

# Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2019-22

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**Foreword by John Biggs, Mayor**

(To be added)

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## Introduction by Will Tuckley, Chief Executive

(To be added)

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## **Our Priorities and Outcomes**

The Strategic Plan is an important precursor to the Council's Performance Management and Accountability Framework and is the main strategic business planning document of the Council. It sets out the corporate priorities and outcomes, the high level activities that will be undertaken to deliver the outcomes, as well as the measures that will help us determine whether we are achieving the outcomes.

The Council is looking to deliver the following priorities and outcomes over the next three years:

### **Priority 1 - People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities**

1. People access a range of education, training, and employment opportunities.
2. Children and young people are protected so they get the best start in life and can realise their potential.
3. People access joined-up services when they need them and feel healthier and more independent.
4. Inequality is reduced and people feel that they fairly share the benefits from growth.

### **Priority 2 - A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in**

5. People live in a borough that is clean and green.
6. People live in good quality affordable homes and well-designed neighbourhoods.
7. People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled.
8. People feel they are part of a cohesive and vibrant community.

### **Priority 3 - A dynamic, outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough**

9. People say we are open and transparent putting residents at the heart of everything we do.
10. People say we work together across boundaries in a strong and effective partnership to achieve the best outcomes for our residents.
11. People say we continuously seek innovation and strive for excellence to embed a culture of sustainable improvement.

The plan is a key link in the 'Golden Thread' and used to inform directorate, service and team planning. It also sets out how the Council will deliver the objective and priorities set out in the new Tower Hamlets Plan developed by the Tower Hamlets Strategic Partnership.

## **Priority 1 - People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities**

Tower Hamlets is one of the most vibrant and diverse communities in the UK. Almost 140 languages are spoken in our schools alone. People value the rich cultural offer that comes with this mix, and the new opportunities to celebrate this diversity that we have worked hard to create.

Over the past three decades our population has more than doubled and we are still growing: the population recently broke through the 300,000 mark and is projected to be approaching 400,000 by 2027. We are also a young borough - the fourth youngest in the UK: almost half of our residents are aged 20-39.

This priority provides a focus for our efforts to ensure that our residents can achieve their aspirations and gain from the benefits of living in a borough that is economically vibrant, resilient and diverse.

There are four overarching outcomes under Priority 1 that the Council's actions for the coming year are focussed on achieving and these are described in more detail in the sections that follow.

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### **Outcome 1: People access a range of education, training, and employment opportunities.**

High quality education is a stepping stone to high quality employment. In partnership with the Tower Hamlets Education and Partnership and our schools, we will continue to work hard to help our young people do well at school and go on to reach their full potential. Beyond school, we also want to support them and their families to be aspirational about their future and to have the opportunity to thrive in good jobs. This means equipping young people with the skills and confidence to succeed in the modern economy.

We want to help local residents to capitalise on the dynamic employment growth occurring around them. We want to encourage employers and education providers to work closely together in the design and delivery of education and skills training to reflect the needs of the job market. Higher education is not for everyone and people should be offered a range of routes into employment, including work placements and apprenticeships. We will push for economic investment that is coordinated and focused and for a borough that is a dynamic place for innovation and those who want to set up a business.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Agree common expectations with key stakeholders e.g. schools, New City College, Job Centre Plus, the business community
2. Develop action plans based on individual needs assessments for those young people and adults we are supporting into education, training and employment opportunities (note – this action also supports Outcome 4)

3. Develop a careers education programme for young people in years 7-9 (aged 11 to 14)
4. Identify key skills and training for employment support professionals
5. Provide support to start-ups and existing business
6. Develop business networks and contacts with hiring managers
7. Provide access to entry point learning which promote personal development
8. Improve our understanding of the current and future London labour market-

#### What will we measure?

- Young people who are in education, employment or training
- Pupils who are attending secondary school regularly
- New enterprises created with support from the Council's business development programmes
- Adult learners who complete a course successfully
- Adults supported into sustainable employment by the WorkPath service

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### **Outcome 2: Children and young people are protected so they get the best start in life and can realise their potential**

The formative years from 0 to 5 are absolutely critical to the future health and wellbeing of infants in Tower Hamlets. The integrated early years' service works with partners and stakeholders to address levels of provision and quality in early education and childcare. Similarly, health visitors play a crucial role in identifying and supporting our youngest children in need, making sure they get the best start in life. We want to ensure high quality provision to support the learning, development and care of young children to prepare them for school and their futures.

