

**2020 VISION  
THE TOWER HAMLETS COMMUNITY PLAN**

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## **CHAIR'S FOREWORD**

I am delighted to present the new Tower Hamlets Community Plan on behalf of the Tower Hamlets Partnership.

This plan explains how we will improve the quality of life in Tower Hamlets over the next decade or so in a whole range of areas – from education for our children and young people to support and care for some of the oldest and most vulnerable people.

The Tower Hamlets Partnership has put this Community Plan together. The Partnership brings together all of the key stakeholders in the borough - residents, the council, the police, the health service, other public services, voluntary and community groups, housing associations, faith communities and businesses.

We have been listening. To develop the vision and priorities we've held public meetings across the borough which hundreds of people attended to give their views. The Community Plan reflects the aspirations and needs of residents and people who work and invest in the borough.

The consultation brought out many of the positive features of Tower Hamlets – its great diversity, the wealth of opportunities and strong communities. People in Tower Hamlets have much to be proud of. However, I know that much more needs to be done and there are immense challenges facing us across a whole range of areas.

Everyone should realise their full potential in Tower Hamlets. We want to raise ambitions and increase opportunities, particularly in our most deprived areas and communities.

The aspiration of 'One Tower Hamlets' runs throughout the Community Plan. One Tower Hamlets is about reducing the inequalities and poverty that we see around us, strengthening cohesion and making sure our communities continue to live well together. Most of all, One Tower Hamlets is about recognising that we all have a part to play in making this a reality.

The challenges ahead are significant, but so are the opportunities. The aims of this Community Plan are very ambitious – and I make no apologies for that. The residents of Tower Hamlets deserve the very best. We will continue to aim high and seize opportunities.

Of course, a Plan won't change Tower Hamlets - only its delivery can. I am looking forward to working with you all to make this work for Tower Hamlets.

**Councillor Lutfur Rahman**  
**Chair of the Tower Hamlets Partnership**  
**Leader of Tower Hamlets Council**

## **THE STORY SO FAR**

Tower Hamlets is changing. It's changing fast – and for the better!

The landscape has altered vastly since the first Community Plan was published by the Tower Hamlets Partnership in 2001. The population has grown and diversified. East London is preparing to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games - and new local and national priorities have emerged.

All this at a time when significant investment in local public services is bearing fruit.

Crime has been cut by almost 24% over the past four years, thanks to a range of initiatives and campaigns targeting crime hotspots. This represents a drop in all crime types including violence, burglary, motor vehicle crime and robbery. Also, our success in reducing reoffending was recognised with a Beacon Award.

Health and fitness levels show signs of improving – with leisure centre attendances soaring to a record 1.45 million. The number of older people using local facilities in particular is up by around 5% – one of the many ways that the major review of Older People as Citizens has helped to boost local services for older people.

Our Children's Centres offer health, employment, education and parenting support to families with children under five. Education standards in the borough have improved dramatically - our 11 year olds now achieve above the national average and we are the most improved borough in the country for results at GCSE.

As a borough, we have invested in high quality activities and places to go for our young people. Around a third of all young people are in contact with our youth services and we are opening up our schools to local people providing sporting, recreational and cultural activities.

Since 1998, the number of jobs has increased in the borough by 41%, and it is projected that another 150,000 jobs will be created by 2020 – making Tower Hamlets one of the top growth areas in the country.

In recent years, over £450 million of much-needed investment has been secured for local estates – and through the setting up of Tower Hamlets Homes - a new way of managing Council housing – further significant investment could be available.

As a result of all this activity, Tower Hamlets has been ranked among the most improved performers over the past three years – and the Council is one of only 10 councils reckoned to be 'improving strongly' for the past two years by the public service watchdog, the Audit Commission.

Throughout all of this change and improvement, Tower Hamlets remains a place of contrast, where wealth and affluence sit beside poverty in many

areas. It is also a place of diversity, variety and considerable opportunity. The key facts below give a sense of some of these contrasts.

