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Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to introduce the new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy.

Our vision is that: local people live healthier, happier lives by being more active and engaging with sport in the borough.

We want every person in Tower Hamlets to feel that there are sport and physical activity opportunities available locally that work for them and that they are supported to get involved. Whether participating or spectating we want the many benefits of sport and physical activity to reach the whole local population.

The connections between being more active and health and wellbeing are clear and it is vital that we reduce inactivity in order to address health concerns in the borough, such as higher incidence of some health problems and levels of childhood obesity.

We also know that bringing people together and making connections are a natural part of being active and this can help address issues such as social isolation, provide positive engagement opportunities for young people, and support greater community integration.

This strategy is driven by a set of priorities and outcomes which define what we want to achieve. This means that we are focusing on the impact we want to have on people's lives and what we want the future to look like rather than just the specific actions we will take.

Although the potential to make a positive difference in a broad range of ways through sport and physical activity is recognised by many, this strategy provides a framework for understanding these connections better and taking the necessary steps to make things happen.

This will enable the council and partners to work together across all sectors, reaching more people and maximising the impact of everything that we do.

These are ambitious goals but together we can achieve them and offer everyone the chance to live active lives which support their health and wellbeing.



Cllr Sabina Aktar
Cabinet Member
for Culture, Arts
and Brexit



Cllr Amina Ali
Chair of the
Health and
Wellbeing
Board

Introduction

This strategy sets out how we can increase levels of participation in physical activity and sport in the borough, make the most of the local environment, harness community engagement opportunities and ensure that children and young people develop a positive relationship with being active.

We know that physical activity and sport can offer countless ways to change and improve people's lives. This could be through: playing a sport for personal challenge or just the enjoyment of taking part; volunteering to support a club, team or activity; travelling more actively in the borough by walking or cycling; or participating in any number of other activities such as dancing, yoga and chair based exercise.

The reasons that this is so important are clear. As Public Health England has highlighted we are not active enough¹. It is vital for our physical and mental health and wellbeing and can help prevent a number of diseases. This is an issue that affects people at every stage of their life. Inactivity can put additional pressure on services such as health and social care and result in negative impacts on the lives of individuals and communities.

At the centre of our approach is a focus on groups who are more likely to be inactive or under represented such as women and girls, people from ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and older age groups. We want everyone to feel they can be more active and for all members of our communities to feel supported in getting involved.

What has also become more widely recognised is the potential for physical activity and sport to add value and benefits to many policy areas including health, education, community cohesion and community safety. We will make sure we identify the best ways to capture and make the most of these complimentary themes.

There are so many opportunities for local people to take part in sport and physical activity in Tower Hamlets. The seven leisure centres provide a wide range of facilities and activities and a multitude of sports clubs and voluntary sector and community groups give people the chance to get active and involved.

Within the borough's parks and open spaces people can access exercise classes, playing pitches, outdoor gyms, the Urban Adventure Base for young people and places to cycle or take a walk in a natural environment. Programmes are run to promote and develop sport and physical activity and to provide opportunities for groups we know are more likely to be inactive or under represented. The network of individuals, groups and organisations involved in delivering these opportunities is extensive and spans all sectors. How these assets and resources are used in the most effective and efficient ways forms a significant part of our future plans.

¹ Public Health England, Everybody Active, Everyday Oct 2014

The strategic direction we are outlining here was developed using the knowledge, understanding and experiences shared with us by local people, professionals, groups and organisations involved in physical activity and sport in the borough. It provides a set of priorities which map the outcomes we want to achieve, what our focus of attention will be and what we will do to deliver on these.

We look forward to working with all our partners to ensure that Tower Hamlets is a place where greater engagement in sport and physical activity improves the health and wellbeing of local people in every community.

