

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Equality Framework for Local Government Self-Assessment

February 2014

Summary

Despite experiencing the most challenging financial pressures of recent times and an unparalleled growth in our local population, we have since 2010 continued to deliver significant improvement in life chances for local people in Tower Hamlets. This has included enabling the delivery of nearly 4,000 new affordable homes, exceeding our stretch targets for re-housing overcrowded families, making sure that our streets are cleaner than ever and improving educational attainment at 11 and 16 year on year and above the national average. Against a challenging backdrop, the Council has also delivered award winning regeneration of the Ocean Estate and major improvements to Victoria Park. Our annual resident survey indicates that more of our residents than ever think that the Council is doing a good job and making the area a better place to live. Each of these achievements has made a concrete contribution to greater equality for people living and working in the borough. In this self-assessment we describe how our commitment to tackling inequality, strengthening community cohesion and building community leadership in all that we do has been at the heart of our achievements over the last four years.

The document below is in five parts:

- A summary of the changing context for our work on equality since our first EFLG assessment in 2010
- A description of the way we have adapted our approach to delivering 'One Tower Hamlets' to meet new challenges and create new opportunities
- A series of corporate case studies which describe how our cross-cutting approach has enabled us to deliver improved equality and diversity outcomes in areas identified by the 2010 peer assessment
- Four Directorate case studies which set out how our four service Directorates have used the One Tower Hamlets framework to drive continuous improvement and delivered improved equality of outcomes
- A summary of evidence drawn from across a wide range of Council service areas to demonstrate how we have continued to meet the EFLG 'Excellent' criteria

Background: Our changing context

In January 2010 we were delighted to become the second Local Authority in the country to be assessed as 'Excellent' under the EFLG. Concluding their report, the peer assessors noted that:

"...equality and diversity underpins everything the Council does with partners and stakeholders in the provision of services to its community. Looking across the Equality Framework we saw that LBTH has an in-depth and sophisticated knowledge of its community which informs service delivery; very strong political and managerial leadership on equality and diversity; good levels of equality and diversity resources and expertise and a national reputation for diversity and innovative community engagement".

We have continued to be a leader in this field. Our commitment and achievement of real progress on the ground has been recognised in a number of ways, including in our ranking in the top one hundred of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. At a national level we have sought to be at the very forefront of developments on equality and community cohesion, working closely with the other 'Excellent' local authorities and the LGA to develop a sector response to the government's Public Sector Equality Duty consultation and contributing to the activities and publications of the DCLG-sponsored Special Interest Group on the far right. Four years on from our original assessment we have welcomed this opportunity to look back and assess our response to the

challenges we have faced and are keen to lead the way as the first local authority to be reassessed.

In 2010 the Diversity Peer assessors highlighted a number of upcoming challenges and opportunities for our work on equality (their report is attached). Many of the predictions made in that report have become reality, and some have developed in ways no one predicted. This section of our self-assessment describes the changing context within which the council operates and local people live. This provides the background to later sections in which we describe how new challenges and opportunities have prompted us to redouble our commitment to improving the life chances for everyone living and working in the borough and resulted in new and innovative approaches to delivering our 'One Tower Hamlets' commitment.

Three years on from the assessment, the context in which the Council operates and the people of Tower Hamlets live has changed significantly. Organisationally, the Council now has its **first Elected Mayor**, Lutfur Rahman, 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 he was elected as the Council's first Executive Mayor in 2010 Mayor Rahman has made tackling inequality and protecting vulnerable residents a key priority and his leadership has been fundamental to our achievements in this area over the last three years. The Mayoral model has provided the organisation with a clear focus and greater capability to tackle inequality. Mayor Rahman's priority of protecting the most vulnerable has been a strong driver of all strategic and financial planning and his role has enabled him to develop a shared vision to unify different sections of our community and provide leadership in times of difficulty and tension. One of Mayor Rahman's key pledges is to promote community cohesion and bring our diverse communities together to build 'One Tower Hamlets'.

In **financial terms the last three years have brought unprecedented challenges**. The government's 2010 Emergency Budget brought in a programme of cuts to public spending, the pace and scale of which the Chancellor has now confirmed will continue in to 2017-18. Locally this has led to the largest reduction in spending this Council has ever experienced; some 24% of the overall budget (which equates to savings totalling £91m compared with a baseline in 2010/11). It is likely that over the course of the austerity period, from the Emergency Budget in 2010 to 2017/18, the Council's General Fund budget, excluding schools, will be cut by around 50% in real terms. In this self-assessment we set out how we have responded to this very challenging financial context, delivering an ambitious savings programme while remaining focused on delivering key policy objectives, at the heart of which sits the commitment of the Mayor and senior officers to build 'One Tower Hamlets'.

The **borough's population** has grown at an extraordinary rate in the last ten years, with rapidly changing patterns of wealth and poverty. Over recent years we have seen the beginning of a fundamental shift in the profile of Tower Hamlets – once home to poor communities living on the edge of the great wealth of London, the wealthy are now increasingly choosing to live in the borough. Spurred by the dynamic growth of Canary Wharf, in 2011 Tower Hamlets became the fastest growing local authority area in the country. Results from the 2011 Census confirmed that between 2001 and 2011, the borough's population increased by almost 30%, to 254,100. Recently published population projections¹ from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicates that the population could reach 361,000 by 2035, a further increase of 41%. As described in our 2010 self-assessment, we continue to be a borough of rich diversity. International migration is a significant feature of life in the borough – in 2011 41 percent of people in the borough were born outside the UK and half of them arrived in the country in the last ten years. Just over 50% of the borough's population are from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community and around 40% of all adults in the borough speak a language other than English in their home. We have the highest

proportion of EAL (English as an Additional Language) pupils in both London and England. This reflects the size and young age profile of the BAME population in the borough.

Between 2001 and 2011 there has been considerable change in the age structure of the borough's population. Tower Hamlets is one of two London boroughs which has had a significant increase in the working age population during this period and we now have the lowest proportion of residents aged 65 and older in London and nationally, with only 6.1% in this age group. Our working age population grew by almost 45%, the fastest growing in the country. Approximately 69% (176,400) of the borough's population are now aged 19 to 64.

Over the last three years **rapidly rising costs of living, the government's welfare reform programme and cuts to public spending** have had an impact on the lives of many people in the borough. While over the last fifteen years we have made real progress at addressing some of the underlying social issues in the borough (including rates of employment for single parents and educational achievement), recent macroeconomic and financial developments and national policy changes have brought about new pressures on households. A key pressure on the outgoings of local residents is the cost of housing, particularly in the growing private rented sector. Local housing tenure patterns have changed significantly over the last 20 years. In 1985 13% of the housing in the borough was in private ownership. Today only 11.6% of the stock is council owned and for the first time in the borough's history, less than half the housing stock is social housing. Approximately 19.7% (12,180) of homes in the private sector do not meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Welfare reform

In a borough where twenty percent of households have an income of under £15,000 and where housing costs are high, reliance on welfare benefits is also high. 800 Tower Hamlets households have been affected by the benefit cap, at an average weekly loss of £61 and a further 2700 by the spare room subsidy or bedroom tax, with an average loss of £21 per week per household. For each household this reduction in income could affect their ability to afford their rent, putting their tenancy at significant risk. The shortfall in benefits across the borough is estimated at £8 million per year. Many of the most vulnerable households affected by the benefit cap are homeless families living in temporary accommodation, or those living in the private-rented sector, many of them single parents and from BME communities.

Our response

In responding to these challenges, our focus on equality has remained but we have sought out new ways of delivering improvement. The scale of the changes and challenges facing our residents and the Council as an organisation are in many ways unprecedented and at a national level they have set a new context for work on equality.

This self-assessment describes how we have built on our experience and expertise in tackling inequality to address new challenges and create new opportunities. It highlights how we have maintained our commitment to putting equality at the heart of everything we do, redoubling our efforts and seeking out new and innovative approaches at a time when we know many residents are experiencing significant pressure. Whilst our commitment has been unwavering, we have adapted many of the methods and structures that have served us well in the past to make them fit for purpose to address the new challenges we now face.

Evolving our approach

Leadership and organisational commitment

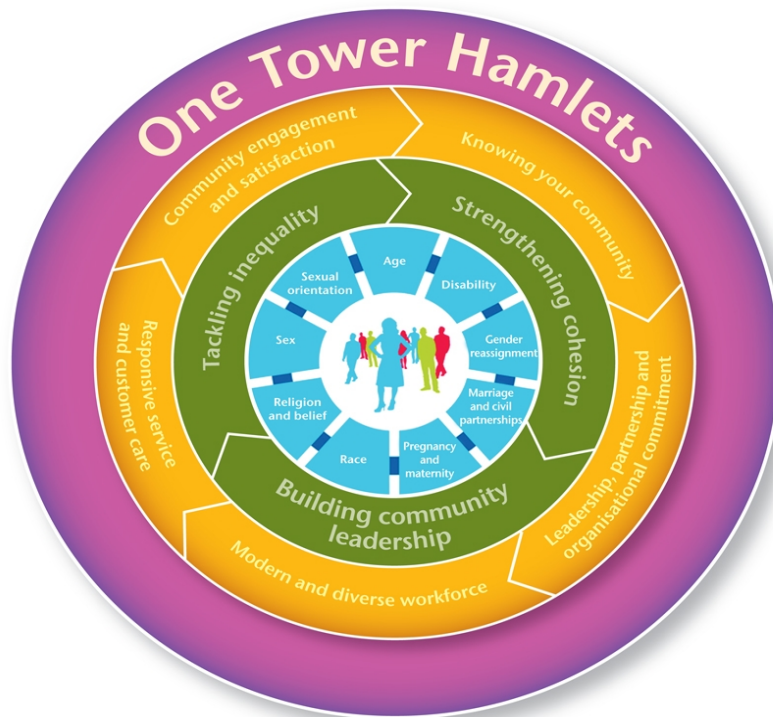
In 2011 we developed our 'Community Plan to 2020' through an extensive programme of engagement with local people from a wide range of backgrounds. The vision set out in the Plan,

and to be achieved with our partners and with the active participation of all those who have a stake locally, 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 – an ambition to reduce poverty and inequality, bring local communities closer together, and build strong community leadership by involving people and giving them the tools and support to improve their lives. It was through discussions and conversations with residents about the Community Plan that this concept of ‘One Tower Hamlets’ emerged.

