

Transformation Advisory Board

Agenda

**Monday, 11 December 2023 at 2.00 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel**

Members:

Chair: Mayor Lutfur Rahman

Richard Penn	(Independent non-executive member)
Sir George Iacobescu CBE	(Independent non-executive member)
Sir Steve Bullock DL	(Independent non-executive member)
Martin Esom	(Independent non-executive member)
Sir Stephen O'Brien	(Independent non-executive member)
Dr Mahera Ruby	(Independent non-executive member)
Dr Kathleen McCarthy	(Independent non-executive member)
Alison Griffin	(Independent non-executive member)
Kate Herbert	(Independent non-executive member)
Hira Islam	(Independent non-executive member)
Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive - Senior Responsible Officer SRO)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director of Health, Adults & Community and Deputy Chief Executive - Deputy SRO)

Officers in Attendance:

Julie Lorraine	(Corporate Director Resources)
Robin Beattie	(Acting Director of Strategy Innovation and Transformation)
Amy Jackson	(Head of Mayor's Office)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Ayesha Hakim Rahman	(Acting Deputy Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)

Contact for further enquiries:

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services,
matthew.mannion@towerhamlets.gov.uk
020 7364 4651



Refreshments

These will be available from half an hour before the meeting and Members are encouraged to attend at this time for informal networking and engagement.

Agenda Papers

Hard copy agenda papers will only be available at the meeting if requested from the clerk (contact details on the front page) by Noon the working day before the meeting takes place.

Officers of the Council who are Members of the Board will also be able to access electronic papers on their Mod.Gov Laptop Apps.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Transformation Advisory Board

Monday, 11 December 2023

2.00 p.m.

ITEM TITLE	TIME	PRESENTER	PAGES
1. Welcome and Apologies	2:00pm		
2. Declarations of Interest	2:05pm		
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting	2:10pm		(PAGES 5 - 8)
4. Community Engagement Strategy	2:15pm	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Communities	(PAGES 9 - 44)
Please note the evaluation report is an appendix for information and will not be presented at the meeting.			
5. Partnership Working	3:15pm	Kirsty Roberts, Strategy and Policy Lead	(PAGES 45 - 56)
6. Any Other Business and Close	4:15pm		

Next Meeting of the Transformation Advisory Board

Monday, 19 February 2024 at 2.00 p.m. to be held in Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE TRANSFORMATION ADVISORY BOARD

HELD AT 2.18 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	
Richard Penn	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Sir George Iacobescu CBE	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Martin Esom	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Sir Stephen O'Brien	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Dr Mahera Ruby	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Dr Kathleen McCarthy	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Alison Griffin	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Kate Herbert	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Hira Islam	(Independent Non-Executive Member)
Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive)
Denise Radley	(Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director, Health and Social Care)

Officers Present in Person:

Robin Beattie	(Acting Director of Strategy Innovation and Transformation)
Amy Jackson	(Head of Mayor's Office)
Stephen Bramah	(Head of Corporate Strategy and Improvement)
Ayesha Hakim Rahman	(Acting Deputy Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Martin Rogers	(Senior Research Officer)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all present to introduce themselves. He then also specifically welcomed the new Board Members and asked them to give a brief summary about themselves and the skills/knowledge they brought to the Board.

All Members were present and so there were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

Robin Beattie, Acting Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation, introduced the item on the LGA Peer Challenge. He highlighted how the review had come at a really useful time and the Council had fully embraced this as an opportunity to help shape the transformation journey the Council was embarking on.

Stephen Bramah, Head of Corporate Strategy and Improvement, then took the Board through a more detailed look at the initial response from the LGA including the 17 recommendations received. The final report was expected soon and would be published by the end of the year. The Council would be publishing an Action Plan at the same time.

The Board reviewed the report and made a number of comments, including:

- There is a lot that the Council already does well, as acknowledged by the LGA Challenge.
- The Action Plan would cover new work as well as existing improvement projects.
- It was important to think how Workforce to Reflect the Community was embedded.
- Make sure the Council was structured to provided the necessary capacity to deliver.
- Focus and pace was important.
- Good governance and accurate delegations would speed up the proposed improvements.

Finally, it was noted that the LGA would return for a follow up review after six months.

It was agreed that the action plan would be brought to the Board for comment before it was published.

3. TRANSFORMATION DASHBOARD PROPOSAL

Ayesha Hakim Rahman, Acting Deputy Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation, introduced a draft proposed Transformation Dashboard for review and comment by the Board. She highlighted that a lot of work was linked to the Transformation agenda and so it was important to keep track of it to evidence and measure the progress.

The Board welcomed the proposals and made a number of comments, including:

- There were quite a lot of indicators and some such as 3, 6 and 7 could potentially be reshaped and/or merged.
- There are lots of potential reviews by different regulators coming up so it could be sensible to widen Indicator 9 to cover those.

- Think about the timings for when indicators would report back to the Board.
- Think about how best to present the information avoiding lots of lists of metrics.

The Board looked forward to receiving an updated version at future meetings.

4. NEW TARGET OPERATING MODEL

Ayesha Hakim Rahman, Acting Deputy Director Strategy, Improvement and Transformation, took the Board through the proposal for a new Target Operating Model (TOM). In particular, she highlighted the extensive consultation that was being undertaken and that to ensure this could be done meaningfully the plan was to push the agreement of the final Target Operating Model into the Spring.

The Board welcomed the proposal and made a number of suggestions including:

- Important to embed the needs of residents and communities into the Model.
- The potential role of Scrutiny in monitoring the TOM.
- How to bring in the views of young people including the Young Mayor and Youth Council.
- How to undertake meaningful co-production.
- The Transformation Advisory Board should not be seen as part of the core model, it is there to advise.
- Community engagement is more useful when wider than just showing residents the TOMs and asking for comments.
- Delivery work should continue without waiting for a final TOM to be agreed.

It was agreed that an updated TOM would be presented to the Board and they would be kept updated on the consultation results.

5. ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY

Stephen Bramah, Head of Corporate Strategy and Improvement, introduced a report on the recent Annual Residents' Survey. This was seen as an important tool to help the Council understand the needs of residents and communities from across the borough. The survey had not taken place for a few years due to Covid and it was pleasing that it had now been relaunched. In general the questions were the same as from previous surveys to make trend analysis easier.

Martin Rogers, Senior Research Officer, then took the Board through the data in more detail.

The Board reviewed the report and made a number of comments including:

- It could be worth undertaking even more frequent surveys and focus groups so that specific service changes can be monitored and new issues picked up quickly.
- Where possible it would be good to understand why there had been such a noticeable increase in 'don't know' responses. Officers would come back on whether there were patterns such as in relation to age, community or location or length of stay in the borough.
- Noted that further consultation would take place with communities that were under represented.
- An action plan following on from the survey would be prepared and circulated.

The Board looked forward to receiving further updates on future agendas.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A few issues were discussed during any other business including:

- A suggestion that the agenda frontsheet sets out more specifically what feedback officers would like from the Board on each item.
- Board Members were encouraged to submit ideas for items they would like to see on future agendas.
- A future reports on income generation, on partnership working and on community engagement would be welcome.
- Officers were asked to consider whether useful papers could be presented on key issues facing the borough such as on housing overcrowding, health inequality and similar especially where Board Members had specific skills/knowledge that were relevant to the issue.
- It was asked that a forward plan for future agendas be circulated to Members before the next meeting.

6.1 Budget Monitoring 23/24 Q1

The Budget Monitoring Quarter One report was noted and the Board were advised that they would receive regular updates in future for their information.

The meeting ended at 4.19 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman
Transformation Advisory Board

Community Engagement Strategy

Transformation Advisory Board



Questions for Transformation Advisory Board



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- What **meaningful methods and opportunities** might the council use to ensure the community and key partners can influence the decisions that matter to them?
- How might the council **work in a more joined up way** with its key partners, to ensure the community and partners have a say in the issues that affect the borough?



**“A council that listens and works
for everyone.”**



What we've done so far



Page 12

Established a project team with reps from across the council

Evaluated current practice to identify strengths and weaknesses

Developed a draft vision and objectives

Researched good practice from elsewhere

Consulted with 308 stakeholders



Draft vision and objectives



Vision: The council works closely in partnership with the community to develop policies, strategies and services that meets their needs and aspirations and address their concerns.

Objectives:

1. The council provides meaningful opportunities for the community to influence the decisions that impact their lives.
2. Community engagement activities are well communicated and are inclusive and accessible for all Tower Hamlets residents.
3. The impact that resident's involvement has had on shaping council decisions is communicated effectively.
4. Staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to deliver high quality community engagement.
5. A joined-up approach to coordinating and planning community engagement activities across the council, and with partners, leads to better outcomes.



Ideas from research & consultation



We listened to ideas for improving community engagement through:

Research

- 4 X Interviews with local authorities
- Reviewed 5 other local authority strategies
- Literature review

Consultation

- 1 online survey
- 2 X workshops with residents
- 4 pop-ups in public spaces
- 2 X workshops with members
- 2 X workshop with staff
- 3 X workshops with targeted groups

Here are some of the ideas...



The council provides meaningful opportunities for the community to influence the decisions that impact their lives



- **Annual satisfaction survey** – A survey to understand residents views of the borough. This will be supplemented by focus groups to identify solutions for issues that arise.
- **Online engagement** – Explore an online engagement tool that enables the council to deliver surveys, polls, crowdsourcing, mapping and participatory budgeting.
- **Locality Working** – Working in partnership with Tower Hamlets Together to understand the needs of localities and bring partners and the community together to take action on the things important to communities.



Community engagement activities are well communicated and are inclusive and accessible for all Tower Hamlets residents.

- **Data on the community** – Create a profile of the make-up of the Tower Hamlets communities so there is clarity on what a representative sample of people looks like.
- **Equalities Impact Assessment** – Standardise the use Equality Impact Assessment form when planning and preparing for community engagement processes.
- **Recognition and reward** - Agree a policy that outlines how the council pays expenses and recognises and rewards residents' participation.



Staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to deliver community high quality engagement.



- **Refresh the community engagement handbook** – a guide for council staff on how to deliver effective community engagement
- **Training and development** - Organise learning opportunities for relevant staff so they can develop their knowledge and skills, and experience.
- **Co-production academy** – Deliver training and learning on co-production
- **Member development** – Training and development opportunities for members on effective community engagement



The impact that resident's involvement has had on shaping council decisions is communicated effectively.



- **Feeding back directly to be people involved** – Update guidance on how to collect participants details and write to them or organise meetings to let them know how their input was used.
- **Let's Talk Tower Hamlets** – Use the 'You Said, We Did' function on Lets Talk Tower Hamlets to let communities know about the impact their involvement had.
- **Using council communications** – Feeding back to the community by having 'you said we did' sections in the residents' newsletters and promoting outcomes through the council's social media channels.



A joined-up approach to coordinating and planning community engagement activities across the council, and with partners, leads to better outcomes.

- **Service planning** – During service planning each service will identify the opportunities for communities to be involved in decision-making and this will form part of their service plans
- **Develop a community engagement calendar** – A central database, setting out details and timeframes for all our community engagement activities
- **Community Engagement Champions Programme** - Creating a network of staff who do community engagement to come together periodically to update on work and share best practice



What issues matter to the council and the community?