Leisure Management Contract

As the current leisure management contract comes to an end in April 2022 we have started preparations for the tendering of a new contract. This contract provides a significant opportunity for the borough to take a fresh approach and drive delivery of the outcomes we want to achieve through physical activity and sport, including:

- Tackling inactivity, especially amongst those most likely to be inactive
- Aligning with wider health and wellbeing opportunities
- Enabling sport and physical activity as a community engagement tool
- Supporting sector employment opportunities through apprenticeships and internships

There are a number of challenges. Investment is needed across all centres, customer satisfaction has declined in recent years and it's a competitive market with a small number of key providers. However, we shouldn't underestimate the scale and range of the benefits that are possible. Through simple technology like the use of a 'Leisure Card', we want to explore new possibilities to collect and manage insight so we can better target our interventions and deliver a more impactful service.

In advance of this process we are also undertaking work to review our use of council owned property assets across sports, leisure and culture services. This includes all assets related to sport, physical activity and parks and open spaces. The focus of this work is to identify ways to maximise outcomes achieved through our assets and the findings could impact on the new leisure management contract.

Our borough: demographics and need

The borough's population reached 317,705 in June 2018 (1)



Tower Hamlets experienced the 3rd highest population increase nationally, between 2017 and 2018 (2)



Tower Hamlets continues to have one of the youngest populations in the country (3)



Tower Hamlets is the 50th most deprived local authority in England and has the highest levels of pensioner poverty and child poverty in England (4)



An estimated four in ten households in Tower Hamlets are living below the poverty line, after housing costs are taken into account (5)



22% of the adult population are classified as inactive, which is slightly lower than the London average of 24% (6)



The cost of inactivity to the economy per 100,000 people is higher than average in Tower Hamlets (7)



42% of children in year 6 were overweight or obese in 2018, compared to 38% in London and 32% nationally (8)



11% of people aged 5-16 years old in Tower Hamlets were estimated to have mental health disorders in 2015. This is higher than in London as a whole (9)



77% of the population and 80% of schools are based in areas that exceed the legal limits for air pollution (10)



Provision of indoor sports facilities in the borough are equivalent to 16 sports halls, 5 swimming pools and 2,228 fitness stations (gym facilities) (11)



There are more than 200 parks and open spaces in the borough – however they will come under increasing pressure in the future (12)



(1, 2 & 3) ONS Mid-2018 Population Estimate (4) Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-23 (5) Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-23 (6) Active Lives Survey, Sport England Nov 2017/18 (7) UK Active, Turning the Tide 2014 (8) National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2017/18 (9) Public Health England PHE Fingertips Tool 2019 (10) Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy 2019-2024 (11) Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2017-2027 (12) Tower Hamlets Open Space Strategy 2017-2027)

What do local people think?

We have been able to draw on a wide range of insight about what matters most to people when thinking about physical activity and sport and interlinked issues such as health and wellbeing.

Views about better health and wellbeing, including the local environment, exercise and access to opportunities formed a key part of the Community Insight Research carried out in 2018 using the themes in the Tower Hamlets Strategic Framework.

There are two regular surveys of local students and parents and an annual survey with residents which include questions about physical activity, leisure and health related matters:

- Annual Residents Survey – the survey is based on face to face interviews with 1,104 residents
- Pupil Attitude Survey - 1,824 pupils took part in the 2017, with 1,433 primary pupil responses and 391 secondary pupil responses
- Parent Carer Survey - 209 parents and carers responded in 2018

Alongside these sources we have held a number of focus groups, workshops and online consultation activities which focused on physical activity and sport and sought to strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the experiences of local people. We will continue to build on the engagement used to inform this strategy and work across local partnership to ensure that the priorities in the strategy make a real difference to peoples' lives.