One Tower Hamlets, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Framework for Local Government

In many ways our cross cutting principle of One Tower Hamlets prefigured the aspiration of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Since residents first articulated their desire for the principle during the development of the Community Plan, the Council and partners have worked to create a ‘cycle of action’ underpinning all that we do by tackling inequality, strengthening cohesion and building community leadership. The principle itself and the actions we take to bring it to life demonstrate how we embrace and meet the Duty. The diagram below describes the relationship between the three elements of One Tower Hamlets, the nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act and the five elements of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

At the heart of our work on equality and diversity are the people who live, work and visit Tower Hamlets who describe themselves in a countless number of ways, often including the characteristics identified by the Equality Act. Achieving real improvements in equality of life chances in the borough requires us to respond creatively to the diverse needs and aspirations of local people and this is a process of continuous improvement. The ‘cycle of action’ set out below describes how work on tackling inequality, strengthening cohesion and building community leadership are mutually reinforcing. For example, work to reduce homophobia in the borough has required targeted work to identify and take action against perpetrators and provide effective support to victims of homophobic hate, but it has also required people from a wide range of backgrounds to explore differences as well as shared values of unity in the face of hate. Many of the people involved in these activities have gone on to play powerful leadership roles in local communities and challenge prejudice. The five elements of the Equality Framework reinforce the message about continuous improvement providing a practical framework for action. Over the last three years we have been faced with a fast changing environment – we have had to be dynamic in our response to the numerous challenges and opportunities which have presented themselves. The One Tower Hamlets cycle of action has enabled us to put the promotion of equality and diversity right at the heart of our responses at all levels.



Structures and processes

In 2011 we carried out a **restructure of the strategy, policy and performance functions** across the Council. This restructure was driven by the need to realise a £1 million saving whilst continuing to deliver high quality support to services across the organisation. A key aim of the reorganisation was to strengthen the promotion of equality across all strategic planning, policy making and performance management activities. Whereas previously each Directorate had a dedicated Diversity and Equality Coordinator who worked closely with the Corporate Equality and Diversity Team, the newly created Strategy, Policy and Performance (SPP) generic officer roles are all responsible for providing expert advice and support to colleagues on embedding the One Tower Hamlets principles. In addition, the corporate equality and diversity team was replaced by the One Tower Hamlets team based in the Law, Probity and Governance Directorate. This team has responsibility for developing corporate policies, plans and structures to ensure that equality practice continues to be of the highest standard and that our One Tower Hamlets objectives inform all key corporate strategies. Within the first six month, the One Tower Hamlets team provided tailored training for the 40 officers who secured new roles within the newly created SPP teams to ensure they had sufficient knowledge and expertise to effectively embed equality considerations within the work of their Directorates.

Single Equality Framework

Each year between 2006 and 2011 we produced an annual Diversity and Equality Action Plan (DEAP). The plan set out the activities being carried out across the organisation to promote equality for people from different backgrounds. It also described the structures and processes in place to ensure that the promotion of equality informed the day to day work of all Council services. Through the DEAP a number of important pieces of work were taken forward and it provided a comprehensive account of our work to promote equality. However, the weakness of this approach was that the DEAP sat alongside all other strategic and operational plans rather than informing business planning. In 2011 we replaced the DEAP with the 'Single Equality Framework' (SEF) a high level strategic document which sets out our approach to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Building on our DEAP, the SEF describes how the way we deliver work to promote equality has changed as a result of the move to an Executive Mayoral model as well as a greater emphasis on embedding work on equality into the Strategy, Policy Performance (SPP) function.

The Framework describes the opportunities created by the Mayoral model to strengthen 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. At the heart of the Framework are Mayor Rahman's priorities of:

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

In 2012 we further strengthened this work by embedding the priorities identified in the SEF into the Council's Strategic Plan. Working with SPP teams across the Council we identified a subset of the Strategic Plan priorities which have high relevance to equality including:

- Priorities where the primary intention is to reduce inequality between people (eg: reduce violence against women and girls)
- Priorities which relate to an outcome where we know that there are significant inequalities between different groups (eg: Maximise employment, actions would need to address known differences in the employment rate of women and men, people from different ethnic backgrounds and people with disabilities)

These equality priorities are set out in the Single Equality Framework. In addition we have identified a set of existing performance measures which are 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 in turn informs future business planning.

In early 2013 we sought to further improve our practice by ensuring that an understanding of the key areas of inequality in the borough informed the identification of strategic priorities. To support this we developed a **Borough Equality Assessment**, 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. We have drawn on this document to develop our draft Strategic Plan for 2014/15 and through this process have ensured that each of the areas of inequality identified in the Assessment is addressed within the Plan. The Assessment is included in the attached evidence pack.

The Framework also includes an action plan to strengthen our equalities practice across the organisation to ensure that we are able to meet our legal obligations but also ensure that an accurate understanding of need informs financial and policy decisions facing the Council in the coming years.

Responding to challenges, redoubling our commitment

The processes and structures set out above describe how we have adapted and innovated to ensure that we continue to put the promotion of equality at the heart of how we operate as an organisation. In the sections below we set out how this refreshed framework for delivering our One Tower Hamlets objectives has shaped the way we have responded to the challenges of the last three years and our continued drive to improve the life chances of everyone in the borough.

The issues and challenges set out below could not have been addressed by any one service working in isolation. The joined up approach we have taken, coupled with clear corporate leadership, has been key to the success in these areas.

Delivering savings

Our response to unprecedented financial challenges demonstrates the strength of the One Tower Hamlets approach in assisting us to work through complex and demanding issues. A clear and unwavering commitment to equality by the Council leadership, a sophisticated understanding of our local community, robust mechanisms for engaging with local people and an innovative approach to improving life chances of local people through partnerships with commercial suppliers have been at the centre of our approach to savings

Organisational commitment and leadership

A firm commitment at the highest level of the organisation has provided a clear and compelling moral leadership to officers involved in detailed financial planning as well as to partners and other agencies. Notwithstanding the need to manage within a very challenging financial context, we have remained focused on delivering the Mayor's priorities to support vulnerable people and tackle the issues which drive inequality in the borough, including poor housing, employment and community safety, have shaped the financial planning process. Specifically the Mayor has set out the following priorities which have directed the allocation of Council resources, namely:

- Improving the condition of social housing
- Increasing the supply of affordable social housing (particularly family sized housing)
- Maintaining the provision of services for young people
- Delivering programmes of skills development, employment and enterprise activity
- Maintaining support to vulnerable adults
- Minimising the impact on resident household budgets
- Protecting investment in activity that promotes community safety

To enable us to deliver against these priorities we produced a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which set out how these savings would be achieved to March 2014, alongside a detailed budget for 2011-12 which was agreed by Full Council. Within the framework provided by the MTFP, annual budgets have been agreed each year which have taken into account further reductions in government funding and information on changing patterns of demand for council services. Savings have been identified in the following five areas, enabling us to protect frontline services and support for vulnerable residents:

- **A leaner workforce:** with a particular focus on rationalising senior management and creating a flatter, more generic operational structure designed both to enable the progression of talented employees
- **Smarter Working:** with a particular focus on the vacation of the Anchorage House building; more localised patterns of working; better use of new technology to enable council officers to do their jobs more effectively and at less cost and; opening up opportunities for residents to access our services in ways that reflect the realities of their lives be that in their homes, on-line, over the phone or in our offices and one stop shops.
- **Better utilisation of our assets:** with a particular focus on underutilised buildings being put to better use and, where not possible, disposed of to support the council's capital programme and a root and branch review of our treasure management and capital planning arrangements.

- **Income Optimisation:** with a particular focus on ensuring that charges are set fairly and in a manner that protects our most vulnerable residents; ensuring money owed to us is collected in a timely and efficient manner; and on a review of our commercial charges.
- **Better Buying:** with a particular focus on supporting local businesses to access the council's supply chain, ensuring a continuing role for the third sector in the delivery of services and ensuring that private sector contractors give value for money and deliver efficiency savings where appropriate, whilst working within the values and ethos of the council.

Knowing our communities

Our detailed knowledge of our local community and robust mechanisms for engagement have enabled us to understand the impact not just of individual Council savings proposals, but of the cumulative effect of reductions in public spending across the borough. To translate high level priorities into practice, officers within the One Tower Hamlets and financial Strategy Team worked closely with colleagues across the Council as they identified savings options. We have been able to use this information to minimise the impact of savings on residents and ensure politicians making difficult financial decisions have accurate assessments of the potential impact of different savings options when making their decisions. The attached evidence pack provides a detailed description of the approach we taken to identifying and assessing the potential impact on equality between people of all savings proposals (3.7).

Partnership

In the context of such drastic reductions in income, we have sought out new forms of partnership, identifying opportunities to deliver real improvements in the life chances of local people through effectively influencing the behaviour of our suppliers and commercial partners. 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. Examples of key contracts which have delivered real improvements in equality outcomes for residents and employees are included in the attached evidence pack.

Welfare reform – customer service, knowing our community

As described above, the impact of the government's programme of welfare reform has been a key concern since as early as January 2012. It was clear from this point that the planned changes to a wide range of working age benefits would have a significant impact on incomes of many local people and our key strategic priorities of increasing employment, ensuring availability of affordable housing and tackling poverty.

In responding to these challenges we were one of the first local authorities to set up a dedicated task group to work across the Council and with partners to monitor and mitigate some of the impacts of the benefit changes. Our work to establish this partnership group, run engagement events for local people, train frontline staff, and produce guides specific to the local area has been held up as an area of best practice by London Councils¹. Our multi agency action plan is included in the attached evidence pack and demonstrates how our approach has been shaped by our commitment to building One Tower Hamlets, including:

Leadership and organisational commitment

¹ More information can be found on the London Councils website
<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/policylobbying/healthadultservices/jip/map/towerhamletsinfo.htm>

Our response to welfare reform has been led and managed collaboratively by the multi-agency Welfare Reform Task Group (WRTG) which includes representatives from a range of Council services as well as local social welfare advice agencies and disabled people's organisations. The group's work has the full backing of the Mayor of Tower Hamlets who launched a Welfare Reform Pledge in January 2012 to gain partnership buy-in. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Rabina Khan, has been instrumental in ensuring the high profile of the campaign, representing the Council in media engagements and being the driving force behind building alliances at a national level. The Mayor has also identified specific financial support to help those most vulnerable homeless families in temporary accommodation, many of whom are single parents and from black and minority ethnic families.

