

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE TOWER HAMLETS HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

HELD AT 5.03 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2023

**COMMITTEE ROOM 3 - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Present:

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| Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury (Chair) | – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health, and Wellbeing |
| Councillor Kabir Ahmed | – Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding |
| Councillor Abdul Wahid | – Non-Executive Majority Group Councillor |
| Councillor Amy Lee | – Non-Executive Opposition Group Councillor |
| Councillor Ahmodur Khan | – Chair of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee |
| Matthew Adrien | – Service Director at Healthwatch Tower Hamlets |
| Dr Somen Banerjee (Member) | – Director of Public Health |
| Katie Cole | – Associate Director of Public Health |
| Cyril Eshareturi | – BAME Commission Health and Wellbeing Programme Lead |
| Amy Gibbs | – Chair of Tower Hamlets Together |
| Dan Jones | – Director, Public Realm |
| Ellie Kershaw | – Acting Director, Growth and Economic Development |
| David Knight | – Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance |
| Professor John Eade | – University of Roehampton |
| Shamea Mia | – Wapping Bangladeshi Association |
| Abdul Mumin | – Partnership Board Leader |
| Fran Pearson | – Safeguarding Adults' Board Chair |
| Fiona Peskett | – Director of Strategy and Integration - Royal London and Mile End |
| Marissa Ryan-Hernandez | – Plan Making Team Leader |
| Katy Scammell | – Associate Director of Public Health |
| James Thomas | – Corporate Director, Children and Culture |
| Warwick Tomsett (Member) | – Joint Director, Integrated Commissioning |
| Matthew Wong | – Planning Officer |

Apologies:

Councillor Saied Ahmed	– (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living)
Councillor Maium Talukdar	– (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor))
Dr Neil Ashman	– (Chief Executive of The Royal London and Mile End hospitals)
Dr Ian Basnett	– (Public Health Director, Barts Health NHS Trust)
Chris Banks	– (Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC)
Lucie Butler	– (Director of Nursing and Governance)
Joseph Lacey-Holland	– (Senior Strategy Policy & Performance Officer)
Shohel Ahmed	– (Joint Safeguarding Adults Strategy and Governance Manager)

1. STANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1.1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health, and Wellbeing welcomed everybody to the meeting.

1.2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Chair of the Board moved and it was: - **RESOLVED.**

The unrestricted minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as a correct record and the Chair of the Board was authorised to sign them accordingly.

1.3 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

No declarations were received at the meeting.

1.4 Information Share

The Board:

- ❖ **Noted** that LBTH continues to work with colleagues across the partnership in terms of the cost-of-living crisis and that one of the most significant measures of support that the Council has been initiated with the Councils benefits service being responsible for administering claims

for free school meals on behalf of the council's education department and is available to children attending schools within Tower Hamlets.

- ❖ **Noted** that 19,000 vouchers had gone out just before the Yuletide Festivities to those children eligible for free school meals, and 76% of those as of today have been cashed.
- ❖ **Noted** details of the Healthy Start Scheme a national programme helping children of low-income families to be healthy who may be eligible for a free Healthy Start Card with money to spend on milk and healthy food and the value could be over £1,000 per child over their lifetime, if claimed from pregnancy to the child's 4th birthday.
- ❖ **Noted** that all the healthy start vouchers went out prior to the for all have all gone out just before the Yuletide Festivities and is a really significant measure to help struggling families.
- ❖ **Noted** that that Barts Health is under such extreme pressure due to a multitude of complex factors across the whole health and care system. In many areas the Borough is seeing the highest levels of demand ever, combined with restricted capacity, increasing patient needs and high public expectation, culminating in the greatest pressure on the NHS in a generation.
- ❖ **Noted** that the demand for places for younger pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is increasing. The number of pupils with Statements or Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), requiring specialist provision to meet their needs, has risen in LBTH and the complexity of these needs is increasing which is putting considerable strain on the education system.
- ❖ **Noted** that the pandemic has impacted on children's literacy and mathematical skills, communication and language, physical development, and personal.
- ❖ **Noted** separate report summarising research on the impact of the pandemic on learning finds attainment gap between socially disadvantaged pupils and their classmates has grown.
- ❖ **Noted** there is some evidence that in primary schools, younger year groups have been the most significantly affected.
- ❖ **Noted** that whilst the impact of coronavirus on the NHS has been unprecedented, the NHS now faces another unique challenge - restoring planned care to previous levels. The staff responded incredibly well to each Covid-19 peak, and the NHS has learned lessons from the experience and is therefore better prepared to meet the next challenge.
- ❖ **Noted** that three key themes have emerged that enables effective discharge planning: Improved communication, improved co-ordination of services and improved collaboration.
- ❖ **Noted** that commissioner and provider organisations examine the local processes they have in place for discharge planning, ensuring that transfer of care between services is planned around the needs of patients, families, and carers at all times.
- ❖ **Noted** that at a practitioner level, there needs to be willingness from nurses both in hospital and community to improve partnership working, to ensure that patients, carers, and families experience a seamless