Staff and members

- Strategic plan
- Budget
- Service design and improvement
- New policies and strategies
- When there is a large amount of investment
- Regeneration projects

Residents and local groups

- Recycling
- Housing issues such as mould, repair and rent issues
- Environment, including liveable streets, litter, graffiti, parks and open spaces
- Community safety issues
- Regeneration projects

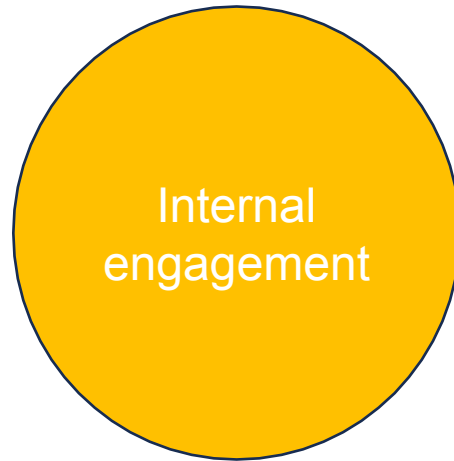
**Issues
that affect
their
everyday
lives**



Next steps



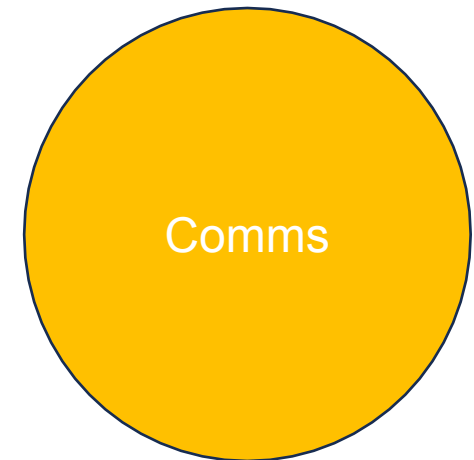
December



January



April



May



Questions for Transformation Advisory Board



Page 22

- What **meaningful methods and opportunities** might the council use to ensure the community and key partners can influence the decisions that matter to them?
- How might the council **work in a more joined up way** with its key partners, to ensure the community and partners have a say in the issues that affect the borough?



Thank you.



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Community Engagement

Evaluation report

04/09/2023



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Introduction

The work that the Council delivers has a direct impact on the lives of people who live, work, and visit Tower Hamlets. Community engagement happens when residents are able to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives.

The Council has an ambition to create a Council that 'listens and works for everyone' because it will result in better decision-making on policy and practice and the Councils work will be more likely to receive community support.

This will not happen without effective community engagement. Therefore, the Council is currently working with internal and external stakeholders to develop a new Community Engagement Strategy.

In support the development of a new strategy, we have conducted an evaluation to review how well the Council is currently delivering community engagement and identify areas for improvement.

This report provides our assessment of the Council's current strengths and areas for improvement and recommendations on how the Council can further improve community engagement in the future.

Executive Summary

The Council is currently in the process of developing a new Community Engagement Strategy. To support the development of the strategy, we conducted an evaluation to identify how well the Council is currently delivering community engagement and identify areas for improvement.

We gathered evidence for the evaluation by:

- Reading and reviewing corporate documents
- Conducting interviews and surveys with officers
- Focus groups with Divisional Leadership Teams (DLTs)
- A workshop with partners.

Our view is that the Council has clear areas of strengths for delivering community engagement and there are pockets of good practice to build on. There are also significant areas of weakness but encouragingly officers can identify the areas for improvement.

The Council at all levels spoke passionately about the importance of community engagement for achieving better outcomes for Tower Hamlets, and there is a desire to improve practice in the future. There are lots of impressive recent examples of how community engagement being used to inform policy and practice, and it's clear the Council has effective partnerships in place.

However, there is no coordinated approach to identify and plan for community engagement opportunities, involvement in community engagement is often not representative of the community, and the impact of resident's involvement is not fed back to them effectively. Perhaps the biggest issue we identified is insufficient resources to deliver effective community engagement consistently.

Based on the findings of this evaluation our summarised recommendations are to:

- Develop a new community engagement strategy and plan for delivering it
- Better planning and coordination of community engagement activity
- Improve partnership working to enable effective community engagement to happen
- Ensure the residents involved in community engagement are reflective of the Tower Hamlets community
- Equip the workforce with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver community engagement effectively
- Increase opportunities for the Council and residents to work together to design policies and services
- Let residents know about the impact their involvement has had on policy and practice

Methodology

To conduct the evaluation we used a quality framework. The framework is a development tool that outlines what good practice in community engagement looks like by using a set of standards and indicators, enabling us to assess the Council's strengths and weaknesses, and to identify areas for improvement.

The 8 quality standards that we used are:

- **Vision & Strategy** - There is a clearly stated vision for community engagement and a strategy, supported by clear objectives to deliver it.
- **Participation** - There is a consistent approach to ensuring residents can have a say in the decisions that affect them.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** - The residents involved in community engagement reflect the makeup of the range of communities in Tower Hamlets.
- **Resources** - There are adequate resources to deliver community engagement processes effectively.
- **Workforce** - The workforce has the necessary skills, knowledge, and capabilities to deliver high quality community engagement.
- **Partnerships** - There are partnerships in place at all levels that enable effective community engagement to take place.
- **Leadership** - Senior leaders and managers are champions for community engagement.
- **Learning and impact** – Community engagement has had an impact on policy and practice.

Conducting the maturity assessment

The Council worked with the 'Community Engagement Strategy – Project Group' to conduct the evaluation. To do the evaluation we gathered information from the following sources:

Reading and reviewing corporate documents, including the:

- Strategic Plan 2022-2026
- Communications Strategy 2022-2025
- Statement of Community Involvement

Surveys / Interviews with Council services, including:

- Strategy & Improvement
- Public Health
- Young People's Service

- Strategy and Communities
- Communications
- Children and Culture (Strategy, Policy and Improvement)
- Health, Adults and Communities (Strategy, Policy, and Improvement)
- Tower Hamlets Homes
- Planning Services
- Citizenship & Immigration Services

1 X workshop with external organisations. The participation organisations included:

- Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services (THCVS)
- Healthwatch Tower Hamlets
- Women's Inclusive Team
- North East London CCG
- Coffee Afrique
- Tower Hamlets GP Care Group
- Social Action for Health
- Global Learning London

Workshops with Council divisional leaderships teams (DLTs), including:

- Resources
- Place
- Chief Executives
- Childrens and Culture
- Health, Adults and Communities

Interviews with officers who have been involved in community engagement activities, including:

- Emily Fieran-Reed
- Employment and skills SMT
- Idea Store Leadership Team

Developing recommendations

Once we had gathered the information, we collated it using a tool called 'how are we doing?' The tool has a table for each of the standards, and within the table there are sections to assess 'where are you now' and 'what needs to improve?'

