

<b>Cabinet</b>  30 June 2021	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Will Tuckley, Chief Executive	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Annual council performance and delivery report 2020/21</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>John Biggs, Executive Mayor</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Sharon Godman, Director Strategy, Policy and Performance Thorsten Dreyer, Head of Intelligence and Performance
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
<b>Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome</b>	All

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides the Mayor in Cabinet with an annual update on the delivery and implementation of the council's Strategic Plan throughout 2020/21. Over the last year, the council has focused on supporting residents and businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic. The report provides an overview of the planned activity we have delivered as well as how we have rapidly reprioritised our resources to focus on the emerging needs of our communities during a global pandemic.

## **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the strategic delivery and performance report for 2020/21;
2. Note that in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, throughout the past year we have rapidly pivoted many of our services to support residents, businesses and partners in the borough and this has had an impact on our ability to deliver everything that we had planned;
3. Review the performance of the strategic measures, including those measures where the minimum expectation has been missed; and
4. Review progress in delivering the council's Strategic Plan.

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The council is committed to improving outcomes for residents. Our corporate priorities and outcomes are found in our Strategic Plan and provide a framework for action.
- 1.2 Our Performance & Accountability Framework sets out the process for monitoring the timely and effective delivery of the Strategic Plan to improve outcomes for residents. In line with the framework, Cabinet receives regular update reports to ensure oversight of pace, delivery, performance and improvement activities.
- 1.3 This report promotes openness, transparency and accountability by enabling Tower Hamlets residents to track progress of activities that impact on their lives and the communities they live in.

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Cabinet may decide not to review the delivery and performance information. This is not recommended as Members have a key role to review and challenge underperformance and to utilise performance information to inform resource allocation.

## **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 *Background*

- 3.2 The last year has been extraordinary in many ways for everyone. Together with all councils, our primary focus in the past year had to be on supporting our residents through the pandemic. Like many sectors, we had to stop some of our services and radically change the way we deliver others. Some of our services were closed for long periods of the year. Uniquely, councils also had a legal duty, like the NHS, to deliver large parts of the pandemic response. To do this, we redeployed many of our staff from their normal roles to support our Covid-19 response.
- 3.3 Our annual delivery and performance report 2020/21 needs to be viewed in the context of the pandemic.
- 3.4 The Strategic Plan is the councils' main business plan and embeds the priorities set by the administration into council delivery. Our annual council performance and delivery report would normally report on the progress we have made in delivering our planned commitments. In this highly unusual year, the report includes information on our pandemic response and sets out how our shift from planned business to pandemic response has impacted on our delivery and performance. Alongside this report, we are also publishing a Covid-19 response annual report 2020/21 which gives more detail on how we have supported our communities over the last year.
- 3.5 The council is committed to making Tower Hamlets a safer, cleaner, fairer borough. In 2018 we adopted three new corporate priorities and 11 outcomes that provide a framework for action to improve outcomes for our residents.
- 3.6 *Performance summary*
- 3.7 Over the past year our collective efforts were focused on responding to the pandemic, supporting residents and businesses through three lockdowns and phases of some opening up of society and the economy. We prioritised protecting the most vulnerable and those most at risk during the pandemic, providing support to more than 19,000 shielding residents. Since the start of the pandemic, our dedicated Covid-19 helpline has taken more than 21,900 calls. More than 5,000 households have contacted us through our dedicated Covid-19 support line or online form, and we have provided advice and support to more than 15,000 individuals.
- 3.8 We put in place the infrastructure needed to support the test and trace programme, opening test centres in key locations across the borough. We supported NHS colleagues in the NHS to roll out vaccination centres and vaccinations campaign to encourage all of our eligible residents to take up the vaccine offer.
- 3.9 Our enterprise and growth services shifted their focus from employment support to business support. During the last year, recruitment of new staff stagnated in many sectors with limited vacancies being available. By focusing on business support, we were able to assist businesses to adapt their business models to continue trading. Sustaining businesses will enable us to

then help people into employment once the economy reopens and businesses start to recruit again.