Knowing our community and involving residents

Targeted engagement with service users and front line staff informed the design and delivery of our joint action plan which includes the following key activities:

- Direct contact with all those impacted by the benefit cap, including home visits to the most vulnerable in temporary accommodation and employment support to those receiving The Mayor's Temporary Accommodation fund
- Reaching out to people where they are – following feedback and analysis, roadshows were held in our busy Idea Stores and/or close to busy shopping centres as well as specific events for more hard to reach groups;
- Feedback from staff and residents viewed the proposed campaign headline of 'Money Matters' as a confusing term. It was therefore changed to 'Prepare and Act Now' – reflecting the ambitions of the campaign to minimise the impact of the reforms; and
- Feedback from disabled residents resulted in the re-design of the booklet to improve accessibility, information and signposting and there is now ongoing regular liaison between disabled people and the WRTG through the Local Voices project outlined below
- We are commissioning further research to fully understand the impact of welfare reform on our residents and enable us to plan and focus appropriate support in the future.

Successful community engagement

Whilst the worst effects of welfare reform are yet to materialise, there is evidence that residents are hearing and acting on our 'Prepare and Act Now' communications campaign messages (for details of this campaign see the attached evidence pack):

- Over 700 residents have attended 9 events and received 1:1 advice;
- There have been 4500 unique views of the Council's welfare reform website;
- 1300 residents have sought advice from the council's online video;
- Over 170 Tower Hamlets Homes (ALMO) residents engaged with 'Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice' assessments on welfare reform communications and engagement
- Amongst the over 250 practitioners receiving training 91% felt they had learned a great deal from the course;
- Of the 12 Housing Associations working closely with us on engagement, 79% have used campaign materials make direct contact with residents;
- The initial 1500 residents identified as likely to be subject to the Benefit Cap had been reduced to around 800 by the time of implementation.

Disabled people – knowing our community and partnership and engagement

In recognition of the shortcomings of existing structures for hearing the voice of disabled people in the borough our 2010-13 Disability Equality Scheme 2010-13 set out our commitment to improve the involvement, participation and engagement of disabled people across the borough. This was also an area for improvement identified in our 2010 EFLG peer assessment. Over the last two years we have worked alongside local disabled people to design and deliver a new model for the

involvement which enables them to have a voice and shape the services and decisions which affect their life chances.

2012-13 was the final year of our three year Disability Equality Scheme and during that year we undertook a review of progress against the objectives we set ourselves in 2010. Engagement with disabled people was central to this review. The changing national context made this an important time to update our understanding of the experiences, aspirations and life chances of local disabled people. It was clear by early 2012 that the government's reform of welfare benefits would have major implications for disabled people. Pressure on the budgets of many public sector organisations have affected provision of a wide range of services used by disabled people. Without understanding the implications of these changes on disabled residents there was a real risk of losing ground on improvements made to equality for disabled people over recent years.

Local Voices

In December 2012, we commissioned Real Tower Hamlets, a local disabled people-led organisation, to work with us to develop a model to increase the representation and involvement of disabled people in decision making, service design and scrutiny. Over nine months, a steering group of local disabled people, set up and supported by Real, designed and undertook a programme of outreach and engagement to hear from disabled people from a range of backgrounds about the issues which most affected them. Named 'Local Voices', this project aimed to hear directly from people with disabilities about how aspects of identity, service provision, central and local government policy and welfare reform interacted to affect their lives. The information gathered from the 400 people whose views were recorded as part of the project was collated into a final report which was presented by the Local Voices Steering Group to Service Heads from all five of the Council's Directorates at a dedicated Tower Hamlets Equalities Steering Group meeting in June 2013. As a result of the involvement of senior officers at this meeting an action plan to address the issues identified was drawn up and presented back to people who had taken part in the project's consultation and engagement activities at a feedback event co-hosted by the Council and the Local Voices Steering Group in September 2013. Following discussion at the event, the action plan was revised and activities prioritised. The revised action plan has now been published along with the original Local Voices report on our website.

To build on the success of Local Voices approach to engagement and to provide a means for on-going involvement of disabled people in our response to the issues identified through consultation, we have now commissioned Real Tower Hamlets for two further years to continue to support the Local Voices Steering Group to:

- Expand membership of the Local Voices network
- Develop thematic programmes of activities to enable disabled people to get involved with Council officers to design responses to the issues identified in the Stage One report
- Provide a mechanism for disabled people to raise new and emerging issues to senior decision makers within the Council, through engagement with the Tower Hamlets Equalities Steering Group

Engagement with residents

In 2010 the EFLG peer assessors highlighted our robust approaches to engaging with different sections of our community. In their concluding comments, they reflected on emerging challenges, noting that:

"It will be important to explore the tensions that can exist around the aspirations of ... communities and strengthen confidence locally about how to negotiate these sometimes complex differences... Historically the Council has been generous in delivering services in a resource rich environment; this model is unlikely to be sustainable in the immediate future.

Does the Council need to be engaging with its citizens differently to encourage and enable them to be less dependent and reliant on the Council in the future?"

Since 2010 one of our most exciting areas of innovation has been the remodelling of our approach to the engagement of local people. Below we describe key aspects of this programme which has opened up new spaces for residents to shape their neighbourhoods and build strong and resilient relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Neighbourhood Agreements

Neighbourhood Agreements are voluntary agreements between local service providers and neighbourhoods and aim to increase public satisfaction with local services. The Agreement identifies agreed priorities for a local area, assesses how services and residents can work to address these priorities, and sets out standards of service. Under the Neighbourhood Agreements programme (for which we were a pathfinder authority), the Council, our contractors, and various local service providers have relinquished control over service delivery to adopt more of a supporting role. Local residents have been given greater autonomy to work together and with providers to identify local issues and design solutions to address these issues. We have provided seed funding, guidance, and senior manager resource to unblock any issues, but residents have been in charge of all aspects of decision-making, delivery and assessment of success.

Between 2011 and 2013 we supported ten Neighbourhood Agreements across the borough, each with their own objectives. However the initiative as a whole is underpinned by two overarching aims:

- **To improve the delivery of local services** by:
 - empowering residents to identify, manage and lead on the delivery of local services
 - facilitating and encouraging joint working and problem solving between communities and service providers on a range of local issues.

- **To improve cohesion between communities** by:
 - encouraging and supporting local communities (particularly under-represented communities) to work collaboratively to identify and deliver projects beneficial to the community.

Approach taken

The initiative was shaped on the understanding that residents would need to decide how, when and in what capacity and to what degree they wanted to participate in local service delivery. Residents made it clear they were suffering from 'consultation fatigue', and wanted to be able to make decisions for themselves. Whilst the borough's Participatory Budgeting process (described in our 2010 self-assessment) had been hugely popular and successful, residents wanted more involvement in designing service options, not just voting on them. Neighbourhood Agreements provided this.

The Council focused its efforts on providing training, support and guidance for a core group of dedicated residents, in order to create a sustainable model for future years. This allowed the Council, with minimal resource, to design and coordinate powerful partnership and resident engagement structures.

To evaluate this approach, we have moved away from traditional performance measurement tools. In 2012-13 we ran an action learning programme with the ten resident groups who secured funding for Neighbourhood Agreements through our One Tower Hamlets grants programme. Residents and community workers involved in the projects took part in a twelve month programme of regular workshops facilitated by the Council's One Tower Hamlets Team working closely with

Talk for a Change, an organisation specialising in enabling people to build strong relationships with people from different backgrounds.

Talk for a Change supported the groups to develop a framework for measuring the impact of their work which has now been developed into the ‘Getting on Together toolkit’, a short, easy to use toolkit designed to assist people designing community projects to strengthen good relations. In their evaluation, *Talk for a Change* noted that:

“Many of the Neighbourhood Agreement outcomes and the cohesion criteria overlap. For a Neighbourhood Agreement to maximize its impact and be truly effective, the process of reaching the agreement is as important as the agreement itself... Many of the (*One Tower Hamlets projects*) used the process of the Neighbourhood Agreement to promote meaningful interaction across difference and ...supported these relationships to develop”

In their evaluations, some projects said that ‘meaningful interactions’ across difference occurred as part of the Neighbourhood Agreement process, while others were more actively fostered, for example:

‘Hinton Close residents came to the mosque and had a tea party here, and were part of the planning for the Ramadan intervention with young people. They are a group of mainly white pensioners, predominantly female, some men. I keep in regular contact with them. We underestimate the older community they are so clued in. They admitted that they were quite scared of Darul Ummah (*a local mosque*) before and were frightened of what goes on here. They are not so frightened any more. They are reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously.’

Through the evaluation, those involved in the Neighbourhood Agreements were encouraged to gather evidence of success through photographs, testimonials with residents and other participants and regular group review sessions. Having evaluation undertaken by residents, for residents ensured that measurements of success were relevant and accessible.

Next steps: *Local Community Ward Forums*

Utilising the positive atmosphere created by the Olympic Games (when we recruited more than 100 Olympic Community Champions) and building on the experiences of the Neighbourhood Agreements, we have now developed Local Community Ward Forums (LCWFs) to further encourage and support resident involvement in local service delivery. Recognising that to drive progress, local areas would need committed community organisers at the heart of any structures, we have recruited and trained eighty six Community Champion Coordinators (including many of the Olympic Games Community Champions as well as others who have not had significant involvement with Council structures before) to lead public forums representing each of the borough’s seventeen ward. We actively sought to recruit Champions who reflected the equality profile of the borough and data on their age and ethnicity suggests this has been successful:

Age	% of Community Champion Coordinators	Ethnicity	% of Community Champion Coordinators
16-24	19%	Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	39%

25-34	17%		White – British	25%
35-44	25%		White – other	12%
45-54	6%		Black/Black British – African	8%
55-64	19%		Asian/Asian British – other	6%
65+	8%		Somali	4%

Moving forward

Over coming years it is likely that we will continue to face stark challenges as further savings are necessary in council budgets, our population continues to grow and the impact of wider cuts in the public sector and the roll out of the welfare reform programme are increasingly felt. To prepare for this, we have set up a 'Think Tank' of senior managers to develop innovative approaches to re-designing services and structures to deliver the savings we need to find. The Think Tank identified that continuing to deliver the outcomes residents and their political representatives consistently prioritise with less money will require us to have a robust focus on understanding our community and their needs. A key workstream for the Think Tank has therefore been to better understand our growing and changing population to inform the options for future savings opportunities. A pack of data providing a demographic and socio-economic analysis of our population has been developed and the headline conclusions from this shared with the Corporate Management Team and with all of our 150 senior managers at an away day in autumn 2013 - this work is now informing the development of savings options across the Council. More detailed in depth work is also now underway modelling the likely ongoing demand for some of our most expensive services, in particular in the area of social care.

