


<b>Cabinet Decision</b> 3 December 2014	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Steve Halsey, Head of Paid Service	<b>Classification:</b> [Unrestricted or Exempt]
<b>Tower Hamlets Single Equality Framework 2014/15</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Aminur Khan
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Louise Russell, Service Head Strategy and Equality
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	One Tower Hamlets
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes

### Executive Summary

This report presents Cabinet with the council's Single Equality Framework (SEF) for 2014/15 (Appendix 1). The SEF is the council's corporate strategy for promoting diversity and equality and helps the organisation achieve the vision of One Tower Hamlets. The core function of the SEF is to prioritise equality outcomes that require intervention at a strategic level and ensure that we have the plans and strategies to deliver our vision. The SEF pulls together an ambitious programme of equalities work across the council, including:

- The actions in place to deliver our equality priorities for 2014-15 and to respond to recommendations in our assessment under the Equality Framework for Local Government
- The organisation's response to the requirements of the Equality Act (2010)
- The council's activities to develop a workforce which reflects the community

### Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

Agree the Tower Hamlets Single Equality framework 2014/15

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**Consultation and Version Control**

[Please state version number and all changes must be tracked or report will not be accepted]

<b>Version Number</b>	1.0 [Please update]	<b>Version Date</b>	dd/mm/yy
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<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date Consulted</b>	<b>Date Cleared</b>	<b>Version</b>
	Corporate Director			
	Department Finance			
	Corporate Finance			
	Legal Services			

**Decision Type**

<b>Key Decision?</b>	<b>Urgent Decision?</b>	<b>Exempt from Call-In?</b>	<b>Restricted Report or Partially Restricted (e.g. appendix)?</b>
Yes/No	Yes/No?*	Yes/No?*	Yes/No?*

\*If the answer is yes make sure the forthcoming decision on the website states this or else the decision cannot be taken.

Further details on the procedure for Urgent Decisions can be found in the [Intranet Library](#) and the What to Do with Your Decision If [guidance note](#).

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## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 To Agree the council's Single Equality Framework. The Equality Act 2010 requires the council to publish annually information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty. This compliance is demonstrated in the Single Equality Framework.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The council has a legal duty to publish annually information to demonstrate compliance with Equality Act 2010 and this is demonstrated in the Single Equality Framework. There are alternative ways of meeting this duty - for example, developing a council wide Equality Plan which is not integrated with the Strategic Plan. However, there are strong reasons for integrating equality within our approach to business planning and this approach has been recognised as good practice by independent peers.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The SEF is the council's corporate strategy for understanding diversity, tackling inequality and promoting cohesion. Integrated into the Strategic Plan, the SEF provides the strategic direction for the council's work on equality and enables the organisation to better meet the financial, policy and social challenges that we face today. It embraces the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and sets out the organisation's Strategic Equality priorities.
- 3.2 The SEF provides a mechanism for the identification and monitoring of a focused set of strategic level equality priorities across the council to respond to areas of persistent inequality.
- 3.3 To ensure that we are able to track performance against our equality objectives for 2014/15 we have identified a set of equality performance measures and these are incorporated in to the Strategic Plan 2014/15. These include existing performance measures that relate to equality and measures which will be disaggregated by specific equality strands where we need to narrow the gap in terms of outcomes for specific groups.
- 3.4 All equality priorities are set out in the SEF. In addition, we have identified a set of existing performance measures which will be disaggregated by the relevant equality groups to enable us to monitor outcomes for these groups. Being able to track whether overall improvements are also narrowing the gap in outcomes for different groups will in turn inform future business planning. This approach also demonstrates that we are meeting the requirements of the PSED.
- 3.5 In early 2013 we developed a Borough Equality Assessment (Appendix 2), a document which summarises what we know about age, disability, gender,

race, religion/belief and sexual orientation inequality in the borough. This document replaces the six Equality Schemes which were produced in 2010 and contained action plans which ran to 2013. This document was used to develop Strategic Plan priorities and actions for 2014-15, enabling us to further embed intelligence about inequality in the borough into our corporate planning framework.

### **Key Achievements in 2013-14**

3.6 In March 2014 Tower Hamlets council was successfully re-assessed against the criteria for the 'excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government. Key findings from the comprehensive peer review (Appendix 3) highlighted that:

- The council has built on experience and expertise in tackling inequality since the previous assessment in 2010, and has adapted methods and structures to address the new challenges that it faces. The council continues to focus its resources on improving outcomes for its most vulnerable communities, with equality underpinning the council's work with partners and stakeholders.
- Strong political and managerial leadership on equalities permeates Tower Hamlets council. This appears to instil confidence across the organisation and staff have a clear understanding of equality, and how it can be used as a key driver for delivering improvements in the borough.
- There is evidence of nuanced and sophisticated partnership working, on areas such as hate crime and managing community tensions, which are clearly having a significant positive effect in the ability of the council to respond quickly to situations as they arise.
- The council has good quality up to date information about the demographics of its local communities and uses its diverse workforce to enrich this data, enabling it to build up a sophisticated and up to date picture of the local area.
- The council uses commissioning and procurement to significant effect as a means of delivering on local equality and economic objectives. In order to get better value for money, its procurement strategy links equalities into the organisation's corporate vision and objectives, and opportunities to obtain wider (community) benefits when procuring have been identified and pursued.

3.7 The Equality Framework for Local Government review also highlighted some examples of activities the council undertakes that make it an 'Excellent' organisation in regards to equality. Examples included:

- Throughout 2013/14 the Local Voices project has supported local disabled people to participate in workshops, discussions groups, community activities, events, surveys and social media activity to address their

concerns and issues. The project was supervised by a steering group of eight local disabled people with a mixture of impairments, ages, ethnicities and genders. Participants in the project are helping the council involve more disabled people in decision making and designing services.

- In 2013 Tower Hamlets Council in partnership with the East London Foundation Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and the Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group won a Local Government Chronicle Award for the work on 'Improving Pathways for People with Dementia and their Carers'. The award was given in recognition of partnership working across organisations resulting in significant improvements for people with dementia and their carers.

3.8 The council's Borough Equality Assessment provides an account of inequality in the borough. The Assessment provides an evidence base for the Single Equality Framework and informs service planning across the Council to ensure the council takes full account of the borough's diversity in planning and designing services. Some of the key achievements against the Borough Equality Assessment for 2013/14 include:

### ***A Prosperous Community***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Continued to narrow the gap between the Tower Hamlets employment rate and the London average
- 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

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, beating the national average again
- The borough's schools were judged to be amongst 'the best urban schools in the world' by academics from the Institute of Education
- The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) reduced further to less than 4.6%

### ***A Great Place to Live***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Supported the delivery of a further 581 affordable homes, bringing the total delivered since 2010 to 4029
- Held four energy auctions with more than 4,000 residents signed up to the Energy Co-operative, saving an average of £150 on their annual energy bill.

### ***Safe and Cohesive community***

Over the past year:

- The overall level of crime has reduced
- The percentage of local residents feeling this is a place where people from different communities get on well together has increased year on year to 81%

### ***A Healthy Community***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Further reduced the teenage pregnancy rate
- Maintained free home care services for older people and disabled adults
- Ensured that Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board was the first in the UK to sign the Time to Change pledge, challenging mental health stigma and discrimination

### ***One Tower Hamlets***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Increased the proportion of BME and disabled staff employed in senior positions in the Council

3.9 In 2012 the Mayor launched the Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission to address issues of inequality and fairness within an environment of diminishing public sector resources, and make recommendations on how the Council and local partners could work together to continue to reduce inequality.

3.10 The Fairness Commission reported in September 2013, making recommendations relating to three key themes; money and financial inclusion, employment and housing.

3.11 The council and partners have made significant progress in delivering the actions outlined in the report to tackle inequality, including:

- Recommendation 2: “Tower Hamlets becomes an online borough” , towards which the Council and Partners are delivering events for UK Go Online week for the first time, alongside the creation of a Partnership Strategy and Action Plan.

- Recommendation 8: “Reimagine local employment services so they work better for local people and businesses”, towards which the Council has reached agreement with Job Centre Plus on a Memorandum of Understanding and is developing a shared system for supporting residents into employment and monitoring their progress.
- Recommendation 16: “That the standard of private rented accommodation is improved, and tenants better protected, through a landlord licensing scheme for Tower Hamlets”, towards which Cabinet agreed in September to develop the evidence base required to implement the scheme.

3.12 A one year progress report was considered by Cabinet on 5 November 2014 which provided an update on the progress made on all Fairness commission recommendations

### **The Single Equality Framework 2014/15**

3.13 The SEF sets out our approach to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 replaced nine separate pieces of legislation to simplify the law and help people understand it better and tackle discrimination more effectively. The Act introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011 and is aimed to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of all public bodies. Based on an understanding of the ‘protected characteristics’ (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation), public bodies should have ‘due regard’ to the general duty under Section 149(1) of the Act to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups

3.14 To demonstrate ‘due regard’ there are two specific duties which are designed to help public bodies meet the general duty, these are to:

- Publish information showing that they have complied with the general duty
- Prepare and publish equality objectives

3.15 The SEF describes the work of the current Mayor in strengthening work on delivering One Tower Hamlets, including the embedding of equality considerations into medium term financial planning and providing a single

figurehead to engage and represent our diverse communities. It also sets out the Council's key priorities of:

- Protecting the most vulnerable
- Bringing diverse communities together
- Building a workforce that reflects the community

3.16 There is a commitment within the Community and Strategic Plans to continue to build One Tower Hamlets. The Single Equality Framework sits at the heart of the work to tackle inequality by taking a comprehensive look across all objectives and priorities and putting measures in place to improve equality across outcomes. Other key priorities include a renewed focus on enabling residents to voice their concerns, improve cohesion through regular community events that celebrate the diversity of the borough and ensure the council has a zero tolerance policy on hate crime. To achieve these priorities the council is looking to expand the community champions roles to further build community leadership and bring diverse voices to the fore to ensure all groups have an opportunity to participate. There is also a greater focus on the celebration of One Tower Hamlets using culture as a key driver to take this work forward. For example the culture service is currently developing a series of activities/ messages to be developed that culminate in a celebratory event "World Food Day".

### **Monitoring the Single Equality Framework 2014/15**

3.17 Progress on activities within the SEF are monitored through the regular Strategic Plan monitoring.

3.18 The 2013/14 monitoring data has been considered by the Tower Hamlets Equality Steering Group (THESG) which has identified a set of performance measures requiring particular focus in 2014/15, where there is a particular disparity in performance in relation to specific Protected Characteristics. THESG agreed the below measures will be focused on throughout 2014/15. The role of THESG will be to consider proposed activity and assist in identifying further opportunities for activity on a council wide basis to enable the gap to be further closed.

