

**Tower Hamlets Council**  
**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY AND REPORT TO RESIDENTS**  
**2013-14**

Tower Hamlets Council's vision is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough. Against a back-drop of reducing public funding, the Council is committed to the protection of front-line services and promoting equality for all. In 2013/14, the council has had a successful year, and achieved national recognition, across a number of areas.

## **A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE**

### *Housing*

Tower Hamlets has a strong housing track record and is recognised as a top performer for the delivery of affordable homes.

Over the past year, the council has:

- Improved 1785 properties so that they meet the Decent Homes standard
- Supported the delivery of a further 581 affordable homes, bringing the total delivered since 2010 to 4029
- Secured £22 million in additional grant funding and increased the potential for further investment to create an £80 million Council Housing Development Programme
- Held four energy auctions with more than 4,000 residents signed up to its Energy Co-operative, saving an average of £150 on their annual energy bill.

A fast growing population, low income levels for many households and high house prices means that housing remains a key challenge for the borough. A key priority for this year is to continue to build high levels of affordable homes and improve more council houses – making a further 3,000 properties meet the Decent Homes standard by March 2015. The council is also supporting regeneration schemes across the borough including at Whitechapel, Poplar, Ocean Estate and Robin Hood Gardens.

### *Environment*

Tower Hamlets Council continues to invest in the local environment to support a cleaner and greener borough.

Over the past year, the council has:

- Reduced levels of graffiti and flyposting
- Repaired 1,700 potholes
- Introduced the Find It Fix it Love it App so that residents can instantly tell the council about issues that need to be fixed and what they love about Tower Hamlets
- Further increased the amount of waste recycled
- Achieved national recognition for its parks

Current activities include a four year rolling programme of tree planting on streets, parks and open spaces.

### *Arts and Leisure*

Tower Hamlets has maintained its commitment to high quality arts and leisure services.

Over the past year, the council has:

- Opened a new Idea Store in Watney Market with 320,000 visits in the first 10 months
- Improved sports and leisure facilities, including at St. George's Pool, Victoria Park and Stepney Green
- Delivered the People's Plaque Scheme to recognise and honour the diversity of voices which make the history of Tower Hamlets

2014/15 will see continued investment in leisure facilities with further improvements planned for Victoria, Bartlett, Stepney Green and St. John's Parks as well as at John Orwell Sports Centre.

## **PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY**

### *Employment*

Over the last 6 years, Tower Hamlets Council has helped over 4,000 local people into work and the borough's employment rate continues to improve.

Over the past year, the council has:

- Supported more than 750 residents into sustainable jobs through employment and skills programmes
- Helped 200 residents into apprenticeships
- Become an accredited London Living Wage (LLW) employer – which means that the council will pay its staff a minimum of the LLW - £8.80 per hour

Despite strong recent progress, unemployment still remains a key issue in Tower Hamlets with levels remaining above the London average. Over the next year, the council will support residents to gain the skills that businesses want and help more people into work. As a London Living Wage organisation the council is continuing to embed this requirement into council commissioned contracts.

### *Education*

Education services have improved rapidly in Tower Hamlets and the borough's schools were recently judged to be amongst the best urban schools in the world by academics from the Institute of Education.

Over the past year:

- Local primary school children performed better than the national average at Key Stage 2, and results are on course to improve further in 2014

- GCSE results further improved in 2013 with 65% of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs at A\*-C including English and Maths, which is better than the national average
- Tower Hamlets was named, by the DfE, among the top 10 areas in the country for the proportion of students (68%) who go to university
- The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) reduced further to less than 4.6%

Improving attainment at A-Level, which remains below the national average, remains a key focus. In addition, over the next year, the council is seeking to increase the number of high quality early education places for two year olds.

## **SAFE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITY**

Community safety is one of residents' top priorities.

Over the past year:

- The overall level of crime has reduced
- The council has invested £1.1 million on 35 additional police officers, in addition to 41 THEOs
- 388 individuals have been arrested on drug related offences under the 'Dealer a Day' scheme – bringing the total to 1,630 since 2010
- Three new youth centres, with weekend services, have opened

Crime and anti-social behaviour remains a key challenge for Tower Hamlets. Over the next year, the council will invest in an additional 20 police officers to patrol the borough, introduce a mobile police centre and make improvements to street lighting. Tower Hamlets will also support victims of domestic violence, sexual and hate crime through a new violent crime casework service and independent domestic violence adviser.

## **HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY**

Supporting residents to improve their health and wellbeing is a key priority for the council.

Over the past year, the council has:

- Delivered on its pledge to keep homecare services free of charge – the only council in the country to do so
- Supported more than 1,800 residents to quit smoking
- Provided healthy eating and physical activity support to more than 30 schools
- Developed a new plan to support residents with mental health issues

Over the next year the council aims to improve support for local carers and work more closely with local health organisations.

Full detail of the Council's 2013/14 performance and plans and targets for 2014/15 are available on the Council's [website](#).