We have an important responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare and safety of children in need. To do this, we will work with parents and families in the best interests of the children by listening to their views when making decisions. With our partners we will be launching our children's campaign with the aim of making Tower Hamlets a child friendly borough.

We want children and young people to be able to live in a safe environment, ensuring the best health and developmental outcomes.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Provide high quality training for staff working in social care and early help services. This training will need to link closely with the training goals of our partners, and wherever possible, training should be delivered jointly to strengthen joint working.
2. Engage effectively with system partners such as health and the police to ensure that services are complementary and there is no duplication of services or resources.
3. Create and map clear pathways into early help from social care and other universal services; and to develop consistent understanding of thresholds across services and agencies.

4. Use the new Safeguarding Children Partnership to establish partnerships between children; young people; families and schools, health staff and other stakeholders
5. Continue to offer Family Group Conferencing to families in need at the earliest stage.
6. Collate data and feedback from children; young people; families and the wider community and further develop mechanisms for youth and parental voice.
7. Provide varied high quality activities outside of school for children and young people.

#### What will we measure?

- Long-term looked after children who are in stable placements
- Families who are seeing the benefits of being supported before problems escalate
- Pupils who are regularly attending school in reception year
- Young people engaging with the youth service who achieve a recorded outcome

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### **Outcome 3: People access joined-up services when they need them and feel healthier and more independent**

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our local population and the quality of the care services they receive. At the heart of this is ensuring our services are person centred, coordinated and make a tangible and positive difference to people's lives. We have a strong commitment to deliver in a joined-up way with a strong local Tower Hamlets focus, working in partnership with people and their communities, the voluntary and community sector and statutory providers. We aim to give the people of Tower Hamlets one of the best systems of interconnected health and care in the country.

Through further close partnership working, prevention, early intervention and working with our communities, we will tackle health inequalities, improving the quality of life for our residents and managing demand for services.

Through the Tower Hamlets Together partnership with the NHS and local community and voluntary sector, we aim to reduce the need for people to be treated in hospital, by supporting them to stay healthy and to access support earlier to prevent health problems. We also want to give people more control over their own health and wellbeing and manage their health in community settings.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Run activities and programmes that encourage residents to have healthy lifestyles, including encouraging children's healthy weight and nutrition
2. Provide evidence-based early intervention and prevention programmes, helping residents to be as healthy as possible for as long as possible
3. Change how we provide information to residents on health and care, making it easier for people to get advice and help at an early stage

4. Integrate health and care so that residents get a better, more joined-up experience of both systems
5. Make better use of technology and equipment in health and care, recognising its potential to improve how people manage their health conditions and care needs
6. Staff in adult social care will do more to empower people, focusing on the strengths and abilities of social care users as well as the things they need help with
7. Offer choice and personalised support to social care users, including the promotion of direct payments so that people have more control over the care they receive

#### What will we measure?

- People who are more independent after being supported through reablement services
- Delayed discharges from hospital attributable to council social care services
- Proportion of adult social care users who are receiving a direct payment
- Residents' self-reported level of physical activity
- Residents' self-reported level of health
- Children's participation in physical activity (Daily Mile)

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### **Outcome 4: Inequality is reduced and people feel that they fairly share the benefits from growth**

While we want people to have positive associations about life in Tower Hamlets, we cannot deny that Tower Hamlets is a borough of contradictions.

