels of reduction referred in recommendation 1 is that allowable under the current legislation.
- 6.2 The current legislation (Local Government Finance Act 1992) is set for amendment and will be enforce from the 1st April 2024. The levies referred to

in recommendations 2 to 4 inclusive relate to the new levies that will come into force and will be compliant with the new legislation at that time.

- 6.3 The Council is also entitled to determine the level of discount which may apply to second homes including a determination that no discount might apply.
- 6.4 Central Government Guidance suggests that local authorities should consider the state of the housing market when making the determination detailed in this report. The intention of the Council is to increase the availability of homes in the borough which appears to meet the guidance. Therefore the Council has the power to undertake the activities detailed in this report.
-

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>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Wednesday 24 January 2024</p>	
<p>Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES ON COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2023/24</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

This report reviews proportionality as required by section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 ('The 1989 Act'); recommends the establishment of committees and sub-committees as set out in the Council's Constitution; and proposes the allocation of places on those Committees between the political groups represented on the Authority.

A change in the political composition of the Council has occurred following Councillor Ayas Miah becoming an Independent (ungrouped) Member having previously been part of the Labour Group.

Consequent to this change, the Council must review the allocation of places on Committees and other bodies covered by the proportionality requirements in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The proposed new committee allocations are set out at paragraph 3.6 overleaf.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Consider the review of proportionality as at Section 3 of this report and the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub-Committees for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24 as set out at paragraph 3.6.
2. Note the Committees set out for the municipal year 2023/24 listed in paragraph 3.6 as agreed at the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2023.
3. Agree any changes to the memberships (and substitutes) of those Committees as tabled at this Council meeting for approval.
4. To note that the Monitoring Officer is authorised to approve the appointment of Councillors required to fill positions that fall vacant during the municipal year in line with the proportionality arrangements set out in this report from nominations received from the political groups.
5. Agree that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to approve the appointment of ungrouped Councillors to any committee places not allocated by the Council to a political group, after consultation with those Councillors and the Speaker of the Council where there is only one application for the position (where there is more than one application these will be presented to Council for decision).

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Changes to the political composition of the Council require a review of the proportionality calculations for the Council's Committees.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Council could determine a different arrangement of Committees to perform the required decision making and scrutiny functions and could also agree different changes to the proportionality on specific Committees to meet the same overall proportionality rules.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Section 15(1) of the 1989 Act requires the Council at, or as soon as practicable after, the Annual Meeting to carry out a review to determine the allocation to the political groups of seats on the Committees/ Panels of the Council. The principles which must be adopted are:

- (i) that in relation to each body covered by the Act, all seats are not allocated to the same political group;
- (ii) that the majority of seats on each body must go to the political group with the majority on the Council (if any);
- (iii) that subject to (i) and (ii) the number of seats on the total of all the ordinary Committees/ Panels of the authority allocated to each group bears the same proportion as that group's proportion of the seats on the full Council; and
- (iv) that subject to the above three principles, the number of seats on each ordinary Committee of the authority allocated to each political group bears the same proportion as that group's proportion of the seats on the full Council.

3.2 Once the political groups have been allocated their places in accordance with the above rules, the Council may appoint ungrouped members to any remaining positions.

3.3 Neither the Cabinet, any executive sub-groups of the Cabinet, nor the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board, are covered by the requirement for proportionality.

3.4 Following Councillor Ayas Miah's decision to become an Independent (ungrouped) Councillor, The political composition of the Council is as follows:

GROUP	SEATS (on Council)	PROPORTION ON COUNCIL	ENTITLEMENT (to seats on Committees)
Aspire	24	53.33%	41.06 (41)
Labour	18	40%	30.8 (31)
Ungrouped	3	0*	5 (remainder) – but see Para 3.5 below
	45		77

* Ungrouped Councillors are not included in the proportionality calculation. As two Councillors are required to form a group the Conservative, Green and Independent Councillors are included in the 'ungrouped' designation above.

Allocation of Places on Committees

3.5 According to the above calculation the Aspire Group would be entitled to 41 seats on these Committees, with the Labour Group being entitled to 31 and the remaining 5 being available for ungrouped Members. However, there is also a requirement in the above Act that the Aspire Group must have a majority on every Committee. This results in their allocation increasing to 43 and the ungrouped allocation consequently reducing to 3.