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>SEF Measure</b>	<b>13/14 Performance</b>
DR	Employment rate (gap v London)	Strategic Plan Target 13/14: 6.3% Overall Performance for 13/14: 3.9% Performance for Women 13/14: 8.4% Performance for BAME 13/14: 10.9%
CLC	Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Strategic Plan Target: 4.5% Overall performance for 13/14: 4.5% Performance for White British:12.7%
ESCW	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent	Strategic Plan Target 13/14: 65% Overall Performance for 13/14: 64.7%



	including English and Maths	Performance for White British boys and Girls:46.7%/45.9%
Resources/LPG	Proportion of staff that are LP07 or above who are from an ethnic minority, Female , Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The target for the proportion of LP07+ staff who are BME of 30% has not been met, however the minimum standard has been achieved.</li> <li>• There is a slight under-representation of females who are LP07+, the target of 50% has not been met.</li> <li>• The target for the proportion of LP07+ staff who have a disability has been achieved – however, 11.5% of the LP07+ cohort did not answer the question on their disability status.</li> </ul>
Public Health	Childhood Obesity	Between 2006/07 to 2008/09 the increase in the level of obesity in 10-11 year olds in Tower Hamlets was amongst the highest in the country. Analysis of national and local data showed that this was mainly driven by a rapid increase in levels of obesity in Bangladeshi boys (seen both within Tower Hamlets and nationally)

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 This report presents the Council's draft Single Equality Framework (SEF) Action Plan for 2014/15.
- 4.2 Equalities issues should be embedded into service delivery and financial implications incorporated into budgets as part of the normal budget setting process. There are no additional financial implications arising from adopting the Single Equality Framework 2014-15. However, if additional costs arise from implementing the Plan, they will either need to be contained within existing revenue budget provisions in directorates or separate approval sought.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Council is subject to a duty under section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard in the exercise of its functions 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 don't (the public sector equality duty).

- 5.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 Regulations issued pursuant to the Equality Act require the Council to publish information at least annually to demonstrate compliance with the general duty. The Council is also required by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 to prepare and publish one or more objectives which it thinks it should achieve in order to: eliminate discriminate and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups. The objectives must be specific and measurable. The Council has an ongoing duty to review and publish its objectives at intervals of not greater than four years, beginning with the date of last publication.
- 5.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published guidance in relation to the public sector equality duty. This includes specific guidance on the purpose of equality objectives and how to go about setting them. Whilst the Council is not legally obliged to follow the EHRC guidance, it sets out good practice for authorities to follow. Without attempting to repeat the whole of the guidance, some key elements are –
- Proportionality. The number of objectives and the level of ambition should reflect the Council's size and diversity of functions.
  - Business planning. The objectives should be seen as part of the Council's business plan and as supporting its delivery.
  - Engagement. The Council should engage with the public, the voluntary sector and staff when setting objectives and should make full use of available equality data.
- 5.4 The objectives proposed in the Single Equality Framework appear to have been prepared in accordance with the EHRC guidance.
- 5.5 The objectives in the Single Equality Framework are closely aligned with objectives in the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, which contains the Council's sustainable community strategy for the purposes of section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000. The objectives appear capable of being carried out within the Council's statutory functions, but it will be for officers to ensure this is the case.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 This report presents MAB with the council's draft Single Equality Framework (SEF) for 2014/15 (Appendix 1). The SEF is the council's corporate strategy for promoting diversity and equality and helps the organisation achieve the vision of One Tower Hamlets. The core function of the SEF is to prioritise equality outcomes that require intervention at a strategic level and ensure that we have the plans and strategies to deliver our vision.

- 6.2 Under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, the council is required to prepare and publish one or more objectives which it thinks it should achieve in order to: eliminate discrimination and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups. The objectives must be specific and measurable.
- 6.3 The council's Borough Equality Assessment provides an account of inequality in the borough. The Assessment brings together the latest evidence on age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief equality, sexual orientation and transgender inequality in the borough. Produced through engagement with services, residents, community groups and partners the Assessment provides an evidence base for the Single Equality Framework and informs service planning across the Council to ensure the council takes full account of the borough's diversity in planning and designing services. It also provides a robust evidence base for equality objectives that are specific and measurable.
- 6.4 Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission states that equality objectives should have the below elements:
- Proportionality. The number of objectives and the level of ambition should reflect the Council's size and diversity of functions.
  - Business planning. The objectives should be seen as part of the Council's business plan and as supporting its delivery.
  - Engagement. The Council should engage with the public, the voluntary sector and staff when setting objectives and should make full use of available equality data.
- 6.5 The objectives proposed in the Single Equality Framework have used the above principles as a structure to develop equality objectives and actions.

## **7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

7.1 N/A

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. The Single Equality Framework ensures the council meets the obligations of the Single Equality Framework and mitigates against the risk that we discriminate against any element of the community.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Single Equality Framework contains an action plan which would reduce crime and disorder through promoting community safety and community cohesion.

## **10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

10.1 The approach of integrating equality within the council's business planning provides an efficient method of ensuring that equality is at the heart of the

council's strategic and resource planning processes, including how we allocate resources to key priorities.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

NONE

### **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** Single Equality Framework 2014/15

**Appendix 2** Borough Equality Assessment 2014/15

**Appendix 3** Equality Framework for Local Government Peer Review 2014

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

NONE

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

- Louise Russell, Service Head Strategy and Equality 020 7364 3267



# Tower Hamlets SINGLE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK 2014-15



SINGLE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK 2014/15

## **Foreword from Mayor Lutfur Rahman**

I am pleased to present the Single Equality Framework for 2014/15 which provides the strategic direction for the council's work on equality. Underpinning the Single Equality Framework is the aspiration to build One Tower Hamlets – a borough where everyone feels they have an equal stake and status through reducing inequalities, fostering cohesion and supporting strong community leadership. One Tower Hamlets is central to all of the council's work.

Tower Hamlets is the first council in the UK to be reassessed as Excellent against the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) – the highest award available. I am pleased that our approach to creating One Tower Hamlets has received national recognition and as we go forward equality will continue to be the focus of our approach to delivering services to residents.

This framework sets out our considerable achievements in addressing inequality for all groups and communities within the borough. The proposed actions set out in the action plan reflect the analysis we have undertaken to understand current need and what more we need to do to ensure that all residents have access to excellent services and aspirational opportunities.

Mayor Lutfur Rahman

### **1. Introduction**

The Single Equality Framework is the Council's corporate strategy for understanding diversity, tackling inequality and promoting cohesion. Integrated into the Strategic Plan, the Framework provides the strategic direction for the Council's work on equality to enable us to better meet the financial, policy and social challenges that we face today. It embraces the principles of the Equality Act

2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty; sets out our Strategic Equality priorities and; builds on our strong record of embedding diversity and equality in everything we do.

The Council's Vision, developed in the Community Plan 2020, to be achieved with our partners and with the active participation of all those who have a stake in the borough, is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough. Underpinning this vision is the desire to build One Tower Hamlets – by tackling inequality, strengthening cohesion and building community leadership. The Single Equality Framework will help to achieve this by prioritising equality outcomes that require intervention at a strategic level and it will ensure that we have the capacity to deliver our vision.

## **2. Background**

Deprivation and poverty are prominent features in Tower Hamlets and lack of access to affordable housing, high rates of unemployment and stark health inequalities affect the life chances of many residents. Yet the borough is also a place of contrast with immense wealth sitting alongside some of the highest levels of poverty in the country. While the average annual earnings of those working in the borough is £75,000 and its economy is worth £6billion per year, a third of households live on less than £15,000 per year and the borough has the highest rate of child poverty nationally and lowest healthy life expectancy for women in the country.

The Council has a strong track record of working with our partners to reduce inequality and improve outcomes for local people. In 2014 we were re-awarded 'excellent' for the the Equality Framework for Local Government. However, since 2010 reductions in public sector funding have had a significant effect on the resources available to the Council and other local public sector organisations to tackle inequality. Furthermore the Coalition government's programme of welfare reform including changes to benefits, tax credits and support for families, is predicted to have a considerable impact on many residents in the borough. For those affected this means a drop in household income and we are already seeing the effects of these changes in increased rates of homelessness and people seeking advice in relation to their debts. Given the already high levels of deprivation and poverty in the borough, these changes are making it even harder for many households to get by with the potential for this to affect educational attainment, crime, health and wellbeing in the borough. This is happening alongside growing demand for services as a result of a rapidly growing population.

These issues converge to make Tower Hamlets a place in which existing inequalities could grow over coming years. Since he was elected as the Council's first Executive Mayor in 2010 Lutfur Rahman has made tackling inequality and protecting vulnerable residents a key priority. Further reflecting this commitment, Lead Member for Policy, Strategy and Performance Councillor Aminur Khan has the lead responsibility for driving forward the administration's approach to promoting equality.



### **3. Leadership and vision**

The Council's vision, developed in the Community Plan 2020, is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough. Underpinning this vision is the desire to build One Tower Hamlets – by tackling inequality, strengthening cohesion and building community leadership.

#### **Mayor Rahman and One Tower Hamlets:**

##### **Tackling inequality**

Mayor Lutfur Rahman is the first Executive Mayor in the Britain to come from a black or minority ethnic background, demonstrating the real progress made in tackling inequality and discrimination in the borough. Since October 2010 the Mayoral model has provided the organisation with a clear focus and greater capability to tackle inequality. The Mayor's priority of protecting the most vulnerable has informed strategic and financial planning and was a key driver for developing the Council's budget for 2012-15. As a result of this approach the budget has protected frontline services and taken measures to ensure that the borough's most vulnerable residents are protected from budget savings.