In recognition of the need to form new partnerships to address the significant inequalities in the borough, in 2012 the Mayor established a Fairness Commission. The independent Commission brought 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 Commission's report was published in October 2013 with an ambitious set of recommendations for harnessing the borough's significant financial and community resources to tackle inequality and unfairness in jobs, housing and income in the years ahead. The Mayor accepted all fourteen of the Commission's recommendations and officers are currently working with people in local businesses, public sector partners and civil society groups to develop an action plan to make them a reality.

Introducing the Directorate case studies

To demonstrate our approach to equality across the organisation, the following Directorate case studies each address one of the EFLG themes:

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Law, Probity and Governance Directorate: *Community cohesion contingency planning*

Community engagement and satisfaction

Education, Social Care and Wellbeing Directorate: *Improving pathways for people with dementia and their families*

Responsive Services and Customer Care

Development and Renewal Directorate: *Improving availability of high quality, accessible homes for disabled people*

Knowing our Community

Communities, Localities and Culture Directorate: *Violence against Women and Girls action plan*

A Modern and Diverse Workforce

Resources Directorate: *Workforce to Reflect the Community Strategy*

Each case study demonstrates how, over the last four years, we have addressed specific equalities challenges through the development of tailored services, working with partners and engaging and involving local people.

Introduction

Tower Hamlets is a place of significant diversity, with people from many backgrounds and with different identities living and working together. The borough has a long history of challenging discrimination and division, from the Battle of Cable Street in 1936 to the anti-racism movements of the 1980s and 90s. This history gives us real strength and forms the foundation for our on-going work to build good relations between people living and working in the borough. However significant challenges remain. The scale of population growth and churn brings vibrancy but can also be disruptive to settled communities. The iconic status of the borough also brings challenges with national groups targeting the borough to further their ideological agendas. The scale and fast changing/constantly evolving nature of these challenges mean we have had to evolve and adapt our work with communities to ensure that such challenges do not undermine the positive relationships between people in the borough. Over the last five years we have developed a successful approach to responding to the challenges, rooted in strong relationships and local leadership, active community participation and a shared vision for the borough. This case study describes how, against a backdrop of significant threats to community relations, we have achieved a significant improvement in resident perceptions of community cohesion.

Since 1999 we have carried out an Annual Residents Survey in the borough. This independently commissioned survey of at least 1000 local people enables us to track resident perceptions over time. A key measure for our work on cohesion is the Survey question 'How well do you think people from different backgrounds get on in this area?'. Since 2008 we have seen sustained and significant improvements in results for this question:

Year	% of respondents who answered 'well' or 'very well'
2008-9	69%
2009-10	75%
2010-11	76%
2011-12	78%
2012-13	81%

Behind this improvement in resident perception there has been a concerted programme of work in local communities and neighbourhoods to strengthen and promote positive relationships. Some of this work is described in our corporate narrative (add page reference). Alongside this work at a neighbourhood level we have strengthened our response to threats to cohesion, bringing together groups and individuals across the borough to build a unified response to incidents which could divide us. The success of our work in this area is demonstrated not just by the improvement in resident perceptions of cohesion, but also in significant successes we have had as a result of joint working, including securing high profile convictions for hate crimes committed in the borough, prevention of disorder during protests by right wing groups and widespread support for our No Place for Hate campaign.

Community cohesion contingency planning

In 2008 we formed the Community Cohesion Contingency Planning and Tension Monitoring Group (CCCPTMG). The Group's membership 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, our 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 was formed to help us better understand the issues and pressures which threaten community relations in the borough and to enable us to work closely with community and

statutory partners to prevent damage to relations between people in the borough. 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, we 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. The Plan includes the following assessment of risk:

“Not taking action is likely to lead to an imminent threat to local communities of disturbances, civil unrest or serious breakdown of relationships between and within communities”

The Plan provides guidance to council services and our partners to enable fast, coherent and proportionate response to a critical incident which is likely to lead to a significant risk to community cohesion. It details:

- The membership of the Group and the roles of members
- The function of the CCCPTMG
- The activation process and the circumstances leading to it
- The development and performance management of the Action Plan
- The evaluation and review process

Since our last assessment against the EFLG in 2010, the Plan has been activated on six occasions. Several of these are described below:

Gay Free Zone stickers, 2011: In January 2011 a number of stickers appeared across the borough with the words 'Gay Free Zone' and what appeared to be a verse from the Qu'ran underneath. These were quickly identified as a hate crime with potential to cause fear among LGBT people living, working and visiting the area and division between communities. In the days that followed the CCCPTMG played a key role in providing up to date information on tensions and feelings within different sections of the community, informing the Police investigation and communicating out messages of reassurance and unity to the borough's LGBT and wider communities. Following a high profile investigation two individuals were arrested and charged under the Public Order Act for criminal damage. They were convicted but their charges did not reflect the homophobic aspect of their actions and they only received a fine. This led to significant anger and frustration among members of the LGBT community.

In response to the stickers a group of national LGBT activists came together to run a gay pride event in the borough. The group had little engagement with local LGBT organisations and much of their publicity portrayed the borough as a place where LGBT people could not live safely. Some of the commentary on the incident was intensely Islamophobic and concerns were raised by Rainbow Hamlets (our local LGBT community forum) at the CCCPTMG about suspected involvement of far right groups in the gay pride march. This was indeed the case and the march was called off. In its place Rainbow Hamlets worked closely with members of the CCCPTMG to run two events to address the issues raised by the incident and rebuild community trust and confidence. The first was a conference on the role of faith communities in challenging homophobia which provided space for faith communities from across the borough. Funded by the Council and led by Rainbow Hamlets and the Interfaith Forum, the conference successfully brought together people and organisations from across the borough with national organisations to explore themes of education, hate crime and awareness raising. The second event was a Gay Pride March and celebration event which was held the following September, again led by Rainbow Hamlets with financial support from the Council but involving a wide range of LGBT organisations, groups and businesses. The event attracted over 200 people from Tower Hamlets and neighbouring boroughs and was extensively covered in the media. The success of these events were due in significant part to the strength of the relationships built up between community networks and Forums through

the CCCPTMG and the compelling narrative of the No Place for Hate message and vision under which both events were badged.



Mayor Lutfur Rahman at the East End Gay Pride event in September 2011

English Defence League: The English Defence League has announced its intention to demonstrate in the borough on three occasions over the last four years, in May 2010, September 2011 and September 2013. In May 2010 the protest was called off after the event which was the target of their protest was cancelled. In July 2011 however the EDL announced a national call out of its supporters to Tower Hamlets ‘the heart of Britain’s most militant Islamic area’. A march was planned for 11th September and a YouTube promotional video describing the borough as ‘a threat to English people and their way of life’ was posted on the EDL website.

The language and rhetoric used by the EDL in the 2011 campaign demonstrated the symbolic significance the borough has held for them since they were established in 2009. Official EDL publicity for the planned demonstration in May 2010 and a number of social media pieces in 2010 and 2011 highlighted the activity in the borough of Muslim individuals who had spoken at local events and Islamic institutions which, it was claimed, promoted a ‘militant Islamic ideology’, antithetical to human rights. During the 2011 campaign official EDL publicity moved from targeting single issues to an overt and general attack on Tower Hamlets and the Muslim, predominantly Bangladeshi, community. The campaign conflated the presence of a large Muslim community with activity by extremist Islamic groups in east London and the international terrorist threat by Al Qaida inspired networks. A YouTube video uploaded onto the EDL website attacked the local community on the grounds of race and religion.

The threat of EDL protest activity in the borough created widespread fear and anger. Through the networks of members of the CCCPTMG we were able to track rising tension and identify risks of disorder and violence. Working closely together through weekly meetings in the run up to the protest, we were able to ensure effective communication between members of the group and put

in place contingency plans for the day itself. A key outcome of this approach was the development of an innovative approach to stewarding which proved invaluable in preventing disorder.

Stewarding of the protest

A key concern for all members of the CCCPTMG in the run up to the protest was that provocation from EDL supporters would incite a violent response from local people, particularly young men who had previously been involved in volatile public order situations during flash demonstrations by the EDL. There was also an awareness that in policing the demonstration police officers could be seen to be protecting the EDL from local people and that this could lead to the anger of local people being turned to the Police and undermine public confidence. The approach to the planning of the policing operation was very collaborative, with the CCCPTMG group being used as a key interlocutor with local community and youth groups whose views and ideas were sought out to inform tactics. Through discussions at a variety of levels, it became clear that youth and community groups could marshal significant numbers of local volunteers to act as stewards on the day to assist in maintaining calm among counter-protesters.

In the weeks leading up to the protest the CCCPTMG group facilitated visits by faith leaders from different communities, police officers and councillors joined youth workers to Youth Centres across the borough to lead discussions with young people about the EDL's activities. The purpose of these visits was to enable young people to express their views and feelings about the protest to local community leaders and also to demonstrate the unity of the borough against the EDL. These visits proved a very effective mechanism for building trust between young people and youth workers. On the day over 80 stewards from local authority youth services and a several faith organisations were organised to assemble along the line identified by the police as the limit of the counter protest demonstration, facing across the 500 yard gap behind which the EDL were gathered. In a highly volatile situation in which provocative shouts could clearly be heard by EDL supporters, the stewards were able to mediate and manage tensions and no arrests were made. This achievement should not be underestimated given the disorder which has characterised a number of counter demonstrations in other parts of the country. This approach relied on both sides, police and volunteers, being willing to take risks. Leaders on both sides needed to know and trust one another – the Police that the stewards would cooperate and the stewards that the Police would deliver on their promise that EDL supporters would not be allowed across the gap that divided the two demonstrations. They also needed each other's unique credibility/authority – the stewards' ability to engage young people and de-escalate rising tension and the Police's legal authority and power to restrict and manage the movement of EDL supporters. In a debrief meeting following the demonstration, a number of stewards said that they felt the presence of high profile community leaders further reinforced their credibility – councillors, faith leaders and senior local authority and police officers made visible their support for the stewards, taking time to talk to them and engage with the young people at the edge of the counter protest. The success of the stewarding approach was only possible because of the investment of time and energy by people from on all sides in establishing relationships of trust in the weeks leading up to the demonstration. This enabled key local authority and police actors to understand the context in which their policing and youth work response needed to be planned.