- 3.10 In the most recent quarter, we have delivered the local Kickstart programme for young people who have lost their jobs through the pandemic and we have secured employment opportunities as demonstrated by the sharp improvement in our WorkPath performance in the most recent quarter.
- 3.11 Covid-19 restrictions have had a significant impact on our ability to deliver many of our normal services and this in turn impacts on strategic plan delivery and performance. Where possible we are kept services running in line government guidance and Covid-19 regulations. Some services remained open remotely only, others had reduced capacity while some remained closed through much of the year.
- 3.12 Our set of strategic plan performance indicators includes 16 indicators that are normally derived from our Annual Residents' Survey (ARS). The ARS is normally carried out in the winter or spring of each year and has been running for nearly two decades. In 2020 we had to cancel the survey as the UK went into the first lockdown. We had hoped to carry out our usual ARS again in 2021. Unfortunately, because of the further lockdown in the winter, we had to change our plans again.
- 3.13 During the pandemic we have not been able to engage with residents in the normal way and have had to find new ways of engaging. It was still important for us to understand how the pandemic had affected our communities and their experiences of the local area, the council and other public services.
- 3.14 In the summer of 2020, we asked residents in a self-selecting survey how the pandemic was impacting them. Recognising that self-selecting surveys only give a limited picture and may not necessarily be reflective of the wider population, we also wanted to complement this with a sample representative of the borough population.
- 3.15 We commissioned a dedicated mid pandemic residents' survey over the telephone. Many council's carry out residents' surveys or ask similar questions in other ways, such as through focus groups. This year, different councils decided to ask questions in different ways, reflecting that their normal ways of engaging were not available. Some councils decided not to carry out surveys.
- 3.16 The purpose of our dedicated mid pandemic residents' survey was to give us a snapshot of the pandemic impact on our communities and helps us plan for the recovery with our residents and partners. Because of the differences in methodology and the context in which the dedicated mid pandemic residents' survey took place, results cannot be compared directly to our normal ARS. Surveying over the phone and face to face are different methodologies and each come with their own characteristics.

- 3.17 The restrictions in place and the consequences of the pandemic have impacted on several performance indicators. Where we have not met our target, our report provides more detail and what we are planning to do to improve performance in the future and as we move into the recovery phase.
- 3.18 The Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund (see separate report on this agenda) aims to kickstart our community's recovery from the pandemic over the next 12 - 24 months and seeks to ensure we build a brighter post-pandemic future for our borough. The funding will seek to address some of the damage caused by the pandemic, including the impact on delivering better outcomes for residents as set out in our Strategic Plan. The Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund will prioritise initiatives that support:
- residents to access jobs and our businesses and high streets recover
  - residents to address mental and physical health and wellbeing including for people with disabilities
  - children and young people to deal with the impact of the pandemic on learning, physical and mental health and wellbeing, including those with disabilities
  - residents to access welfare, advice, and guidance
  - communities to come together in celebration and recognition
  - residents to access a range of VCS services
  - residents to manage future outbreaks
- 3.19 At the end of quarter 2020/21, 16 performance indicators have met or are exceeding their target and 7 are between the target and the minimum expectation, while 11 are falling short. 16 indicators would normally be derived from our annual residents' survey which we had to cancel. One indicator does not have a target and there are five indicators for which data collection was suspended due to Covid-19 or for which data has been delayed beyond the publication of this report.
- 3.20 Indicators that are exceeding the target broadly fall into the main areas of the business as set out below. Full details of all indicator performance can be found in appendix 1.

#### Education, skills, employment and income

- Number of SMEs and new enterprises supported through the council's business programme
- Percentage of Idea Store learners who pass a course
- Percentage of 16 - 17 year olds in education, employment or training
- Residents who come from deprived postcodes supported into employment by the Workpath service
- Residents supported into employment by the Workpath service
- Residents supported into employment by the Workpath partnership
- Pupils attending school regularly in reception year

#### Health, social care and safeguarding

- Percentage of long-term looked after children who are in stable placements
- Young people engaging with the youth service who achieve a recorded outcome
- Residential and nursing home admissions (over 65s)

#### Environment and sustainability

- Primary school pupils benefiting from a school street at their school (traffic reduction outside the school)

#### Housing supply and homelessness

- Households prevented from becoming homeless
- Lets to overcrowded households

#### Community safety

- Victims of violence against women and girls or hate crime who feel safer after engaging with victim support

#### Customer service and how we work as a council

- Service user satisfaction with the council's online service offer
- Media and press view of the council

3.21 Indicators that are falling short of the minimum expectation broadly fall into the main areas of the business as set out below:

#### Education, skills, employment and income

- Residents who have disabilities supported into employment by the Workpath service
- Average annual income increase for residents receiving benefit maximisation support
- Resident Universal Credit application support

#### Environment and sustainability

- Proportion of the population who live in low traffic neighbourhoods

#### Housing supply and homelessness

- Level of affordable homes completed (by habitable room)
- Level of affordable homes permitted (by habitable room)
- Homeless households moved into permanent social housing

#### Health, social care and safeguarding

- People who are more independent after being supported through reablement services
- Children and young people receiving support from mental health services

#### Community safety

- Drug users (opiate users) successfully completing treatment

## Customer service and how we work as a council

- Council staff sickness absence rate

### 3.22 *Setting targets and improving outcomes*

3.23 The council is committed to driving improvement which sees us deliver high performing services and in turn improved outcomes for our residents. As part of our move to becoming an outcomes-based organisation, we have introduced a more mature approach to performance management which seeks improvement while at the same time taking into account more clearly the operating realities we face.

