

<b>Cabinet</b>  <b>29 January 2020</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Tower Hamlets Approach to Regeneration</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Mayor John Biggs, Lead Member for Regeneration</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Sripriya Sudhakar, Head of Regeneration
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	19 November 2019
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	Impact on Wards
<b>Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome</b>	Priority 2, Outcome 6: People live in good quality affordable homes and well-designed neighbourhoods

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides an overview of the strategic approach being taken to coordinate and deliver regeneration across the borough. It highlights the context driving regeneration as well as the area based approach currently being adopted by the council through the development of governance structures and delivery plans.

### **Recommendations:**

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the report regarding the proposed approach to regeneration.
2. Agree to publish the 'Approach to Regeneration in Tower Hamlets' document (appendix 1) on the Council website.
3. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.1-4.3.

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The co-ordination of regeneration within the borough is a key priority for Tower Hamlets to harness the scale and pace of development and ensure that those living, working and visiting the borough benefit from the high levels of growth.

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The alternative option is to do nothing. This alternative option is not recommended as it would miss opportunities to further improve the services and outcomes for residents.

## **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

### The context for regeneration

- 3.1 The borough's new Local Plan has been developed over the last four years and outlines the anticipated change and growth in the borough over the next 15 years. With over 50% of the borough's footprint in designated Opportunity Areas (the focus for development within London), this change and growth is expected to be significant.
- 3.2 We have seen the population in the borough double in the past thirty years and it is predicted to rise by almost 100,000 by 2031. Around 55,000 homes are expected to be delivered in the same period. Job growth is also continuing at pace. There are already twice as many jobs in the borough as in 2000 and a further 44% increase (125,000 jobs) is forecast by 2031.
- 3.3 This change is taking place within a borough in which deprivation and inequality remain a serious concern. While relative poverty in Tower hamlets has declined, deprivation remains widespread, particularly in the central and eastern parts. According to the Indices of Deprivation (2019) the borough also has the highest level pensioner poverty in England. While rates of child poverty have decreased relative to the rest of England since 2015, we remain the 14<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough in that domain<sup>1</sup>. However, there are growing areas of affluence within close proximity to the River Thames and former dockland areas. This disparity is reflected in the borough's ratio of low-to-high pay, which is the largest in London<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.4 The health of people in Tower Hamlets is significantly worse than the London and England averages, with healthy life expectancy at birth being nearly 10 years less than the national average<sup>3</sup>. Health inequalities also persist in the borough, with significant differences in life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards.
- 3.5 Growth at this scale and pace brings with it opportunities to address these issues, but without careful management and co-ordination there are significant risks around the liveability of neighbourhoods, cohesion and

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<sup>1</sup> The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019).

<sup>2</sup> London Poverty Profile (New Policy Institute, 2015)

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/healthstatelifeexpectancies\\_uk/2015to2017](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/healthstatelifeexpectancies_uk/2015to2017)

inequality. It was with this balance in mind that the Local Plan seeks to 'manage growth and share the benefits'.

### The need for a co-ordinated regeneration approach

- 3.6 The Council's various plans and strategies and its work with partners do already address these issues and deliver tangible benefits for local people. However, in the context of such significant change, it is now considered necessary for the Council to deliver a step-change in its approach in order to ensure that this growth makes Tower Hamlets a better place to live, that local people see the benefits, and that any potential negative impacts are mitigated.
- 3.7 In June 2018, the Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge designed to reflect on, and inform, the Council's improvement journey. Two of the Peer Challenge Recommendations were:
- Recommendation 2: Be forward looking and learn the lessons of the past but not be fettered by them; and
  - Recommendation 7: Reform the services that are still traditional and paternalistic.
- 3.8 In order to respond to these actions recommendations, the Transformation and Improvement Action Plan, overseen by the Mayor's Transformation & Improvement Board (TIB), included an action to establish a Regeneration Board to deliver the council's activity around regeneration and develop a coherent approach for regeneration across the borough.
- 3.9 The development of this co-ordinated approach was further shaped by the recommendations from the Planning Peer Review undertaken in July 2018 which included;
- Turning the Mayors' priorities and the council's regeneration and growth objectives into a clear vision;
  - Taking a place-based approach to development and setting clear objectives and timetabled priorities; and
  - Ensuring strategic oversight of the borough's growth and regeneration programme.
- 3.10 The first Regeneration Board meeting was held in July 2018 and its focus was on establishing a vision for regeneration, a preferred approach to delivering regeneration activity, and setting terms of reference for the board. Over subsequent Board meetings, the need was identified for a dedicated team to establish regeneration priorities for the borough and the resources needed to deliver them.
- 3.11 The development of a Regeneration Team, accountable for developing and coordinating a strategic approach for regeneration across the borough, formed a key action of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022:

- Priority 2 - A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in:  
Outcome 6 - People live in good quality affordable homes and well-designed Neighbourhoods: Action 4 - Develop and deliver a borough programme for regeneration.