Expensive new private riverside housing developments rub shoulders with social housing estates. Tower Hamlets now has one of the highest population densities in inner London. It's projected that by 2017, there will be a further 31,500 new homes in the borough.

Housing affordability is low by national standards - with an average house price of £305,363; that's 60.5% higher than the average in England and Wales - and out of reach for most local people.

The inequality is stark: whilst the average salary for those working in Tower Hamlets is nearly £69,000, 23% of families living on less than £15,000. This all means that Tower Hamlets is the third most deprived borough in the country.

Tower Hamlets is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the country. About half of the total population are from black and minority ethnic communities, and around 110 different languages are spoken by our school pupils.

There are many new communities moving into the borough which will contribute to a changing profile of the community over the next ten years.

Our population is expected to reach 300,000 by 2020.

Although things are improving, average life expectancy at birth is 77.4 years, ranking Tower Hamlets 349<sup>th</sup> out of 408 boroughs in Britain.

The proportion of young people living in Tower Hamlets currently stands at 28%, which is much higher than the 18% average for the rest of inner London, and over 78% of our young people are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

When Tower Hamlets helps to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, we will have the world's greatest sporting occasion on our doorstep. A number of events will be taking place right here in Tower Hamlets, including the marathon which will pass along Whitechapel Road, Mile End Road and Bow Road – our "High Street 2012".

An emerging priority, which wasn't prominent in the borough's first Community Plan, is climate change. As a dense urban area with a high level of development, local energy use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are high. Helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality is therefore a new and significant challenge. Lifestyle changes and difficult choices will have to be made in future years.

The new Community Plan recognises that Tower Hamlets is a 'community of communities' - so a one-size-fits-all approach to problem solving, services and improvements will not work.

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Our challenge is, and will continue to be, to make sure that the many different and specific needs that exist in Tower Hamlets are identified, understood and addressed.

The next section – Living Up To People’s Aspirations - explains how the Partnership has set about achieving these aims in preparing the new Community Plan to 2020.

## **LIVING UP TO PEOPLE'S ASPIRATIONS**

A Community Plan must represent the aspirations of the people it affects - recognising differences between people, as well as common issues affecting neighbourhoods and community groups.

That's why the Tower Hamlets 2020 Community Plan was produced only after comprehensive resident involvement. It takes on the views of partners and takes account of recent consultation findings and the latest research on population, social and economic trends.

The consultation process included four large community events, involving over 400 local residents from all eight Local Area Partnership areas. Residents of all ages and backgrounds came together to talk to senior managers and councillors about the issues that matter to them. There has also been consultation with different groups in the borough including sessions with the Interfaith Forum, the Disabled Access Group, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum, Tower Hamlets Housing Forum and additional work with young and older people.

In addition to consultation events with residents, the Partnership also consulted widely with local business groups and individuals, and organisations representing the diversity of our communities.

In short, residents, businesses and partner agencies have worked side by side in developing the 2020 Community Plan - so that the final vision is informed by the aspirations of the community as a whole. The Plan's priorities address the consultation findings, and these have helped shape the Local Area Agreement – which sets out our key targets for the next 3 years.

A number of common issues have emerged as significant priorities:

- The need for more affordable housing - particularly for families
- A concern about the level of crime and the fear of crime
- The need for more opportunities for residents to get into training, access lifelong learning opportunities and acquire the skills for employment to exploit job opportunities
- The importance of retaining the richness of Tower Hamlets' diversity
- The importance of place shaping and ensuring connected and cohesive communities through planning and design
- Reducing health inequalities
- The need to have, and encourage, respect among communities
- The importance of personal responsibility
- Making sure that the whole community benefit fully from growth

These priorities have shaped and informed the 2020 Community Plan.

The Partnership also looked at the hard evidence in the form of past and current research on performance and context – including a large-scale needs-analysis.

This highlighted current issues for different service areas; how well services were currently performing and levels of need expected over the life of the Plan. This part of the Plan's development included looking at existing service plans, policies and performance reports, in addition to analysis of London-wide and national research papers.