3.24 We need to consider factors affecting local government today. For example, budgetary constraints mean we have to do more with less whilst our population continues to grow, and expectations rise.

3.25 Absolute numerical improvement is often less appropriate now that we have refocussed our activities on improving the life chances of our most vulnerable residents. A focus on numerical improvement can drive the wrong kind of behaviour and place the focus in the wrong area of concern.

3.26 Our improvement journey has been steep, and whilst there is no doubt that we need to continue improving, there is also recognition that sustainability is important. Improvements and new ways of working take time to bed in, and our targets need to reflect this.

3.27 Our target setting principles take these challenges into consideration:

- We will only set targets for performance indicators and not for contextual indicators. Contextual indicators are those less directly in the council's control but which are important for prioritising council investments and actions.
- Targets will be set using a bandwidth approach consisting of a target and a minimum expectation. The target (upper bandwidth) should adhere to one or more of the following target setting principles:
  - Be aligned to an external target, such as a statutory, national or Mayoral manifesto target, or target in strategies and policies where they have been agreed by Cabinet or a Tower Hamlets Partnership group;
  - Aim to improve on our benchmark performance position within the appropriate benchmark family group or maintain a high level of performance where we are among top performing councils;
  - Be based on management information evidence, especially for new measures where targets have previously not been set;
  - Take account of operational practicalities as described below;
- In relation to perception surveys, we will monitor the direction of travel rather than set specific targets.
- Targets for all measures are set against the operating realities of the service – for example service changes, funding changes, changes in

legislation or in local or national policy. These changes may result in the need to re-baseline the targets from one year to the next to reflect the changing circumstances in which the service operates.

- 3.28 The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent and ongoing recovery has had a significant impact on many services. Our target setting principles take these challenges into consideration.
- 3.29 Changes that have had occurred as a result of Covid-19 can be taken into consideration under the last principle. Where services have had to cease or significantly alter operations in response to government guidelines we have adjusted existing targets accordingly, where needed, to ensure they remain realistic. For example, cumulative targets will not include periods during which services were suspended. Targets also take into consideration, where possible, any further impacts Covid-19 may have on services.

#### **4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The council's Strategic Plan is focused on meeting the needs of the diverse communities living in Tower Hamlets and ensuring that everyone can play their part in a vibrant and cohesive community. The strategic outcomes and supporting activities are designed to reduce inequalities and the foster community cohesion. Equalities considerations are embedded in all outcomes of the Strategic Plan with specific actions focusing on areas of inequality identified through the Borough Needs Assessment being addressed under Outcome 4 - Inequality is reduced and people feel that they fairly share the benefits from growth.

#### **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 (BV) Implications*
- 5.3 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires the council as a best value authority to "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". Monitoring of performance information and acting on the findings is an important way in which that obligation is being fulfilled.

5.4 *Sustainable action for a greener environment*

5.5 Outcome 5 - People live in a borough that is clean and green is dedicated to taking sustainable action for a cleaner environment. It focuses on key areas of sustainability, including air quality, waste and carbon emission. Key activities include work to drive up the borough's recycling rate, reducing CO2 emissions, and implementing a number of initiatives to improve air quality, including making Tower Hamlets one of the best boroughs for walking and cycling through our Liveable Streets programme.

5.6 *Risk management implications*

5.7 In line with the council's risk management strategy, the information contained within the strategic indicator monitoring will assist Cabinet, Corporate Directors and relevant service managers in delivering the ambitious targets set out in the Strategic Plan. Regular monitoring reports will enable Members and Corporate Directors to keep progress under regular review.

5.8 *Crime and disorder reduction implications*

5.9 Strategic Plan Outcome 7 - People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled and Outcome 8 – People feel they are part of a vibrant and cohesive community are dedicated to crime and disorder reductions. Activities under these outcomes are designed to improve safety, the perception of safety and community cohesion.

5.10 *Safeguarding implications*

5.11 Strategic Plan Outcome 2 - Children and young people are protected so they get the best start in life and can realise their potential is dedicated to keeping children and young people safe from harm. The activities under this outcome seek to safeguard children and build on our Ofsted success.

5.12 Outcome 3 - People access joined-up services when they need them and feel healthier and more independent is our key outcome in relation to safeguarding vulnerable people. Key activities include projects to address childhood obesity and improve nutrition, as well as supporting greater choice and independence for those requiring adult social care.

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

6.1 This report sets out the delivery, performance and improvement position for the Strategic Plan at the end of 2020/21. There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The report provides performance information. It is consistent with good administration for the council to consider performance related monitoring information. This also assists the council achieve Best Value and may demonstrate continuing improvement.
- 7.2 When considering its performance, the council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). The council's targets are formulated by reference to its public sector equality duty and monitoring performance against those targets should help to ensure they are delivered.
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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- None

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Annual strategic delivery and performance report 2020/21

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

- None

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

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