Despite the economic opportunities in our borough, many in our community do not benefit from them. The borough is the tenth most deprived local authority in England and has the highest levels of pensioner poverty and child poverty in England. The employment rate of residents is below the national average and some people in our communities find it more difficult to find work than others.

The borough is also tackling some of the toughest health inequalities in the UK caused by deprivation and related housing and employment needs – these are addressed in Outcomes 1 (education, training, employment), 3 and 7 (health), and 6 (housing).

#### What actions will we take?

1. Support households impacted by Universal Credit
2. Deliver initiatives to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
3. Work with partners to deliver initiatives to tackle poverty
4. Develop Finance and Welfare advice provision in the borough
5. Review and improve local childcare offer

#### What will we measure?

- Women and residents from BAME backgrounds supported into sustainable employment by the WorkPath service



- Residents' self-reported level of health for groups experiencing health inequalities
- Residents who are better off financially after receiving advice on maximising their household income
- Households prevented from becoming homeless

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## Priority 2 - A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in

Tower Hamlets is one of the most dynamic and exciting places in the country. It is a borough with a rich history; people are proud to be part of this community. Tower Hamlets is also a place of contrasts and contradictions, where a thriving economy co-exists with high levels of poverty. But above all it is a place of opportunity. A place where we can build on the stories of our past, on the great progress we have already made, and on our many strengths, to ensure that this is a borough where all residents can thrive.

Our vision for Tower Hamlets is that it is clean and well looked after, where our air quality is better and our streets and estates safer, a fairer place with more access to affordable housing and where more of our residents achieve their potential.

We know that strong and resilient communities are happier and healthier communities, when people look out for each other they benefit in terms of their health and well-being, from their connections with the people around them.

Against a backdrop of reducing public sector resources and increased confidence to report crime, we will focus more on crime prevention and reducing fear of crime. We will also work closely with communities to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

We will work together as a community to support greater integration and cohesion, helping to build bridges between different parts of the community, tackling social isolation and contributing to making the borough a safer place.

There are four overarching outcomes under Priority 2 that the Council's actions for the coming year are focused on achieving, and these are described in the following sections.

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### **Outcome 5: People live in a borough that is clean and green**

We want residents to enjoy a good quality of life in an environment that has a positive influence on everyone health and wellbeing. While in many ways the local environment for residents is improving, increases in the number of people that live, work and pass through the borough presents many challenges in ensuring the impact of growth on the local environment is managed.

Providing a clean local environment with improved open spaces for a growing population presents a complex challenge to meet within a small borough footprint and against financial constraints. Similarly, managing the impact of a growing population on the environment through reducing congestion, air pollution, and the levels of waste and CO<sub>2</sub> produced presents a significant challenge in how we work with stakeholders to reduce the effects of growth.

We are already making good progress in delivering a range of measures to improve air quality and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the borough and are ambitious in our approach to improve the local environment which residents experience, The Love Your

Neighbourhood Programme will further improve the quality of the local environment for those who live and work in the borough through delivering street cleanliness, waste management, transport and infrastructure initiatives to create a more pleasant environment.

In order to meet the challenge of growth we remain committed to the delivery of affordable homes within the borough and improving the quality and management of housing across the borough. We will continue to progress our approach to regeneration across the borough to ensure we capitalise on opportunities presented by development, ensuring that residents share the benefits of growth and that the appropriate infrastructure is in place to facilitate this.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Implement new arrangements to improve cleansing and the quality of the local environment
2. Deliver the Council's Waste Strategy with initiatives to encourage/enforce waste reduction and recycling amongst residents and businesses
3. Deliver the Mayor's ambitious Love Your Neighbourhood programme to make our streets safer, cleaner and more sociable places to use and to deliver the new investment around street lighting, footways and carriageways throughout the borough
4. Deliver initiatives to maintain and improve existing parks and green spaces
5. Deliver the Air Quality Action Plan
6. Promote use of cleaner fuel types amongst residents and businesses
7. Take targeted action to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across residential and community buildings
8. Agree and deliver a Biodiversity Action Plan to protect and enhance wildlife across the borough

#### What will we measure?

- Level of public realm cleanliness
- Level of recycling
- Level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by the Council's activities
- Primary school pupils benefiting from a school street at their school
- Residents' access to nature through biodiversity projects

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### **Outcome 6: People live in good quality affordable homes and well-designed neighbourhoods**

We want the borough to be a place where people are proud to live and enjoy their lives. Accessing good quality, affordable housing is an ongoing challenge in a borough which has a fast growing population, low income levels for many households and a fast growing private rented sector with high private rents and house prices.