The stewarding of the 2011 counter protest demonstrated what was possible when key partners from across the community and statutory sectors come together on the basis of a shared desire and sense of their own responsibility to avert violence. When the EDL again announced their intention to protest in the borough in September 2013, we again worked closely with through the CCCPTMG to identify and understand tensions and risks to relations between communities. Through close working with Public Order planners at New Scotland Yard we were again able to put in place a successful stewarding plan which effectively prevented confrontation between people involved in the United East End counter-protest and the EDL protesters and officers policing the demonstrations.

Muslim Patrols, 2013

In January 2013 a group of individuals from outside the borough harassed members of the public in the Whitechapel area stating that they were part of the 'Muslim patrols' and that certain behaviour (including drinking, wearing short skirts and being gay) was 'unIslamic' and not allowed to take place near the East London Mosque. The people who carried out these 'patrols' filmed the incidents and uploaded the films onto YouTube. As soon as these came to light we called an urgent meeting of the CCCPTMG to coordinate the policing, community and council response to these incidents. A key part of this work was to put out clear messages that such actions would not be tolerated and began a proactive campaign to identify the victims to enable the identification of the perpetrators.

This was very successful and through a jointly sponsored Rainbow Hamlets/Police witness appeal, the victim of the homophobic incident came forward and made a statement. Following a very thorough investigation two individuals were charged with a range of Public Order offences for causing 'alarm and distress'. One of the two was also charged with assault and a further individual was charged with affray. All three subsequently pleaded guilty to these charges and received custodial sentences at the Old Bailey in recognition of their intent in carrying out these activities. Bringing these individuals to justice was a major success for the CCCPTMG and sent out a clear message that such behaviour would not be tolerated.

Scrutiny and challenge

Whilst the CCCPTMG and the arrangements in place to support it have proved an effective mechanism for managing the risk of threats to cohesion in the borough, we recognise that it is vital that we seek out opportunities to review, challenge and scrutinise our performance. The Community Cohesion Contingency Plan has embedded within it a review process for every incident. This involves a formal debrief meeting with all members of the Group at which a Key Lessons Learned log is populated and recommendations made. As well as informing future work this document is then fed through to relevant bodies, including the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Police Public Order Branch review group.

In addition to this regular process, the group has hosted a number of one off seminar events to bring together members of the group with external experts to explore specific threats. We have also taken part in a range of sector-wide initiatives to learn from colleagues across the country. These have included:

- **Local workshops and seminars:** The first of these took place in 2011, following the first EDL demonstration in the borough. We invited Fiyaz Moghul, Chief Executive of the national organisation Faith Matters (who have worked extensively on Islamophobia in Britain) to chair the session and invited councillors and cohesion leads from our neighbouring boroughs to attend. During the workshop we sought to hear voices of people outside the CCCPTMG and their reflections on our response to the EDL protest. One of the key points to emerge from the session was the lack of involvement of women in the United East End counter-protest. When the EDL announced their intention to return in 2013, we were able to act on the recommendations of the session and specifically work with faith and community groups to better involve women in work leading up to the protest itself. As a result of this focus, a group of women came together to run activities within the counter protest under the banner of 'Sisters against the EDL'. We ran similar workshops following the riots of August 2011, this time bringing councillors, a wide range of youth organisations, staff from the Youth Offending Team and Police Officers involved in the disturbances together with members of the CCCPTMG. This workshop was written up and the outcome used to inform our local responses to rebuilding trust between Police and local young people as well as feeding into a number of national reviews.

- **Prevent peer evaluation:** Our work on Preventing Violent Extremism is closely connected with work on cohesion, as the above examples demonstrate. To assess our performance in this new area we initiated a peer evaluation project in 2010, working with Birmingham and Lancashire local authorities, the LGA and the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. Through a programme of visits and interviews with key partners in each area, participants were able to provide constructive feedback as well as learn from one another. The outcome of our assessment by colleagues in Blackburn and Birmingham fed into our Prevent Delivery Plan for 2011-14 as well as forming part of the LGA's response to the independent review of the Prevent Strategy initiated by the Coalition government in 2010.

Reputation

We are approached regularly to share our experience and learning in this area:

- Following our work on the Gay Free Zones **Stonewall** contacted us for assistance in producing a booklet for local authorities on how to support and work with LGBT community forums around LGBT equality. They felt that our work in this area served as an excellent example of the value of such forums. Further to this we led workshop sessions on religion and sexual orientation equality at three national Stonewall workplace equality index conferences in 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- In 2013 we joined the **DCLG funded national Special Interest Group on the far right**. The Group is made up of over twenty local authorities from across the country who have experienced challenges in responding to far right groups in their area. Through a series of workshops we have shared learning and identified areas for improvement in our own approach. In September 2013 the Group produced a toolkit bringing together case studies of best practice from areas across the country, including one produced by us on the use of banning orders in managing EDL activity. As a leading member of the group we have represented its work in a variety of national and international forums, including the European Commission's Radicalisation Network and the Home Office Prevent Board.

Community engagement and satisfaction

Education, Social Care and Wellbeing Directorate: *Improving pathways for people with dementia and their families*

Three years ago the experience for people with dementia and their carers in Tower Hamlets was particularly poor. Between 2009/10 and 2010/11, Tower Hamlets was the second worst borough in London for performance improvement in diagnosis rates of dementia. Service users and carers reported back that their experience was fragmented and they often battled to get a referral for specialist assessments. Once they had been given an assessment they would often have to be referred separately to the Council for a social care assessment, and on to the Royal London Hospital for an assessment by a geriatrician. Care staff often reported having little understanding of dementia, and how to work with people with dementia in a person-centred way. 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.

The Tower Hamlets Health and Social Care Partnership has over the last three years transformed these underperforming dementia services in the Borough. Through listening carefully to the views of people with dementia and their carers, and identifying and exploiting the opportunities for more effective working across health, social care and the third sector we developed a Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) which mapped out needs and for the first time gained a comprehensive picture of activity across primary, secondary and social care. We wanted to understand the views of service users and carers and so funded an officer to work with carers and users solely on the development of the Commissioning Strategy to ensure that we captured their voices.

We were told that:

- GPs should have the right range of skills and knowledge to detect possible signs of dementia and refer on
- More people should have access to specialist assessments earlier, particularly from BME communities
- People should have an integrated seamless experience of the delivery of health and social care
- People with dementia admitted to acute general hospital for a physical health problem should receive sensitive person centred support from staff who understand dementia
- People with dementia and their carers should be supported to live as independently as possible in their own homes, and where specialist supported living is required, provide the right environment and high quality person-centred care
- We should develop more cost effective models for the delivery of in-patient dementia assessment.

Using the JSNA and listening exercise as our foundations, we developed a Commissioning Strategy that sets out the new pathways and service developments. Initially a project board was set up comprising commissioners, clinicians, public health and third sector representatives. Crucially this was designed around our service users and carers who were at the centre of this partnership approach. This broad range of people secured the buy-in from, and provided leadership within, their respective organisations and brought a tremendous level of energy, enthusiasm and excitement to the process. The principles agreed by the project board at the outset included the goal of harnessing the opportunities for integrated health and social care pathways that a joint commissioning approach would bring. Internally within our respective organisations, we made the case for investment, with business cases to support liaison and community memory service redesign and for Extra Care Sheltered accommodation, Dementia

support workers and a Dementia Café. We successfully identified £750k new investment from the Primary Care Trust and £160k from the Local Authority.

As a result, there has been a demonstrable and rapid improvement in outcomes for people with dementia.

We have developed an entirely new care pathway including:

- Dementia Awareness Raising Plan
- Diagnostic Memory Clinic
- Community Dementia Team
- Dementia Adviser Service
- Dementia Liaison Service at the Royal London Hospital
- Re-specified home care services
- Extra care sheltered scheme for people with dementia
- Dementia cafés in Sylheti and English.

When a service user attends the Diagnostic Memory Clinic, the assessment is holistic. They see a psychiatrist and psychologist as standard practice, and may see a geriatrician, social worker, or nurse if appropriate to their needs. If they have a need for a social care assessment, or to access social care services, they will do so through their single assessment in the clinic. They will be offered post-diagnostic counselling, and pastoral support by the Dementia Adviser Service, which is commissioned from the Alzheimer's Society and co-located with the Memory Clinic. This is in stark contrast the fragmented care pathways previously reported by service users and carers.

Additionally the Community Dementia Team provides on-going support for anyone with moderate to severe needs, and also provides outreach into care homes and into primary care. The Dementia Adviser Service provides on-going support for anyone with mild to moderate dementia. The Dementia Liaison Service at the Royal London Hospital aims to improve the experience of people with dementia in an acute setting with the dual objectives of improving patient experience, and reducing length of stay.

In addition to our existing specialist day developed a refreshed social care offer to well with dementia, including a range of better quality of experience in care homes, who are skilled and knowledgeable about have very well attended dementia cafés, Alzheimer's Society, a Sylheti speaking one Mosque and one at Toynbee Hall in English. sheltered scheme specific to people with opened for business.

This has had noticeable impact on both the people with dementia in Tower Hamlets as significant efficiencies. As a result of the community services for people with carers delivered by our strategy, the number admission to in-patient dementia assessment wards specifically for a problem associated with their dementia has reduced significantly, so much so that at any one time under 50% of the available beds were occupied. Consequently we developed proposals to close three in-patient dementia assessment wards in City & Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets, and open a new ward in Tower Hamlets for residents of inner North East London. We carried out a full public consultation on the proposals and, with a majority of respondents supporting the proposals, they were approved by the NHS East London & the City Board. The new ward was designed in partnership

In terms of community engagement and reaching out to people that play an important and influential role in some communities, we have trained 120 imams and religious teachers in dementia awareness, and there has been a sermon at East London Mosque on dementia delivered to 4000 worshippers.

centre, we have help people live group activities, and home carers dementia. We provided by the at East London A new extra care dementia has just

outcomes for well as delivering improvements to dementia and their of people needing

with LINKs and Alzheimer's Societies across East London, with the advice of architects with particular experience in environmental design for people with dementia. The new ward opened in May 2012. As a consequence of the ward closures, £1.1m of savings was released, £600,000 of which contributed to East London NHS Foundation Trust's 2012/13 cost improvement programme, and £500,000 was released for reinvestment into improving services for people with dementia in the community. In Tower Hamlets this has included investing in a dementia nurse to work with primary care and the virtual ward, an Occupational Therapist to work with care homes to develop their approach to person centred care, reducing anti-psychotic prescriptions and a project to map the needs of people with alcohol related dementia in the borough.