The Mayor's commitment to building One Tower Hamlets has informed the Council's approach to delivering services which meet the needs of our diverse community – a number of the activities and interventions described in the Single Equality Framework action plan 2014-15 demonstrate how services are taking specific measures to mainstream the promotion of equality into the design and delivery of their services. In addition to this however, a number of initiatives have been developed which are intended to directly address the inequality experienced by people in the borough because of their age, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or region/belief. These include activities such as:

- Launching a new mechanism to enable disabled people to play an active role in the design and delivery of key council services through the running of a disabled people-led forum
- Developing a partnership approach to Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) through the design and delivery of a joint VAWG action plan
- Providing support to faith communities in the borough to maintain and develop their buildings which are often of historic significance and are costly to run and maintain
- In the context of increasing migration into the borough of people from a growing number of countries, support the development of a consistent English as a Second Language 'offer' which ensures high quality, accessible provision in the borough for all learners

- Redesigning and re-commissioning community services for older people to enable them to live independently
- Addressing youth unemployment and the barriers young people face getting into jobs in which they can progress by working with employers to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities available to local young people
- Addressing under-representation of local LGBT young people in Youth Services through a targeted programme of work to develop inclusive services

### **Strengthening cohesion**

The Mayoral model has offered real opportunities to develop a shared vision to unify different sections of our community and provide unified leadership in times of difficulty and tension. One of the key pledges of the Mayor is to promote community cohesion and bring our diverse communities together to build 'One Tower Hamlets'. This commitment was especially pronounced in responding to the appearance of "Gay Free Zone" stickers in the borough in spring 2011, the riots which affected much of London in August 2011 and the targeting of the borough by the English Defence League, most recently in September 2013. Working with people from across the borough's diverse communities has been the basis for a unified response to those who seek to divide us and during times of tension the Mayor has worked with young people, faith leaders, Council officers, community workers, police officers and residents to help keep the peace on the streets of Tower Hamlets.

### **Building community leadership**

Having an Executive Mayor offers a unique opportunity to drive forward work on tackling inequality; the Mayor is able to speak on behalf of all residents to partners and other bodies within the borough and beyond to highlight the needs of local people and build coalitions to improve outcomes. A key mechanism for achieving improved outcomes has been by embedding a commitment to promoting equality in the Council's approach to procurement. The Procurement Imperatives outline the Council's priorities for all procurement activity which totals more than £445million per year. 'Promoting diversity and equality of opportunity by incorporating provisions around the Council's Workforce to Reflect the Community policy in contracts and providing support for BME businesses' is one of the Imperatives priorities.

To support Building Community Leadership the Mayor has developed a Community Champion Programme. Mayor's Community Champion Coordinators play a vital role in supporting the actions of the Local Community Ward Forum through:

- acting as facilitators bringing together and promoting discussion between residents and local service providers and schools, etc;
- supporting the development of community-driven solutions taking into account local concerns;
- supporting the creation of active citizenship within the area through fostering community pride and cohesion;

- nurturing community-led projects by providing a platform for resident voice.

All Community Champion Coordinators are provided with a bespoke training package focusing upon community leadership, forum coordination and Tower Hamlets Partnership working. Ongoing support is also be available to all Coordinators.

To further develop work to address the stark inequalities in the borough, in 2012 the Mayor established a Fairness Commission to bring together people, ideas, opinions, experts and evidence to generate a fresh perspective on how to make Tower Hamlets a fairer place to live in the current financial and political climate. During its evidence gathering the Commission was tasked with engaging with people across the borough about its future, from big business and public services to small community groups and individual residents. The Fairness Commission published their report “Tower Hamlets – Time to Act” at the end of September 2013. The report made 16 recommendations relating to three key themes; money and financial inclusion, employment and housing. These recommendations were addressed to four audiences: national government; the council and local public sector; businesses and; the voluntary and community sector.

The report is available on the Council’s website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/fairness](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/fairness)

The leadership and commitment of the Mayor is crucial to our ability to drive forward work on equality, and the Mayor’s priorities are the key driver for the Council’s work. This year equality objectives have been incorporated within the Council’s Strategic Plan and through robust delivery structures and processes these priorities are translated into work at all levels of the organisation.

The equality objectives are key drivers for our work on tackling inequality but also help us to demonstrate how we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty. Under the Act we are required to prepare and publish objectives which ensure that our work contributes to: eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity and; fostering good relations between different people. In many ways our cross cutting principle of One Tower Hamlets mirror the aspiration of the Duty.

#### **4. Key Achievements in 2013-14**

In March 2014 Tower Hamlets council was successfully re-assessed against the criteria for the ‘excellent’ level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (Summary Report Appendix 3) . Key findings from the comprehensive review highlighted that:

- The council has built on experience and expertise in tackling inequality since the previous assessment in 2010, and has adapted methods and structures to address the new challenges that it faces. The council continues to focus its resources on improving outcomes for its most vulnerable communities, with equality underpinning the council's work with partners and stakeholders.
- Strong political and managerial leadership on equalities permeates Tower Hamlets council. This appears to instil confidence across the organisation and staff have a clear understanding of equality, and how it can be used as a key driver for delivering improvements in the borough.
- There is evidence of nuanced and sophisticated partnership working, on areas such as hate crime and managing community tensions, which are clearly having a significant positive effect in the ability of the council to respond quickly to situations as they arise.
- The council has good quality up to date information about the demographics of its local communities and uses its diverse workforce to enrich this data, enabling it to build up a sophisticated and up to date picture of the local area.
- The council uses commissioning and procurement to significant effect as a means of delivering on local equality and economic objectives. In order to get better value for money, its procurement strategy links equalities into the organisation's corporate vision and objectives, and opportunities to obtain wider (community) benefits when procuring have been identified and pursued.

The Equality Framework for Local Government review also highlighted some examples of activities the council undertakes that make it an 'Excellent' organisation in regards to equality. Examples included:

- Throughout 2013/14 the Local Voices project has supported local disabled people to participate in workshops, discussions groups, community activities, events, surveys and social media activity to address their concerns and issues. The project was supervised by a steering group of eight local disabled people with a mixture of impairments, ages, ethnicities and genders. Participants in the project are helping the council involve more disabled people in decision making and designing services.

- In 2013 Tower Hamlets Council in partnership with the East London Foundation Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and the Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group won a Local Government Chronicle Award for the work on 'Improving Pathways for People with Dementia and their Carers'. The award was given in recognition of partnership working across organisations resulting in significant improvements for people with dementia and their carers.

The council's Borough Equality Assessment provides an account of inequality in the borough. The Assessment provides an evidence base for the Single Equality Framework and informs service planning across the Council to ensure the council takes full account of the borough's diversity in planning and designing services. Some of the key achievements against the Borough Equality Assessment for 2013/14 include:

### ***A Prosperous Community***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Continued to narrow the gap between the Tower Hamlets employment rate and the London average
- 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

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, beating the national average again
- The borough's schools were judged to be amongst 'the best urban schools in the world' by academics from the Institute of Education
- The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) reduced further to less than 4.6%

### ***A Great Place to Live***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Supported the delivery of a further 581 affordable homes, bringing the total delivered since 2010 to 4029
- Held four energy auctions with more than 4,000 residents signed up to the Energy Co-operative, saving an average of £150 on their annual energy bill.

### ***Safe and Cohesive community***

Over the past year:

- The overall level of crime has reduced
- The percentage of local residents feeling this is a place where people from different communities get on well together has increased year on year to 81%

### ***A Healthy Community***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Further reduced the teenage pregnancy rate
- Maintained free home care services for older people and disabled adults
- Ensured that Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board was the first in the UK to sign the Time to Change pledge, challenging mental health stigma and discrimination

### ***One Tower Hamlets***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Increased the proportion of BME and disabled staff employed in senior positions in the Council

In 2012 the Mayor launched the Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission to address issues of inequality and fairness within an environment of diminishing public sector resources, and make recommendations on how the Council and local partners could work together to continue to reduce inequality.

The Fairness Commission reported in September 2013, making recommendations relating to three key themes; money and financial inclusion, employment and housing.

The council and partners have made significant progress in delivering the actions outlined in the report to tackle inequality, including:

- Recommendation 2: “Tower Hamlets becomes an online borough” , towards which the Council and Partners are delivering events for UK Go Online week for the first time, alongside the creation of a Partnership Strategy and Action Plan.
- Recommendation 8: “Reimagine local employment services so they work better for local people and businesses”, towards which the Council has reached agreement with Job Centre Plus on a Memorandum of Understanding and is developing a shared system for supporting residents into employment and monitoring their progress.
- Recommendation 16: “That the standard of private rented accommodation is improved, and tenants better protected, through a landlord licensing scheme for Tower Hamlets”, towards which Cabinet agreed in September to develop the evidence base required to implement the scheme.

## **5. Valuing Diversity: Our Policy Statement on Diversity and Equality**

Valuing diversity is one of the four core values of the Council. We will promote diversity and equality in everything we do to improve the quality of life for everyone living, working and visiting Tower Hamlets. The borough’s diversity is one of its greatest strengths and assets. We will build upon this by working with the Tower Hamlets Partnership to provide accessible and responsive services that enable everyone to take part in the social, cultural and economic wealth of the borough. Achieving this is central to delivering the Council’s vision, is linked to our Strategic Plan priorities and objectives and forms a driving force within the Community Plan and is key to creating a cohesive community.

Our commitment is supported by a legal duty to have due regard to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relation between different groups. This provides an important tool to help further embed diversity and equality in the culture of the organisation. We believe we have a strong moral and social duty to do everything we can to challenge prejudice and discrimination and promote better understanding and respect. At the same time we recognise that discrimination takes place and tensions can sometimes exist between different communities.

As a service provider we will:

- Promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination in the planning and delivery of our services in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, health and income status. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.
- Promote good relations between communities and address negative stereotyping of any groups;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
- Tackle harassment relating to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, health and income status and marriage and civil partnership status.

As an employer we will:

- Develop, review and promote policies and practices that ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for our workforce in all areas of employment (including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, disciplinary and retirement); and
- Ensure that our workforce reflects the diverse nature of the borough.

## **6. Delivering improvement: Our equality objectives**

The Single Equality Framework identifies our strategic priorities to promote equality. It also includes the actions we will take as an employer to promote equality and develop a workforce that reflects our community and the activities we will deliver to improve our equality practice across the organisation. The analysis which underpins the Framework informs the wider plans and strategies of the Council and Tower Hamlets Partnership, including:

**The Community Plan** sets out the vision and objectives of the Tower Hamlets Partnership, looking forward to 2020. The Plan was refreshed in July 2011 and embraces the breadth of strategies which the Council and its partners have in place to deliver our vision and objectives. An overarching theme for the Community Plan is a commitment to building One Tower Hamlets and puts tackling inequality, strengthening cohesion and building strong and effective community leadership at the heart of all that we do.

**The Council's Strategic Plan** sets out a work plan for Tower Hamlets Council and is updated annually. We have embedded our equality priorities within the Strategic Plan to ensure the promotion of equality is at the forefront of the Council's work in responding to the financial, policy and social challenges that we face today that a focus on equality informs the business planning of the



organisation.