We analysed the information gathered and used it to make judgements on how well the Council is currently delivering community engagement. To make these judgements, we scored each standard using the following scale:

- **Established** - good overall performance against the standard
- **Aspiring** - some good performance, but also some gaps
- **Emerging** - not there yet, but you're able to identify areas for improvement

Finally, to shape the recommendations we presented the analysis and findings from the evaluation to the project team and came up with ideas on how to improve community engagement in the future.

Analysis & Findings

Standard	Vision & Strategy: There is a clearly stated vision for community engagement and a strategy, supported by clear objectives, to deliver it.
Level	Aspiring
Where are you now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s Strategic Plan 2022-26 has a corporate priority to create a ‘a council that listens and works for communities.’ • The 2023/24 delivery plan for the Strategic Plan has a number of commitments linked to community engagement. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure consultations are conducted at a point which allows residents and stakeholders to influence decision-making. ○ Work with residents, community groups and other interested parties to develop plans and ideas together. ○ Carry out consultation which is fair and worthwhile, on the basis of the ‘Gunning Principles’ devised by Stephen Sedley QC. ○ Ensure that everyone affected by any proposals will be notified and can have their say. ○ Hold regular Q&A sessions around the borough so that we can have a discussion, together, about how my administration is doing on the important issues. • However, the Council’s previous Community Engagement Strategy expired in 2021 meaning there is no clearly stated vision for community engagement or strategy for achieving it. • The Council is in the process of working with internal and external stakeholders to develop a new Community Engagement Strategy and delivery plan, due to be launched in April 2024. • Some Council services have a vision or strategy for community engagement which is relevant to their service area. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tower Hamlets Homes - Resident Engagement Strategy 2021- 26 ○ Planning service - Statement of Community Involvement ○ Young Tower Hamlets – currently developing Participation Strategy • There are objectives or emphasis on community engagement in several Council’s strategies and plans. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 ○ Communications Strategy 2022-25 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Charter within the Children & Families Plan ○ HAC division’s workplan for 2023/24 ○ Tower Hamlets VAWG Strategy 2019-2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a strong understanding of the importance of involving communities in the decisions that affect them across all levels of the Council. ● There is different understanding of what community engagement is amongst Council officers. Some officers believe it means all contact with resident’s whilst others refer to resident involvement in decision-making.
Areas of improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with internal and external stakeholders to develop a vision for community engagement and a strategic plan to deliver it. ● Agree upon a definition of what community engagement means and be clear on the reasons why the Council wants to engage more effectively with residents. ● Embed the Council’s vision for community engagement in other key corporate policies, strategies and plans that guide the council’s work. ● Establish a working group with officers from relevant departments to monitor, review and revise the engagement strategy when it is finished.

Standard	Participation: There is a consistent approach to ensuring citizens can have a say in the decisions that affect them.
Level:	Aspiring
Where are you now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The results from the Annual Residents survey show that residents feeling of being able to be involved or influence decision making has declined. ● There is no Council-wide approach to identify and plan for opportunities for community engagement and to put in place plans to involve residents. ● Opportunities for community engagement are usually identified within services or because there is a statutory responsibility to consult. ● The Communications Service is developing a database of contacts to reach out to residents for community engagement purposes. ● Services usually identify the stakeholders to involve in engagement process by reaching out to groups they have relationships with. 	

- There are varying levels of engagement with residents taking place across the different council services. Some examples of community engagement include:
 - Delivering a hackathon with residents to co-design the Young Tower Hamlets Service.
 - Pre-application engagement with local residents for the Millharbour Village proposed development which included contacting 5000 local residents to attend events and workshops.
- Different approaches are being used by services to carry out community engagement and consultations including:
 - Utilising 'Lets Talk Tower Hamlets' platform – the council's digital consultation platform - where residents, businesses and stakeholders can comment on live consultations being undertaken.
 - Workshops and focus groups with residents, young people, community organisations and equality networks.
 - Surveys and questionnaires.
 - Engaging residents through commissioning of VCS organisations to deliver specific services.
 - Engaging different boards, forums where there is representation of local residents i.e. SEND improvement Board.
 - Peer research.
 - 'You said, we did' format has been used by different services to provide feedback to residents. In some directorates senior managers promote the use of this method and it has been a feature of reports to boards and forums and within annual reports. It's however not clear what methods are being used to convey the information.
- The Health Determinants Research Consortium (HDRC) is developing opportunities for resident participation in research.
- Through the HDRC programme and Corporate Strategy a community insight repository is planned to be developed that is live and affords opportunities for two way communication, including feedback to community groups.
- Despite various approaches used by services there appears to be limited face-to-face engagement with residents. Whilst digital engagement is important, face to face also builds transparency and better relations creating 'a council presence' for communities.
- THH engagement strategy incorporates 3 levels of involvement: high, medium and low levels. There are different engagement options available for residents within each of these levels.
- The Communications service is developing the Residents panel, which has 500 people who can be consulted by different services.
- There is a clear desire at all levels of the organisation to co-produce, co-

design services with communities, and there are some examples of this taking place:

- Corporate Strategy and Communities Team co-designing the Small Grants application process.
- Coproduction of culturally appropriate communication messages for the Covid spring vaccination which used co-production methodology with local CVS groups.
- However, co-production is not yet embedded as a way of working across the Council and many officers express a desire to develop their knowledge and skills in this area.
- There is evidence of consultation fatigue for being over consulted which means residents are not willing to always engage in consultations.
- No evidence has been provided of process for monitoring the involvement of residents either across the Council or within services.