Pressures on the high demand and limited supply of social housing lead to complex challenges concerning overcrowding, homelessness and rough sleeping, while the

expansion of the private sector as of source of housing presents challenges to ensure that this stock is in good condition and well managed.

Finally while Tower Hamlets delivers amongst the largest numbers of housing and affordable amongst Local Authorities each year, we continue to have stretching housing delivery targets from the GLA and have three designated Opportunity Areas designated to accommodate projected population growth of about 25% by 2031. This level of growth within our borough's 2,157 hectare footprint present significant challenges to ensure the correct social, economic and physical infrastructure is in place to accommodate this growth, that residents have a vital say and role in regeneration and that opportunities that arise from growth are accessible for our residents.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Work with housing associations and other partners to improve the supply of affordable housing (note – this action also supports Outcome 4)
2. Identify sites for new Council homes and commence delivery
3. Adopt the Local Plan and produce robust development strategies and policy guidance
4. Develop and deliver a borough programme for regeneration
5. Deliver the Council's programme of estate renewal and initiatives to improve housing conditions (note – this action also supports Outcome 4)
6. Negotiate and deliver strategic infrastructure
7. Continue to drive improvements to the planning process
8. Deliver the programme of Liveable Streets

#### What will we measure?

- Level of household overcrowding
- Level of homeless households moved into permanent accommodation
- Level of affordable homes completed
- Residents' satisfaction with the local area as a place to live

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### **Outcome 7: People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled**

Tower Hamlets is a vibrant, diverse and exciting place to live, work and visit and we want everyone to feel safe and enjoy all that it has to offer, however residents report that crime was their top concern in 2018. Tackling the interlinked issues of violence, anti-social behaviour (ASB), drugs and alcohol is a significant challenge for the borough. The Council is working closely with a range of partners to deliver a holistic response that includes looking at drugs and alcohol misuse as a health issue, and addresses the root causes and consequences of crime, abuse and exploitation.

The Council will make use of all the tools and powers available to it to prevent issues occurring and to focus on robust enforcement against the drugs market and its associated violent crime and ASB. We will continue to fund additional police officers and support Operation Continuum activity. The Council will also seek to reduce the

harm caused to communities by offering improved support to victims, safeguarding people at risk of abuse or neglect, and effective treatment services for those with addictions.

In addition the Council will be reviewing its approach to CCTV and evaluating its Neighbourhood Management Pilot to assess what more can be done to enhance feelings of safety by ensuring that its response is evidence led and co-produced with residents.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Provide education and awareness-raising to prevent and tackle issues including violence against women and girls, safeguarding and exploitation
2. Run a new specialist substance misuse project and get more people into treatment programmes, so that more people get the help they need
3. Make it easier for residents to report ASB to the Council
4. Continue partnership working with the Police to carry out geographic drugs operations ('Operation Continuum') so that drugs markets are continually disrupted
5. Invest in CCTV, Police personnel and other resources to proactively tackle crime and ASB, enabling us to identify hotspots and take swift action
6. Hold perpetrators of crime and abuse to account, using the full spectrum of our enforcement powers when needed
7. Work closely with the community to prevent, identify and tackle crime, ASB, abuse and community tensions
8. Provide personalised support for victims, including new specialist support to victims of knife crime at the Royal London Hospital

#### What will we measure?

- Residents' concern about crime and anti-social behaviour
- Young people entering the youth justice system for the first time
- Residents' feeling of safety in their local area
- Drug users successfully completing treatment
- Victims of violence against women and girls or hate crime who feel safer after engaging with victim support

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### **Outcome 8: People feel they are part of a cohesive and vibrant community**

Tower Hamlets is a place with a rich history- from its beginnings as an historic docks and manufacturing area it has grown and developed at a faster rate than anywhere else in the UK. This culturally rich and diverse area faces unique challenges as it moves from a place of deprivation to become an extension of the Central London economic powerhouse and a vibrant borough in its own right.

