

**Best Value Improvement Plan
April-June 2017 Update****Introduction**

The Council is pleased to provide the first update report on the progress made implementing the Best Value Improvement Plan 2017-18 as required under the Directions of March 2017. The Best Value Improvement Plan 2017-18 includes 26 strategic actions against the 5 areas of property, election, organisation culture, grants and communication.

This report notes that in the first three months of this action plan, covering the period between April-June 2017, 83% of milestones have been completed or are on target to be completed and where any are overdue or delayed a revised plan is set out in the commentary section. This demonstrates the focused determination of the council in delivering continuous improvement and provides the Council with momentum as it works to deliver the remaining milestones in the plan over the next nine months.

A summary of key achievements for this quarter is detailed below:

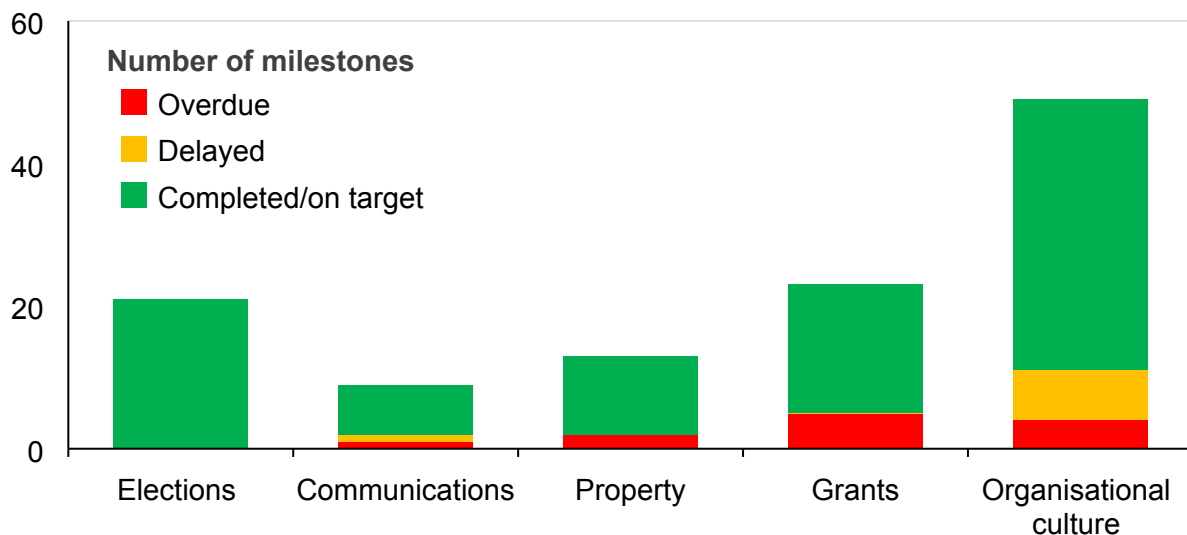
- Launch of weekly staff newsletter to 4,100 staff with a current open rate of 50%;
- Development and agreement of a Communication Strategy for 2017-18 which will further develop communication channels and targeting of information to internal and external audience;
- Completed procurement of providers for publication of statutory notices;
- Completed audit of assets and reported to Asset Management Working Group;
- Moves procedure agreed and communicated to managers;
- Review of third sector team completed and new structure finalised;
- Commissioning of community cohesion theme complete with mobilisation taking place in the next quarter;
- Recruited to 7 senior roles including Corporate Director Governance with plans for further recruitment;
- Clear up Project completed with the report and recommendations being presented to Cabinet in June 2017;
- A project group involving managers, trade unions and HR have prioritised 4 employment policies and practices which have been reviewed and will be implemented in the next quarter;
- Extensive engagement undertaken with staff including survey and focus groups to refresh employee values;
- Established Children's Services Improvement Board and draft Improvement Plan developed which will be submitted to Secretary of State for Education in June 2017;
- Annual residents survey 2017 complete and the results being analysed which will be disseminated to internal and external stakeholders;
- 3 meetings of Tower Hamlets Strategic Partnership held with work programme being developed to support place shaping of the borough;
- ADASS peer review of adult social care outcome based commissioning completed and action plan developed to take forward recommendations;

Overall progress against Best Value Improvement Plan

In order to ensure consistency in the reporting of the status of key milestones the following criteria have been applied:

- **On Target** – where the key milestone will be achieved by the deadline
- **Completed** – Where the key milestone has been achieved by the deadline
- **Delayed** – where the key milestone has not yet been completed but will be completed within a month of the original deadline
- **Overdue** - where the key milestone has been delayed by more than a month from the date of the original deadline

The charts below shows progress against the 115 milestones in the Best Value Improvement Plan submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2017.