Areas of improvement

- Create a corporate approach to identifying the opportunities to engage with communities and put plans in place. This could be through creating a forward plan of engagement opportunities.
- Ensure the Council is aware of their statutory duties to consult and there are plans in place to meet requirements.
- Develop best practice guides with accompanying templates to support officers when planning and preparing for engagement processes including ways to better engage on very technical documents that are important, but not easy to digest.
- Create a database with contacts of key stakeholders who the Council can reach out to when conducting engagement activities.
- Ensure that the Council engages with a diverse range of people and is not always speaking to the same 'usual suspects.'
- Increase knowledge and skills of the workforce of different methods and approaches on how to engage communities effectively.
- More face-to-face engagement with communities to ensure we are reaching more residents and residents from all sections of the community.
- Ensure there is stronger collaboration between the Communications service and community engagement work.
- Enable more opportunities for co-producing policies and services where policy makers can come together with service users to come up with solutions together.
- Explore opportunities to better utilise council's own assets where communities feel comfortable to talk to the council in their local areas.

Standard	Equality, diversity, and inclusion: The residents involved in decision-making reflect the makeup of the range of communities in Tower Hamlets.
Level	Aspiring
Where are you now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has information on the makeup of its communities, for example through census data. • There is some information on the voluntary and community sector partners through Tower Hamlets Connect and subscription to the VCS newsletter. • There is limited evidence of mapping taking place to understand the make-up of the local population and range of groups in Tower Hamlets to inform community engagement activity. • There is evidence that many services identify priority groups when delivering community engagement to ensure a representative group of residents are involved. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Corporate Strategy and Communities Service has commissioned an Equalities Hub, with seven networks aligned to protected characteristics who can be consulted on issues. ○ THH collect equalities data when doing their Satisfaction Survey programme and use it to understand perceptions and feedback based on key equalities strands. ○ Childrens and Culture Division uses Equality analysis and data within performance reports to help inform their understanding of communities and steer engagement work. ○ The Planning Service identify and consider how to engage with hard-to-reach groups ahead of Local Plan consultation. ○ Some of the established Council forums are representative of the make-up of the Borough such as Youth council and Parents and Carers Council • The Council has an Equalities Impact Assessment form which is used to identify the impacts of new policies and strategies on those with protected characteristics. • However, there is no consistent approach to identifying barriers to residents taking part in engagement processes. • Some services have done work to understand the barriers that might stop residents for engaging and put in place solutions. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Communications Service has a Bengali press officer and has Somali and Bengali pages in our Eastend. ○ Public health commissions specific work with priority groups or groups with protected characteristics. 	

- Some of the common barrier's that officers have seen that stop residents taking part include:
 - Language
 - Digital access
 - Power dynamics
- There is acknowledgement from different services that community engagement taking place often doesn't reflect the makeup of Tower Hamlets population.
- Most services provide remuneration as standard practice when there is budget in place to support it.
- There are potentially barriers to adopting a Council wide remuneration policy because the Department for Work and Pensions rules can mean that expenses and incentives can affect people's benefits.
- Due to need, some services have adopted their own policies and initiatives. For example:
 - A remuneration policy is being developed for the HDRC.
 - Development of Children and Safeguarding Young Scrutineers. Their role will be to challenge the priority groups to ensure the voice of the child and young person is at the centre of the work, and link with pre-established youth engagement groups for feedback on the work

Areas of improvement

- Better understand the make-up of Tower Hamlets communities so there is clarity on what a representative sample of people would look like in community engagement.
- Continue to build the database of contacts for organisations who have links with diverse communities who the Council can engage with.
- Equality Impact analysis need to be consistently conducted for any community engagement activity.
- Develop best practice guides with accompanying templates that focus on removing barriers to participation to support officers when planning and preparing for engagement.
- Conduct research into the barriers stopping residents from participating and provide guidance on how to put in place solutions so everyone can participate.
- Agree a remuneration policy that covers how the Council pays expenses, and recognises and rewards residents' participation. Explore whether remuneration for engagement is appropriate for all types of engagement. particularly statutory engagement. Does this also potentially risk people not responding to non-remunerated engagement?

Standard	Resources: There are adequate resources to deliver engagement processes effectively
Level	Emerging
Where are you now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council does not have a dedicated community engagement service who coordinate community engagement activity. • Most services don't have a dedicated budget for community engagement. The budget predominately usually comes from existing staff time or individual team budgets. • However, some services do have a budget from community engagement, including Tower Hamlets Homes and Young Tower Hamlets. • Where there is a statutory requirement to consult, such as the Local Plan or major works, the budget for community engagement purposes is built into the project costs. • A lack of a dedicated community engagement team means that often community engagement processes are an add on to existing work, which can make it difficult to achieve quality. • Officers who have led community engagement activities feel they can be put under pressure to get work completed, meaning there is inadequate time to do meaningful engagement. • There is no Council guidance on how to deliver effective community engagement. • There are various tools and guides on engagement being used by different teams for example Tower Hamlets Homes has their own toolkit. • The Council has a contract with the Consultation Institute who can provide training and advice and guidance to the council on community engagement. 	
Areas of improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for creating a community engagement team that coordinates community engagement and works with divisions to improve quality across the council. • Explore whether there can be a community engagement lead in each division to coordinate community engagement. • Better forward planning on community engagement to ensure there is adequate time and budget to deliver it effectively. • Develop a how to guide and template which provides information on how to deliver community engagement effectively. 	

Standard	Workforce: The workforce has the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities to deliver high quality community engagement
Level	Emerging
Where are you now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most services in the Council don't yet have a lead for community engagement. However, some services who engage with communities extensively have staff who have a lot of experience in engagement. • There hasn't been any work to consider what the essential knowledge, skills, and capabilities the Council workforce needs to deliver effective community engagement. • The Council commissioned the Consultation Institute to deliver training sessions to members and officers on effective community engagement. • There is no other Council wide training on community engagement. Although some services have organised training for staff. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Childrens and Culture they have trained staff in co-production methods and approaches at whole Directorate events. 	
Areas of improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the knowledge, skills and capabilities that officers need to have to deliver community engagement effectively. • Organise learning opportunities for relevant staff so they can develop their knowledge, skills, and capabilities. • Explore the option of having community engagement leads in each division to enable better coordination between different services. • Ensure the job descriptions of key roles include key skills and a commitment to community engagement. 	