Our Diagnostic Memory Clinic has recently been through the RCPsych Memory Service National Accreditation Programme, which is a programme designed to assess the quality of Memory Services nationally. We achieved an excellent status, the top rating. As a consequence of all of the work we have undertaken to develop our community dementia pathway, we have over the past year seen significant improvement in system performance. For example:

- Almost doubling the number of referrals to the Diagnostic Memory Clinic, from 190 in 2010/11 to 335 in 2011/12
- Improvement from being second bottom in London in dementia diagnosis rate from 2009/10 to 2010/11, to being most improved in the country from 2010/11 to 2011/12, a 9.6% improvement in diagnosis against prevalence, and a 20% increase from 2010/11
- Significantly improved diagnostic coding of dementia at the Royal London Hospital.

Having launched in November 2011, our 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 our 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.

Service users and carers are reporting real change, with carers of people with dementia reporting positive experiences in the recent Adults Health and Wellbeing Carers Survey. For example:

“Very thorough discussion regarding the assessment process and the diagnosis result was relayed in the nicest fashion.”

Service user, Memory Service National Accreditation Process

“Good continuity and letters. Excellent nurses. I have been called by their doctors about patients and also to tell me changes in care. They seem very good. They do home visits – doctors seem motivated and caring.”

GP, Memory Service National Accreditation Process

“It was good to get out of the house. Thank you very much for putting a smile on our faces.”

Service user

“It brought Jane to life: it was a lifesaver.”

Service user



Dementia Café in Tower Hamlets.

We have made significant advances in delivering the Council's and the CCG's core aims for people with dementia and their carers, responding to the views of local users, carers and clinicians, and the national policy agenda: i.e. designing new and improved pathways for people with dementia and their carers that promotes independence, early detection, a seamless and joined up experience through integrated health and social care, and which provides value for money.

The partnership intends to build on the huge progress made to date The Tower Hamlets Health & Wellbeing Board has identified mental health as one of its four priorities for 2012/13 and beyond as a key objective and the Partnership believes that the new commissioning landscape presents us with a huge opportunity to promote positive mental health and continue to develop and improve the support and treatment to people with dementia.

Responsive Services and Customer Care

Development and Renewal Directorate: *Improving availability of high quality, accessible homes for disabled people*

The demand for social housing in Tower Hamlets is immense with just under 21,000 applicants on the Common Housing Register, the majority of whom are in housing need and approximately 40% of whom live in overcrowded accommodation. In recognition of the scale of housing need and the significant impact poor housing has on wider health and social outcomes, increasing the supply of affordable housing has been a key priority for the Council over recent years. As a result of a concerted focus in this area, in 2012 more new homes were built in the borough than in any other area in the country. While increasing overall housing supply has been a key objective, we recognise that people have different housing needs and if we are to improve housing quality in the borough, there needs to be an understanding of the needs and wishes of our residents. This case study describes how we have increased the supply of wheelchair accessible homes, significantly reducing the time that people with mobility problems wait for appropriate accommodation.

The demand for wheelchair accessible homes

The number of people on our Common Housing Register who require wheelchair accessible homes is small (just 120 out of nearly 21,000) but their housing needs are complex and the supply of suitable accommodation is very low. It is estimated only 0.7% of social housing stock in the borough is suitable for a wheelchair user. This shortage of appropriate housing has meant that people who require wheelchair accessible homes have waited many years before they are able to move into a suitable property. In 2012 the average expected wait for someone joining the Common Housing Register who needed a wheelchair accessible property was estimated at 14.5 years. As a result of Project 120, the average wait for an applicant has been halved and we anticipate that this will be further reduced in coming years.

Project 120

Project 120 was launched in 2012 to satisfactorily resolve the housing circumstances of the 120 people on the Common Housing Register who required wheelchair accessible properties.

The first phase of the project involved making direct contact with the 120 people on Common Housing Register and identifying their specific needs and aspirations. Working closely with applicants, the Council's Lettings Team then liaised with registered landlords, the Council's Affordable Housing Development Team, Council Planners, Occupational Therapists and Social Services to identify individual solutions for each person. Regular meetings are held with key players including the Affordable Housing Development Team to review the housing list and identify opportunities for wheelchair accessible units within new housing developments. This approach ensures that applicants move into homes that are suitable for their specific needs and also reduces rent loss and costly adaptations in the later stages of the development.

The Project 120 team have delivered the following outputs:

- Develop and maintain a list of housing applicants requiring wheelchair standard housing
- Pre allocate applicants to new build homes, and where necessary find bespoke housing solutions for those applicants who have very specific and complex needs which cannot be met by building a standard wheelchair unit.
- Ensure that new properties designed for disabled wheelchair applicants meet a basic minimum standard and that these properties are located on the required floor level and in the areas of choice at the planning stage

- Develop a formal policy that allows conversion or extension of existing property for disabled residents living in over-crowding properties and ensure an appropriate annual budget is allocated
- Work with Planning colleagues to ensure where necessary households are allocated parking spaces
- Ensure effective use of the Disabled Facilities Grant
- Develop an information sharing protocol – a greater level of information sharing and analysis of need against supply

Results

In the first twelve months of the project 37 applicants were rehoused in suitable accommodation by the following means:

- Rehousing to a new home currently under development.
- Extension or adaptation to existing home,
- Transfer to an existing void property after adaptation

HOUSED	
New Development	28
Existing Home Extension/Adaptation	3
Transfer to home after adaptation	6
Grand Total	37

The key to this success has been early engagement with housing developers, applicants and Planning colleagues to ensure suitable homes are identified, designed, built and adapted to specific housing needs of applicants.

Outcomes

Accessible housing enables people to live independently and with increased dignity through reducing their reliance upon members of their family attending to their daily routine. One woman, aged 38, living with her family, who had waiting 4 years, commented that:

“I now feel like part of the family, I can now make myself and others a cup of tea in the morning, instead of feeling like an invalid stuck in my room unless someone came to help me into the living room.”

Another applicant, who had a disabled child aged 7 years of age living in an un-lifted block and had to negotiate external and internal stairs which posed serious risks to the family were rehoused into a ground floor house with a garden after 4 years. The property not only provided full wheelchair access to all the rooms, it had a garden where the family could spend their leisure time in.

Next steps

Work will continue to ensure 36 applicants who are under offer or have been pre-allocated a property can be assisted to move to these homes with necessary adaptation being completed, and

housing solutions are found for the remaining 72 applicants still without an identified housing solution.

Knowing our Community

Communities, Localities and Culture Directorate: *Violence against Women and Girls action plan*



2

Introduction

Tower Hamlets Council has a long standing commitment to tackling inequalities including the community safety issues that persist as the area of greatest concern to our residents. This is reflected in the priorities set out in our Community Plan 2013-2016, and in the Community Safety Plan that has been developed with our strategic partner organisations.

The first statutory Community Safety Plan, drawn up in 2008, identified domestic violence as a key priority issue for targeted action. This in turn led to the development and establishment of the Violence Against Women and Girls Plan, supported at the highest level by our Mayor, our Deputy Mayor as Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, and our key partner organisations.

The success of our approach can only truly be gauged in terms of the lives that have been saved or changed for individual women and girls who have been encouraged and supported to speak out or seek support, or who have benefited from interventions designed to stop domestic abuse and prevent other violence in all its guises, but we can only measure the crime statistics: Over the last five years the number of incidences of Most Serious Violence (Grievous Bodily Harm and murder) in the borough has seen a significant decrease whilst over the same period the number of reported domestic violence offences have grown. This increase in domestic violence figures can be attributed to an increased confidence in reporting, where in the past incidents would have gone unreported, and this is seen as a positive direction of travel for this indicator.

It is widely believed, however, that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including domestic violence and eight other strands, remain grossly under-reported.³ Although it is impossible for us to capture the whole picture of the issue without reporting from victims, 97% of all reported gender specific violence in the Borough is against females.⁴ The cross-cutting nature of the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda means that responsibility for tackling these

² This leaflet is available at: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=e3460ede-bfc9-4733-9dee-db721efbfa37&version=-1>

³ For example, see 'London VAWG Strategy Refresh: Mayoral Strategy on Violence against Women and Girls 2013-2017', MOPAX, Mayor of London, 2013.

⁴ Tower Hamlets Violence Against Women and Girls Plan 2013-2016, p. 10.

issues falls across a wide range of different agencies. Co-ordinating service provision and ensuring clear governance and accountability for this agenda is, therefore, a key challenge and remains a priority for the borough. The Community Safety team located within the Council's Communities, Localities and Culture directorate have coordinated a multi-agency partnership approach, working together with all of the agencies and organisations across the borough towards addressing the issue effectively and efficiently.⁵

International, national and regional context

Addressing violence against women and girls is already recognised as a priority area internationally, nationally and regionally. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, followed by a resolution on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women in 2009. In 2010, the Mayor of London published '*The Way Forward*', a London-wide plan aimed to end all forms of violence against women in the capital. In 2011 the Coalition Government published its '*Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls*' which outlines the responsibility of Local Authorities to co-ordinate their response to VAWG issues, and the Mayor of London launched the London VAWG Strategy Refresh in November 2013.

Local context⁶

In Tower Hamlets, we have one of the highest rates of reported domestic violence incidents across the 32 London boroughs. In 2011-2012, the Police received 6,625 reports of domestic violence. Domestic violence accounts for around 30% of violent crime in the borough and 6% of overall crime levels. Below shows the current profile of the VAWG in the borough:

- High risk referrals to the Tower Hamlets Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) have increased year on year, such that 2011-12 will see around three times as many high risk cases being referred as in 2008-09.
- Domestic abuse and incidents of violence (against women) currently account for a high proportion of referrals to LBTH Children's Social Care and is a key child protection issue for the borough.
- 20% of women seeking help for domestic abuse in the borough need language support. In addition, a significant proportion of women facing abuse in the borough have no recourse to public funds due to their immigration status and this affects which services these victims can access.
- The ethnic profile of the borough suggests that culturally specific forms of violence such as forced marriage, 'honour' based violence and female genital mutilation are key issues for the borough, although these forms of violence are not always well reported to local agencies.
- There are relatively high levels of vulnerability within the borough's population including high numbers experiencing mental health and substance misuse issues. Women with additional vulnerabilities often find it most difficult to seek help and are therefore often most at risk from abuse.

Gender equality and the Tower Hamlets Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Plan

⁵ Key partner examples – Tower Hamlets Homes:

http://www.towerhamletshomes.org.uk/extra_support_for_residents/domestic_violence.aspx and the Tower Hamlets Metropolitan Police: <http://content.met.police.uk/News/Tower-Hamlets-and-Domestic-Violence/1400011696682/1257246741786>

⁶ The Tower Hamlets Council website includes pages on domestic violence and the services tackling the issue (http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsi/20001-20100/20036_what_is_domestic_viole.aspx).