Further details on the Best Value are detailed over the next few sections.

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| Best Value Improvement Area | Communications |
| Progress Summary | |
| <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Communications in Tower Hamlets had a history of being reactive with a heavy reliance on the Council's weekly publication, East End Life. Many of the messages and activities being communicated were determined by services' willingness and ability to pay and there was little use of insight or data to identify appropriate communication channels and support the delivery of effective communications campaigns. Since the Best Value Action Plan was introduced there has been significant progress in reforming the way the Council deals with internal and external publicity management. This has included the appointment of a new Head of Communications in summer 2016 and a subsequent restructure of the service which concluded in March 2017.</p> <p><u>Key achievements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff appointed to four of eight new roles with the first of the new starters due to take post in June. Ongoing recruitment of other roles. • Council tax booklet completed and sent to all households • Communications Strategy for 17/18 completed. Due to be launched to staff in May/June. • Workpath campaign planned and launched • Mela campaign planned and launched • General Election planning • th now – internal communications newsletter launched • Contract awarded for statutory services <p><u>Measurable outcomes for existing work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tower Hamlets now has a 50% open rate – double the average for internal e-newsletters <p><u>Areas where work continues to progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture change about communications: Opening the Council up to let the communications know of delivery milestones and other activity of the ground in a planned way. This is a central theme of the Communications Strategy and an internal communications campaign will be launched shortly to support the strategy. • Campaigns: Now the campaigns have been decided, the next month or so will be spent working with officers to develop campaign plans using the ROSIE model. | |

| Best Value Improvement | Property |
|--|----------|
| Progress Summary | |
| <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The Council owns, occupies or maintains around 860 non-HRA properties, valued at £1bn, located within the borough. The Council also owns around £800m of HRA properties (the housing element is managed and maintained by Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), the Council's arms-length management organisation) as well as a further £50m of community assets.</p> <p><u>Key achievements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Community Buildings previously used by THH caretakers formerly handed back to Housing Management to deal with • Fitting out work for 1st Community Hub building to complete shortly and this building will be opened and made available for sessional use • All vacant Community Buildings that could be converted to residential use handed back to Housing Management to progress. Two planning applications submitted to date. • Specialist consultants appointed to advise on the creation of a 'super depot'. Work ongoing to identify scope and feasibility exercises needed. • Property inspection audit completed and all actions for regularising occupations allocated to asset managers to progress as BAU <p><u>Measureable outcomes for existing work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of terms agreed for leases to 5 of the 8 nursery / playgroup properties within the CB portfolio and these have all been reported to legal services to progress to completion <p><u>Areas where work continues to progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for the refurbishment of all CBs needs to be clarified and agreed. Works need to be undertaken before leases are completed. Condition survey reports are being completed to inform this work. • Location of second hub has changed over time but now agreed to be Raines House, Wapping Community Centre. Feasibility work to be commenced as alterations will require listed building consent. • Third hub to be agreed formally – likely to be Caxton Hall or Granby Hall. • Specialist consultants appointed to advise on depot consolidation proposals. Feasibility study due for completion by end of Dec 2017. • Regularisation of occupation of properties needs to be completed following inspection audit • Work will be undertaken in the next quarter to scope the parameters of the review of leisure facilities • Creating assessment criteria for TRA's to qualify for a rent reduction will be done at a later stage as focus is currently on progressing implementation of nurseries and community halls | |

Progress Summary**Background**

Since the Directions were issued the Council has successfully delivered a number of elections and referendum which included:

- UK Parliamentary Election May 2015
- Election of Executive Mayor June 2015
- Election of London Mayor and London Assembly Member May 2016
- EU Referendum June 2016
- Whitechapel ward by election December 2016

Key achievements

- Successful delivery of 2017 UK Parliamentary Election;
- 43,000 on-line registration in 8 weeks and successful validation
- Increase in postal votes by 3% with overall at 6%
- Engagement with universities to increase registration of students
- Additional privacy booths at each polling station
- Introduced new form to record number of postal votes handed in at each polling station

Measureable outcomes for existing work

- Increase partnership working and improved relationships with partners;
- Fewer allegations and greater recognition amongst stakeholders of successful delivery of UK Parliamentary Election