Standard	Partnerships: There are partnerships in place at all levels that enable effective community engagement to take place.
Level	Aspiring
Where are you now?	

- [Tower Hamlets Strategic Partnership](#) brings together key stakeholders to improve services and outcomes for residents. It aims to provide residents with opportunities to shape, influence and inform the development of the borough's main partnership plans.
- There are effective partnerships in place with the voluntary and community sector. The Council has a [Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy](#) which is a partnership strategy.
- The Council coordinates 'Cooperate' which is a strategic partnership board for the voluntary and community sector.
- The Communications Service is developing a database of key contacts which the council can engage with in the future.
- The Corporate Strategy and Communities Service commission the [Equalities Hubs](#), which consist of seven networks, with a network for each protected characteristic. Different council services work with these networks on issues affecting them.
- Services across the council demonstrated that they are aware of the key stakeholders who they need to engage with when developing policies, strategies, and plans.
- There are lots of examples of working effectively with partners to ensure the voice of residents is heard. For example:
 - Working with Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services to deliver engagement events to design the Mayors Community Grants Programme.
 - Corporate Parenting Board each of which has community representatives who are actively involved in the work of the boards
 - SEND Improvement Board, these boards produce an annual report including plans for community engagement.
- There is no evidence of communicating with partners about community engagement activities to explore options for joining up and to avoid duplication.
- Council officers from Corporate Strategy & Communities are members of networks that support community engagement. These include:
 - Tower Hamlets Connect has a lead community engagement officers group.
 - London Policy and Strategy Network
 - London Engagement Collaborative: A cross-sector community of practice on engagement led by the GLA
- Internally there is not a working group of officers involved in community engagement. The Childrens division and Public Health have set up a network of officers involved in participation.

Areas of improvement

- Identify the officers within the council who have responsibility for community engagement and establish a network.
- Better coordinate community engagement activities across the council to spot opportunities for partnership working and to avoid duplication.
- Create a database with contacts of key stakeholders who the Council can reach out to when conducting community engagement activities.
- Engage more with local businesses as they are key stakeholders in the borough and often Tower Hamlets residents.
- Share information about community engagement activities with strategic partners to identify opportunities for joined up working, avoid duplication and share learning.

Standard	Leadership: Senior leaders and managers are champions for community engagement.
Level	Embedded
Where are you now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement is central to the Council’s strategic plan. There is a corporate priority for a ‘council that listens and works for everyone.’ • There is a priority within the Councils annual delivery plan to develop a new community engagement strategy. • The Mayor and Chief Executive have made public commitments to community engagement. However, communication of these could be amplified in the future. • The mayor has asked officers to improve consultation at the Mayors Advisory Board and to ensure the Council is engaging with all sections of the community. • There is evidence of senior managers from some directorates and leaders attending community engagement events. 	
Areas of improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how Council communications can be used to promote the importance of community engagement. 	

Standard	Learning and impact: Community engagement has had an impact on policy and practice
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Level	Emerging
Where are you now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples have been provided as to how Community engagement has an impact on policy and practice across the Council. For example Public Health’s work with disabled residents to identify barriers disabled people had understanding Covid-19 information and they co-produced solutions. • There are examples of the results of community engagement being recorded and promoted. However, this is not always commonplace. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Health has plan to create community insight repository that is live and affords opportunities for two-way communication, including feedback to community groups. ○ The Strategic lead for Young Tower Hamlets Service is accountable to the Youth Council so also obliged to provide feedback to them in the development of the new service. • ‘You said we did’ is the format most often used by different services for feed back to participants about their involvement. • There is little evidence of feedback being conducted face-to-face either online or in-person, so it is not clear if the information is reaching the residents. • Feedback, when not messaged well, can be counterproductive, which can upset participants because people feel nothing has come from it, even if it has. • There is not a systematic approach to evaluating community engagement approaches in the council, although some services do evaluate and reflect on their community engagement. • There is no evidence of producing case studies or delivering presentations to colleagues to share the insights from community engagement processes internally. 	
Areas of improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council should identify and use effective methods to inform the people who have taken part about the impact that their input has made on tangible action. • The Council should also be honest about things it can’t implement and explain the reasons why. • Time should be built into community engagement projects to reflect and evaluate, to enable continuous improvement. • Learning of projects that went well and not well should be captured and shared internally using case studies and learning sessions. • Residents should be made aware of the influence their contribution can have on decisions at the outset. 	

Recommendations

Develop a new community engagement strategy and plan for delivering it

Better planning and coordination of community engagement activity

- Create a corporate approach to identifying the opportunities to engage with communities and put plans in place by creating an annual forward plan.
- Identify the officers within the Council and divisions who have responsibility for community engagement and establish a network to improve communication.

Improve partnership working to enable effective community engagement to happen

- Create a database with contacts of key stakeholders who the Council can reach out to when conducting engagement activities.
- Share information about community engagement activities with strategic partners to identify opportunities for joined up working, avoid duplication, and share learning.

Ensure the residents involved in community engagement are reflective of the Tower Hamlets community

- Better understand the make-up of Tower Hamlets communities so there is clarity on what a representative sample of people would look like in community engagement.
- Conduct research into the barriers stopping residents from participating and provide guidance on how to put in place solutions so everyone can participate.
- Start using the Equality Impact analysis form when planning and preparing for community engagement activity.
- Agree a remuneration policy that covers how the Council pays expenses and recognises and rewards residents' participation. Explore whether remuneration for engagement is appropriate for all types of engagement, particularly statutory engagement.

Equip the workforce with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver community engagement effectively

- Identify the knowledge, skills and capabilities that officers need to have to deliver community engagement effectively.
- Organise learning opportunities for relevant staff so they can develop their knowledge, skills, and capabilities.

- Develop a how to guides on how to deliver effective community engagement with accompanying templates.