service when discharged from hospital to home, with good discharge planning and post-discharge support.

- ❖ **Noted** that Health Watch are currently working with the London Ambulance Service on their engagement strategy for 2023-2028. The most recent LAS strategy was published in 2018 and will run until the end of the 2022-23 financial year. LAS is in the process of engaging with stakeholders in order to develop a new strategy, which will be published early in the 2023-24 financial year. LAS has identified five 'emerging themes', which will be the basis for the new strategy. These themes are: **(i)** High quality emergency care; **(ii)** Effective coordination and delivery of urgent care; **(iii)** Creation of a great place to work; **(iv)** Support for the wider health system; and **(v)** Contribution to life in the capital.
- ❖ **Noted** that Healthwatch is working with NHS North East London and Maternity Voices Partnerships to develop a better understanding of the choices women and pregnant people are making when it comes to antenatal care. When it comes to using maternity services, NHS North East London want to ensure all women and pregnant people have the best experience. The purpose of Maternity Choices engagement is to understand whether service users felt they could make choices about their antenatal care. Moreover, this project aims to gain understanding as to why they chose to have their care in their chosen hospital, birth centre or a home birth. The survey is led by 7 Healthwatch organizations across North East London – They are gathering responses through paper and online surveys, as well as face to face interviews. Once the survey has been closed, Healthwatch will share the findings from the survey responses with the North East London Local Maternity and Neonatal System – a partnership of organisations, women and their families working together to deliver improvements in maternity services in North East London.
- ❖ **Noted** the establishment of Adult Safeguarding Champions whose role combines responsibility for strategy, operations, and oversight for an organisation in relation to adults at risk of harm.
- ❖ **Noted** that The law defines self-neglect as an adult's inability, due to physical or mental impairment, or diminished capacity, to perform essential self-care tasks including: **(i)** obtaining essential food, clothing, shelter, and medical care; **(ii)** obtaining goods and services necessary to maintain physical health, mental health; or **(iii)** managing one's own financial affairs. Despite understanding how an individual behaviour would affect health, the individual makes a conscious and voluntary decision to engage in acts that threaten his/her health or safety as a matter of personal choice.
- ❖ **Noted** that Pension Credit (that is separate from the State Pension) provides extra money to help with living costs for those over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit **(i)** can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges; **(ii)** is also available for those who are a carer, severely disabled, or responsible for a child or young person; and **(iii)** can be claimed even if a pensioner has another income, savings, or their own home.

- ❖ **Noted** that whilst a large number of vouchers to pensioners only 35% has been cashed, therefore partner agencies (**e.g.**, home care providers and faith organizations) who are working with pensioners in poverty are asked to cash their vouchers at their local post office.
- ❖ **Noted** that as the cold weather begins to bite and temperatures set to plummet over the coming days, Tower Hamlets Council has set up a series of warm hubs for residents who may be struggling to heat their homes due to soaring energy prices. A network of warm hubs opened in December 2023 to provide people with a safe space to stay warm, socialise and have a hot drink. Warm hubs will be running from a number of our Idea Stores and libraries every day during the winter. Refreshments will be provided including hot drinks, squash, and biscuits. The warm hubs will also be hosting board game sessions to keep residents entertained. Staff will also be on hand to signpost people to advice and support services if needed.
- ❖ **Noted** that In April, the Council will be getting a new tranche of the Household Support Fund (HSF) the Fund helps people experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food and household energy bills. This is money the Council has been awarded by HM Government to help those in need and most affected by the cost-of-living crisis to support them to resolve their financial issues and can be accessed directly through the Council.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked all for their updates on how agencies are engaging with and supporting local residents.