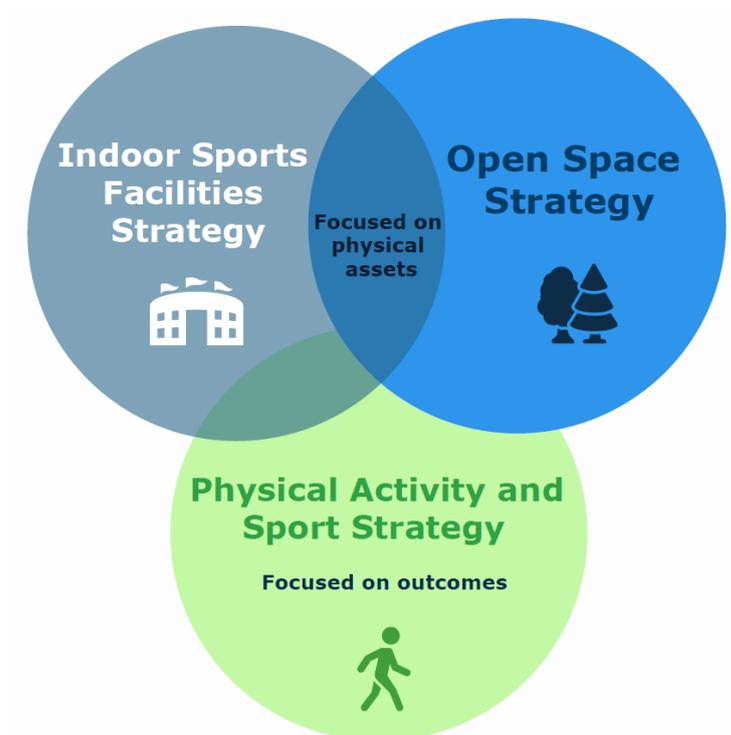
(1) Active People Survey 2017 (2 & 3) Annual Residents Survey 2019 (4, 5, 7, 9 & 10) Focus Group Feedback Oct 2017 (8 & 11) Parent & Carer Survey 2018 (6) Pupil Attitude Survey 2017 (12) Online Consultation 2019

Our physical activity and sports priorities

The strategy has four priorities, setting out the key areas we will concentrate our efforts on to achieve maximum impact and the best possible outcomes for local people.



The diagram below shows how the priorities within this strategy, which focus on outcomes such as reducing levels of inactivity and increased engagement with sport, inter-link with those in the Tower Hamlets Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2017 – 2027 and the Tower Hamlets Open Space Strategy 2017 – 2027 which focus on physical assets in the borough.



Priority 1: Developing young interest

What outcome do we want to achieve through this priority?

Children and young people develop a positive, sustained relationship with physical activity and sport

Why is this priority important?

Developing a positive relationship with being physically active whilst young can lead to life-long participation with all of the rewards that offers. The benefits of physical activity and sport for children and young people include better physical and mental health, increased confidence, opportunities to be social, development of skills such as team working and leadership and improved academic performance.

This underlines the importance of children and young people being able to access activities that encourage them to get involved and then stay engaged. Girls, children with disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and less affluent families, all tend to have lower levels of physical activity than other children and young people. In Tower Hamlets, which has the highest levels of child poverty in England, engaging with activity young means activities need to be affordable for everyone.

Play is vital to the development of a wide range of skills and abilities and it benefits children, young people and families in a multitude of ways. It is inter-linked with good physical and mental health, provides opportunities for family bonding, being social and wider community cohesion. It is important that we support access to a wide variety of play opportunities, including the delivery of inclusive play equipment designed to enable children of all abilities to play together.

The challenges and opportunities for physical activity also vary depending on the stage of a young person's life. Physical activity guidelines² outline that early years physical activity (birth to 5 years) should be for at least 180 minutes per day (including at least 30 minutes of 'tummy time' for infants not yet mobile), and children and young people (5 to 18 years old) should aim for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week (which should include a variety of types and intensities of physical activity). We also recognise that the engagement of parents, carers and the whole family plays an important role and the transitions young people experience, such as between phases of education, moving into teenage years and leaving school, can have an impact on levels of activity.

The time that children and young people spend in schools and colleges represents a significant opportunity in supporting them to develop regular, sustained physical activity behaviours. The role that education providers play is being increasingly recognised at a national level including within the new Ofsted framework and the government commitment to 60 minutes of physical activity every day. We know that education providers face many challenges and competing priorities but it is essential that we find ways to build on the

² UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines

foundation of successes such as the Daily Mile programme and realise the full potential of what is possible.

Sport can provide a focal point which allows young people to explore what they are capable of and inspire them to build a positive future. Although participation is one element of this there are a wide variety of potential workforce related opportunities for young people as well, such as volunteering, work experience, qualifications and employment opportunities.