3.12 In April 2019, a new Regeneration Team was set up on an interim basis to establish a co-ordinated approach to regeneration. The team consists of five team members seconded from within the Council. Over the past six months the team has helped define and shape a Regeneration Delivery Plan in close collaboration with the Regeneration Board and various Council departments and wider stakeholders.

#### The Tower Hamlets approach to regeneration

3.13 The Regeneration approach is driven by the Board's regeneration vision: "A strategic approach to regeneration will ensure Tower Hamlets embraces its role as a key focus for London's growth, making the best use of the economic benefits provided by a thriving enterprise sector and improving connections between the borough and surrounding areas.

The benefits of transformation will be shared throughout our borough, amongst all residents, ensuring no one is left behind and everyone has access to the economic opportunities derived through growth. We will support our existing communities as well as welcome new residents to make their home within liveable, mixed, stable and cohesive neighbourhoods.

We will work hard to ensure our neighbourhoods are transformed with high quality buildings and well-designed spaces, while ensuring their distinct characters are protected and enhanced. They will contain a mix of housing types, served by a range of excellent facilities and infrastructure. They will be green, safe and accessible to all, promoting sustainable transport and making the best use of both our borough's heritage and natural resources such as parks and waterways."

3.14 The approach to delivering this vision acknowledges that the borough is made up of a number of distinct neighbourhoods and places, which have their own identities, opportunities and challenges. In order to maintain an area-sensitive approach, the regeneration approach has been organised around the borough's four sub-areas as identified in the new Local Plan. The focus of the regeneration of the borough is on three of these sub-areas, where it's projected the majority of projected growth will take place over the next 15 years; these are:

- City Fringe (including Whitechapel);
- Lower Lea Valley; and
- Isle of Dogs and South Poplar

There are also regeneration projects in the Central sub-area of the borough.

3.15 The approach also reflects the multifaceted nature of regeneration in Tower Hamlets, which must encompass social regeneration as well as physical changes. Eight regeneration outcomes have been devised and are interlinked to the Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan, Local Plan and the Mayor's Pledges,

ensuring the alignment of regeneration activity to the existing strategic framework:

1. Infrastructure & place-making: New development that is designed to promote inclusivity and enhance quality of place, and is matched by timely delivery of social, transport and services infrastructure in order to support sustainable growth.
  2. Reducing inequalities and enhancing wellbeing: Reducing health and other inequalities between people from different communities and different areas, and better air quality.
  3. Making communities safer and more cohesive: Making communities safer and more cohesive through ensuring the accessibility of spaces, places and facilities; enabling community participation & strong relationships, and promoting culture and leisure opportunities.
  4. Public realm & environment: The local environment is improved – Cleaner and more attractive streets, open and green spaces.
  5. Affordable housing: More high quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of residents is provided.
  6. Employment: More local people are in work and progressing to better paid employment.
  7. Enterprise: Locally owned businesses and those that employ local people are starting, growing and staying in the borough.
  8. Town centres & markets: Well-functioning town centres and markets provide existing and new residents with access to a range of local shops, services, leisure, cultural and community facilities that meet their needs.
- 3.16 Finally, the approach acknowledges that regeneration is a council-wide activity, with many of the Council's services delivering activities which contribute to the eight regeneration outcomes. Regeneration activity involves the whole Council going beyond 'business as usual' to work innovatively and across the Council and with partners to identify and deliver programmes of interventions for each area that respond to a robust analysis of the changes occurring in the area and how best to respond to them for the benefit of local people. Regeneration is delivered by the whole Council, and not by one single team.

### Delivery

- 3.17 In order to achieve these regeneration outcomes a series of interventions have been identified. This toolbox of interventions provides an indication of the types of intervention which are either currently being delivered or could be deployed by the Council in order to achieve the outcome.

3.18 These interventions have been placed on an incremental scale, ranging from low intervention to high intervention, representing a range from a do-minimum position, or those which are less 'interventionist' in terms of time and resourcing, through to those which involve a high level of intervention, which would generally involve more time or financial resource.