Create adequate resources to deliver engagement processes effectively

- Explore options for creating a community engagement team that coordinates community engagement and works with divisions to improve quality across the council.
- Explore whether there can be a community engagement lead in each division to coordinate community engagement.
- Explore options for a budget to support important community engagement activities.

Increase opportunities for the Council and service users to work together to design policies and services

- Understand the ways the communities can be involved in the decisions that affect them and identify more opportunities where residents can be involved in decision-making.
- Enable more opportunities for co-producing policies and services where policy makers can come together with service users to come up with solutions together.
- Use council assets more effectively to engage with communities.

Let residents know about the impact their involvement has had on policy and practice

- Explore how Council communications can be used to promote the importance of community engagement to officers.
- Identify and use effective methods to inform the people who have taken part about the impact that their input has made.
- Explore options for how the community and partners can hold the Council to account on the delivery of the Community Engagement Strategy.

Partnership Working

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Transformation Advisory Board
December 2023

Agenda Item 5



Questions for the Transformation Advisory Board



- 1. How can we develop effective mission-based partnerships to deliver our calls to action?**
- 2. How can we strengthen our regional/ national strategic partnerships to support the delivery of our ambitious partnership plan?**



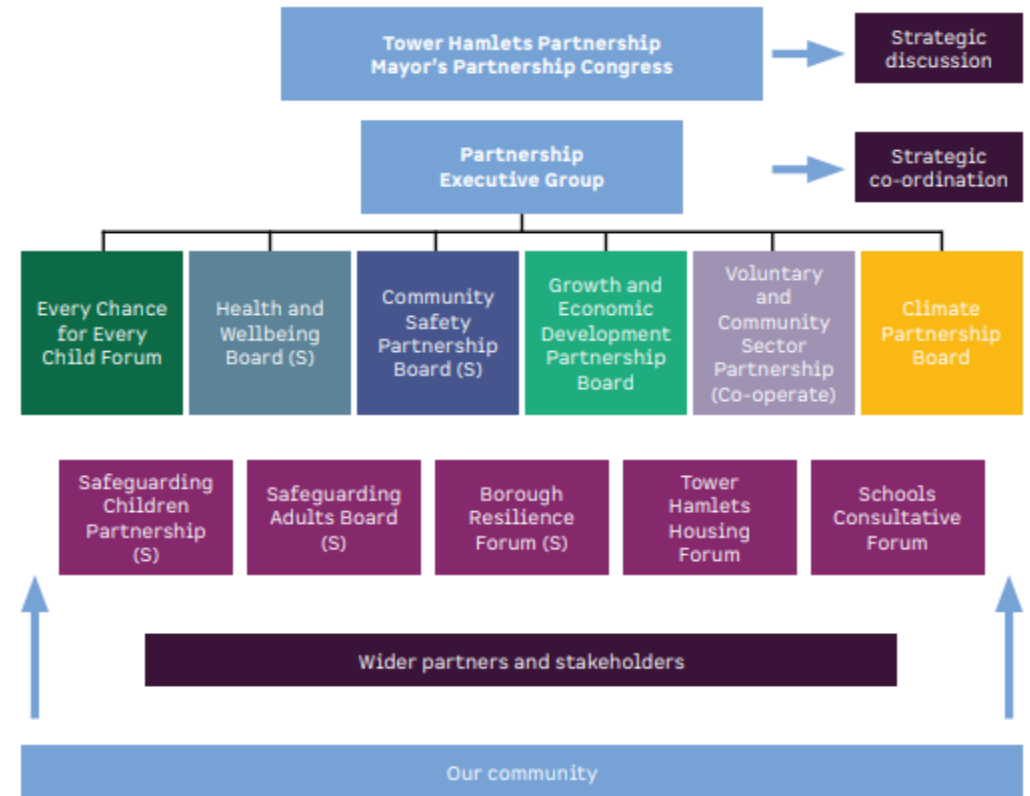
Working together: our Tower Hamlets Partnership



Our vision: Residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, advance equality, opportunity, and empowered communities

- A coalition of public services, community and business organisations committed to improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the borough and local people – (Terms of Reference attached at appendix 1)
- Partners work together and with residents to **improve services and outcomes** and provide strategic leadership on complex issues.
- At its heart is an **Executive Group and Congress**, supported by **six thematic boards**, each working to agreed goals.
- We want to **tackle poverty**, and inequalities and advance equality of opportunity.
- We will seek to collaborate even more effectively to **achieve excellence and our shared vision**.

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(S) = Statutory



A proud history of partnership working



Our achievements 2018-2023 including:

- **Tackling inequality** by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough
- **A whole community response** to local and national challenges - including **Covid 19**
- A new partnership between health and care
- **Joined up local services** through resident hubs and family hubs
- Strengthening the **equality hubs** and networks
- Practical multi-sector **collaborations**
- **Our journey continues**

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Covid-19 Vaccine Helpline



Hospital at Home



TH.IS Campaign



Summer of Wellbeing 2022



Safety Surgeries and Walkabouts



Digital Inclusion



**Women into Leadership:
Anti-Racist Borough Pledge
Mentoring for young people in
years 10 and 11**

**SME Energy
Reduction Pilot**



A Tower Hamlets for All: A New Shared Vision and Partnership Plan



- **A new shared vision:** Residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, advance equality, opportunity and empowered communities
- **Shared outcomes** including **to address inequalities**, improve neighbourhoods and tackle climate change
- Each call to action can add value to current work and **prepare us for the challenges and opportunities of the future**

Our vision is supported by five cross-cutting calls to action where the partnership believes we can empower action together