**The Council's Borough Equality Assessment** provides an account of inequality in the borough. The Assessment brings together the latest evidence on age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief equality, sexual orientation and transgender inequality in the borough. Produced through engagement with services, residents, community groups and partners the Assessment provides an evidence base for services across the Council to ensure that they take full account of the borough's diversity in planning and designing services.

### Our equality objectives

Our equality objectives for 2014/15 are set out below and are made up of:

- Priorities where the primary intention is to reduce inequality between people from different protected groups
- Priorities which relate to an outcome where we know that there are inequalities between different groups and where we will seek to narrow the gap

One Tower Hamlets		
Strategic priority	Strategic equality actions	Milestones
<i>Reduce inequalities</i>	Employ a workforce that fully reflects the community it serves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the 'Take a Chance Scheme' new recruitment initiative</li> <li>• Support the Navigate programme with progression or development for 50% of participants, encouraging participation from all groups to reflect the workforce</li> <li>• Support 50 apprentices in vocational training by identifying placements across directorates, encouraging participation from all groups (including older established communities) to reflect the community</li> <li>• Increase the proportion of temporary workers resourced from the local community by utilising Tower Hamlets in-house temporary resourcing service (ITRES) and encouraging participation from all groups to reflect the community</li> </ul>
	Double the number of apprenticeships at the council for disabled residents from 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two recruitment campaigns to take place on an annual basis for disabled residents to support them into employment or vocational studies</li> </ul>

	to 20 each year	
	Coordinate and support the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council response to the Fairness Commission recommendations presented at Cabinet</li> <li>• Progress report on implementation of the Fairness Commission recommendations presented at Cabinet</li> </ul>
	Refresh our strategies around diversity and cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on response of recommendations of the EFLG to CMT</li> <li>• Review of our cohesion and equality strategies to CMT</li> </ul>
	Ensure that 'every voice matters'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas where disabled people will be involved in co-designing responses to areas of inequality for disabled people agreed through the Local Voices work programme</li> <li>• Present Local Voices progress report to Tower Hamlets Equalities Steering Group</li> <li>• Refresh mechanisms for involving local LGBT residents in the design, delivery and scrutiny of local services</li> <li>• Review mechanisms for involving local faith communities</li> <li>• Improve representation of disabled people in the Community Champions</li> </ul>
<i>Work efficiently and effectively as One Council</i>	Develop Progressive Partnerships to further the Mayor's social objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce smarter sourcing practices to support SMEs, deliver savings and increase compliance</li> <li>• Launch the local supply chain initiatives to stimulate the local economy</li> <li>• Develop a 'Business Charter' for Tower Hamlets through which local businesses commit to 'buy local, employ local, support local'</li> </ul>

<b>A Great Place to Live</b>		
<b>Strategic priority</b>	<b>Strategic equality actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>

<i>Provide good quality affordable housing:</i>	Increase the availability of affordable family sized housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with developing RPs twice, to agree the number, location, size and timing of their schemes</li> <li>• Ensure that each planning application has as close to a policy compliant offer of affordable family sized homes</li> <li>• Meet quarterly with the GLA to discuss progress on grant funded schemes and future bids by RPs/developers in Tower Hamlets</li> <li>• Participate at all ELHP Chief Officer Groups and the ELHP Board</li> <li>• Support RPs grant applications to the GLA ensuring that quantum of family homes is maximised and rents are affordable</li> <li>• Work with RPs and Planning to increase the delivery of affordable housing with the aim of completing 5500 new affordable homes by May 2018</li> </ul>
	Seek to mitigate homelessness and improve housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve housing options in the private rented sector - scope project and agree project plan</li> <li>• Develop proposals for consideration informed by evidence and legal advice</li> <li>• Produce and publish the Homeless Statement Action Plan</li> <li>• Submit Cabinet report setting out options and budgetary requirements in relation to the private rented sector</li> <li>• Support the London Living Rent Campaign and work with the GLA's London Rental Scheme and London Landlord Accreditation Scheme to improve regulation in the Private Rented Sector producing a scoping report by September 2014</li> <li>• Produce the service change specification for an enhanced Housing Options Service as defined by the No Wrong Door project</li> </ul>
<i>Maintain and improve the quality of housing</i>	Reduce the number of council homes that fall below a decent standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence Year 4 DH Programme using five contractors</li> <li>• Make 3109 homes decent</li> <li>• Ensure delivery of local community benefits targets</li> </ul>

	Offer affordable fuel options through the Tower Hamlets Energy Community Power (Energy Cooperative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the energy use awareness programme, including home energy efficiency advice and short term loans of energy monitoring devices, to help residents recognise their current energy use and identify potential savings</li> <li>• Provide tailored home energy efficiency advice and energy packs to 250 households in the borough, focused on those at risk of fuel poverty including vulnerable residents and over 75s</li> <li>• Implement the Fuel Poverty Plan and produce an annual report on progress and achievements</li> <li>• Continue with resident sign-up for the collective energy switching scheme and hold at least two auctions in the year to secure cheaper tariffs for residents</li> </ul>
<i>Provide effective local services and facilities</i>	Deliver a multi-faith burial ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner to secure planning consent for Multi-Faith burial ground</li> <li>• Commence marketing of cemetery provision</li> <li>• Completion of setting out of grounds</li> </ul>
<i>Develop stronger communities</i>	Engage residents and community leaders in policy and budget changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult residents as part of the development of the Community Plan</li> <li>• Hold an annual Mayor's Budget congress</li> <li>• Further develop and deliver a resident budget communications plan</li> </ul>
	Implement a framework for engagement of borough-wide equality forums in the Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop proposals to Partnership Executive for engagement of borough wide equality forums</li> <li>• Present implementation report to Partnership Executive</li> </ul>
	Develop further the Local Community Ward Forums and the Community Champions Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the LCWFs to support the scoping of the 'Play Streets' scheme in the borough</li> <li>• Establish and implement three additional Local Community Ward Forums following the implementation of ward boundary changes</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a 3rd round of Community Champions recruitment with targeted recruitment of under-represented groups</li> <li>• Develop a Community Champions Framework</li> </ul>
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<b>A Prosperous Community</b>		
<b>Strategic priority</b>	<b>Strategic equality actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>
<i>Improve educational aspiration and attainment</i>	Expand free early years education places of high quality for disadvantaged two-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop access routes to support the expansion of early learning places for eligible 2 year olds</li> <li>• Use capital and trajectory building allocation from Dedicated Schools Grant to develop new, and expand existing, provision for eligible 2 year olds</li> <li>• Work with identified settings to ensure that they are of high enough quality to provide places for eligible 2 year olds - promoting shared use of buildings where possible</li> </ul>
	Raise attainment and narrow the gap between the lowest 20% and the median of all children at the end of the Early Year's Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out second year of Every Tower Hamlets Child a Talker (ECaT) Programme</li> <li>• Roll out of the mathematics programme, including by appointing a skilled teacher who can work with both schools and MPVI settings; beginning the programme in the summer term and using QA and review processes as for ECaT</li> <li>• Work with targeted schools, including by allocating a development worker to each school; agreeing a programme of work incorporating support for leadership skills, assessment, assessing using the characteristics of learning and planning for progress; reviewing EYFSP outcomes for each school</li> </ul>

	<p>Increase the number of children achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and maths grades at GCSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the distribution of underperformance across the borough schools at all key stages, with a particular focus on White UK pupils and Looked After Children; offer feedback to the schools; identify key schools to work with to improve the attainment levels of the underachieving pupils</li> <li>• Undertake identification of specific barriers to achieving such as family issues, SEN, attendance, health and motivation</li> <li>• Offer targeted Key Stage 4 support to the worst performing schools to support improvement, including learning and family support interventions especially for Looked After Children</li> </ul>
	<p>Bring A Level results above the national average</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support all sixth forms to use ALPS data effectively in their planning to target support to Year 12 students</li> <li>• Offer targeted Key Stage 5 support to the worst performing schools to support improvement, including learning and family support interventions</li> <li>• Fund and support the development of academic literacy, by providing one to one tuition for students and support for teachers which schools can access</li> </ul>
	<p>Embed a Child Rights Approach in all of our commissioning for 2014-15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all our key partners sign up to the Mayor's Charter of Child Rights</li> <li>• Children and Families Partnership Board agree the joint child rights based commissioning framework</li> <li>• Provide training for colleagues undertaking commissioning in 2014-15</li> <li>• Procurement processes completed</li> </ul>

	<p>Assist more people into further education and to university, and continue to deliver the Mayor's Educational Allowance (MEA) and the Mayor's Higher Education Award (MEHEA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold information sessions for parents about aspirational progression routes for young people leaving school, college or university</li> <li>• Hold the annual Mayor's Education Achievement Awards to recognise the achievements of young people in the borough</li> <li>• Undertake publicity and advertise the MEA and MHEA schemes</li> <li>• Apply the MEA and MHEA policy to determine applications</li> <li>• Make payments</li> </ul>
	<p>Maintain investment in youth services and provision for young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign and implement a new grant allocation process</li> <li>• Review Youth Service provision following the implementation of the restructure</li> <li>• Undertake a review of administrative support functions</li> </ul>
	<p>Provide effective support for parents and governors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training in relation to governors' financial responsibilities including new responsibilities related to teachers' pay, to improve the governance framework</li> <li>• Ensure new governors in community schools undertake induction training; 50% of governors newly appointed in 2013/14 to attend the course within one year of being appointed</li> <li>• Monitor the equality profile of governors and encourage the recruitment of under-represented groups</li> </ul>

<p><i>Support more people into work</i></p>	<p>Support residents into jobs through employment and skills programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support 750 Tower Hamlets residents into jobs</li> <li>• Monitor and report the equalities profile of residents securing jobs to steer provision to targeted equality groups</li> <li>• Establish a commercial recruitment agency for Tower Hamlets</li> <li>• Create a new internal partnership arrangement based on a broad SLA with key partners including Job Centre Plus and other Economic Taskforce members</li> <li>• Progress the first phase of the development of a new integrated employment centre</li> <li>• Deliver integrated employment support services from each of the Idea Stores</li> <li>• Support more people aged 18-69 with learning disabilities and mental health needs into employment</li> </ul>
	<p>Provide high quality support and training to assist young people into sustainable employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase and improve the labour market information provided to young people, schools and parents, focusing on growth areas</li> <li>• In partnership with TH EBP, develop a clear and high quality standard of work experience for young people in school for employers to sign up to</li> <li>• Provide a minimum of 2 job fairs during the year for NEETs</li> <li>• Provide a Level 2 Award in Leadership for 200 young people</li> </ul>
	<p>Support English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the performance framework to enhance monitoring arrangements for the uptake and performance of Idea Stores Learning ESOL provision</li> <li>• Carry out a review of funding options for ESOL in the borough and implement a new structure for the delivery of a sustainable ESOL programme</li> </ul>