What will our focus be?

As the evidence shows us, the greatest benefits come from regular physical activity continuing throughout a lifetime. This makes it clear how important it is that we support children and young people to find ways to be active that they enjoy, that promote improved wellbeing and that want to find time for.

In order to deliver the best possible outcomes we will focus on the most effective evidence based interventions according to each stage of a young person's life. We will look for ways to join up initiatives to maximise their impact and concentrate our attention on working together through partnerships. The work we do with education providers will be central to achieving success. We will seek to develop new and innovative approaches to increasing participation in physical activity and sport through the time that children and young people spend in school and the connections with parents and carers.

What actions will we take?

- The new Leisure Management Contract will deliver outcomes which support schools in getting pupils to be more active and support delivery of sport and physical activity related education, employment and training opportunities for young people.
- We will work with education providers and other partners to develop a sustainable model for the delivery of Physical Education (PE) and sport in schools and colleges
- We will work with education partners to develop a physical literacy campaign for schools.
- We will explore the potential for schools to pool their sports premium funding to improve outcomes
- We will identify further engagement opportunities through the development of the new vision for the Tower Hamlets Youth Service
- We will develop a Play Charter which encourages individuals and organisations to advocate for quality play space, physical activity and play in the borough
- We will continue to deliver a substantial annual Summer Programme which offers free activities including park based events, sport focused initiatives and try new things
- We will provide physical activity and healthy eating sessions for families, linked to National Childhood Measurements Programme results

What other work is contributing to our priority?

The Children and Families Strategy 2019-24, owned by the Children and Families Partnership, includes outcomes focused on children, young people and families demonstrating healthy behaviours and accessing a wide range of play options.

The council's Healthy Lives Team works in schools supporting pupils, parents and staff across a range of mental and physical health related issues including levels of physical activity. This includes the 'Daily Mile' which encourages pupils to run, walk or skip for about 15 minutes with Tower Hamlets achieving the highest number of engaged schools in London

The Tower Hamlet's whole system approach to tackling childhood obesity is focused on healthy eating and physical activity interventions which look at what needs to happen across many elements including the environment, local facilities and services and within families and communities.

What outcomes will be achieved by 2024?

- Children and young people are more physically active
- Children and young people feel the benefits of increased physical activity and sport
- Children and young people remain engaged with sport and physical activity as they get older

How will we know if this is working?

- More children and young people are physically active
- More opportunities delivered through our leisure centres which are targeted at children and young people
- Reduced inequalities in levels of physical activity for children and young people
- More children and young people think the parks and play areas are good
- More schools have signed up to the 'Daily Mile'

Priority 2: Driving health change

What outcome do we want to achieve through this priority?

People who are inactive become more physically active

Why is this priority important?

In Tower Hamlets 22.3% of adults are inactive, which is just below the average for the London Region (23.7%)³. Being physically active has wide ranging positive impacts for people's health and wellbeing and can reduce a number of chronic diseases including obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, some cancers, and mental ill health and in some instances help to manage them⁴. The costs of inactivity to the economy, including those from treating health outcomes, is higher than average in the borough⁵.

The evidence shows us that some groups are more likely to be inactive than others and this is reflected locally. These groups include women and girls, people from ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and older age groups. Research and local consultation highlight that there are a multiple issues which should be taken into account when considering the possible barriers for some to being physically active. These can include potential fear of abuse or harassment, cultural considerations, body confidence and perceptions and stereotypes around sport and physical activity.

There are many benefits that can be realised by addressing the barriers that some people experience to being physical active and engaged with sport. For example, physical activity can help older people to stay well and retain their independence for longer and there is the potential for positive impact on broader issues such as loneliness. The benefits to mental health can include reduced stress, increased self-esteem and the prevention (or improved management) of depression and anxiety. For children and young people there are known positive impacts on self-esteem, emotional wellbeing and resilience.