1.5 Feedback from the Tower Hamlets Together (THT) Board (verbal update)

The Board received an update from Amy Gibbs Chair of Tower Hamlets Together which may be summarised as follows:

The Board

- ❖ **Noted** the work to transition into taking on the Integrated Care Board functions between the north east London's (NEL) place partnerships and NHS North East London including contributing to the new NEL accountability framework.
- ❖ **Noted** that the North East London's place partnerships are uniquely placed to drive the integration between health and care that will improve residents' wellbeing, through co-produced approaches that build on community assets.
- ❖ **Noted** as partnerships, they understand their communities and the inequalities that residents face. Reshaping north east London's health and care system so that it is equitable, delivers improved wellbeing for everyone, and is financially sustainable, will happen only if we work together to deliver at neighbourhood, place, collaborative, and system.
- ❖ **Noted** that each element of the system needs to be accountable for its part of the improvement journey and to work together alongside residents and communities to effect change sustainably.

- ❖ **Noted** that THT had welcomed new Board members such as Healthwatch Tower Hamlets, THT's new Clinical and Care Director, Roberto Tamsangan, and Primary Care Development Lead, Khyati Bakhai.
- ❖ **Noted** that the THT are recruiting new clinical leads across multiple professional disciplines. In addition, Members also received an update on THT work to maintain and strengthen community voice and inclusion within the Board and across THT, including ongoing user voice slots, the local investment in the new Community Voice Lead, and their £100,000 tender for anti-racism education across the partnership, that is now live.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the Chair of Tower Hamlets Together for a very helpful and informative update.

2. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

2.1 Lessons from Covid - culturally appropriate communications

The Board noted that the Health communication and engagement strategy had been reviewed by Tower Hamlet residents towards ensuring guidance and important health messages are 'culturally appropriate', 'available in different languages' and 'uses different approaches' to ensure messages reach different audiences. A summary of the discussions is set out below:

The Board **noted**:

- ❖ Adopting a two phased approach which comprised of a desk top review and semi-structured interviews with 22 Tower Hamlets residents, the project reinforced the importance of community involvement as crucial to the ethos of cultural appropriate health communication and highlights the need for ensuring health messages are co-designed, and accessibility issues considered congruent to the provision of health messaging which is culturally appropriate.
- ❖ To implant the approach of culturally appropriate health communication and engagement, a tool was developed to embed this ethos across the London borough of Tower Hamlets.
- ❖ That the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Commission highlighted the poorer health outcomes associated with ethnicity, linkages to structural racism and the impact of COVID-19 in bringing these inequalities into focus. In response, the Tower Hamlets Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Action Plan set out recommendations aimed at addressing these health outcomes.
- ❖ That health messages do not unwittingly disadvantage target communities as the checklist mandates for messages to be co-designed by working with communities and resources focused on addressing those who are most in need. This will ensure that communities are treated equally, respectfully and without discrimination whilst providing assurance that health and wellbeing information and

advice are clear, simple, and produced with those who will benefit from them.

- ❖ Health and wellbeing information needs to be clear, simple and co-designed towards ensuring that communities feel connected and included in the design, delivery, and engagement with health messages.

As a result of a full and wide-ranging discussion the Chair Moved and it was:- **AGREED.**

1. To adopt the use of the Culturally Appropriate Health Communication and Engagement toolkit to underpin and inform the provision of all health messages.