<i>Manage the impact of welfare reform on local residents and maximising incomes</i>	Implement the Welfare Reform Temporary Accommodation Support Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on fund's 6-month spend, using this data to assess fund's likely duration and number of households involved</li> <li>• Report on measures requiring adoption to prevent over-spend of fund</li> <li>• Delivery of adopted measures for all capped households</li> </ul>
	Optimise use of existing funding and maximise prospects for future funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine and develop grant management systems to improve productivity, management information and effectiveness of contract compliance monitoring</li> <li>• Develop the Main Stream Grants future funding programme</li> <li>• Launch round 3 of the European Social Fund community grants programme</li> </ul>
	Drive the ongoing partnership wide programme around welfare reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete research into impact of welfare reform on local people</li> <li>• Increase supply of specialist welfare benefits advice provision to support residents affected by changes in welfare benefits.</li> <li>• Develop proposals to respond to Local Support Services Framework</li> <li>• Develop a partnership approach to promote digital inclusion including provision of free WIFI areas</li> <li>• Take forward recommendations of welfare reform research</li> </ul>

<b>A Safe and Cohesive Community</b>		
<b>Strategic priority</b>	<b>Strategic equality actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>
<i>Focus on crime and anti-social behaviour</i>	Deliver the partnership 'Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and analyse new performance indicators to support the anti-VAWG partnership work of the Council</li> <li>• Ensure that female residents have continued access to in-borough provision of Rape Crisis Services (Advice, Counselling and Advocacy)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a multi-agency strategic approach to training and awareness raising in the borough for existing (VAWG) professionals</li> <li>• Develop a dedicated curriculum and VAWG training programme for young people in schools</li> </ul>
	With our partners, deliver the Partnership Community Safety Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the strategic review and equality analysis of Crime and ASB</li> <li>• Annual review of the Community Safety Plan</li> <li>• Ensure that the Integrated Offender Model is embedded within the Community Safety Partnership Plan</li> <li>• Increase the number of hate crime pledges signed, and the number of reports made by hate crime third party reporting sites</li> <li>• Work to improve reporting of hate crime from disabled people through the work of Community Champions.</li> </ul>
<i>Foster greater community cohesion</i>	Celebrate our diversity with community events every month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and deliver 120 community events with an attendance of over 100</li> <li>• Deliver a programme of events which celebrate the diversity of the local community including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black History Month</li> <li>• Interfaith Week</li> <li>• International Day for Disabled People</li> <li>• LGBT History Month</li> <li>• International Women's Week</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support the celebration of World Food Day on October 16th as part of the annual events programme.</li> </ul>
	Deliver the Mayor's One Tower Hamlets fund scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete evaluation of 2014 One Tower Hamlets fund and present to the Tower Hamlets Equalities Steering Group</li> <li>• Advertise One Tower Hamlets Fund</li> <li>• Evaluate and award funding</li> </ul>

<b>A Healthy and Supportive Community</b>		
<b>Strategic priority</b>	<b>Strategic equality actions</b>	<b>Milestones</b>
<i>Reduce health</i>	Develop and implement a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce programme Steering Group monthly meetings</li> </ul>

<i>inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles</i>	Women and Health employment programme focusing on the priority of Maternity and Early Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit 100 women</li> <li>• Ensure 100 training courses started</li> <li>• Deliver 100 placements started</li> </ul>
	Support young people to live healthy lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure 90% of Tower Hamlets schools have registered with the GLA's Healthy Schools London Award Scheme</li> <li>• Deliver healthy eating and physical activity training to 150 school staff</li> <li>• Provide healthy eating and physical activity support to 25 schools</li> <li>• Support 15 schools to achieve Advanced Healthy School Status</li> <li>• Develop a new model of Tier 2 mental health support to schools, children's centres, colleges and youth services, in partnership with Tower Hamlets CCG</li> <li>• Ensure the provision of focused contraception and sexual health services and the delivery of SRE in school and community settings</li> </ul>
	Use Public Health expertise within a Council and Partnership-wide approach to reduce health inequalities for all sections of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, agree and implement a 'food for health' action plan</li> <li>• Identify roles and responsibilities across the Council for Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators and align with JSNA and Health and Wellbeing Strategy</li> <li>• Support 2900 people to quit smoking.</li> <li>• Tender and award Public Health commissioned services</li> </ul>
	Deliver free school meals for all primary pupils in the borough through supplementing the government's Universal Infant Free School Meals programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess catering staffing needs on school by school basis (July 2014)</li> <li>• Recruit additional staff through Skillsmatch (July 2014)</li> <li>• Publicise scheme to parents of all Primary children (July 2014)</li> </ul>
<i>Enable people to live</i>	Improve support to carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the commissioning actions within the Carers Three Year Plan – including improving access to employment for carers</li> </ul>

<i>independently</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the introduction of carers' budgets to give carers control over the services they choose to receive in the context of the Care Bill</li> </ul>
	Improve the customer journey by embedding the principles of choice and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the implementation of the new 'Customer Journey' for the community learning disability service</li> <li>• Complete the refresh on the market position statement and approach to social care market locally in line with requirements of the Care and Support Bill</li> <li>• Launch the e-marketplace to enable people to purchase health and social care services over the internet</li> <li>• Implement phase 2 of the development of a Quality Standards Framework for non-regulated services</li> <li>• Review take-up of self-directed and direct support in giving users control over the services they choose to receive</li> <li>• Re-commission mental health services to improve their ability to enable people to live safe, independent and fulfilled lives in the community</li> </ul>
	Enable personalised support for the borough's most vulnerable residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strategic framework to address the issues of social inclusion and health and within this context review open access/prevention services including the Borough's network of lunch clubs and tea dance events.</li> <li>• Create an equipment demonstration centre to support independence and wellbeing</li> <li>• Implement the strategy on the development of new supported accommodation for people with mental health needs who need high end support</li> <li>• Implement the Mental Health Strategy with emphasis on addressing mental health inequalities and establishing a life course approach to mental health</li> </ul>
<i>Keep vulnerable children, adults and families' safer, minimising harm and neglect</i>	Work together to protect vulnerable adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a working relationship between SAB and the HWBB; including the establishment of a written protocol</li> <li>• Continue to develop the Safeguarding Adults Board role in monitoring and reviewing the multi-agency response to safeguarding vulnerable adults</li> <li>• Ensure local agencies comply with the Winterbourne Actions</li> </ul>
	Provide proportionate support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the recommendations from the Children with Disabilities Joint</li> </ul>

	to vulnerable children and families	Strategic Needs Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Gangs strategy to keep our young people away from gang culture</li> </ul>
	Introducing improvements to the adoption system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of children awaiting permanent adoption through adoption, special guardianship or long-term fostering</li> <li>• Achieve an increase in the pool of adopters through contributing to the pan-London recruitment campaign</li> <li>• Reduce the average number of days between Tower Hamlets receiving court authority to place a child for adoption and then deciding on a match to an adoptive family to less than 100 days</li> </ul>

## 7. Delivering our equality objectives

Robust structures and processes ensure that our equality objectives are translated into work at all levels of the organisation. In 2015/154 the Lead Member with responsibility for equality is Cllr Aminur Khan and the Scrutiny Lead for the Law, Probity and Governance Directorate is Cllr Peter Golds who has diversity, equality and community cohesion within his remit. The Corporate Director responsible for diversity and equalities is the Head of Paid Service, Stephen Halsey, and the One Tower Hamlets Team in the Law, Probity and Governance Directorate facilitates and coordinates equality and diversity work across the Council. Within directorates there are Strategy, Policy and Performance (SPP) teams with responsibility for promoting and mainstreaming diversity and equality. In directorates without an SPP Team, Business Managers have a key coordinating role. The above structures ensure that our equality objectives are cascaded and implemented throughout the organisation.

In order to maintain and develop existing good practices, the Council has in place a number of business planning processes which support our work on equality:

1. The Tower Hamlets Equality Steering Group (THESG) is the Council's strategic level group with responsibility to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. It is the role of the Group to identify processes and projects that will embed and mainstream equalities and put structures in place to meet our equality objectives. Meetings are chaired by the Corporate Director for Development and Renewal, Aman Dalvi, and takes place monthly with representation from each directorate. SPP officers from all directorates attend these meetings which ensures a strong focus on equality and diversity is embedded and becomes "business as usual" across the council.

2. Each service, team and individual work plan is expected to draw on the Borough Equality Assessment and include diversity and equality objectives that arise from the equality objectives set out in the Strategic Plan, as well as actions arising from equality analyses and our duties to promote equality in employment to ensure that staff see equality issues as part of their day-to-day work. To support this, a range of training is offered by Corporate Learning and Development including a section about equality in corporate induction, disability awareness and equality and diversity workshops. There is also detailed information available on the intranet which provides an easy guide for staff to help mainstream equalities.
3. To ensure that the promotion of equality and elimination of discrimination informs our day to day business, we have put in place a number of processes and structures to manage and monitor our work and will continue to develop these over 2014/15 to ensure an ongoing strong focus on equality and diversity and enabling us to monitor progress and show improvement. These include:

