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| Transformation and Improvement Board 09 September 2019 |  TOWER HAMLETS |
| Report of: Sharon Godman Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance | Classification: [Unrestricted or Exempt] |
| Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan 2018-2022 | |

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| Lead Member | Mayor John Biggs |
| Originating Officer(s) | Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Policy Daniel Kerr Strategy and Policy Manager, Corporate Filuck Miah Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate |
| Wards affected | All wards |
| Key Decision? | No |
| Forward Plan Notice Published | |
| Reason for Key Decision | |
| Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome | People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities. A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in. A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough |

Executive Summary

This report provides a progress update on the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan which was developed in response to the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (June 2018) and captures the significant transformation and improvement activity currently undertaken in the Council.

Recommendations:

The Transformation & Improvement Board is recommended to:

1. Consider and comment on the progress of the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan

1. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. In June 2018, the Council had participated in a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. The purpose of the review was to establish an independent review of the Council's achievements against its Best Value Improvement Plan and to learn from best practice.
- 1.2. The Corporate Peer Challenge represented a significant milestone in the Council's improvement journey and offered a fresh insight into the Council's strengths, weaknesses, and its ability to deliver the on going improvements required to improve services for residents.
- 1.3. The Corporate Peer Challenge had identified a number of areas where the Council can continue to improve. The Council needs to increase the pace of change in the borough and remains currently too risk averse as a result of past decision making. Furthermore, the Council should focus on taking a more proportionate risk based approach and empower officers to be less cautious and bureaucratic in order to drive through improvements at a faster rate.
- 1.4. This report captures the significant transformation and improvement activity being undertaken by the Council in order to become a modern and efficient Council, and achieve the recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.
- 1.5. This progress update of the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan represents the third quarterly submission of the plan to the Transformation and Improvement Board (TIB). The TIB will continue to have oversight of the plan.

2. Progress of Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan

- 2.1 The following provides the latest updates on key achievements that the Council have delivered against recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peers Challenge as outlined in the in the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan. A comprehensive update on the progress of the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan can be found at appendix 1.
 - 2.1.1. Overall the Improvement plan remains on target with around 70% of the plan nearing completion.

2.2. **Recommendation 1: The Council now needs to grasp opportunities and drive the pace of change to achieve the potential of the place.
Recommendation 2: Be forward looking and learn the lessons of the past but not be fettered by them.**

2.2.1. The Partnership Executive Group (PEG) which formed a partner led Brexit Action Group has proposed to deliver three significant themed actions from Brexit Commission Recommendations these are the following:

- **Tower Hamlets – You’re Home** – A campaign to promote Tower Hamlet’s and EU residents to feel safe and welcome whilst providing reassurance to businesses that the borough remains open and prime location for businesses.
- **Tower Hamlet’s Got Talent** – A series of focussed sustainable actions for employers, education and skills based organisations to provide an develop the workforce for local and international businesses in borough.
- **Tower Hamlets and European Culture Festival** – Celebration of EU cultural events commencing Autumn 2019 - Autumn 2020 recognising TH position in Europe.

2.2.2. The public sector spend analysis has allowed the Council to map the borough’s ESOL provision and it Increased access to resident to via an online presence.

2.2.3. The Council’s Smarter Together Programme has implemented a number of projects including online key customer journeys and the new external community equipment service has gone live.

2.2.4. The Council has undertaken a strategic review of assets, which includes service reviews for all directorates, identifying efficiencies and scope for future usage.

2.3. **Recommendation 3: Be confident and bold about the Council’s ability to be normal and even strive for excellence, review its risk appetite and take account of the role of Internal Audit in managing this.**

2.3.1. The Council’s Local Community Fund (LCF) programme includes over 50 projects and expects it to deliver a range of activities against the five priority areas and outcomes of LCF. Monitoring and reporting arrangements for the LCF will also includes providing updates to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Grants Determination Committee.

2.4. **Recommendation 5: Address the barriers to sustainable change such as the over use of interims and agency staff, some of the practices of the Human Resources department and the problems with the ICT systems**

2.4.1. A HR Policy Working group has been established to review existing and develop new policies and procedures, and ensure HR is at the forefront of

delivering change. The first phase of the review of policies has been complete and changes to be implemented in 2020.