As stated, 97% of all reported gender specific violence in the Borough is against females. Violence against Women and Girls includes any violence that is targeted at women or girls specifically because of their gender or types of violence that are known to affect women and girls disproportionately. Nine areas of gender-based violence have been identified:

- Domestic violence
- Sexual violence
- Trafficking
- Prostitution
- Sexual exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- So-called 'honour' based violence
- Dowry related abuse
- Stalking and harassment

To tackle this issue and address this extreme gender inequality the Council, working with its wide-ranging partners, developed and established the Tower Hamlets Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Plan 2013-2016⁷, along with an underlying action plan setting out the coordinated responses to the key issues. The VAWG Plan was officially launched at the VAWG Plan launch conference in May 2013 and adopted by a number of partners. Over 120 professionals and residents attended the conference.

The VAWG Plan has consolidated the activities undertaken by the Council and its key partners, including promoting joint planning and implementation, raising awareness of the issues, promoting safeguarding processes and delivering support. The Plan is aimed at issues specifically affecting women and girls, but the Plan also recognises that abuse can take place regardless of gender, ethnicity, faith, sexuality or age and the services and partners commit to provide support for all victims and potential victims of violence.

VAWG as a strategic issue & the Tower Hamlets Partnership approach

The Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2011⁸ states that we will prevent and reduce violence against women and girls in order to achieve our commitments to One Tower Hamlets.⁹ The Community Plan also identifies that a Violence Against Women and Girls strategy will contribute to the Plan's Safer and Cohesive Community theme and help provide a clear delivery framework to inform partnership working on this theme.¹⁰ The Council have established four Community Plan Delivery Groups which are held responsible by the Partnership Executive for delivering the aims and actions contained within the Community Plan. The Community Safety Partnership is one of the four Delivery Groups and acts as the governing body for the Partnership, agreeing priorities and monitoring performance against the Community Plan targets and holding the Partnership to account through active involvement of local residents. Membership of the Partnership includes the Deputy Mayor along with high level representatives from the Council, Police, NHS, other statutory service providers, voluntary and community groups, faith communities, businesses and citizens.

In order to co-ordinate and deliver activities in VAWG, the Domestic Violence Forum was established by the Council and other statutory and voluntary services as a sub-group of the Community Safety Partnership. The Forum, chaired by the Council's Head of Community Safety, takes place quarterly and has oversight of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

⁷ VAWG Plan builds upon the previous Tower Hamlets Domestic Violence Action Plan.

⁸ The Community Plan is a three year agreement that articulates the aspirations of local communities and sets out how the Borough work together to realise these priorities.

⁹ Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2011, p. 34.

¹⁰ *ibid*

(MARAC), the Specialist Domestic Violence Court, the DV One Stop Shop, the Housing & Health DV drop-in services, the LBTH Domestic Violence duty helpline, training and all safeguarding matters related to domestic abuse. The Forum is responsible for ensuring that appropriate services are provided within the borough for both domestic violence victims and those perpetrating violence against them.

The VAWG partner organisations, including all specialist VAWG services, housing and legal services, are required to make substantial savings due to the current financial climate. It is also expected that the welfare reforms will increase the challenges faced by survivors of violence in securing access to safe accommodation at an affordable rent close to their communities and local networks. The Council and the partners have recognised that partnership working will be of key importance to mitigating potential adverse impacts on the agenda. The Plan brings partner organisations together to be more effective in combating this problem whilst making more efficient use of resources.

Implementing the plan

The VAWG agenda cuts across a wide range of different operational services including health, housing, community safety organisations, and the community and voluntary sector. The Council and the partners' coordinated approach to tackling the VAWG issues in the borough are set out in the Action Plan attached to the VAWG Plan.

The Council has appointed a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Manager based in the Council's domestic violence and hate crime team (within the Community Safety team), who is responsible for working with the partners to ensure the delivery of the Action Plan. The Council and the partners, including health and housing organisations, have already established the borough's Domestic Violence One-Stop Shop, the Homeless Person's Unit Domestic Violence Service and a Domestic Violence Service at the Barkantine medical centre.¹¹ These services have been developed to include support and advice addressing all VAWG related issues.

The VAWG Plan has identified the following four key objectives, with which the Action Plan is aligned:

1. Develop understanding of VAWG and its impact
2. Preventing of VAWG
3. Support and Protection
4. Holding perpetrators to account for their actions

One of key aspects across the four objectives is to increase the awareness of the VAWG issue and reporting. The Action Plan includes a number of actions to achieve this, including:

- Work in partnership with partners' communications leads to develop a VAWG Communications Plan and promote our VAWG Plan. To achieve this, the partners, including the Council, the housing sector and school representatives, carry out the following:
 - 1) Work jointly and regularly with LBTH and partner Communications Teams to promote VAWG activities, awareness raising and campaigns.
 - 2) Increased campaigning and promotion of VAWG services, The One Stop Shop and Third Party reporting sites.

¹¹ See p. 8 of this paper about how these work.

- Provision of Third Party Reporting Sites – the Council is responsible for developing VAWG reporting centres within the borough where trained staff can offer immediate support or signposting to women and girls, for example at identified children’s centres, the Homeless Persons Unit (HPU), Health Centres, libraries, Ideas Stores, GP surgeries.

The overall VAWG Plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis at the VAWG Steering Group meeting commencing in December 2013. An annual progress report will be completed at the end of each financial year. The first review of the VAWG Plan will be early 2013, although individual action plans under each strand are reviewed and monitored at the strand steering group meetings.

Since the launch of the VAWG Plan, there have been a wide range of activities, actions and achievements including:

- Working with public health to develop a campaign against domestic violence and all forms of VAWG which commences on 25th November and runs until 10th December. The campaign includes a wide range of training and community awareness raising events¹²
- Development of a bus stop campaign linked to the ‘16 Days of Action against gender violence’ and ‘White Ribbon’ campaigns (outlined above) which starts on the 19th November for two weeks
- Leverage of funding from MOPAC for a VAWG Training and Awareness Officer who starts in December 2013 and a case management service for street based prostitution work which is currently being tendered
- Development and implementation of the Tower Hamlets’ Prostitution Partnership (THPP) Meetings, also known as ‘Prostitution MARAC’ which are multi-agency risk assessment and support planning meetings for street based sex workers at risk of serious harm
- Development of individual action plans under each strand, except domestic abuse where there has been an action plan for a number of years which is monitored by the domestic violence forum
- Implementation of a number of training programmes to professionals, including to health trainers and health champions from across Tower Hamlets
- Development of a wide range of VAWG partnerships across Tower Hamlets with both statutory and voluntary agencies.

Measuring success

Performance indicators are regularly monitored and discussed both at the Domestic Violence Forum and the Community Safety Partnership. Key trends that the data show include:

- The number of reported domestic violence has been upward. In 2010-11 (Oct-Sept), it was 1682; 1789 in 2011-12 (Oct-Sept); 1993 in 2012-13 (Apr-Mar). 6% up between 2010-11 and 2011-12.
- Domestic violence sanction detection rate increased from 43% (774) in 2011-12 to 48% (952) in 2012-13.
- The length of time domestic violence is experienced before it is reported to a specialist agency was 3.63 year in 2011-12 (Oct-Sept) and 2012-13 (Apr-Mar).
- In 2011-12 (Oct-Sept), the satisfaction rate of victims whose cases come through the Specialist Domestic Violence Court was 80-100%; it was 90-100% in 2012-13 (Apr-Mar).

¹² A newspaper article that reports the campaign led by the Council DV and Hate Crime team:
http://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/call_to_end_domestic_violence_in_tower_hamlets_1_3025408

Since it is believed that there are a number of unreported domestic violence incidents, the increase of reporting is considered favourable, demonstrating that women are more confident in reporting through various contacts that the council and partnership have made available.

Sharing experience

The LBTH domestic violence and hate crime team shares their experience with their partners, local authorities and other organisations. For example, the information on the VAWG Plan launch conference in May 2013 was widely shared. The conference was open to all other London local authorities. The information on the conference was shared through the MOPAC¹³ VAWG Coordinators' Group email list and also was discussed at a meeting. The information on the conference was publicised through a newsletter across national VAWG organisations including: Against Violence and Abuse, Women and Girls Network, End Violence Against Women (EVAW), Eaves and Women's Grid.

The team also work closely with other local authorities on a range of issues especially FGM and, to a lesser extent, prostitution. The domestic violence teams of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest comprise the East London FGM group. Observers from other boroughs attend some of Tower Hamlets prostitution MARAC meetings.

It is believed that LBTH is the only local authority to have a complete 'Domestic Violence 16 Days of Action Campaign'. The outcomes of the campaign will also be shared with other local authorities.

Conclusion

An understanding of the local community and a multi-faceted programme of engagement with residents, civil society organisations, voluntary sector partners and community leaders have been crucial to the progress made in this area. More victims than ever before are coming forward to report violence and as a result are being given access to services which can provide them with the tailored support they need. A key focus for the Council and Community Safety Partnership in developing this work further is to continue to support victims to report violence and through this reduce the length of time it takes for people to seek help.

¹³ The Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime.

A Modern and Diverse Workforce

Resources Directorate: *Workforce to Reflect the Community Strategy*

Background

The Council's first Workforce to Reflect the Community (WFTRC) strategy was published in 1998 and since then it has been a cornerstone of our work on promoting equality for staff and residents. We recognise that the benefits of recruiting a diverse workforce which reflects the profile of our local community are immense. Local candidates often have a better understanding of the experiences and needs of local people and are well placed to deliver responsive services. Over the last fifteen years we have seen real progress as a result of the many policies, strategies and practice which have been developed under the banner of our WFTRC policy. This case study outlines the progress made in this area and describes the work we have done over the last four years to continuously improve in this area and drive on-going improvements.

