

APPENDIX A

Committee/Meeting: Cabinet	Date: 8 th June 2011	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No: CAB 005/112
Report of: Isabella Freeman Assistant Chief Executive (Legal) Originating officer(s) Michael Keating Service Head One Tower Hamlets		Title: Tower Hamlets Community Plan Refresh 2011 Wards Affected: All	

Lead Member	Mayor Lutfur Rahman
Community Plan Theme	All
Strategic Priority	All

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the refresh of the borough's community strategy and the new proposed Tower Hamlets Community Plan (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The Community Plan is the borough's sustainable community strategy and sets out the long-term vision and priorities for Tower Hamlets. It is a statutory document developed and owned by the Tower Hamlets Partnership, led by the Council.
- 1.3 The refresh of the Plan has been informed by assessments of needs in the borough and through consultation with local residents, organisations and partners.

2. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to:-

- § Note the process followed for refreshing the Community Plan;
- § Recommend the Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2011 to Full Council for approval (Appendix 1); and
- § Authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Mayor, to make appropriate amendments to the Tower Hamlets Community Plan before it is presented to Full Council that are necessary to respond to any late consultation responses.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 The Community Plan is the local term given to the borough's sustainable community strategy. It is a statutory document and an integral part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, it must therefore be agreed by Full Council, following recommendation from Cabinet.
- 3.2 The Plan provides the long-term vision for the borough, articulating local aspirations, needs and priorities. As the high-level partnership strategy, it informs all other strategies and delivery plans of the Tower Hamlets Partnership, including the Council's Strategic Plan.
- 3.3 It outlines how the Partnership will work together to improve the lives of all those who live and work in the borough. It has a particular focus on tackling inequality, poverty and social exclusion as articulated through the One Tower Hamlets narrative.
- 3.4 The refreshed Community Plan is intended to provide a more robust and sustainable direction of travel for the Partnership, in light of future needs and emerging challenges and opportunities including the new Coalition Government's reform agenda. It is the product of wide ranging consultation with local people and partners to ensure that it reflects the issues that matter most to local people.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Cabinet may decide not to recommend the proposed Community Plan to Full Council. Should Cabinet decide to do so elements of the refresh process may need to be repeated. The Community Plan supports partnership working at a time of significant change. Other documents such as the Strategic Plan, which Cabinet approved in April 2011, based on the proposed Community Plan, may also need to be amended.
- 4.2 Cabinet may also decide to make any amendments to the Plan as it sees fit.

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 Through the existing Community Plan, the Tower Hamlets Partnership has made significant strides in improving the lives of local people. However since the borough's current Community Plan was published in 2008 there have been a number of national and local developments with considerable implications for Tower Hamlets. These include an economic downturn, a new national political landscape and significant spending reductions in the public and third sector over the next four years. In 2010, based on the challenges and opportunities facing the borough, the Tower Hamlets Partnership Executive agreed that this is an opportune time to review the Community Plan.

6. BODY OF THE REPORT

Community Plan Refresh Process

- 6.1 A comprehensive process has been followed to refresh the Community Plan. This included the development of an evidence base comprising of existing needs assessments (such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Local Economic Assessment); performance data; and an analysis of the Coalition Government's reform agenda and its possible implications for the borough.
- 6.2 Consultation with local people, communities and organisations has also been central to this evidence base. Several consultation activities have been held to capture the concerns and aspirations of local people and stakeholders to help inform the Plan. These include:
- § Discussions at the Partnership Board and LAP Steering Group conference;
 - § General open consultation events for residents held in each of the 4 paired LAPs;
 - § Street and market based consultation activities;
 - § Thematic workshops with key partners, drawn from each of the Community Plan Delivery Groups;
 - § Cross-cutting workshop with senior officers from the Partnership;
 - § Discussions at the Localisation Board, Partnership Executive Support Group and Community Plan Delivery Groups;
 - § Seminar open to all Council Members;
 - § Consultation with the third sector at TH3 Council of Voluntary Services launch event and a workshop with key third sector representatives;
 - § Discussions at Tower Hamlets Housing Forum; and
 - § Discussions with key Equalities forums such as the Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum, Rainbow Hamlets and the Pan Disability Panel.
- 6.3 Outcomes from the borough's Budget Congresses, which discussed the Partnership's approach to the considerable financial challenges facing Tower Hamlets, have also fed into the development of the new proposed Community Plan.