As part of the Equality Framework for Local Government the peer assessors provided a number of recommendations for Tower Hamlets Council to focus on to improve their organisational approach to equality. These recommendations are actioned through our equality standards, measures and actions.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>How is this delivered?</b>
Undertake Equality Analysis (EA) to assess the impact of changes in policy, service design and strategy on people from different backgrounds	<p>Equality analyses are carried out on all significant changes to policy and services and on the development of new strategies. In 2012 we developed new guidance for staff carrying out Equality Analysis which is available on the Council intranet.</p> <p>In addition we have embedded consideration of equality impacts into our financial planning processes through which an equality analysis is carried out on each savings proposal put forward in the annual budget setting process.</p> <p>An equalities analysis of the Annual Residents' Survey is produced each year.</p> <p>During 2014/15 the council has undertaken a comprehensive Equality Analysis of the budget for 2015/16. This has involved wide ranging consultation with residents and the development of Equality Analyses for all savings proposals that have an impact on</p>

	staff, service users and the wider local community.
Ensure that all our team plans incorporate relevant diversity and equality objectives and targets.	This is included with the annual review of team plans and reported to the Council's Performance Review Group.
Ensure all new staff participate in the Council equality induction training sessions	This is co-ordinated by Organisational Development in Corporate Human Resources.
Ensure that our policies are compliant with equalities legislation.	Committee reports and budget proposals must include consideration of 'One Tower Hamlets' implications and an equality analysis as required. Guidance has been produced for officers to enable them to assess the impact of policy and service changes in terms of cohesion, equalities and community leadership. The CS&E team will undertake sample testing of EAs to improve quality and ensure they are fit for purpose.
Involve communities, staff and stakeholders in the design, review and scrutiny of our services and employment practices.	<p>Three cross-cutting equality staff forums (covering Black and Minority Ethnic, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Disabled Staff) meet every quarter.</p> <p>We also have three self-organised Staff Forums: the Muslim Staff Forum and two Christian Prayer Groups.</p> <p>External community forums include the Interfaith Forum, Rainbow Hamlets and Local Voices (a forum for disabled residents).</p> <p>Partnership Forums include: the New Residents and Refugee Forum; the No Place for Hate Forum and; the Older People's Partnership Board. In 2013 we launched 'Local Voices', a new forum to bring disabled people together to have a say about the design and delivery of council services.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the representativeness of Community Champions and seek to ensure they reflect communities across the borough.</p>
Benchmark our policies and practices against other public bodies.	We work with Local Government Association and other relevant cross-borough, regional and national groups to test our practice.

	<p>We have demonstrated our commitment to learning from others by undertaking a peer assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government</p> <p>Staff from the One Tower Hamlets Service contribute to national benchmarking groups including the Employers Forums on Age, Disability and Religion/Belief.</p>
<p>Seek external validation of our equality achievements</p>	<p>The Local Government Association's Equality Framework is the validation tool for assessing the ability of local authorities to deliver on the equalities agenda. We achieved excellent rating in January 2010 and were again assessed as excellent in 2014.</p> <p>Investors in People, the Fawcett Charter, the Stonewall Equality Index and the Employers' Forum on Disability Employers Standard are other recent examples of benchmarking schemes in which we have participated.</p>
<p>Increase the extent to which our workforce reflects the local community</p>	<p>This is a key Council policy aimed at delivering the corporate commitment to provide services which offer equal access to every person in the borough reflecting the diversity of the population which will be overwhelmingly staffed by local people whose profile reflects the community.</p> <p>Our recruitment procedures have been developed to ensure fairness and transparency and to remove unnecessary barriers which may reduce the opportunity for people from underrepresented groups to access jobs in the council.</p>
<p>Ensure that the promotion of equality and elimination of discrimination informs all procurement activities</p>	<p>All major procurement exercises are subject to the Tollgate process which ensures that in developing contract specifications we ensure that externally provided services are accessible to all groups and that performance targets are set to reduce existing gaps in outcomes between different groups.</p>
<p>Improve our understanding of the profile of people who use our services and their outcomes</p>	<p>Equality monitoring guidance has been produced and promoted to all council services to ensure that we have an accurate and up to date understanding of the groups which access our services and any differences in satisfaction rates or outcomes between different groups.</p>



	<p>We publish a summary of this equality monitoring information each year on the Council website.</p> <p>As recommended by the EFLG assessment we will seek to extend the availability of monitoring data, particularly for people with disabilities who are the victims of hate crime.</p>
Provision of more support to Members to understand demographic data and 'what does this mean' for communities in relation to equality	<p>We will provide a Members seminar on Ward profiles with a specific focus on equality</p> <p>Review and update the Borough Equality Assessment on an annual basis</p>

The structures and processes outlined above provide a strong foundation for the mainstreaming of equality across the organisation, but we know there is always room to improve and further strengthen our practice. Since 2010 we have used Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) as an improvement tool to increase our capacity to tackle inequality and discrimination.

## 8. Monitoring and reporting

To ensure that we are able to track performance against our equality objectives for 2014/15 we have identified a set of equality performance measures. These include existing performance measures that relate to equality (eg: child poverty rates) as well as outcome measures which will be disaggregated by specific equality strands where we would like to narrow the gap in terms of outcomes for specific groups. During 2014-15 we will be carrying out an equality monitoring improvement project to improve the quality of the data we collect on service user outcomes across all equality groups and this will strengthen the monitoring and target setting in 2015-16.

The list of measures to track performance is set out below along with the equality groups by which we will disaggregate these measures. These groups have been identified on the basis of evidence of differential outcomes between people from these groups:

Community Plan theme	Performance measure and targets 2014/15	Equality groups to monitor
	Strategic measure	
<b>A Great Place to Live</b>		

	Number of affordable homes built	n/a Number of homes built through Project 120
	The number of affordable social rented housing completions for family housing	n/a
<b>A Prosperous Community</b>		
	Achievement across the Early Years Foundation Stage	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
	Achievement at Level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
	Achievement of 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
	A Level Average Points Score per student in Tower Hamlets	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
	Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
	Employment rate (gap v London)	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender
	Child Poverty rate	n/a
<b>A Safe and Cohesive Community</b>		
	Personal robbery rate	Disability, Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation
	Local concern about ASB and Crime	Disability, Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender-Reassignment
	Satisfaction with the Police and Community Safety Partnership	Disability, Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender-Reassignment
<b>A Healthy Community</b>		
	All age, all-cause mortality rate	Gender, Ethnicity
	Number of people who have stopped smoking	Gender, Ethnicity
	Proportion of children in reception who are obese	Disability, Ethnicity, Gender

	Under 18 conception rate	Ethnicity, Disability
	Proportion of social care clients and carers in receipt of Self Directed Support	Disability, Religion/Belief, Gender, Age
	Percentage of ethnic minority background children adopted	Disability, Religion/Belief, Gender, Age
<b>One Tower Hamlets</b>		
	Proportion of staff that are LP07 or above who are from an ethnic minority	Ethnicity
	Proportion of staff that are LP07 or above that are women	Gender
	Proportion of staff that are LP07 or above who have a disability	Disability

As part of our commitment to make information available to residents to enable them to hold the Council to account, we will be incorporating reporting on our equality objectives into the Mayor's annual Aspirations, Achievements and Challenges report.

**Borough Equality Assessment summary:** Priority areas of inequality to be addressed through strategic and business planning. 2014-15

Priority area	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/Belief	Sexual Orientation
A Prosperous Community: Employment	Reduce number of 16-24 year olds not in education, employment or training (Strategic Milestone)	Increase number of disabled people in employment  (Strategic Plan: support more people with learning disabilities and mental health needs into employment)	Reduce worklessness among working age women (Strategic Plan: monitor and report the equalities profile of residents securing jobs to steer provision to targeted equality groups)	Reduce levels of unemployment and worklessness amongst Bangladeshi and Somali residents (Strategic Plan: monitor and report the equalities profile of residents securing jobs to steer provision to targeted equality groups)	Reduce rate of economic inactivity among Muslim Women  (Strategic Plan: monitor and report the equalities profile of residents securing jobs to steer provision to targeted equality groups and Support ESOL)	Tackle homophobia in the workplace (Strategic Plan: establish an every voice matters strategy)
			Improve under performance of boys relative to girls at GCSE (Strategic Plan: Identify the distribution of underperformance across the borough schools at all key stages, with particular focus on White UK pupils ....)	Narrow the achievement gaps between different ethnic groups and the national average (Strategic Plan: Identify the distribution of underperformance across the borough schools at all key stages, with particular focus on White UK pupils ....)		Tackle homophobia in schools

Priority area	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/Belief	Sexual Orientation
A Great Place to Live: Housing and community safety	Support young people affected by changes to housing benefits for under 35 year olds <b>(Strategic Plan: seek to mitigate homelessness and improve housing options)</b>	Increase access to independent living opportunities for disabled people <b>(Strategic Plan: implement the strategy on the development of new supported accommodation for people with mental health needs who need high end support in the borough)</b>	Reduce violence against Women and Girls <b>(Strategic Plan: deliver the violence against women and girls programme)</b>	Address shortage of suitable social housing which has a disproportionate impact on BME families <b>(Strategic Plan: increase the availability of affordable family sized housing)</b>	Address shortage of suitable social housing which has a disproportionate effect on Muslim families <b>(Strategic Plan: increase the availability of affordable family sized housing)</b>	Improve same sex domestic violence services <b>(Strategic Plan: deliver the violence against women and girls programme)</b>
	Improve quality of housing suitable for older people <b>(Strategic Plan: implement the strategy on the development of new supported accommodation for people with mental health needs who need high end support in the borough)</b>	Improve supply of wheelchair accessible homes for disabled people on Housing Register <b>(Strategic Plan: ensure sign up to P120 by all RP partners, developers and the GLA)</b>  Improve accessibility of transport network for disabled people	Support single parents affected by housing benefit cap <b>(Strategic Plan: Drive the ongoing partnership wide programme around welfare reform)</b>	Address high rates of rent arrears for Somali people <b>(Strategic Plan: Drive the ongoing partnership wide programme around welfare reform)</b>		Improve access to housing advice for young LGB people affected by changes to housing benefit eligibility for under 35s <b>(Strategic Plan: Drive the ongoing partnership wide programme around welfare reform)</b>

Priority area	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/Belief	Sexual Orientation
<b>One Tower Hamlets:</b> Community cohesion	Strengthen inter-generational cohesion	Give disabled people a voice in decision making <b>(Strategic Plan: establish an every voice matters strategy)</b>	Improve representation of women in public life	Increase the number of people of different backgrounds who feel that ethnic differences are respected <b>(Strategic Measure: ARS survey – get along well together)</b>	Increase the extent to which people of different faiths say they get on well together <b>(Strategic Measure: ARS survey – get along well together)</b>	Reduce homophobia and promote understanding and respect for LGB people <b>(Strategic Measure: ARS survey – get along well together)</b>
<b>A Healthy Community:</b> Health	Reduce childhood obesity <b>(Strategic Measure &amp; Strategic Plan: Support young people to live healthy lives)</b>	Improve access to health services for people with learning disabilities <b>(Strategic Plan: improve customer journey by embedding the principles of choice and control)</b>	Improve life expectancy for men through effective health promotion services <b>(Strategic Measure &amp; Strategic Plan: use public health expertise... to reduce health inequalities for all sectors of the community AND Embed integrated governance arrangements to maximise health outcomes)</b>	Promote healthy lifestyles in an effective way to BME communities <b>(Strategic Plan: use public health expertise... to reduce health inequalities for all sectors of the community AND Embed integrated governance arrangements to maximise health outcomes Develop and implement a women and health employment programme focusing on the priority of maternity and early years)</b>	Effectively engage faith communities in health promotion	Improve access to primary care health services for LGB people