Target setting

Target setting has been a key driver for our work on WFTRC. These targets are part of the Council's Strategic Indicator set against which performance is monitored and publicly reported on a quarterly basis. Our progress against these key indicators is described in the table below and shows real improvement across all areas.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	1998 position	September 2013
Percentage of top 5% earners that are women (<i>target introduced 2003/04</i>)	36.6% (2002/3 figure)	48%
Percentage of top 5% of earners from minority ethnic communities (<i>target introduced 2003/04</i>)	13.4% (2002/3 figure)	21.8%
Percentage of top 5% of earners disabled (<i>target introduced 2004/05</i>)	3.6% (2004/5 figure)	5.9%
Percentage of disabled employees	2%	4.8%
Percentage of employees from minority ethnic communities	32%	54.8%
Percentage of Bangladeshi employees	8.3%	23.6%

The Workforce to Reflect the Community action plan

The WFTRC action plan is a key document which draws together the wide range of activities and interventions in place to deliver on our WFTRC objectives and targets. This action plan is refreshed on an annual basis and performance is monitored quarterly by the Corporate Management Team and Mayor's Advisory Board. The current action plan for 2013-4 is included in the attached evidence pack (3.20).

Recruitment

Despite an overall reduction in staff numbers as a result of our savings programme, we are continuing to recruit staff in a number of areas. Our apprenticeship and innovative new temporary staff resourcing service (ITRES) we are taking proactive steps to ensure that candidates from diverse backgrounds are able to secure employment, driving improvement in overall representation in the workforce.

Apprentice Scheme

We have run an administration apprenticeship schemes for a number of years but with the on-going reduction in local government finance we have begun to look more widely at those areas where we know that we will continue to need to recruit staff. Apprenticeship programmes have therefore been developed and are running in a number vocational areas including Planning and Building Control and Contract Services. Future programme are being developed in Youth Services and Parking Services. Through this refocused programme, the apprentice scheme continues to support the Council's objective to offer employment schemes to the young people of the borough. 53 apprenticeships (includes pre-apprenticeships) were started in between 2011-2013. The equality profile of the apprentices reflects our aspiration to improve the overall diversity of staff in the organisation. Half of all apprentices recruited between 2011-13 were women and seventy percent were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. In addition 10 pre-apprentice places were made available for young adults leaving care who received specialist support from the Leaving Care Service. We are keen that the skills gained by apprentices are not lost to the Council and all apprentices from the 2011-13 cohort remained with the Council after concluding their apprenticeships, through further training opportunities or employment contracts.

In-House Temporary Resourcing service (ITRES)

In 2012 we undertook analysis of the equality profile of agency workers. This showed that in almost every work category, there was an under-representation of people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds when compared to the ethnic profile of the borough.

In response to this we launched the 'In-House Temporary Resourcing Service' (ITRES) in April 2013 to work alongside our agency framework provider to prioritise the employment, on both a temporary and a permanent basis, of people from the borough. ITRES works with local SMEs and a number of community organisations who make referrals to ITRES. While still too early to provide any definitive information, the scheme is so far fulfilling its brief: the most recent statistics show that 53 of the 83 people in the pool and 50 of the 75 assignments went to people from the borough; a far higher percentage than that of other recruitment agencies working with our agency framework provider.

Talent management and representation at a senior level

Over the last two years a key focus for our work has been to improve the representation of women, people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people in senior positions. Whilst the equality profile of our senior tier of management has improved over time the percentage of women, people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people has remained just below the targets set. Because of lower than average turnover at this level, any progress by 'natural' means tended to be too slow for progress to be made at the speed we wanted to see.

To accelerate improvement in this area, in 2010 we reviewed and re-launched our talent management programmes, developing a suite of initiatives to enable staff across the organisation to progress and increase the proportion of staff in senior positions from under-represented groups.

The starting point for refreshing our talent management model was to review our existing staff development programmes, which included a number of positive action schemes. Between 2007 and 2010 we ran a number of accredited leadership and management development programmes including the Aspiring Leaders Programme and Step-Up Now. Both programmes were targeted at staff from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, two leadership management and development programmes (the Certificate in First Line Management and the Award in First Line Management) were offered to all staff. Analysis of the programme demonstrated that the proportion of participants who went on to secure higher grade jobs was very low and that while

participants valued the learning and development support offered they felt this was not always recognised by managers when recruiting for new roles. A new approach to talent management was therefore adopted replacing a traditional training course approach with a model based on personalised professional development and work-based learning. The Navigate programme is the cornerstone of this new approach and is described below, along with our graduate scheme.

Navigate

The Navigate initiative was implemented in July 2012 with the following key objectives:

- Support the WFTRC strategy to increase representation of women, black and minority ethnic staff and disabled staff in LP07 posts and above across the organisation
- Identify talent within the organisation
- Support the progression of staff at all levels of the organisation
- Provide Navigate members with a range of development opportunities to enhance experience, skills and knowledge.
- Achieve a richer talent pool at senior levels

Navigate is a programme of development activities that support individuals' career aspirations with a series of targeted learning and development interventions and offers individuals the opportunity to join a talent pool and to plan their career pathways and progression routes through developing their skills, knowledge and behaviours using a mixed learning approach. It is essentially a non-qualification route to development. Development activities are tailored through individual personal development plans developed with an independent consultant.

Acknowledging the different requirements of staff at different levels in the organisations, there are 3 talent pools as follows:

- Emerging Talent Pool (Scale 6 to PO2)
- Management Development Pool (PO3-PO6)
- Leadership Development Pool (LPO7 and above)

Although the full impact of the programme will not be clear for a number of year, early indications suggest it is already having an impact on progression of groups of people who are currently under-represented in senior management positions. The table below sets out an analysis of promotions between 2012-13 by equality group and demonstrates that progress has been made in increasing the representation of staff from under-represented groups in promotions:

Equality group	Percentage of staff	Percentage of promotions secured (2012/13)
Women	63%	65%
Black and minority ethnic staff	54%	61.5%
Bangladeshi staff	23%	31%
LGB staff	3.2%	5.1%
Disabled staff	4%	3.1%

Graduate Programme

The graduate programme began over 10 years ago with the recruitment of 26 local graduates and has proved a successful mechanism for recruiting and training highly talented local graduates for future careers within the Council. Like our apprentice scheme, the intake is restricted to Tower Hamlets residents and, as we would expect given the profile of our youth population, we see a high proportion of black and minority ethnic candidates apply each year. In 2013 we recruited 21 graduates through the scheme, 86 percent of whom are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and 5 percent of whom have a disability .

With regard to changing the make-up of the workforce to better reflect that of the community, the key success criteria is whether the apprentices and graduates stay with the Council. The significant effort made to help apprentices and graduates through the redeployment process has achieved a high degree of success; of the most recent intake, 20 of the 21 gained jobs with the Council.

Vacancy Assurance

In addition to our talent management programmes, we have developed a new process to scrutinise recruitment and the management of vacancies at PO5 level and above. A panel of senior managers challenge managers seeking to recruit to ensure they are maximising opportunities for staff to progress through to senior roles by effective use of secondments and acting-up opportunities. They will also be required to show how they use recruitment processes to increase the diversity of its senior managers, particularly in terms of disability and ethnicity.

Staff satisfaction: Building One Tower Hamlets in the workplace

Staff Equality Forums

We have three Staff Equality Forums, each of which was developed in response to specific drivers. The LGBT Staff Forum arose from a recommendation made in a research project into the experiences of LGBT staff commissioned by the corporate Diversity and Equality Team in 2007. The Disabled Staff Forum was initiated as part of our Disability Employment Scheme action plan in 2007 undertaken in response to consistent under-representation of disabled people in our workforce. The BME Staff Forum was created based on feedback from staff following a BME Women's Conference for Council staff. Each of the forums has a member of our Corporate Management Team who acts as a senior sponsor. Each Forum is supported by the One Tower Hamlets Team and a senior managers from HR attends all meetings to hear the experiences and concerns of members and to work with members to address these. All Council HR Policies are consulted upon with the Forums in the same way and at the same time as consultation with the trade unions takes place.

Following a review process led by the One Tower Hamlets team and a diversity consultant from Stonewall in summer 2013, we have put in place a series of measures to further strengthen the impact Forum members are able to have on Council business. These include a series of workshops run for members from all three forums to enable them to feed directly into strategic planning in the following areas which they identified as priorities:

- Learning and development
- Communications and awareness raising of diverse staff needs and experiences
- HR policy reviews
- Career progression

HR policy and practice

The Council has a broad range of policies dealing with equalities issues and all key HR policies overtly address equalities. This is not a static process. For example in light of requests for additional guidance for managers, a guide to Access to Work for Managers has been produced, in concert with the Disabled Forum. Similarly a Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (including a 'parachute' scheme) is currently being consulted upon with the Disabled Staff Forum and trade unions.

Equality Analyses

The use of equality analyses has contributed to progress on key areas of the WFTRC Strategy by assessing the impact of Human Resources policies have on the workforce by informing the decision-making process before any decisions are made.

In light of recent WFTRC Action Plans, HR has:

- Instigated a rolling review of all HR policies. The three Staff Forums and the trade unions are formally part of the consultation process.
- Undertaken to increase the number and effectiveness of exit interviews with a view to improving why under-represented groups leave the Council's employment
- Continue to produce quarterly HR effectiveness reports for CMT. The reports analyse employment data including data on our WFTRC targets and makes recommendations for corrective actions
- Where the Council uses search agencies to recruit to senior posts, the contract with the agency requires that they provide a detailed report of efforts made to secure candidates from BME backgrounds, including groups they have networked with, and the headhunting they have undertaken.

Learning and development

Achieving consistency in practice across all Council services is a key theme of our work. A fundamental aspect of progress has been instituting standards for managers' engagement with staff through the Council-wide Performance Development and Review (PDR) scheme, One-to-Ones and Team Meetings. These processes simultaneously reinforce expectations around equality and diversity by requiring managers to agree relevant individual objectives relating to equalities and diversity for every employee.

Valuing Diversity is one of the four key values of the Council's Core Values and Leadership and Management Framework, and informs all operational considerations. For example all Person Specifications include a Valuing Diversity section whereby the recruiting manager is required to address the equalities requirements of the post to which they are recruiting.

London Living Wage

The Council has continued with its commitment to pay the London Living Wage to both staff and agency workers. The announcement in November 2013 of an increase in the LLW from £8.55 to £8.80 will result in salary increases for 495 employees, over 80% of whom are women. In addition, all new procurement contracts contain a clause committing payment of the LLW to all contracted staff. The Council is currently applying for LLW accreditation.

Conclusion

Since the launch of our Workforce to Reflect the Community Strategy in 1998, the diversity of our workforce has increased significantly. We know that by continuing to strive for a modern and diverse workforce we will directly contribute to excellent service provision and improving outcomes for local communities.

Whilst work continues on our key WFTRC targets, and some of our achievements are cause for celebration, we are determined not to rest on our laurels. We will continue to measure and monitor the results of the work carried out and adapt our future actions in the light of that analyse.