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

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

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

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

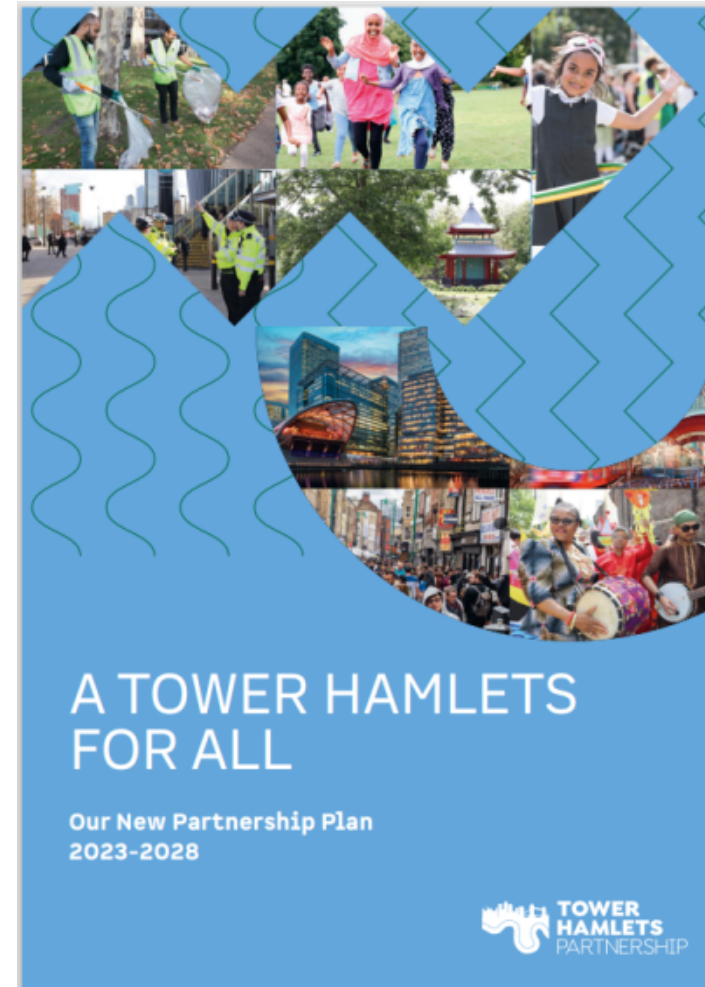
Call to action 5: A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to



Continuing our journey of improvement

The vision is supported by new system-wide improvement principles that will guide the way we work together:

- **A clear focus** – aligning communications and improving collaboration and join-up
- Every organisation in the partnership will contribute to **delivering the calls to action**
- We will communicate and challenge each other to **raise standards** and tackle the most difficult issues
- **Residents will play their part** through involvement and action
- Building **tri-sector partnerships** for research, skills, and job opportunities
- Defining a research agenda linked to our partner objectives – **evidence-led and impact-driven**
- **An economy that is inclusive**



New ways of working and engaging



We've introduced twice-yearly thematic partnership congresses to engage a wider range of local partners and residents around key administration priorities.

- The Congresses are tackling complex issues and leveraging partnership working more effectively to improve outcomes for residents
- 14 November 2023 - **The Mayor's first partnership congress focusing on community safety**
- Outcome: **Co-producing a charter and commitments** to improve outcomes around crime and anti-social behaviour.

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Reviewing our Partnership to achieve our shared vision



As we implement 'A Tower Hamlets for All' we are **reviewing governance arrangements** to improve the strategic approach to partnership and delivery of our shared vision, values, and outcomes. We are undertaking this review because...

- The new partnership plan is significantly more ambitious than the last, and we will need to set ourselves up to achieve that ambition
- Some of the calls to action are 'moonshots' that will require a more missions-based approach to galvanise an ambitious partnership response
- Ø There are too many partnerships sitting under the PEG, and its thematic partnerships (for example subgroups). There is a collective view that the partnership structure may require simplification and improvements in joined-up working.
- There is a question around whether we are making enough use of other strategic forums e.g. the GLA on economy, skills and housing delivery.

The review will:

- Work through a Task and Finish Group to **simplify the structure; improve focus; strengthen accountability; and promote transformational partnership working and collaboration.**
- Reflect the Council's **strategic priorities where there is a partnership influence**, new duties and requirements of partners.
- Ensure there is clear political and organisational support, **system leadership and prioritisation**



How the partnership maps onto our priorities



Five cross-cutting calls to action

Tower Hamlets will be a fair, inclusive and anti-racist borough

Everyone in TH should be able to enjoy good mental health and wellbeing

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

Everyone in TH should have access to good jobs and skills and an income that meets their basic needs

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

Current areas of strategic focus and LBTH priorities, led by partnership boards.

Inequality Commission Action Plan

Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Community Safety Partnership Plan

Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan

Growth and Economic Development Strategy

Children and Families Strategy

Equality, inclusion and diversity

Empowered communities and public services

Mental and physical health, and health services access

Safer communities

Clean and green

Jobs, skills, growth, poverty/cost of living

Accelerate education



Summary...



- We have a real shared commitment to tackling inequalities and stronger public services
- Partnerships are working well where priorities are joined up
- Opportunities for transformational partnership working to further our strategic ambitions

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... and discussion

- 1. How can we develop effective mission-based partnerships to deliver our calls to action?**
- 2. How can we strengthen our regional/ national strategic partnerships to support the delivery of our ambitious partnership plan?**



Appendix 1: Tower Hamlets Partnership - ToR



A local strategic partnership re-established in 2017. Headed by a board and congress and thematic partnerships, actively participating in tackling inequality, and ensuring that partner members maintain good relationships, information-sharing, and decision-making that is coordinated and integrated across the system leadership.

The Council is only first amongst equals in having responsibility for the management and delivery of the Partnership. The Partnership is open to all stakeholders and several changes have taken place since 2022, to bring partnership arrangements into line with statutory, and national government requirements.

Chair: Mayor of London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

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Partnership Executive Group

- To deliver on the priorities, objectives and cross-cutting principles of the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan
- To support a powerful public through pro-active citizen and service user engagement in the delivery of local services
- To share resources and expertise in joint commissioning and delivery arrangements
- To operate in a transparent and accountable way by seeking external and peer challenge to assess and improve performance
- To share knowledge and learning by collecting and sharing data improve service delivery
- Meeting frequency: up to 5 times a year.
- Members are expected to have decision-making capacity on behalf of their organisation.
- Formal agendas and action notes issued by LBTH officers, acting as secretariat for the Partnership



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