Priority area	Age	Disability	Gender	Race	Religion/Belief	Sexual Orientation
			<p>Improve healthy life expectancy age for women  <b>(Strategic Measure &amp; Strategic Plan: use public health expertise... to reduce health inequalities for all sectors of the community AND Embed integrated governance arrangements to maximise health outcomes AND Develop and implement a women and health employment programme focusing on the priority of maternity and early years)</b></p>			
			<p>Improve mental health services for transgender people  <b>(Strategic Plan: implement the mental health strategy with emphasis on addressing mental health inequalities and establishing a life course approach to mental health)</b></p>	<p>Improve mental health outcomes for people from BME communities  <b>(Strategic Plan: implement the mental health strategy with emphasis on addressing mental health inequalities and establishing a life course approach to mental health)</b></p>		<p>Ensure mental health services are LGB friendly  <b>(Strategic Plan: implement the mental health strategy with emphasis on addressing mental health inequalities and establishing a life course approach to mental health)</b></p>



Equality Peer Challenge

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets

27<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Report



## 1. Background

This report is a summary of the findings of an equality peer challenge organised by the Local Government Association (LGA) and carried out by its trained peers. The report satisfies the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) for an external re-assessment at the 'excellent' level. The peer challenge is designed to validate a service's own self-assessment at this level by considering documentary evidence and carrying out a series of interviews and focus groups with employees, councillors and other stakeholders.

The basis for the peer challenge is a benchmark against five areas of performance. They are:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

The peer challenge is not an inspection; rather it offers an external assessment of an organisation's own judgement of itself against the equality framework benchmark, by critical friends who have experience of delivering an equality agenda in their own organisation. The assessment is a reflection of the evidence presented to the peer team, through reading the documentary evidence submitted in advance, and the interviews and focus groups when on site.

The team was:

Lead peer: Patricia Oakley, London Fire Brigade  
Member peer: Marie Pye, London Borough of Waltham Forest  
Officer peer: Sharon Robinson, Hertfordshire County Council  
Challenge manager: Deborah Carson, Local Government Association

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by the service and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions.

## 2. Executive summary and recommendations

Following this equality peer challenge, we have reached the following conclusion:

**Tower Hamlets council has completed a satisfactory re-assessment against the criteria for the 'excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.**

The organisation was able to evidence how it has built on experience and expertise in tackling inequality since the previous assessment in 2010, and highlight how it has adapted methods and structures to address the new challenges that it faces. Despite experiencing ongoing financial pressure and a significant growth in the local population, the organisation continues to focus its resources on improving outcomes for its most vulnerable communities, with equality underpinning the council's work with partners and stakeholders to contribute to improved outcomes for people living and working in the borough.

Strong political and managerial leadership on equalities permeates Tower Hamlets council. This appears to instil confidence across the organisation and staff have a clear understanding of equality, and how it can be used as a key driver for delivering improvements in the borough. There is evidence of nuanced and sophisticated partnership working, on areas such as hate crime and managing community tensions, which are clearly having a significant positive effect in the ability of the council to respond quickly to situations as they arise.

TH has good quality up to date information about the demographics of its local communities, and commissions research regularly both internally and from partners to supplement knowledge about changes to the makeup of the borough. The council uses its diverse workforce to enrich this data, enabling it to build up a sophisticated and up to date picture of the local area. There was good evidence of how the council uses data to understand trends, characteristics and challenges and targets resources accordingly. Information is shared consistently with partners and stakeholders, and ward profiles are used for local budget setting.

The council uses commissioning and procurement to significant effect as a means of delivering on local equality and economic objectives. In order to get better value for money, its procurement strategy links equalities into the organisation's corporate vision and objectives, and opportunities to obtain wider (community) benefits when procuring have been identified and pursued.

To help the service improve we have made a number of recommendations that the council may want to consider:

- Provision of more support to Members by supplementing the data from the ward profiles with intelligence on 'what does this mean' for communities in relation to equality.
- Continue to consider the needs of older established communities whilst embracing development opportunities that are contributing to the regeneration of the borough.
- Closely monitor how the generic policy officer role encourages a strong focus on equality and diversity, to ensure that as the work is embedded and becomes "business as usual" the council is still able to monitor progress and show improvement.
- Improve representation of disabled people in the Community Champions cohort, in order to make this group more representative.
- Ensure that they are able to gather Hate Crime statistics for disabled people in the borough.

### 3. Detailed findings

#### 3.1 Knowing your communities

##### **Strengths:**

1. The council uses the Corporate Research Team to good effect; the unit is commissioned regularly by a variety of services from across the council to provide up to date information on the needs and profile of the local community. The unit sits alongside the strategy team and so is well placed to influence policy. They produce regular publications including a Quarterly Research Bulletin, labour market briefing, housing market fact sheet as well as individual fact sheets and briefings on topical issues. There was evidence of several recent publications that have focused on inequality including a poverty briefing, welfare reform briefing, economic immigration, employment and enterprise in TH and financial capability.
2. The organisation has a sophisticated understanding of the equality profile of the local area and how that translates to inequalities for different groups. The council uses a range of consultation mechanisms, and is pragmatic about working with partners to share information and uses this to target resources to where they will impact positively on vulnerable people and protected groups. For example educational outcomes and performance are regularly reviewed using a number of indicators. Pupil level achievement data profiles are produced for individual schools which enable the council to monitor differences in outcomes between groups of students and shape teaching and learning support to better meet diverse needs.
3. Using the characteristics identified by the Equality Act and PSED, the council uses a “cycle of action” to describe and reinforce how its work on tackling inequality, strengthening cohesion and building community leadership underpins the concept of One Tower Hamlets. The authority produces comprehensive borough equality assessments (replacing the previous six Equality Schemes), disaggregated by protected characteristics, that support work across the council to promote improvements in life chances for its residents.

##### **Areas for consideration:**

1. It was not clear how the Corporate Research Team interact with Members other than through the provision of Ward profiles, and no evidence that Elected Members commission studies from the Team or that the limited resource for programmed rather than commissioned investigations was influenced by Member concerns. TH may want to consider providing more support to Members by supplementing the data from the ward profiles with intelligence on ‘what does this mean’ for communities in relation to equality.
2. TH must continue to be mindful to the risk of alienating older established communities whilst embracing development opportunities that are contributing to the regeneration of the borough.

### 3.2. Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

#### **Strengths:**

1. The council has moved to an Executive Mayoral model, which has strengthened the council's work on delivering One Tower Hamlets. The Mayor takes a strong leadership role on equality, and there is a clearly articulated vision about the council's vision for the borough and priorities. The Chair of the Equality Steering Group maintains a robust high level focus on communities experiencing inequality when making key decisions on, for example, regeneration or housing programmes. The Scrutiny process continues to be a key driver for a continued commitment to equality.
2. The council has carried out a restructure of the strategy, policy and performance functions across the council, with the aim of strengthening the promotion of equality across all three of these activities. The generic roles developed through this restructure are all responsible for providing equality related support and advice, and ensuring that the One Tower Hamlets objectives inform all key corporate strategies. The council uses its Single Equality Framework (SEF) to describe how work to promote equality is delivered and the priorities identified in the SEF are embedded in the council's Strategic Plan.
3. There is strong evidence of effective partnership working. For example the Community Cohesion Contingency Planning and Tension Monitoring Group, chaired by the Service Head for Strategy and Equality, has been developed to help the borough better understand the issues which can threaten community cohesion. The group meets regularly to share information and track issues of concern, and has established a Contingency Plan that provides guidance to council services and partners to support a fast and proportionate response to an incident that is likely to lead to a risk to community cohesion. The partnership is based very much on trust, and has strong commitment and leadership from the council. Since the last assessment the plan has been activated on six separate occasions. The group has been noted as an exemplary partnership and is currently supporting work on the Pan London Hate Crime Strategy.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

1. Whilst the council's new structure encourages a strong focus on equality and diversity, there is an on-going challenge around sustaining this focus. For example, incorporating equality objectives into the council's strategic plan demonstrates equality is embedded, but makes it difficult to evidence how progress is being tracked on tackling inequality. There is a danger that as the work becomes more "business as usual" the council becomes less able to monitor and evidence progress and demonstrate how equality initiatives and interventions are adding value. The new generic policy officer roles which have an equality function may rely on the enthusiasm of the individual which may be lost due to staff turnover.

### 3.3 Community engagement and satisfaction

#### **Strengths:**

1. The council has developed a strong programme of engagement around the effects of welfare reform. The “Prepare and Act Now” campaign has targeted support to residents highlighted as being at risk from changes to welfare benefits. In total over 700 residents have attended a series of events and received 1:1 advice. The council has worked closely with Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) to train practitioners, who are then able to engage residents and minimise or mitigate the negative impacts of the reforms.
2. The council is a pathfinder authority for the Neighbourhood Agreements programme and use these agreements to very positive effect across the borough. Between 2011 and 2013 TH has supported ten Neighbourhood Agreements across the borough, each with their own objectives. The approach has been established as an innovative and effective solution to long-standing problems at ward and estate level, where activity is informed by what residents know about their local area. The agreements are used to identify agreed priorities for a local area, assess how services and residents can work to address these priorities, and set out standards of service. There was good evidence of where local residents have been given greater autonomy to work together and with providers to identify local issues and design solutions to address these issues. For example, an initial pilot project on a single estate has resulted in a disused building being brought back into (community) use, which has provided a catalyst to the community to gain extra funding for further neighbourhood improvements.
3. The Children’s Social Care team undertake specific work targeted at Muslim and African families in order to improve outcomes for them. There was evidence of targeted support aimed at Muslim families over the past year, including the first Bangladeshi Carers Dad Programme, engaging and training facilitators from religious and community organisations in the delivery of the Positive Change Programme and the ‘Working with Bangladeshi Families’ training for Professionals. The Tower Hamlets African Family Service was a good example of direct engagement work with children and families in schools and service users in order to meet the specific needs of African families. What is exceptional about this service is that it is an integral part of the Council provision and provides assistance and advice to improve the way interventions with African families are managed and policies are developed. TH social workers receive training from the African Families Service and this training is also accessed by national and international agencies.
4. Since the previous assessment in 2010, engagement activities with the white working class community has improved. The council bases this around a well-considered understanding of the needs of this community. Following targeted community engagement activity, the council identified intergenerationality as a key cohesion challenge with this community, with many older residents suffering from social isolation and poor health outcomes as a result. On the basis of these findings, TH developed a series of very locally focused

intergenerational activities and projects which appear to be having positive results. Impacts will need to be tracked carefully to benchmark progress.