We are also one of the most vibrant and diverse communities in the UK. Local people are proud of the high levels of community cohesion, and value the rich cultural offer that comes with this mix. The Voluntary and Community Sector is crucial to the economic and social life of the borough, for example, as an employer,

service provider, and provider of community space. We need to continue to ensure the sector is aligned as much as possible to what citizens in the borough want and need. Starting later this year, the new The Local Community Fund (LCF) Programme will focus on outcomes for local residents and making a positive impact on their lives, while building the capacity of local voluntary and community sector organisations.

In February 2019, the government published its Integrated Communities Action Plan which we will use to develop Council's Cohesion Framework to help embed cohesion in all our business. This will have a focus on building positive relationships valuing diversity, supporting equality of opportunity and enhancing a sense of belonging.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Work with stakeholders and communities to tackle emerging tensions and issues within and between communities including those generated by hate crimes or extremism
2. Roll out community-led improvement projects & programmes including supporting the voluntary & community sector to deliver services and bring people together
3. Improve services for refugees and people fleeing harm
4. Deliver projects to support integration of new communities
5. Deliver initiatives to celebrate diverse cultures of our borough

#### What will we measure?

- Level of hate crime
- Residents' level of volunteering
- Residents' perception of people from different backgrounds getting on well

### **Priority 3 - A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough**

Tower Hamlets is the UK's most dynamic, innovative and exciting place. Change is happening at a faster rate than any time in our history. We are seeing a rapid expansion in the number of homes and jobs and a changing, growing population. The vast majority of residents (92%) have access to the internet.

With these increased pressures and reduced funding, we need to embrace technology and work with residents and partners to make the most of our resources.

To get the best outcomes, the Council needs to be more agile, leaner and strategic, and cannot deliver everything. So we will commission services when other organisations are in a better position to provide them. We will work in partnership with stakeholders to share resources and become more than the sum of our parts.

We will also use digital innovation to improve services and to give people the opportunity to take a greater role in improving our borough.

*Smarter Together* is the Council's blueprint for transformation. *Smarter Together* will make us become a dynamic outcomes-based organisation using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough. Our transformation is shaped by three lenses – Partnership, Outcomes and Digital.

- Partnership: Collaboration with residents, businesses and partners at the earliest stage.
- Outcomes: Services will be delivered by organisations that offer the best outcomes for our residents. That means measuring the difference we are making in people's lives. We will become agile in responding to issues and finding solutions inside and outside the Council.
- Digital: Accessing most Council services will feel similar to the best online experiences. Smart technology will allow people to transact, feedback and measure services with ease.

There are three overarching outcomes under Priority 3 that the Council's actions for the coming year are focused on achieving, and these are described in the following sections.

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#### **Outcome 9: People say we are open and transparent putting residents at the heart of everything we do**

Our residents are varied and have a range of needs. Everyone who lives, works, studies, and visits or does business in Tower Hamlets will use a Council service in some form, whether they are visiting one of the Council's parks, applying for a parking permit or simply walking down one of our streets.

We want to make it easier for people to contact us online. Helping our residents to become confident dealing with us online helps them to become more independent

financially, socially and practically. This will help them in other areas of their lives, such as getting information about jobs, or getting a better deal from their energy provider.

We will be 'digital by default' (which means that this will generally be the main way that people contact or do business with us for straightforward matters).

Every resident should feel that they have received excellent customer service when dealing with us and should be able to easily connect with us whenever they want. In most cases we should be able to meet their needs first time around. To do this we will need to work with our residents to get feedback, as well as analysing the information provided by people using our services.