- 3.6 Applying the above principles, the proposed allocation of places on the Committees established by the Council for the remainder of the municipal year 2023/24 and covered by the requirement for proportionality, are listed below. The allocations for the remainder of the municipal year or until the next review of proportionality, whichever is the sooner, is as follows:

Committee	Total	Aspire	Labour	Ungrouped
Licensing Committee	15	8	6	1
Overview and Scrutiny (plus 2 co-optees)	9	5	4	
Audit Committee	9	5	4	
Strategic Development Committee	9	5	3	1
General Purposes Committee	9	5	3	1
Human Resources Committee	7	4	3	
Development Committee	7	4	3	
Pensions Committee	7	4	3	
Standards Advisory Committee (plus 5 co-optees)	5	3	2	
TOTALS	77	43	31	3

- 3.7 This will result in the allocation of all committee places amongst the political groups in accordance with the rules set out in the 1989 Act.
- 3.8 The changes result in two new places being available to ungrouped Members on Council Committees (Strategic Development Committee and General Purposes Committee). Any applications to fill those posts that are received before the Council meeting will be reported at the meeting and can be agreed by Council. Where vacancies remain, Council is asked to agree that the Monitoring Officer can confirm later expressions of interest providing there is only one application for each vacancy. Where there are multiple applications, a report will be presented to a future Council meeting asked for a decision to be taken.

- 3.9 It is for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree arrangements for its own sub-committees but no changes are required following the above and so the Sub-Committees remain:

Committee	Total	Aspire	Labour
Scrutiny Sub-Committee	7	4	3

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The purpose of the report is to ensure all political groups receive an appropriate allocation of Non-Executive Committee seats.

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.

- 5.2 None specific to this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no direct financial considerations arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The legal considerations are set out in the main body of the report. At the Annual Meeting of Council on 17 May 2023, approval was given to the Director of Legal & Interim Monitoring Officer to approve appointments of Councillors in accordance with recommendation 4.

- 7.2 Part B, Section 24 (Functions of the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Chief Officers and Corporate Directors) authorises the Monitoring Officer to make appointments to the Council's Committees in line with agreed proportionality calculations as nominated by the Council's political groups.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None.

Appendices

- None.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

Non-Executive Report of the: Council 24 th January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Questions submitted by Members of the Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions that were submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Mayor, the Speaker or the Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee for this Council meeting.
2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4, questions relating to Executive functions and decisions taken by the Mayor are put to the Mayor unless he delegates such a decision to another Member, who will therefore be responsible for answering the question. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will answer questions directed to the Mayor.
3. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. Council Procedure Rule 10.7 provides for an answer to take the form of a written answer circulated to the questioner, a reference to a published work or a direct oral answer.
5. There is a time limit of thirty minutes at the Council meeting for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any questions not put within this time are dealt with by way of written responses.
6. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

27 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

11.1 Question from Councillor Amin Rahman

Could the Lead member provide an update on the council's outstanding accounts requiring sign off? These accounts were left unsigned for 6 years under the previous administration.

11.2 Question from Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury

Can the Cabinet Member follow up on suggestions at the recent Health and Wellbeing Board that housing officers be part of the consultation in combatting drugs work?

11.3 Question from Councillor Ahmodul Kabir

Residents in Wharton House in Bethnal Green East recently went without heating and hot water for weeks, and in some cases over a month. In an emergency such as this can the Lead Member tell us what the council doing to a) ensure that the registered provider, in this case One Housing is supporting residents and b) deploy its own resources to assist those most vulnerable.

11.4 Question from Councillor Marc Francis

Can the Mayor and Lead Member provide details of the number of applications that were in the queue awaiting an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment in each month since April 2022? It would also be helpful to know how many assessments were carried out (a) within and (b) outside the two-month target time, broken down by (i) Homelessness and (ii) Lettings in each of 2022/23 and so far in 2023/24?

11.5 Question from Councillor Shafi Ahmed

I thank the current administration for introducing a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order to curb drug related Anti-Social behaviour, particularly the use of NOX (laughing gas) on our streets. Can the Lead Member set out the impact this has had in addressing the problem to date?

11.6 Question from Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

Following the allocation of NCIL to fund the Mayor's Community Grants programme, when will councillors receive copies of:

- 1) the legal advice provided to the Mayor validating the use of NCIL in this way
- 2) the breakdown of NCIL allocation to grants at a project and location level

11.7 Question from Councillor Harun Miah

Can the Lead Member provide an update on progress with senior management recruitment and achieving a workforce to reflect the community - in Tower Hamlets?

11.8 Question from Councillor Asma Islam

Could the Mayor provide us with an update of the conversations he has had with THCH regarding the condition of Vollasky house?

11.9 Question from Councillor Abdul Mannan

Can the Lead Member update us on progress with the recommendations following the LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place in September last year?

11.10 Question from Councillor Asma Begum

Could the relevant cabinet member inform me what new investment there is in the 2024-25 council budget related to the council's net zero commitments?

11.11 Question from Councillor Kamrul Hussain

Could the Lead Member share feedback from the Women In Business Festive Fair last month? What was on offer and how well was it attended?

11.12 Question from Councillor Rebekah Sultana

Could the relevant cabinet member inform me what sort of actions are being taken to support individuals without housing during the winter months and whether the council could be take actions such as lowering the threshold in which Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) protocols can be initiated?