### **Areas for consideration:**

1. Whilst the development of Community Champions in the borough can be considered notable practice, only 9% of the current cohort has a disability. This compares with 22% in the borough overall. More work could be done to recruit disabled community champions, possibly through the Local Voices project.

### **3.4 Responsive services and customer care**

#### **Strengths:**

1. The Local Voices project builds on previous consultation and engagement work, including the council's previous Disability Equality Schemes reviews. TH developed this project following the findings of the previous Peer Challenge, when the Peers highlighted richer engagement with disabled people as a key area for consideration. The council conducted detailed research with over 300 participants at workshops and other activities, and gathered nearly 1,000 pieces of information to help understand the issues and challenges for disabled people in the borough. Participants reflected the diversity of the borough, with people from a wide range of ethnicities, age groups and impairment types having their say. Participants co-developed an action plan, which has helped the council develop a new model for consultation with disabled people.
2. The council has one of the highest rates of reported domestic violence incidents in London, and recognising this as a key priority area, has developed the TH Violence against Women and Girls Plan. The plan consolidates all the activities undertaken by the council and partners to raise awareness, promote safeguarding processes and deliver support to victims. The plan looks at the issue through the lens of the PSED, and has a detailed action plan delivered through a sophisticated partnership approach, targeting and sharing resources, and carefully monitoring progress.
3. The council has a good corporate approach to procurement that includes a visible commitment to equalities, closely aligned to its corporate vision and objectives. There was evidence that TH has identified opportunities to obtain wider community benefits, for example through using community benefit clauses to support more permanent employment opportunities for the long term unemployed, as well as providing training and work placements for young people. There was evidence of procurement and service managers working together effectively across a range of commissioning activities. Overall, the council appears to effectively use commissioning and procurement as a means of delivering on local equality and economic objectives. For example, the Tower Hamlets Local Plan is considered to be a national example of best practice across both public and private sector planners. Significant contracts have been procured through the Decent Homes programme with THH and equality objectives have been key to this.

The Council's commitment to maintain open spaces, support street markets and encourage small businesses demonstrates an understanding of the practical requirements of local people and acknowledgement of what is required to sustain communities.

4. As a result of equalities assessment the council has increased provision and engagement of fathers and male carers, which has resulted in an increased number and diversity of parent/ carer volunteers trained and recruited from marginalised, vulnerable groups. The Dads Network has been established and a number of events organised to increase involvement in children's learning and development, including school based courses and workshops for fathers and male carers.
5. Tower Hamlets identified that between 2009/10 and 2010/11 experiences for people with dementia and their carers in the borough was particularly poor. At the same time, the London Dementia Health Care Needs Assessment suggested a 31.6% increase in people with dementia in Tower Hamlets by 2021 with growth in the older Bengali population who, as a consequence of higher cardiovascular risk, also have a higher risk of vascular dementia. To address this, the council has developed an entirely new care pathway for people with dementia, including a Community Dementia Team and Dementia Adviser Service, Diagnostic Memory Clinic and Dementia cafés in Sylheti and English. This has resulted in evidence of demonstrable and rapid improvement in outcomes for people with dementia.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

1. The team were not able to evidence hate crime statistics in relation to disabled people.
2. Whilst it is acknowledged by the team that the council is in the relatively early stages of embedding a new approach to Equality Impact Assessments/ Equality analysis, there was evidence of some inconsistencies in the quality of these assessments. It may be that giving a stronger role for the equality steering group to peer review/challenge would support more consistent analysis.

#### **3.5 A skilled and committed workforce**

#### **Strengths:**

1. Target setting has been a key driver for success in TH. Despite an overall reduction in staff numbers, the council has recruited in a number of areas, and has used a very successful apprenticeship programme in a number of vocational areas including Planning and Building Control and Youth Services. 53 apprenticeships were started between 2011 and 2013, with the equality profile of the apprentices reflecting the diversity of the borough (half being women, and 70% from BME backgrounds). The council has worked with its providers so that a number of apprentices work a proportion of their time within TH and a proportion within other partner organisations/ providers. This offers a richness of learning and development, and of the 2011-2013 cohort, all have remained with the council after concluding their apprenticeships.

2. The Navigate programme supports the wider aims of the Workforce to Reflect the Community strategy, by encouraging the progression of staff at all levels of the organisation. The programme uses a series of targeted learning and development interventions with the aim of increasing the representation of women, BME and disabled staff in LP07 posts and above, across the council. (note that LPO7 more or less equivalent to top 5% of earners – the council having changed the measure to make it less subject to fluctuation and easier for staff and members to understand and track and report on). There was evidence that the use of tailored personal development plans is making a real difference in enhancing experience in staff involved in the programme, which appears to be providing a richer pool of talent further up the organisation. Staff spoke very positively about the support that they receive from managers and the constructive impact it has have on them both personally and professionally.
3. Recognising a challenge highlighted in the 2010 report around the need to achieve higher response rates from LGB, BME and disabled staff, the council can show a gradual improvement over the last five years. For example, some targeted work to improve the monitoring of sexual orientation of service users in certain services where declaration levels are low has been used as a driver to encourage staff to declare their sexual orientation. HR ran a campaign (including individual letters/emails to all members of staff) aimed at increasing personal declarations of sexuality and disability by staff. Its effectiveness has been reviewed and a new, amended exercise will be undertaken this year.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

1. Although the council has focused on rationalising senior management and creating a flatter, more generic operational structure, there is still a lack of diversity in the top 5% of earners, with a lack of progression still evidenced at grade PO7 and above.
2. There is a need to increase levels of declaration of disability within the council in order to enable directorates to set local targets to increase representation. One way of achieving this, as set out in the council's action plan, is to recruit through the Navigate initiative and set targets for under-represented groups.

#### **4. Examples of innovative projects and initiatives**

##### **6.1 The Local Voices project**

This project was started in 2012 to establish the issues and concerns of local disabled people. Local disabled people were able to participate in the project through workshops, discussions groups, community activities, events, surveys and social media activity. The project was supervised by a steering group of eight local disabled people with a mixture of impairments, ages, ethnicities and genders. A scoring system was developed based on the proportion, volume and impact of information that was brought up. Local Voices and the council then created an action plan based on the information, which is currently being implemented. Participants in the project



are also helping the council involve more disabled people in decision making and designing services.

### **6.2 Community Cohesion Contingency Planning and Tension Monitoring Group (CCCPTMG)**

The CCCPTMG was formed to help the council better understand the issues and pressures which threaten community relations in the borough and to enable TH to work closely with community and statutory partners to prevent damage to relations between people in the borough. Membership of the group has developed over time but currently includes representatives from the Council's Youth Service, Community Safety Team, Emergency Planning Unit and Communications Team as well as senior Police officers and community representatives from faith communities, the LGBT community forum, registered social landlords, youth organisations and Tower Hamlets College. It is chaired by the Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality. The Group meets every six weeks to share information and track issues of concern, putting in place actions and interventions to address these issues. In addition to this on-going work, TH worked with the Group to develop the Tower Hamlets Community Cohesion Contingency Plan which sets out the mechanisms for responding to cohesion related incidents and supports the Council's emergency planning procedures.

### **6.3 Improving pathways for people with dementia**

Having launched in November 2011, the council's new dementia pathway has received substantial acclaim. The CEO of the Alzheimer's Society described Tower Hamlets' dementia pathway as one of the most impressive he had seen whilst the NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) chose the partnership work around dementia as one of its three case studies for authorisation. In March 2013, Tower Hamlets Council, the East London Foundation Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and the Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group received a Local Government Chronicle Award for this work.

### **6.4 Secondary School Consultation Fun Day**

As part of its work on embedding the Every Disabled Child Matters Charter in practice, Tower Hamlets organised and delivered a consultation event for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Developed using a working group with representatives from a range of stakeholders, the aim of the event was to find out what matters to young people in the borough, and establish how best to help families access services, as well as to inform the commissioning of particular services such as short breaks. Despite very bad weather on the day, approximately sixty young people from 8 mainstream secondary schools, aged between 11 and 18, attended. The young people involved had a wide range of conditions and difficulties, such as Developmental and Learning Disabilities, Cerebral Palsy, Downs Syndrome, Autism, Short stature, and Epilepsy.

### **6.5 No Place for Hate campaign**

Tower Hamlets works closely in partnership with the Police and other agencies to prevent all forms of hate crime, and takes action against perpetrators and supports and protects victims. The vision for this work on tackling hate crime is articulated through the 'No Place for Hate' campaign which centres around two pledges – one personal and the other organisational – in which people commit to actively

challenging hate and promote positive engagement between people living and working in the borough. To date 1423 individuals and organisations have signed up to the Pledge. The pledge campaign and work to promote awareness, encourage reporting and build community cohesion across all communities through outreach activities is overseen by the No Place for Hate Board – an independent body of community and statutory organisations and groups. Since the campaign started a number of activities and programmes have been run under the No Place for Hate banner, including training of No Place for Hate champions, the development of a young people's pledge and marketing campaigns.

## **6. Signposting to areas of good practice**

### **Bristol City Council**

Programme of projects to increase the workforce diversity with regards to people from a BAME background

Following research the council developed a programme of 25 projects to address the issue. Innovative projects include opportunities for reverse mentoring: white managers to be mentored by BAME staff; involvement of trained BAME staff on selection panels; community representatives on selection panels; a BME Leadership Programme; targeted apprenticeship and internship schemes.

### **LB Hackney**

Councillor led ward forums are really effective vehicles for engagement. The Council is evaluating the success of the forums and has started to encourage the involvement of young people.

Representativeness of the Workforce - The Chief Executive was very clear that the Council's workforce needs to be representative of the community and his leadership is key to the progress made on this issue. The workforce is representative at all levels and this is regularly monitored. The Council is in the top quartile for BME staff in the top 5% of the workforce compared to other London Boroughs. Since 2011 the number of BMEs in the top 5% has increased by 7% to 28%. One in three frontline managers is black and 30% of middle managers are from a BME background.

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