The 2019 UK Physical Activity Guidelines updated those issued in 2011 and these now include additional guidance on being active in pregnancy and after giving birth, and for disabled adults. Each set of guidelines covers recommendations on duration and type of physical activity as well as the benefits.

The high rate of childhood excess weight is a key health challenge in the borough. There has been some improvement in the rates at reception stage but 42.1% of children are overweight or obese by year 6, which is significantly higher than London. As highlighted by the Chief Medical Officer⁶ having opportunities to play and be physically active are an important part of tackling the problem and we also know that this is a complex issue with inequalities linked to ethnicity, gender and deprivation.

³ Active Lives Survey, Sport England Nov 2017/18

⁴ Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2018

⁵ UK Active, Turning the tide of inactivity Jan 2014

⁶ CMO, Time to Solve Childhood Obesity, 2019

Alongside what we know about some specific health issues in the borough it is clear that there are links between levels of physical activity, health and areas of higher deprivation. Our local data shows us that people are more likely to be inactive in the East of the borough, often in our most deprived areas and places where healthy life expectancy is lower.

Some of the enduring challenges are linked to how we can encourage behaviour change around being active and how we can make information about what is available easy to find. We know that marketing and communications are an important part of how we can do this but initiatives must be based on a good understanding of what works and local knowledge.

What will our focus be?

We want every person in the borough to know about how they can be more active, where they can go, who can support them and how they can make sustainable changes for a healthier life. We will take an evidence based approach to reducing levels of inactivity in the borough by focusing on what the data and insight tells will achieve the maximum impact, in the areas where it is most needed.

By concentrating our efforts on those we know are most likely to be inactive including, women and girls, over 65's, people from Asian, Black and other ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities, we can achieve the greatest health and wellbeing benefits. Working in partnership across a wide range of settings will be essential in order to achieve large scale results. As set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority 'Developing an Integrated System' we can make the best use of resources, and improve access, by developing joined up services.

What actions will we take?

- 'Getting the most inactive people active to improve their health' will be part of the key outcomes for the new Leisure Management Contract.
- We will use emerging insight to refine our understanding of the groups who are most likely to be inactive so we can remain responsive to local health and population changes.
- We will gain a detailed understanding of local issues around inactivity so that we can identify the most effective interventions to reach people and change behaviour.
- We will develop and link up with evidence based marketing and communication initiatives to maximise our reach and impact.
- We will make the best use of facilities across the borough to engage and promote healthy opportunities to be more active.
- We will work collaboratively with GPs and other settings to publicise the benefits of health change through increased levels of physical activity.

- We will work with health and social care partners to encourage physical activity and to tackle issues such as social isolation through initiatives such as social prescribing (which can connect people to sources of support within the community)
- We will work with health and social care providers to enable personal and health budgets to be used to increase levels of physical activity.

What other work is contributing to our priority?

There is huge amount of work taking place across the borough which contributes to improving the health and wellbeing of local people. The Health and Wellbeing Board is currently in the process of refreshing our local Health and Wellbeing Strategy which is drawing from the work undertaken by Tower Hamlets Together (THT). THT is a partnership of health and social care organisations and takes responsibility for the integration and coordination of health and social care services to improve the health and wellbeing of people living and/or working in the Borough.

THT have produced a shared 'Outcomes Framework' in collaboration with service users, patients, carers and residents. The framework features seventeen 'I' statements, three of which have significant links to the PASS strategy:

- I am supported to make healthy choices
- I understand the ways to live a healthy life
- I have a good level of happiness and wellbeing

As the Outcomes Framework is further embedded across the borough, we will develop a greater understanding of the impact of local health and social care integration on physical activity for local residents.

The Tower Hamlet's whole system approach to tackling childhood obesity is being developed in broadly the same timescales as this strategy therefore outcomes and actions will be formulated through a joined up approach across both pieces of work.

What outcomes will be achieved by 2024?

- People use physical activity and sport to improve their health and wellbeing
- People understand the ways in which physical activity can improve their health and wellbeing

How will we know if this is working?

- More people will be physically active
- Reduced inequalities in levels of physical activity
- Less children are overweight or obese
- Less adults are overweight or obese

Priority 3: Shaping places and communities

What outcome do we want to achieve through this priority?