11.13 Question from Councillor Ahmodur Khan

Community safety is a huge concern, and this is felt quite strongly on the Isle of Dogs. The previous administration did very little to address crime and even less to save the only police station on the Island. Can the Lead Member tell us what he is going to do help Islanders feel safer?

11.14 Question from Councillor Shubo Hussain

How many GCSE booster classes have the council supported schools in delivering since 2022?

11.15 Question from Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled

Now that the independent investigation, initiated by 31 members of staff, into housing management across housing options and homelessness has concluded, can the Lead Member provide an update as to what will happen going forward.

11.16 Question from Councillor James King

When is the council going to get round to fixing the front door of Padstow House on the Roche estate? It has been hanging off its hinges for six months.

11.17 Question from Councillor Abdul Mailk

Can the Lead Member provide a list of all the road safety and traffic management schemes on the Isle of Dogs delivered under the current Mayor and measures that are planned in the next 12 months?

11.18 Question from Councillor Amina Ali

What actions has the council taken to support residents and business owners affected by the recent flooding on Fish Island?

11.19 Question from Councillor Bellal Uddin

The previous administration had very little regard for Cubitt Town Library. This historic building has received a boost from Mayor Rahman and is now also operating as a much-needed Resident Hub. Is the Lead Member aware of plans to move the library service and if so, will he work to keep the provision in Cubitt Town?

11.20 Question from Councillor Abdal Ullah

Can the Mayor give us an update on progress with Mulberry Academy London Dock?

11.21 Question from Councillor Amy Lee

Can the Mayor tell me what representations he has made to relevant partners in regards to the boat the OceanDiva?

11.22 Question from Councillor Sabina Akhtar

How many £100 free school vouchers were delivered to parents over the Christmas period?

11.23 Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed

Could the relevant cabinet member inform me how many times the housing emergency task force has met and its membership?

11.24 Question from Councillor Sirajul Islam

How many housing enforcement officers have been funded and resourced since 2022?

11.25 Question from Councillor Sabina Khan

Could the relevant cabinet member provide an update on any actions taken by the tension monitoring group over the last three months?

11.26 Question from Councillor Nathalie Bienfait


How much progress has been made on installing new EV chargers across the borough?

- Please provide details of chargers installed in the last 12 months broken down by ward.
- Please provide details of plans to install chargers in the coming 12 months
- In both cases above, please provide the following information: about where and when chargers will be/were installed, what type of charger (e.g. fast/slow), where they are located on the pavement or street and whether/what proportion have a dedicated parking bay for them.

11.27 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

Pavements across the Isle of Dogs and elsewhere in the borough are increasingly being obstructed by abandoned lime bikes. These are a particular hazard to the disabled, those with sight impediments and parents with buggies. Many local authorities across London are introducing restrictions on these bikes to prevent the problems they create. Will Tower Hamlets consider implementing such restrictions?

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Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 24 th January 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motions submitted by Members of the Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. The following motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting.
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the motions alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS

Set out overleaf is the motions that have been submitted.

12.1 Motion on CROSS PARTY MOTION ON CELEBRATING MIGRATION

Proposed by: Cllr Musthak Ahmed

Seconded by: Cllr Amina Ali

This Council notes:

- The integral and invaluable role that migrants, refugees, and asylum- seeking peoples have played in shaping the history and culture of Tower Hamlets.
- That those fleeing tyranny and oppression – whether they be the Jewish communities fleeing the pogroms of Tsarist Russia; the fascism of Mussolini, Franco and Hitler; the Irish, Caribbean, Bangladeshi, and South-East Asian communities escaping the poverty and deprivation of colonialism; or Somali and Ukrainian refugees seeking safety from war – have always been welcomed into this Borough, enriched our community, and thrived.
- That the contribution of these communities to the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of the Borough have changed its identity for the better.
- That these groups have worked with and forged great links of solidarity and friendship with pre-existing working-class communities, who themselves have played a proud and positive role in the forging of the borough we live in today.
- That these communities have stood together and fought against racism and hatred in every generation: from those who stood bravely against the fascist Blackshirts in the 1930s; to the Caribbean community that fought against racism in the 50s and 60s; the Bangladeshi and South East Asian community – including the Mayor and many members from across the chamber – who faced down the National Front in the 70s and 80s; and the broad coalition of communities that expelled the EDL in the 2010s.

This Council believes:

- Tower Hamlets should always be a borough where the poor, the tired, the oppressed, and the hungry can come and know they will be welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.
- That our borough's diversity and openness represents the best of humanity, and demonstrates that tolerance, respect, and understanding will always produce caring and cooperative places for people to live.
- That regardless of religion, skin colour, sexual orientation, gender, or belief system, Tower Hamlets will always be a safe place for all its residents.

