

Transformation and Improvement Board	 TOWER HAMLETS
09/12/2019	
Report of: Sharon Godman, Divisional Director Strategy Policy and Performance	Classification: Unrestricted
Transformation and Improvement Plan 2018-22	

Lead Member	John Biggs Mayor
Originating Officer(s)	Afazul Hoque, Head of Strategy and Policy, Corporate Daniel Kerr, Strategy and Policy Manager, Corporate Filuck Miah, Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate
Wards affected	All wards
Reason for Key Decision	[Financial Threshold / Impact on Wards]
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	<p>A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in.</p> <p>A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough</p> <p>People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities.</p>

Executive Summary

This report supplies Q3 progress updates on the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan's 11 recommendations; developed in response to the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (June 2018) and captures the improvement activity currently undertaken in the Council.

Recommendations:

The Transformation and Improvement Board is recommended to:

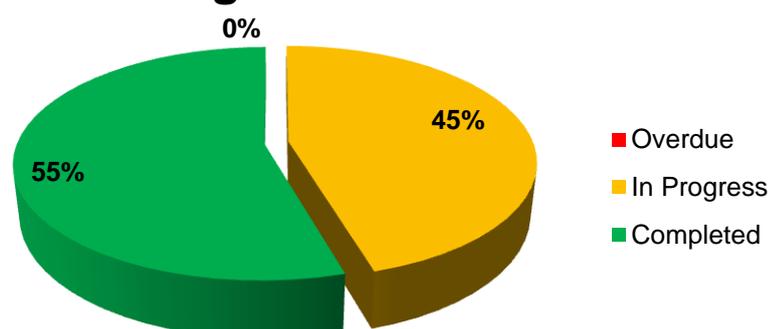
1. Review and comment on the progress of the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan

1. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

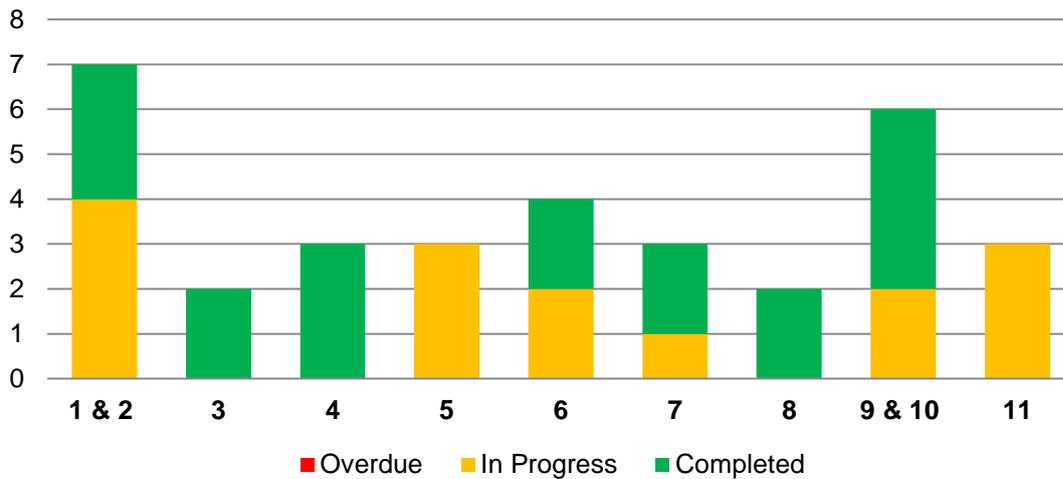
- 1.1. In June 2018, the Council participated in a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. The purpose of the review was to achieve an independent perspective of the Council's achievement against its Best Value Improvement Plan and to learn from best practice. The Peer Challenge represented a significant milestone in the Council's strengths, weaknesses and a catalyst to deliver the ongoing improvements required to improve services for residents.
- 1.2. The Corporate Peer Challenge had identified a number of areas where the Council can make further improvements. Large areas within the Council are in need of modernisation with some services operating under a traditional and paternalistic model of delivery. The Council needs to expedite the pace of change in the borough as it remains too risk averse as a result of past decision making. The Council should focus on taking a more proportionate risk approach and empower officers to be less cautious and bureaucratic in order to drive through improvements at a quick rate.
- 1.3. This report captures the significant transformation and improvement activity being undertaken by the Council as their goal to become a modern and efficient Council and meet the recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.
- 1.4. This progress update of the Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan represents the third quarterly (2019-20) submission of the plan to the Transformation and Improvement Board (TIB).