- 2.4.2. In Children's Social Care, vacancy gap has been further reduced from 26% to 19.55%. SLA are being set for Resourcing Team and social care managers to improve recruitment timescales. Work continues with the development of the national social work apprenticeship scheme to be launched late 2019/20
- 2.4.3. Then Council has installed Clever Touch Smart Screens over nine locations, which can be used via mirroring from smart phones, Laptop, VDI and early results suggests paper levels for meetings have been significantly reduced.
- 2.4.4. Improving Digital Connectivity within the borough includes Tower Hamlets Homes having an understanding of the requirements and input. In some cases the thinking (with THH) has been taking a project-shared approach with fibre operators. THH will nominate pilot sites to assess viability.

2.5. Recommendation 6: There needs to be an unrelenting focus on the previous areas of failure including Children's Services.

- 2.5.1. Full inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILAC) took place in June 2019. The result of the inspection graded Tower Hamlets Children's Services as GOOD. In continuing to maintain the improvements The Council has established and Children and Education Scrutiny Subcommittee to look at issues that can impact Children's Services
- 2.5.2. The Performance Improvement Board has agreed for two improvement and efficiency reviews for 2019-20 e.g.
 - Markets – review of the current delivery model of markets
 - HR/ Sickness – How the Council manages cases of long term illness/ sicknessThese reviews will focus on improving the pace and effectiveness of service delivery and will build on existing activity and transformation programmes.

2.6. Recommendation 7: Reform the services that are still traditional and paternalistic

- 2.6.1. A programme of reviews has been scheduled in the Transformation & Improvement Board's 2019/20-work programme. The review of 'cleaner streets and our local environment' focused on the delivery and improvement plans. The Board reviewed the progress of the mobilisation of the in house for the integrated delivery of waste, recycling and cleansing functions with Tower Hamlets and how the new service will improve the high levels of complaints received on environmental indicators.
- 2.6.2. In supporting the development of Councillors role at the scrutiny through a range of initiatives, the Council's General Purpose Committee agreed with the findings to Strengthening Local Democracy which included actions to develop Overview and Scrutiny. Members and Co optees from OSC and its Subcommittees attended a joint workshop to discuss the work programme for

2019/20; an online presence was developed to capture residents' views on topics for OSC to consider. A scrutiny toolkit has been developed to support Members to perform their roles. Scrutiny Leads continue with meeting with their equivalent Cabinet leads and senior officers to discuss areas of the portfolio. This will help improve the effectiveness of scrutiny and ensure that it is better aligned with the council's key strategic priorities.

2.7. Recommendation 10: Continue to promote, cascade and embed the behavioural and cultural change by engaging the whole organisation

2.7.1 In addition to breaking down internal silos, the Council is also strengthening its collaboration and integration with key partners through the Partnership Executive Group (PEG). A summit was held in June with over 100 members of the business community at Canary Wharf. It offered an opportunity for businesses to share their views on key issues and to help the partnership board to prioritise support for them. The Council has delivered its objectives hosting two partnerships summits (as identified in Tower Hamlets Plan, July 2018) on Children and Young People and Jobs and Skills.

2.8. Recommendation 11: Maximise the advantages of the Council's financial standing whilst instilling more robust financial discipline and delivery of efficiency and value for money.

2.8.1. Work is underway to strengthen the organisation's financial discipline in terms of the delivery of savings targets and balanced budgets, with a focus on budget holders' accountability. The Council has completed the first phase of the Outcome Based Budgeting project with the budget being analysed across strategic priorities but there remains scope for further refinement. Financial regulations have been updated and approved by the Council (July 2019), A new system upgrade (Agresso) will need lead time (2020) for implementation but this will be delivered through a tendering process.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no equality implications arising from the report

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

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

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,

- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The reports forms part of the Tower hamlets improvement plan and recommends number of proposals to increase the pace of change in the borough and empower officers to be less cautious and bureaucratic in order to drive through improvements at a faster rate.

6.2 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

6.3

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 The schemes identified in the report have been subject to separate legal advice and are all within the Council's legal powers to undertake.

7.2 The nature of the report is an update and therefore there are no further legal issues arising from the report.

7.3

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

NONE

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state N/A