We need to transform our approach to business intelligence and insight. The Council and its partners collect and store vast amounts of data on our citizens, businesses and communities that we use as part of our everyday service delivery and transform into intelligence to inform service planning. However much of this data is fragmented and underused – we need to unlock the potential of our data giving staff the power to make better informed decisions to deliver better outcomes for our citizens and communities.

Through positive delivery of our Community Engagement Strategy, we want to strengthen our relationship with local people by enabling them to be actively involved in the design and delivery of services.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Work with internal and external stakeholders to deliver improvements in the Council's consultation and engagement approach
2. Develop a digital Strategy which supports our work to improve customer services through digital platforms
3. Develop initiatives to increase democratic participation by local communities
4. Deliver a Communications Strategy to tell the story about the Council

#### What will we measure?

- Service user satisfaction with the Council's online service offer
- Residents' satisfaction with Idea Stores and libraries
- Residents' perception of being involved in Council decision-making
- Residents' perception of Council transparency
- Residents' perception of being kept informed by the Council

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### **Outcome 10: People say we work together across boundaries in a strong and effective partnership to achieve the best outcomes for our residents**

We will work in partnership with stakeholders to share resources and become more than the sum of our parts.

The Tower Hamlets Strategic Partnership is the borough's Local Strategic Partnership bringing together key stakeholders to provide and improve services and outcomes for local residents. In particular it gives residents more powerful input in the way



services are provided and ensures that all aspects of the community work together to achieve the objectives of a borough plan.

As partners have reflected on the key opportunities and challenges facing the borough, we have also thought hard about how we are going to achieve our objectives. In a time of austerity and uncertainty, 'less of the same' will not be enough. Public sector organisations in the borough are already making big changes to the ways that they work, and this will need to continue. And as the richness of our conversations about the role of organisations and people beyond the public sector has shown, we really do all need to play our part. Responsible local businesses, a thriving voluntary sector and residents themselves are critical to achieving this Plan.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Understand public sector investment, commitments and resourcing across Tower Hamlets
2. Deliver a Tower Hamlets place-based campaign
3. Develop a clear set of priorities for partnership working
4. Work with partners to mitigate impact of Brexit on communities and stakeholders in Tower Hamlets
5. Improve collaborative working and integration with partners to drive improvements against the four priority areas of the Tower Hamlets Plan

#### What will we measure?

- Residents' satisfaction with Council and partner response to anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Children and young people receiving support from mental health services
- Older people who have not returned to hospital after being supported through reablement services
- Residents supported into sustainable employment by the WorkPath partnership

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### **Outcome 11: People say we continuously seek innovation and strive for excellence to embed a culture of sustainable improvement**

Public services are under huge long-term financial pressures and are also facing rising demand from service users. There are already many initiatives underway to change the way that public services are designed and run in Tower Hamlets, such as the integration of health and social care.

We as civic leaders will need to increase our efforts, and ensure a greater coherence of approach across our organisations.

We are calling this a 'whole system' approach to change in Tower Hamlets, and it will require us to work together in new ways, build better alignment of our respective efforts in service of our shared aims, and put the interests of the borough above those of our individual organisations.

#### What actions will we take?

1. Deliver the Smarter Together Transformation Programme
2. Deliver improvements to how we use our land and buildings
3. Improve the IT infrastructure and modernise applications to enable innovation
4. Develop a modern workforce within the Council through culture change
5. Embed Outcomes Based Budgeting across the Council
6. Deliver a programme of service reviews to improve operational effectiveness
7. Review business intelligence processes and procedures to support better outcomes for local people
8. Change our approach to performance management to focus on better outcomes for residents

What will we measure?

- Council staff turnover rate
- Council staff sickness absence rate
- Media and press view of the Council
- Residents' perception of the Council doing a better job than last year

**The Borough by numbers**

**(To be added)**

**Council Spending by Strategic Priority Outcome**  
**(To be added)**

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