People engage with their local environment to improve their levels of physical activity

Why is this priority important?

We know that one of the most effective ways to increase levels of physical activity is to make it a part of daily life. Public Health England describes the need for 'active environments' which create the right spaces to be more physically active. Most people experience some challenges to being more active, such as time pressures or lifestyles which increasingly reduce opportunities to move around. In order for spaces to encourage people to be more active they need to be well designed, attractive and safe.

There are some particular barriers to increased use of our streets, parks and other public spaces for being active. Concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour can discourage people from walking or using parks and car dependency creates noise and air pollution.

The journeys people take every day can be a great opportunity to be active. This might be travelling to work, school, going shopping or simply moving around the borough. Improving the design and facilities of the built environment can help to support and encourage these choices. Resting places, such as benches can make taking part in an active life more accessible for those who are older or have disabilities, whilst conveniently located bike racks help to increase the take up of cycling.

The Tower Hamlets Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy highlights that population growth means facilities will become more intensely used and may ultimately be unable to meet the needs of the borough. The strategy also forecasts that more pools and sports halls will be needed in the future. Although most residents have access to either a sports hall or swimming pool within a 15 minute walk there are gaps in provision in some areas, primarily in the north-east of the borough.

We know that we need high quality indoor sports facilities in the borough, potentially through upgrading or making changes to maximise the benefits of existing provision or redevelopment, however outreach work is also essential. For example, there are opportunities to bring physical activity and sport to the places people live through events and initiatives by and with housing providers. Such work has included a multi-sport festival at Poplar Baths and Leisure Centre, which was held by a wide range of organisations, including several housing associations.

As an inner city London borough, Tower Hamlets has a limited number of parks and open spaces yet they have a critical role to play, even as they will continue to come under pressure from development and population increases. As well as being places to enjoy a walk they also provide space for community events and activities such as bowling, kayaking and outdoor gyms. The playgrounds in the borough include adventure playgrounds, skate

parks and children's play areas. Our canals, riversides and open water are significant assets for activity both alongside and on the water, but there is more we could do to increase their use. Open spaces managed by social housing providers also provide places which can support increased levels of activity. Work is being carried out to maximise the contribution they make.

Tower Hamlets has the 2nd lowest proportion of 'green space' in London⁷ (25.4%) and with so many competing demands we must prioritise how we use these spaces so that the maximum number of people can use them to increase levels of physical activity and improve their health. The Mayor's London Plan highlights that good planning can help to create and protect opportunities for people to be active. With this in mind, we need to work with developers and landowners to ensure that physical activity and sport continue to be given due consideration in development across the borough. Equally, we need to work with partners to unlock sports assets for as many in our community as possible.

What will our focus be?

We will focus on the creation of a built environment, facilities and public spaces which encourage and support being active and engaging with sport. A broad range of partners play a part in this and we will ensure that we work with them to build a collective vision of how the features of our environment can work better to make the choice to be active easier.

A fundamental part of how we achieve these aims are the policies within the Local Plan and planning processes, which shape the built environment to encourage physical activity. We must also look at what more we can do to bring together health and wellbeing priorities with planning, housing and transport infrastructure including through alignment of policies and joined up working between professionals such as architects, planners, public health consultants and sport and leisure specialists.

Whilst ensuring that the built environment supports active travel and physical activity, the way in which we use our assets, such as leisure facilities, parks and pitches is also crucial. We will identify the best ways to improve and maximise the benefits of assets across the council's sport, leisure and culture services and this will also help to shape the direction of new leisure management contract.

What actions will we take?

- 'Ensuring access to high quality facilities across the borough' will be part of the key outcomes for the new Leisure Management Contract.
- We will maximise use of funding to support the provision of public open space improvements so that facilities in the borough are of the highest quality.
- We will review how we use all council sports, leisure and culture assets to identify the most effective approach for the future.