3.19 The Interventions Toolbox is outlined below:

**LOW INTERVENTION**

**HIGH INTERVENTION**

**1. INFRASTRUCTURE & PLACEMAKING**

Local Plan policies and evidence

Site specific or more detailed planning

Enabling through partnerships

Development partnerships

Direct Delivery

**2. REDUCING INEQUALITIES & ENHANCING WELLBEING**

Research and monitoring

Communication and campaigns

Healthy environments & air quality

Anti-poverty projects

Enhanced health services

**3. MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER & MORE COHESIVE**

Representation on Partnerships

Events and community participation

Directly delivering projects with partners

Neighbourhood Management

Investing in community facilities

**4. PUBLIC REALM & ENVIRONMENT**

Street cleaning, bins, highway maintenance

Public realm design guide / heritage advice

Streetscape / park improvements

Grants for conservation / historic buildings

New parks / open spaces

**5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Section 106 & monitoring

Enabling housing developments by RPs

Infill on Council sites / purchasing homes

Supporting Estate regeneration by RPs

Major developments and estate regeneration with Council land interest

**6. EMPLOYMENT**

Targeted Council recruitment

Signposting

Job brokerage

Education / Training / Apprenticeships

Intermediate Labour Market schemes

**7. ENTERPRISE**

Efficient Council services

Place promotion / networking

Active inward investment / business support

Providing appropriate workspace

Investing in businesses (grants/loans)

**8. TOWN CENTRES & MARKETS**

Council services - street cleaning, bins

Targeted enforcement

Town centre management & partnerships

Improvements to town centre environments and buildings

Investment in specific uses to improve offer

- 3.20 Each of the four sub-areas has unique characteristics and challenges. Mapping and understanding existing issues and using the new Local Plan visions for each area helped to define vision statements for each sub-area. This helped to consider how best the Council could intervene, over and above what is already planned in the area, to realise that vision against each of the eight outcomes. For each of the four sub-areas, analysis was undertaken against each of the proposed interventions to identify where no intervention is required beyond the Council's 'business as usual' activities in order to achieve the outcome; where there is already sufficient regeneration activity being delivered by the Council to achieve the outcomes and where additional activity is required in order to achieve the regeneration outcome. This additional activity will be captured as new regeneration delivery and form part of that sub-area Regeneration Delivery Plan, that could be delivered by the Regeneration Team or another team in the Council.
- 3.21 This analysis and the delivery plans have been informed by:
- the Local Plan and its supporting evidence base and engagement;
  - other planning framework documents including the Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks prepared by the GLA (City Fringe, Isle of Dogs and South Poplar and Lower Lea Valley/Poplar Riverside);
  - the capital programme, including section 106 and Community; Infrastructure Fund funded projects and associated consultation;
  - projects and priorities identified by residents through the Local; Infrastructure Fund consultation;
  - the Mayor's manifesto; and
  - internal consultation with teams across the council.
- 3.22 Taking the example of one Regeneration Outcome – Infrastructure and Placemaking – and undertaking this analysis for each area, the following additional regeneration activity has been identified:
- In the Lower Lea Valley sub-area this identified the need for an Area Action Plan and the delivery of bridges over the river Lea.
  - In the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar sub-area this identified the need for infrastructure and utilities coordination.
  - In the Central sub-area the need for a masterplan for the developing Queen Mary Campus was identified; and
  - In the City Fringe sub-area the need for improved partnership working and co-ordination was identified.
- 3.23 This additional delivery activity is supported by the Regeneration Team. The role of the team will be to spearhead delivery of the programme, improve coordination of existing regeneration programmes and projects on an area basis and increase external funding coming into the borough.
- 3.24 The Regeneration team will be a small, tactical resource that will play an enabling role in achieving the objectives and will develop projects and programmes from inception through consultation and planning stage, working

with other teams within the Council, partner agencies or new delivery functions. The team will also develop strategic partnerships with external agencies to identify opportunities and maximise the impact of the Council's resources.

- 3.25 Area Delivery Plans will be will be live documents that will be updated annually, ensuring that new opportunities, priorities and requirements are quickly identified and responded to. The Area Delivery Plans will inform the team plans, service plans and directorate plans as the projects span across the service areas.
- 3.26 Individual programmes and projects in the Area Delivery Plans will seek funding and approval through the usual Council governance procedures.

### Governance

- 3.27 The regeneration programme is overseen by a Tower Hamlets Regeneration Board chaired by the Mayor and four Area Regeneration Boards. The main Regeneration Board is responsible for the development of the strategic approach to regeneration across the Borough, including oversight over delivery or programmes; steering a strategic approach to the securing of funds for regeneration and discussing strategic schemes coming forward (which have a significant area-wide impacts) to ensure a cohesive approach can be taken in relation to their impact on regeneration. The Area Boards serve as a platform for agreeing and overseeing work priorities and delivery programmes for each regeneration area.
- 3.28 The Regeneration Board is chaired by the Mayor and the membership is comprised of Council Officers and Members. The Area Boards are chaired either by the Mayor (The Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Area) or a Cabinet Member (City Fringe and Lower Lea Valley Areas) or an officer (Central Area), and involve the Greater London Authority and Transport for London as key stakeholders.
- 3.29 The Regeneration Boards are co-ordinating and advisory programme boards. Decision making remains through the Council's existing governance procedures.