TIP Milestone - Overall Progress

Figure 1



Transformation and Improvement Plan Milestone by Recommendations figure 2



2. PROGRESS OF TOWER HAMLETS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The following highlights some the key achievements the Council have delivered against the recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, as outlined 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. **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. The council has continued its awareness raising campaigns around the EU Settlement Scheme. To ensure vulnerable groups have been captured in communications about the scheme, tailored materials have been distributed to key partners in the borough to help target these groups and to help advertise local immigration support services. Collaboration with members of the Grant Funded Network, commissioned by the Home Office to assist with applications, has been on-going.
- 2.3. Key considerations have also been made towards potential risks arising from Brexit. Council services have mapped areas of consideration and have identified mitigating actions to alleviate any risk. Contingency planning for national level issues, such as risks to food, fuel, and medicine have taken place and the council has engaged its service providers in these areas to seek reassurance. This planning will continue alongside any advice distributed to local authorities by central government in the lead up to Brexit.

The Smarter Together Programme, which encompasses most of the council's transformational change, is proceeding broadly to plan for this year. Whilst

there have been some challenges this quarter but it continues to make progress which includes:

- Re-tendering for the secondary schools catering contract.
- Several key customer journeys are now available online
- Rolled out replacement multi-functional devices (printer / scanner / copier) across the whole estate

- 2.4. Tower Hamlets Partnership Board has approved the development of the place campaign to launch stage in summer 2019. They agreed that the council should follow a similar approach to the Belfast place campaign. In October, the Divisional Director of Communications met with the Tower Hamlets Partnership Comms Group and also secured their support.

In November, the Chief Executive wrote to the Tower Hamlets Partnership Board members to ask for contributions to the funding of the next stage of the campaign development. This is ongoing but has resulted in contributions from members. The Council Communications team is now about to commission an agency to develop the campaign branding and content for launch in the spring.

The Council Communications team is in the process of finalising new guidelines and look and feel for council branding (while not changing the logo).

- 2.5. **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.**

- 2.6. The Local Community Fund (LCF) was presented and agreed at Cabinet on 31st July 2019. The programme includes over 50 projects that will deliver a diverse range of activities against the five priority areas and outcomes of the LCF. Contract mobilisation will commence as soon as possible alongside a transition support programme for organisations who were not awarded any funding. Monitoring and reporting arrangements for the LCF will be developed and updates will be provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Grants Determination Committee.

- 2.7. **Recommendation 4: Increase the pace of decision making and implementation by removing bad bureaucracy whilst retaining good governance**

- 2.8. A review of the Council's strategies and boards has been completed. Through engagement with services across the organisation 61 strategies were identified. Work is now underway to streamline this into 47 strategies which will make the organisation more efficient, support service delivery and achieve the aims of the strategic plan.

2.9. **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**

2.10. The first phase of the review of policies has been completed as a result of the proposed changes to our terms, conditions and benefits package. These will be implemented early 2020. A scoping meeting is taking place on 9th September 2019 to determine the timetable for reviewing all other policies and procedures. A proposal for how to manage this process going forward has been developed. New arrangements will be put in place in the New Year.