⁷ GLA, London Green and Blue Cover Dataset 2019

- We will work with housing providers to maximise physical activity and sport opportunities and safeguard and quality assure playground signage and provision.
- We will work in partnership with planning and regeneration to integrate health, wellbeing and physical activity priorities into local policy and strategy.
- We will support and enable the delivery of the Transport Strategy actions and associated initiatives, including 'Liveable Streets' and Healthy Streets'.
- We will investigate the potential for opening up physical activity and sports facilities in schools for use by the community.
- We will support the delivery of actions within the Transport Strategy.

What other work is contributing to our priority?

There are a collection of strategies, plans and policies which set out the Tower Hamlets approach to shaping the built environment within our borough. The Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 is at an advanced stage of development. This sets out a policy framework by which all development is shaped and determined against. Supporting documents also set out what infrastructure is required to under-pin development. Key principles include sustainable growth, which encompasses contributing to creating healthy environments which encourage physical activity and supporting community facilities (such as leisure and sport facilities) including delivering new facilities and improving existing facilities through the use of developer contributions. There is also a requirement for certain developments to complete a health impact assessment and policies focused on protecting open space, including playing fields and outdoor sports facilities and delivery of an improved accessible, well connected network.

A number of other strategies also contribute to this priority, such as the Open Space Strategy 2017 – 2027, which provides an assessment of the quality and quantity of open space in the borough, the Air Quality Action Plan for 2017 – 2022, setting out what is being done to improve air quality locally and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019 – 2024 continuing work around conserving the environment.

The developing Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy includes a range of actions which seek to increase opportunities for active travel to and from school, including through the Healthy School Streets and School Travel Plan programmes, places to play and delivering 'Play Streets' initiatives in the borough. It commits to making the borough 'one of best in London to walk or cycle in' by describing how the Council intends to transform the way people travel in the borough over the next 20 years.

What outcomes will be achieved by 2024?

- Physical activity is an integral part of daily life for all people
- People make healthy and active travel choices
- People feel empowered to participate in physical activity and sport in their local area

How will we know if this is working?

- More people are satisfied with the leisure and sports facilities in the borough
- More children, young people and adults are choosing to cycle to get around in the borough
- Less people are concerned about a lack of recreational activities in the borough
- More people are walking in the borough

Priority 4: Physical activity and sport as a community engagement tool

What outcome do we want to achieve through this priority?

People feel part of a cohesive, vibrant community through taking part in physical activity

Why is this priority important?

Involvement in physical activity and sport has the potential to act as a powerful tool to bring people together, connect communities and promote social cohesion. This could be through engagement with both competitive sport and those played for fun or it could be any way in which people meet up to be active, such as walking groups, dancing or yoga classes. What matters is the chance to create bonds and develop understanding amongst individuals and communities.

We know from our annual resident's survey that 86% of residents feel that people from a different background get on well together, however the survey also reflects concerns about crime and ASB and we know this can act as a barrier to some types of physical activity, such as active travel, and playing outside.

As the Mayor of London's Sport Unites Programme and Impact Partnership Fund highlight there is a role for sport and physical activity in supporting young people at risk of being involved in violence and crime. Tower Hamlets faces challenges which are experienced across the capital around how to keep young people safe and sport interventions offer a valuable tool in addressing these.

The community sports workforce and community organisations are of course integral to realising all of these benefits. We also recognise that volunteering to help others become active or develop further sporting skills contributes to social cohesion and we know that local people would like more opportunities to do this.

Unique volunteering opportunities can also come from major sporting occasions. Such events can inspire people to get involved and demonstrate that physical activity and sport should be for everyone. We want to harness and use the inspiration which drives people at major events that take place locally and in neighbouring boroughs.

As this strategy highlights, there are significant challenges which impact on the sports infrastructure in Tower Hamlets. Financial resources have reduced and will continue to diminish, we have a growing population in an already densely populated borough and there will be ongoing pressure on our indoor sports facilities and the limited supply of open spaces including playing pitches.

There are many sports being played in Tower Hamlets and the facilities where they are played are finite. Whilst we want sport to flourish in the borough this means it is not possible to provide what every sport would ideally want to see in terms of access to existing

provision or additional facilities and playing pitches. What is available must be shared and must also serve the needs of local people who want to use them for other types of leisure activities.