This Council resolves:

- To produce an exhibition showcasing the rich history of migration to Tower Hamlets, to be showcased in the new Town Hall.
- To build on the borough's work with organisations that support and protect migrants and refugees.
- To work with relevant epistemic communities and external stakeholders to develop and enhance its institutional knowledge in protecting and promoting refugees and asylum-seeking peoples, building on the good work of the existing Refugee and Families teams.
- To work with boroughs and authorities across London and the country to protect migrants, refugees, and asylum-seeking peoples from hostile environments.
- To officially state its wish to be designated a 'Borough of Sanctuary' – cementing its commitment to inclusivity, tolerance, and dignity for all people.

12.2 Motion on the Public Body Pay Gap

Proposed by: Cllr Maisha Begum

Seconded by: Cllr TBC

Research from across civil society, including the GMB union shows that there is an Ethnicity Pay Gap, between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic worker and non-Black Asian and Minority Ethnic workers who are otherwise equal in educational attainment. This is not only reflected in the pay of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers, but this disparity is also apparent in the promotion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers in the workplace.

This council notes that:

- One in six Bangladeshi residents across England and Wales live in Tower Hamlets. Locally, the Bangladeshi population remains by far the largest in the country in both proportionate (34.6%) and numerical (107,333) terms.
- Other significant ethnic groups include White British (22.9%), White Other (14.6%), Black African (5%), Chinese (3.3%) and Somali or Somalilander (2%)
- GMB Race, the union's self-organised groups in London, sent out a survey to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic London workers to collect information about their Pay, Terms and Conditions. GMB Race's survey results, while disappointing, unsurprisingly show the fact that only half of respondents thought they received equal treatment and access to bonuses, overtime, pension, and other plus payments compared to non-BAME staff.
- The TUC's own research shows that the Ethnicity Pay Gap for minority workers has shown that students who entered the workplace after GCSE are paid 11% less than their white counterparts. Whilst those who attained degrees, the pay gap more than doubled to 23%. The race pay gap impacts the standard of living of those affected and also worsens for people who have aspired and succeeded in further education.
- The Resolution Foundation has shown that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers lose out on £3.2bn a year in wages compared to white workers. It found Pakistani and Bangladeshi male graduates earned an average £2.67 an hour (12%) less, while among female graduates, black women faced the biggest pay penalty, of £1.62 an hour (9%).
- Within Tower Hamlets only 33.1% of the borough's top 5% of earners are BAME.
- The general reporting of the pay gap is poor and recent figures show so far only 3% of employers with over 250 employees are voluntarily reporting their ethnicity pay gap.

- The Government has acknowledged this weakness and that Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting should be mandatory. However, this has not happened.
- The Women's and Equalities Committee's (WESC) report Ethnicity Pay Gap in February 2022 recommended that the Government should introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting by April 2023. This should be for all organisations that currently report for gender and that legislation should include the requirement for employers to publish a supporting narrative and action plan.
- This call has been echoed by the TUC.

This council believes that:

- All those that live and work within Tower Hamlets should be equally able to flourish in their place of employment. Therefore, there should be no glass ceiling because of the colour of someone's skin. Pay, promotions, career development and progression and bonuses in all sectors should be underpinned by ability and fairness. This is vital in eradicating systemic racism and division in wider society and a cause acutely relevant to the diverse community in this borough.
- With a cost-of-living crisis hitting households hard, the diminishing earnings of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers will disproportionately push many of such workers further into work poverty.
- This disproportionately affects local authorities, like Tower Hamlets, who are proud of their diverse and multicultural communities.
- All public bodies within the borough should be committed to being open and transparent about publishing its data on employees, whilst running fair, open and inclusive promotion strategies within its public sector duties. Such public data is the first step in creating awareness of the ethnicity pay gap with a view to drive change.
- Other employers across all sectors should do the same and that there should be mandatory reporting of the Ethnicity Pay Gap for all employers with 250 or more staff members.

This council resolves to:

- Adopt GMB Race's campaign for an Ethnicity Pay Gap, including:
- Agree to annually report on the Ethnicity Pay Gap within its own organisation;
- Endeavour to regularly analyse strengths and weakness based on its own reporting, devising and implementing annual plans to proactively put in place measures to

ensure there are no bars to recruitment, training, salary levels or promotion, including local schemes to give opportunities for BAME staff to achieve promotion and occupy more senior positions within the Council;

- Work with the three recognised Councils unions locally and to adopt GMB Race campaigns Ethnicity Pay Gap Charter;
- Work with council suppliers, contractors and partners to seek to do the same encouraging best practice through procurement rules as relevant, including in the contracting of any new services; and
- Call upon the Government to introduce mandatory pay gap reporting