


Cabinet	
27 November 2024	
Report of: Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children's Services	Classification: Unrestricted
Youth Service Progress Update	

Lead Member	Councillor Maium Talukdar, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
Originating Officer(s)	Shafiur Rahman, Interim Director of Youth Services
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Reason for Key Decision	Significant impact on wards
Forward Plan Notice Published	17 October 2024
Exempt information	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Priority 3: Accelerate education Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure Priority 5. Invest in public services Priority 6. Empower communities and fight crime Priority 8. A council that works for you and listens to you

Executive Summary

A priority within the Mayoral Manifesto Pledge and Tower Hamlets Council Strategic Plan 2022-2026 is to transform and improve services for young people in the borough.

We are ambitious about ensuring that every young person in Tower Hamlets has the best start in life and can access opportunities that enable young people to fulfil their potential including removing the impact of societal barriers that many young people face. To achieve this there are a range of measures designed to improve outcomes for young people which are detailed within the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 including the council's priority to invest in a flagship youth service following significant cutbacks through the years of austerity.

This report aims to provide an update in respect of the progress made with the youth service transformation. The report sets out what has been achieved to date around the implementation of the Young Tower Hamlets delivery model, mobilisation

of the new youth service offer and the priorities over the coming months as well as governance oversight, budget and risks.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the progress made in respect of the Youth Service roll out.
2. Provide agreement to continue to roll out line with the implementation plan.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

1. It is important that the Mayor and Cabinet are kept informed of the progress made around the implementation of the new youth service model and that the Executive is provided with feedback to improve delivery of the transformation programme.
2. This report aims to provide Cabinet with a comprehensive update on the development and launch of the Youth Service and asks Cabinet members to note the achievements to date and endorse the plan going forward.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3. None.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1. The Young Tower Hamlet transformation programme has been delivering at pace since the last strategic update in June 2024. The key achievements that this paper aims to highlight are:

- The Young Tower Hamlets staffing model
- A safe space in every ward
- Operational delivery
- Communication and engagement
- Young Tower Hamlets Strategy

3.2. Young Tower Hamlets staffing model

- 3.2.1. In September 2023 the Young Peoples Service underwent a full-service restructure into becoming Young Tower Hamlets. The restructure concluded in June 2024 with staff members moving into their new permanent roles and there no longer being an 'interim' model in place as the posts are now created within the staffing establishment.

- 3.2.2. Throughout the summer of 2024, there has been a large-scale recruitment campaign to advertise and appoint to management roles

within the structure of which 13 out of 16 are now occupied by a permanent member of staff.

- 3.2.3. In September 2024 the service held a recruitment open day to support with the recruitment of the vacant operational roles and to promote the new Young Tower Hamlets Service offer. The open day was a huge success with over 200 people attend the open day of which 73% live in the borough and 68% seeking new job opportunities.
- 3.2.4. Overall, 25% of all Young Tower Hamlets permanent roles have been recruited to as of October 2024. With all remaining posts planned to be filled by March 2025.

3.3. A Safe space in every ward

3.3.1. Young Tower Hamlets has increased its safe space service provision over the last 12 months to 14 operational sites across the borough. The offer is a mixed economy of mainly Local Authority provision (15 wards) and some commissioned to VCS providers (up to 5 wards). The current Young Tower Hamlets safe space settings in the borough comprise of:

- Columbia Road Youth Centre
- Haileybury Youth Centre
- Limehouse Youth Centre
- Old Castle Street Youth Centre
- St Andrews Wharf Youth Centre
- Kitcat
- Wapping Youth Centre
- Urban Adventure Base
- Osmani Youth Centre
- Linc Community Centre
- St Paul's Way Centre
- Minerva Community Centre
- Christian Street Community Hub
- Eastside Youth and Community Centre

3.3.2. The service is scheduled to open an additional three sites throughout November 2024, another three in December 2024 and one in February 2025. Any remaining sites will be open before summer 2025.

3.3.3. In 2023 the service secured an additional £488k in grant funding from the Youth Investment Fund. This funding has contributed to the Young Tower Hamlets refurbishment programme to refresh a range of safe space provision in the borough. The refresh programme started in April 2024 and is on track to be completed by March 2025.

3.4. Operational Delivery

3.4.1. All of the Young Tower Hamlets service elements (Universal safe spaces, targeted youth support, integrated detached youth work, Youth sports and adventure learning and youth participation) are operational and delivering frontline services to children in the borough. The service delivered a great summer of fun programme with over 1000 free activities and are about to deliver a range of activities throughout National Youth Work Week which starts on 4 November 2024.

- 3.4.2. To ensure the services are delivering a safe and sustainable model, a full review of each area is underway around their processes, policies, KPI's, performance information as well as quality assurance.
- 3.4.3. The service continues to recruit into the vacant permanent posts and will be delivering the whole offer at full capacity by March 2025.
- 3.4.4. The service has been building relationships with the partnership, with regards to schools the service regularly contributes into the Head Teachers newsletter, the Detached Youth Service delivers youth safety and mediation workshops within schools and the Universal Safe Space team are looking to collaborate with teachers in delivering homework/revision classes for young people. Through our Targeted Youth Support work we have a wellbeing offer which we are looking to expand within the Universal Safe Space settings next year and the Detached Youth Service work with Your Stance to deliver first aid training within the community.

3.5. Communication and engagement

- 3.5.1. The corporate communications team has been working with staff and children to develop the new Young Tower Hamlets website. The website went live in August 2024 and is fully up and running with over 5,000 visits to date.
- 3.5.2. Through consultation and listening to how young people want to stay in touch we have invested in our social media platform TikTok. Earlier this year we launched our TikTok channel (@youngtowerhamlets) which has over 3,000 followers, over 13,000 likes and over 1.5million views which demonstrates successful channel growth. Our top 3 Young Tower Hamlets videos by views was:
 - World Book Day (189k)
 - Study tips from Youth Council during exams (97k)
 - Urban Adventure Base – sports events during Easter (88k)
- 3.5.3. We also promote our service using leaflets and flyers which are distributed through our youth workers to create awareness of what is happening across our youth offer to children, parents and partners in the borough.
- 3.5.4. By having these different communication platforms in place is enabling us to communicate in the way young people want to be communicated with. These platforms provide us with the opportunity to showcase the work that is being delivered through Young Tower Hamlets, it supports with the increase of young people attending our universal safe space settings as well as increasing the number of young people attending holiday provision.

3.6. Young Tower Hamlets Strategy

3.6.1. The Young Tower Hamlets strategy is in draft form and in the process of being reviewed by different governance groups and will be presented to Cabinet in March 2025.

3.6.2. As part of our continuous learning, we will be engaging an independent evaluator to review the added value of the new model, which will take place in September 2025.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Equalities impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the service redesign.

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. This is a progress report implications were raised by previous reports.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report. The budgets referenced within are accurate and have been verified as correct.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1. The Council has the legal power to operate in the manner detailed in this report.

7.2. The Council is legally obliged to ensure delivery of a number of youth related services. The proposed structure is one which may be considered one that a rational local authority may devise in order to meet the requirements of its statutory obligations.

7.3. The Council has a wide-ranging discretion to determine the best way to meet its Best Value legal obligations for the delivery of its legal functions. It is open for the Council to elect to implement the structure detailed in this report

as one which might be reasonably expected to meet its Best Value obligations.

- 7.4. The Council will continue to assess the impact of the implementation in terms of equalities and to ensure that the Council continues to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
-

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Young Tower Hamlets Progress Update

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

None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A