### Monitoring

- 3.30 Progress against the Area Delivery Plans will be monitored by the Area Boards and Regeneration Board. In addition to these boards, the Mayor's Transformation Board will monitor progress against agreed milestones (agreed at Regeneration Board at the start of financial year). Furthermore, strategic projects/actions in the regeneration delivery plan will be monitored as part of Strategic Plan monitoring process.
- 3.31 In addition to monitoring the delivery of regeneration activity, the Regeneration Team will work with the Council's Strategy, Policy and Performance directorate to monitor whether the delivery of the regeneration

programme is achieving an improvement against the eight Regeneration Outcomes. A range of existing and, where required, new indices will be brought together to measure the cumulative impact of additional regeneration activity.

### Engagement

- 3.32 In line with the Council's Community Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021 (CES), approved by Cabinet in January 2018 and reflecting the inclusive and co-ordinating approach to regeneration, the Regeneration Team will incorporate residents' views expressed in existing and ongoing consultation exercises, as well as undertaking engagement on individual programmes and projects as they are developed.
- 3.33 The emerging area regeneration delivery plans have been informed by the engagement undertaken on the Local Plan, the Local Infrastructure Fund and Liveable Streets programme. In addition, an area-based workshop with ward members will be held in January 2020 to present the proposed regeneration approach and discuss their ideas on how to apply it to their areas.
- 3.34 In order to raise awareness of the regeneration approach, the Regeneration Team have developed the 'Approach to Regeneration in Tower Hamlets' document (appendix 1) which provides an introduction to the new approach to regeneration for residents and stakeholders. This will be made available on the Council's website after formal adoption in Feb 2020. Following this, the Regeneration Team will organise stakeholder engagement for all four areas to explore how we can maximise our collective effort to deliver the outcomes in the regeneration plan.

## **4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) was undertaken for the Local Plan in 2017, and subsequently updated in 2019, which includes an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA); given the core focus of regeneration activity within Tower Hamlets is focused on delivering the Local Plan vision to 'manage growth and share the benefits', this EqIA will also be used for the regeneration delivery approach for the borough.
- 4.2 As per the EqIA checklist, found at Appendix H of the IIA:
- “...the content of the Draft Local Plan...does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share Protected Characteristics and those who do not; aims to foster good relations and establish communities that are free from discrimination. No further actions are recommended at this stage”
- 4.3 The attached Regeneration Delivery Plan represents the implementation of the Local Plan. As per the above, it is therefore determined that the delivery of the Plan through the regeneration vision will similarly not have any adverse

effects on people who shared Protected Characteristics. However, in order to ensure this remains the case, individual projects brought forward by the regeneration team will be subject to their own EqIA checklist prior to commencement.

## **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.
- 5.2 Best Value Implications: Under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Through establishing a new regeneration function and approach the Council will improve the efficiency and co-ordination of how it achieves effective regeneration outcomes for residents.
- 5.3 Environmental (including air quality) and Crime Reduction: Three of the regeneration objectives (reducing inequalities and enhancing wellbeing, public realm & environment and making communities safer and more cohesive) will deliver projects which focus on improving the local environment and air quality and helping to reduce crime and increase community safety.

## **6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications emanating from this report which provides an overview of the strategic approach being taken to coordinate and deliver regeneration across the borough.
- 6.2 The existing team of five officers that has developed the strategy has to date been funded by Mayoral Priority Growth money. This is time limited funding and the delivery of specific projects will require further funding that will need approval prior to project commencement. This includes opportunities to utilise CIL money and external funding sources and will be subject of separate approval processes.

## **7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 This report provides an overview of the strategic approach being taken to coordinate and deliver regeneration across the borough. Each regeneration project will need to be assessed on a case by case basis ensuring that it adheres to relevant legislation, of which some is detailed below.
- 7.2 The Council has a range of powers to enter into the contractual arrangements to facilitate regeneration programmes, including the general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals can do subject to any specific restrictions contained in legislation.
- 7.3 The Council has the power to s120 of the Local Government Act 1972 to acquire land by agreement for the purposes of (a) any of the council's functions under the Local Government Act or (b) the benefit, improvement or development of the area.
- 7.4 The Council also has the power to dispose of land by agreement in accordance with Sections 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 subject to obtaining all appropriate consents and approvals and ensuring that any grants of leases for more than seven years are for a consideration that is the best that can reasonably be obtained (unless secretary of state consent is obtained).
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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- *Transformation and Improvement Board Work Programme, Terms of Reference & LGA Action Plan Tower Hamlets.*  
Transformation and Improvement Board, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018
- *Adoption of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031: Managing Growth and Sharing the Benefits.*  
Cabinet, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Approach to Regeneration in Tower Hamlets (draft)

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

- NONE

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A