2.2 Combatting Drugs Partnership

The Board noted that in 2021 the Government introduced a 10 Year strategy to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system – ‘From Harm to Hope’. The strategy was a whole Government approach to tackle drug related harm which is then reflected at a local level. The main points of the discussion maybe summarised as follows:

The Board **noted** that:

- ❖ As part of the strategy each locality is required to develop a multi-agency ‘Combating Drugs Partnership’ (CDP) that will focus on delivering the three strategic priorities as set out in ‘From Harm to Hope’ to **(i)** break drug supply chains; **(ii)** deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system; and **(iii)** achieve a shift in the demand for drugs.
- ❖ The Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP) will provide strategic oversight of delivering the national drugs strategy at a local level and oversee the development of a Local Joins Needs Assessment, Strategic Delivery Plan, and a Local Performance Framework. It will also be responsible for providing an annual progress report to the responsible national body – the Joint Combatting Drugs Unit (JCDU).
- ❖ It is proposed that the Tower Hamlets CDP is set up as a sub-group of both the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB), with a dual reporting arrangement to ensure leadership and oversight of the cross-cutting themes of enforcement and recovery set out in ‘From Harm to Hope’.

As a result of discussions on the report the Chair Moved and it was:- **AGREED** to:

1. Formally constitute the Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) as a sub-group of the Board; and
2. Adopt the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership of the CDP, recognising these are living documents that are subject to revision when required (**e.g.**, members of staff leaving their posts and being replaced)

2.3 London Borough of Tower Hamlets New Local Plan

The Board noted that the London Borough of Tower Hamlets adopted its current Local Plan in January 2020. The main purpose of the Local Plan is to inform decision-making on planning applications, respond to community needs and aspirations, as well as to meet the Council's national and regional obligations as a Local Planning Authority (LPA). The main points of the discussion are summarised below:

The Board **noted** that:

- ❖ Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) LPAs must review Local Plans at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.
- ❖ Officers have initiated the process by undertaking a review of planning policies against national and regional guidance, identifying borough changes, scoping evidence requirements and are now looking to engage with colleagues, services and with the wider borough community.
- ❖ In determining the extent of changes that will be needed to bring the current plan up-to-date and to ensure the Council's Local Plan is fit-for-purpose, officers have engaged with various teams across the Council and begun preparing and commissioning evidence base studies.
- ❖ A programme has been prepared for the project which seeks to adopt a new Local Plan in Autumn of 2025. The adoption of a new Local Plan will provide an up-to-date development plan framework, that will be in conformity with government's latest policies and will facilitate the delivery of the Mayor's priorities on housing, employment, environment, and public realm, providing positive impacts into local community, improvements in housing, infrastructure, and the environment.

As a result of consideration on the presentation on the New Local Plan approach the Board **noted** the progress on the adoption of the new Local Plan in Autumn of 2025 that would facilitate the delivery of the Mayor's priorities on housing, employment, environment, and public realm, providing positive impacts into local community, improvements in housing, infrastructure, and the environment.

2.4 Air Quality action plan

The Board received a paper that advocated for action to improve air quality that protects those most vulnerable to air pollution and outlines details on the Council's Air Quality Action Plan including action to provide information to residents with clear and simple messages on air quality. The main points of the discussion are summarised below:

The Board **noted** that:

- ❖ Addressing this issue is a priority at national, regional, and local level. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) has highlighted its commitment to improve air quality in the strategic plan and recently publishing its updated Air Quality Action Plan that outlines how the council will address air pollution over the next five years.
- ❖ Health partners are also undertaking work to improve air quality in the Borough, as well as supporting vulnerable population groups to mitigate against the impact of poor air quality on their health.
- ❖ Poor air quality in the Borough puts residents at risk of poor health. This is felt the most by those living on low incomes in the most polluted areas and vulnerable population groups including pregnant women; children; older people; and those with existing health conditions.

As a result of having reviewed the Council's Air Quality Action Plan and any further action that the Borough should consider improving air quality discussions on the report the Chair Moved and it was:- **AGREED** to:

- ❖ Support, and advocate for, measures that protect residents, particularly vulnerable population groups, from poor air quality.
- ❖ Assess progress against improving air quality on an annual basis, timed with the annual review of the Air Quality Action Plan.
- ❖ Advocate for action across the system, so all partner organisations have comprehensive and ambitious air quality plans.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In conclusion the Chair expressed his thanks to everybody who had contributed this evening and advised the Board that the next meeting would be on 20th March 2023 at the New Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ.

The meeting ended at 7.16 p.m.

**Chair, Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury
Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board**