- 6.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment of the proposed Community Plan framework has been conducted by partnership representatives, led by the Council's Equalities and Scrutiny Service. The recommendations from the assessment have also helped develop the draft Plan.
- 6.5 In summary, the EqIA indicated that overall, the Community Plan will help address the needs of the borough's diverse communities and contribute to equality of opportunity for all. A number of recommendations were made to ensure that the Plan fully addresses equalities needs in the borough. The Community Plan objectives and narrative were amended to provide a sharper focus on equalities and diversity. For example, the objective on hate crime has been amended to reflect all hate crime, a specific mental health priority has been included in the One Tower Hamlets Focus of the Healthy and Supportive Community theme; and the narrative on community cohesion extended, including promoting cohesion among young people. Based on the recommendations the Partnership will also give further consideration to reporting performance data by equalities strands.

Proposed Community Plan

- 6.6 The Partnership has produced a draft Community Plan using the evidence base outlined above. Whilst many of the high-level priorities and objectives remain the same, there are some important differences compared with the current Plan.
- 6.7 There is a stronger articulation of the 'story of place' – highlighting the borough's unique and diverse history and its challenges and opportunities. There is also a better alignment of the Community Plan themes to reflect these challenges and opportunities.

The refreshed Community Plan themes are as follows:

- A Great Place to Live:* focusing on improving the liveability of the borough including housing, the public realm and local transport
- A Prosperous Community:* focusing on getting more people into work; supporting residents through welfare reform in the borough; raising educational attainment; and supporting enterprise, including the third sector
- A Safe and Cohesive Community:* focusing on tackling and preventing crime and anti-social behaviour as well as improving people's sense of feeling safe, alongside improving community cohesion in the borough
- Healthy and Supportive Community:* focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of local people, supporting people to live

independently and protecting vulnerable children and adults

- 6.8 The approach of the Partnership in delivering these priorities has also changed. There is new emphasis on the Localisation agenda – integrating services at the local level so services are more responsive, efficient and engaged with local people; a more focused narrative on ‘One Tower Hamlets’ – a continuing commitment to tackling inequality and disadvantage; and the principles of efficient use of resources as integral to the delivery of the Plan.

Consultation on the Proposed Community Plan

- 6.9 Formal consultation on the draft Plan took place between April – May 2011. The consultation was open to all those who live, work, study or have an interest in the borough.
- 6.10 A number of methods were used to consult on the draft Plan, ensuring that it was accessible and inclusive. This ranged from publicising the consultation in the local media, including East End Life and Bengali newspapers; publicising the consultation on the Tower Hamlets Partnership website, Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services website and Tower Hamlets Involvement Network websites; text messages to local people registered on the borough’s consultation portal and direct emails inviting people to take part in the consultation.
- 6.11 Feedback from the consultation shows that the draft Community Plan was well received. Local people and organisations agreed that the Plan reflects key local priorities. Respondents were pleased that despite the economic downturn, the Partnership has not dampened its vision. It still remains as determined to improve the lives of local people, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, whilst building resilient communities and embedding a culture of aspiration.
- 6.12 Local organisations also highlighted the need to ensure that community engagement is pivotal to the delivery of the Plan and that third sector organisations are seen as key partners to its delivery. A number of respondents also commented that the protection of open spaces and natural environment should not be overlooked. Feedback from the consultation has helped inform the final proposed Community Plan.

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 7.1 This report describes the proposed consultation draft Community Plan and the arrangements and timetable for refreshing the Plan.
- 7.2 The report in paragraph 5.1 acknowledges the changed financial environment the Council now faces in particular the fact that the Council will no longer receive the same levels of government funding from 2011-12 onwards and

therefore will not be able to continue or offer similar level of financial commitments it has had up until recently. A report on the Council's 2011-12 revenue budget and medium term financial plan 2011-14 was presented to Cabinet on 12 January 2011.

- 7.3 There are no other specific financial implications emanating from this report but in the event that the Council agrees further action in response to this report's recommendations then officers will be obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made.