Areas where work continues to progress

- Preparing for 2018 elections
- Development of the Pilot ID scheme
- Annual canvass between July-Nov 2017
- Canvassers using tablets which improves efficiency and effectiveness
- Revised Register of Electors
- Awareness raising and publicity for 2018 elections

| Best Value Improvement | Grants |
|--|--------|
| Progress Summary | |
| <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>All actions in the original Grants Best Value Action Plan have been completed. Work has been undertaken to review and develop approaches to, and processes for, grant making with the Grants Determination Sub-Committee. The Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee continues to provide cross party members review and challenge to the grants decision making process.</p> <p><u>Key Achievements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going delivery of the Action Plan of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy • The Grants Determination Sub-Committee and Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee continue to meet every six weeks and have held 2 meetings during April-June 2017 • Grants Scrutiny Committee membership agreed • New third sector team structure developed which will be implemented following engagement with staff and union • Mapping of ICT system required to deliver new role for the team • Completion of commissioning of community cohesion theme which was co-produced with the local voluntary and community sector • External evaluation of the MSG Programme which has engaged a range of stakeholders with the final report expected in July 2017 • Quarterly monitoring of MSG projects which is reported to GDSC <p><u>Measureable outcomes for existing work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater involvement of voluntary and community sector in commissioning of services <p><u>Areas where work continues to progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New team structure supported by ICT system • Enhance strategic work with voluntary and community sector | |

| Best Value Area | Organisational Culture |
|--|------------------------|
| Progress Summary | |
| <p><u>Background</u></p> | |
| <p>Organisational culture is recognised as a key component in moving the Council forward. The aims of the Organisational Culture Action Plan are to: ensure that the culture of the organisation continues to be one which strives for continuous improvement; engage and invest in staff; ensure relationships between groups of members and between members and officers are professional, respectful, open and honest and rebuild trust in the areas where this has, or is perceived to have, broken down.</p> | |
| <p>The key outcomes we are looking to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engaged with and committed to delivering the Council’s vision and priorities • Improved clarity and understanding of formal roles and responsibilities of the Executive, non-Executive and senior officers of the Council in a Mayoral system • Effective working relationships between elected members, and between elected members and senior officers, to enable all to work together to achieve the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets and its residents • A shared commitment to a set of agreed behaviours and cultural values to underpin formal roles and responsibilities • A sustainable approach to maintaining and refreshing this shared commitment | |
| <p><u>Key achievements</u></p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of engagement events completed over 6 months to develop a new set of core values with staff and members • Leadership development programme established, including online resources, peer to peer coaching, qualification training and external partnerships • Whistleblowing mop-up activities completed to address any remaining issues and contract awarded for independent review of whistleblowing processes and procedures. • Reorganisation of the top 3 tiers implemented and recruitment to several key leadership posts completed • 6 Conversation Groups created from staff volunteers at all levels to provide a sounding board and increase transparency of the Smarter Together transformation programme • Independent review of industrial relations completed and actions recommended • Corporate Project Management Office (PMO) set up and resourced to Deliver MTFS savings • Smarter Together Programme set up with appropriate governance structures/framework in place • Establishment of a Children’s Services Improvement Board • 2017 Annual Residents survey completed • ADASS peer review completed | |
| <p><u>Measureable outcomes for existing work</u></p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58% of managers registered with online leadership development tools • 14 senior managers trained as facilitators for peer to peer coaching • 180 managers inducted onto Chartered Management Institute accredited courses | |

- 750 employees attended the Staff Conference and staff awards presentation
- 80% of staff say that they are proud to work for Tower Hamlets
- 60 staff trained in Outcome Based Accountability methodology

Areas where work continues to progress

- Bespoke leadership development programme for the top 3 tiers to be commissioned
- Decision Making Accountability methodology to be piloted across selected services to analyse tiers/spans of control and barriers to effective and appropriate decision making
- Final core values to be launched and embedded
- Continuous performance improvement to be reviewed as a way to provide ongoing and open feedback and engagement between staff and managers
- Recommendations from the industrial relations review to be progressed
- Refresh of constitution
- Implementation of Clear Up Project recommendations
- Implement Children's Services Improvement Plan
- Analysis of Annual Residents Survey
- Development of Tower Hamlets Partnership work programme
- Updated Planning code of conduct, Member/Officer protocol and new Member/Member protocol