This priority is about the issues highlighted above around community cohesion and the benefits of getting people involved but it is more than this. It is also about how all groups and agencies involved in sports in the borough can take a broader view, reaching out beyond their core aims to consider how they can contribute to improving life for everyone in our communities.

For this to work there are certain principles which must underpin the physical activity and sports offer in Tower Hamlets. We want to see more high quality, accredited sports provision, a commitment to meeting the needs of under-represented groups, support for wider strategic objectives and community engagement and social value objectives as part of what all providers deliver. In order that facilities, clubs and all activities are welcoming and open to everyone integration and community cohesion must be central to how they operate.

What will our focus be?

Our focus will be on working with those who are committed to the principles set out here so that we deliver physical activity and sports opportunities which help to build stronger communities. Provision in the borough must look at what best meets the needs of all residents and supports the delivery of priorities for the borough, as set out in the Tower Hamlets Plan 2018 – 2023. This will guide decision making for the council around the best use of resources.

In a changing landscape with reduced resources our focus will also be on developing ways to maximise the benefits that physical activity and sport offer. We will bring local people and physical activity and sport provision together, through volunteering and workforce development initiatives that support integration and an enhanced focus in sport of the issues which present key challenges such as inactivity and its impact on health and wellbeing.

We will also look for better ways to harness the potential of events, both sporting and wider, for getting people to be more active and more involved within communities. Every time a person goes to an event in the borough, such as the 'All Points East' music festival, a Black History Month exhibition or takes part in the Summer Reading challenge there is an opportunity to engage and promote physical activity and sports opportunities.

What actions will we take?

- The new Leisure Management Contract will support the boroughs approach to strengthening community engagement and involvement and enhancing community cohesion in sport and physical activity.
- We will develop guidance notes that provide clear information on the council's policies regarding the use of facilities and spaces in the borough, as well development opportunities for the provision of sport.

- We will engage with external sports organisations who use sport as the mechanism to deliver initiatives to tackle issues such as hate crime
- We will work with the voluntary and community sector to bring resources together to support physical activity.
- We will work with the voluntary and community sector to get more people to take part in physical activity through volunteering and workforce development opportunities.
- We will co-produce 'inclusivity' messages promoting physical activity and sport to everyone.
- We will work with Public Health on 'Healthy Places' and 'Communities Driving Change' initiatives to integrate physical activity messages and opportunities wherever possible.

What other work is contributing to our priority?

The Tower Hamlets Partnership is committed to 'building a stronger, more inclusive and fairer borough' through the delivery of the Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-23. One of the priorities of the plan is to deliver 'strong, resilient and safe communities' and as part of this work a Social Isolation and Partnership Taskforce has been set up.

The Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership is responsible for reducing crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and reducing re-offending. The Partnership leads a wide range of activities that can make a positive difference to community safety, reducing the fear of crime, and bringing communities together. The developing Transport Strategy highlights the impact of crime and ASB concerns on active travel and seeks to address these.

The Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2021 sets out four outcomes which are aimed at supporting strong, active and inclusive communities. The strategy promotes co-production principles and increased opportunities for people to be involved and active in community life. A Tower Hamlets Community Cohesion Plan is under development. The plan will set out our approach to cohesion including tackling poverty and inequality, integrating new residents, dealing with the impact of Brexit and leading cohesion projects.

What outcomes will be achieved by 2024?

- People appreciate that participation in physical activity and sport is open to all communities
- People feel the benefits from major sporting events held in and around the borough
- People feel part of a vibrant, inclusive community

How will we know if this is working?

- Less people are concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough
- More adults, children and young people think that people from different backgrounds get on well together
- More children and young people feel safe in the area they live in
- More people are volunteering in their local communities

Making it happen

The priorities within the Physical Activity and Sports Strategy will be taken forward through the Health and Wellbeing Board and we will work closely with wider health and social care partners through the three THT work streams – Born Well and Growing Well, Living Well and Promoting Independence.