2.11. Improving Digital Connectivity within the borough - Quarter 2 focused on working with the three operators (Community Fibre, Hyper Optic and Virgin Media) to agree specific operator versions of for the wayleave agreements. In conjunction with this activity the project has worked with THH and operators to identify pilot/launch survey sites to enable the operators to demonstrate their survey documentation and approach on specified locations across the borough. One operator (Community Fibre) has now completed the wayleave process and all paperwork has been completed and signed by both parties. The programme has now based itself at THH offices one day a week and has met with the majority of all key THH stakeholders as part of the mobilisation phase prior to the rollout commencing.

2.12. **Recommendation 6: There needs to be an unrelenting focus on the previous areas of failure.**

A scope of the Street Care review has been agreed. The desired outcome of the review includes improving the effectiveness of the new waste management system. This includes through streamlining existing processes for managing service requests with updated process map(s) and clear lines of responsibilities, thereby achieving an improvement in the customer journey and satisfactions levels with the new in-house service. The principal fieldwork of the review will commence (Dec 19) once the Markets Review has been completed, when the resources become available.

A standardised report template has been prepared – allowing PIB to assess scope, method, key findings, recommendations, and implementation options for all reviews

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

2.14. A programme of reviews has been scheduled into the Transformation & Improvement Board's 2019/20 work programme. To support the TIB in their reviews, pre meetings have been held with external board members, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee chair and the leader of the opposition with front line service mangers to help shape their lines of questioning.

- 2.15. The Board looked into the regeneration delivery plan and employment – Work and Greater Prosperity. The regeneration delivery plan highlighted the growth development over the next 15 years e.g. homes, jobs, services and infrastructure. The board suggested that the action was required to address the approach in becoming consistent in order to have a proper strategic oversight of the borough’s growth and regeneration programme. The board looked into the approach taken to improve greater prosperity in Tower Hamlets focusing specifically on measures taken to improve economic wellbeing outcomes for young people.
- 2.16. **Recommendation 8: Maximise the potential, ability and enthusiasm of all members**
- 2.17. A Scrutiny toolkit has been developed to support members to perform their role. The toolkit provides a summary of key information members need to know as well as a ‘how to guide’ approach to effectively Scrutiny. An external guide to scrutiny has been developed and publicised with Council communications and partners to inform the boroughs residents and raise the profile of the Council’s scrutiny function. Furthermore, regular meetings have been set up for Scrutiny Leads to meet with their equivalent Cabinet Leads to discuss key issues and activity within their portfolio.
- 2.18. **Recommendation 9: Further break down silos and embed cross organisational working.**
Recommendation 10: Continue to promote, cascade and embed the behavioural and cultural change by engaging the whole organisation
- 2.19. The Partnership Executive Group (PEG) has now concluded its Appreciative Inquiry approach, which focussed on all four themes of the Tower Hamlets Plan. It has now been agreed to explore the most cross-cutting, high level and strategic issues in the borough at the subsequent PEG meetings. Over the last year the Partnership has hosted a Business Summit, which brought together over one hundred businesses to discuss issues affecting them. The Children and Families strategy was developed in conjunction with partners to agree a shared vision for children in Tower Hamlets. The PEG highlighted substance misuse as a borough-wide issue to which all partners could contribute. The discussion has informed the development of the borough’s substance misuse strategy.
- 2.20. The Council is preparing for the IIP assessor to visit in December 2019. A temperature check is currently being undertaken to see where the organisation is. In October 2019 OCPB agreed a revised timeline for 2020-2022
- 2.21. **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.**

2.22. The Financial Regulations has been updated and was approved by full Council in July 2019. The new system upgrade (Agresso) is taking some time to complete; there will be a tender process and implementation time which will take us into late 2020. Good progress is being made on this important project.

3. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

3.1. This report is in full compliance of the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010).

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

4.1. 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.

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

5. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

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

5.2. The activities detailed in the report are required in order that the Council continuously improves the way it delivers its legal functions in terms of economy efficiency and effectiveness. This demonstrates compliance with the Council's Best Value duty.

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

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- List any linked reports
- State NONE if none.

Appendices

- Tower Hamlets Improvement Plan

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

- List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.
- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

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