8 CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)

- 8.1 The Community Plan comprises the Council's sustainable community strategy within the meaning of section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Council is required to have a sustainable community strategy and may modify it from time to time. In modifying the strategy, the Council must consult and seek the participation of each partner authority and such other persons as the Council considers appropriate. The Council must also have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State in July 2008 in the document entitled *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities*. The statutory guidance indicates that authorities need to consider how to consult with local people, local businesses and third sector organisations. According to the guidance, the strategy should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom.
- 8.2 The Community Plan under-pins the Council's well-being power in section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, which is used to support a range of actions. The Council is empowered under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to do anything which it considers likely to promote the social, economic or environmental well being of Tower Hamlets, provided the action is not otherwise prohibited by statute. This power includes the ability to incur expenditure or to give financial assistance to or enter into arrangements or agreements with any other person. The power may be exercised in relation to, or for the benefit of: (a) the whole or any part of Tower Hamlets; or (b) all or any persons resident in Tower Hamlets. In exercising the power, regard must be had to the Community Plan.
- 8.3 The Community Plan is critically important to the discharge of the whole range of the Council's statutory functions, providing over-arching objectives the Council is trying to achieve. It is impractical to refer to all the statutory functions to which the Community Plan will relate. However, the cross-cutting principles expressed in the Plan are particularly closely aligned with the following of the Council's duties –
- The Council is subject to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the following matters in the exercise of its functions: (1) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act; (2) the need to advance equality of

opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (RPC) and those who don't; and (3) the need to foster good relations between persons who share an RPC and those who don't.

- The Council is required as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 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.
- The Council is required by section 3A of the Local Government Act 1999 to take steps to ensure that local representatives are involved in the exercise of Council functions if it considers it appropriate they should be so involved.

9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The Community Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the borough's diverse communities. Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential, by tackling and mitigating poverty and promoting social inclusion, is central to the Community Plan. This is articulated through the Plan's One Tower Hamlets principle.
- 9.2 One Tower Hamlets is a cross-cutting principle that runs through the Community Plan. It is integral to the delivery of the inclusive vision of the Partnership to improve the lives of all those who live and work in the borough.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 The purpose of the Community Plan is to ensure that it contributes to supporting sustainable communities, including environmental sustainability. The Plan contains a number of objectives that will help achieve a sustainable environment: these include maximising energy efficiency and improving the public realm. As part of this, a number of strategies are identified to help reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty, as well as protect the borough's physical and natural environment.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Community Plan provides the strategic direction for all Council strategies, service plans and resource allocations. Risks relating to the achievement of the objectives are therefore monitored through the Council's Corporate Risk Register and directorate risk registers.
- 11.2 Corporate risks are assessed for likelihood and impact, and have responsible owners and programmes of mitigating actions. The Corporate Risk Register is updated throughout the year and reported quarterly to the Corporate Management Team. Each directorate also maintains its own register of risks that feeds into the corporate monitoring and evaluation

process. In this way senior managers assess risks, develop mitigating actions, and monitor progress in a systematic manner.

- 11.3 The Council's performance against the Community Plan objectives, as the lead organisation in the Tower Hamlets Partnership, will determine how it is assessed by central government, external partners and the wider public.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Reducing crime and disorder are a central focus of the Community Plan, articulated in the Safe and Cohesive Community theme. The Community Plan aspires to reduce the crime and anti-social behaviour rate in the borough through joint working between community safety partners.
- 12.2 The Plan also recognises that multiple disadvantage often puts many people at risk of engaging in criminal behaviour. It concentrates on an early intervention approach to prevent people, particularly young people, getting involved in criminal activity.
- 12.3 As well as reducing crime, the Community Plan also prioritises tackling the fear of crime to make people feel safer in their neighbourhoods.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

- 13.1 The Community Plan highlights the significant spending cuts to public organisations and the impact of this on service provision from both the public and third sectors. It outlines that in a much changed financial context, efficiency – providing value for money services – becomes more important than ever. This commitment is articulated through a cross-cutting principle on efficiency that informs delivery against all objectives in the Plan.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2011

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended) List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

Brief description of Background Papers:

Name and telephone number of holder
and address where open to inspection:

Equality Impact Assessment
Summary Evidence Base
Consultation Findings
Budget Congress Reports

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