The Community Plan provides the long-term vision for Tower Hamlets. Many individuals and organisations have helped to develop it, and will help to deliver it. There are already a number of key long-term plans in place, such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan, which have helped to inform this Community Plan's development.

The new Community Plan has also been developed alongside the borough's Local Development Framework (LDF) – which sets out the plan for the physical changes taking place in the borough – so that the new LDF reflects the ambitions, aspirations and priorities of the Community Plan.

But the 2020 Community Plan is more than the sum of existing plans – it provides a new vision and framework, from which all future Partnership strategies will take their lead.

## **BUILDING ONE TOWER HAMLETS**

The aim of the 2020 Community Plan is to *“improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough.”*

To turn this vision into reality, the Plan is split into four themes – each designed to confront the challenges and opportunities highlighted in previous sections and deliver lasting improvements for local people.

The four themes are

- ~ A Great Place to Live
- ~ A Prosperous Community
- ~ A Safe and Supportive Community
- ~ A Healthy Community

Underpinning all these themes is a desire to build One Tower Hamlets - a borough where everyone has an equal stake and status; where people have the same opportunities as their neighbours, where people have a responsibility to contribute; and where families are the cornerstone of success.

Tower Hamlets has benefited from massive inward investment over the past ten years, along with a changing skyline and significant service improvements, but this has not filtered through to enough local residents' day to day lives. Given this, tackling poverty and inequality will be a prime focus of the Partnership so that over the life of this Community Plan such stark differences no longer remain a reality.

One Tower Hamlets also means bringing different parts of the community together, encouraging positive relationships and tackling divisions between communities – as well as providing strong leadership, involving people and giving them the tools and support to improve their lives. People's participation in the Partnership is critical. We will only be successful if we keep listening to, and acting on, your feedback – so that together we can drive forward the improvements we all want to see.

It's also about the Partnership working together efficiently and effectively to achieve One Tower Hamlets. Making sure that we join up our resources and services to drive the community plan priorities and provide value for money to local people.

There's more detailed information about the four themes, and how they support One Tower Hamlets, in the later section headed TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY. Below is a taste of how the Partnership would like to see Tower Hamlets develop through the Community Plan by 2020.

### **A great place to live**

By 2020 Tower Hamlets will continue to be a place that attracts people – to settle and raise families, to study, to work in a thriving local economy and enjoy the rich cultural life. The ambition is for everyone to have the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford – and for all children to have a bedroom of their own.

Many neighbourhoods and estates will undergo major investment to improve the quality of homes, and public spaces through better lighting.

Residents will benefit from improved transport networks, linking communities to different areas of the borough and key services.

Older residents will enjoy fulfilling retirements with access to first class leisure and support services with more activities delivered from improved community centres.

Our focus on long lasting and environmentally-friendly improvements will benefit current and future generations.

The huge economic growth in Canary Wharf and elsewhere in the borough will be used as a vital tool to secure improvements for local people.

Our town centres will be vibrant places to shop, spend our leisure time and do business.

The Olympic Park will be a distinctive, high quality new place providing world class sporting venues and parkland for local people.

Schools, children's centres and youth services will be at the heart of their communities.

Our Third Sector will thrive, contributing more to Partnership efforts to improve the quality of life for all those who live and work in the borough.

### **A prosperous community**

By 2020 partnership working with both large and small businesses throughout Tower Hamlets will help ensure that employment opportunities are available to all local people.

Our children and young people will learn from the best teachers and gain qualifications that allow them to pursue their career goals.

Lifelong learning opportunities will be plentiful with more people achieving qualifications that enable them to pursue further and higher education and get jobs.

New residents will be supported to learn English, so that they can make friends, feel integrated and seek employment.

Local people will have the skills and training to get employment and the range of issues associated with worklessness such as poor housing and debt, will be tackled together.

Tower Hamlets will be known as a place where entrepreneurship and local enterprise is successful.

Fewer children will be living in poverty.

### **A safe and supportive community**

By 2020 crime and antisocial behaviour will be greatly reduced in our neighbourhoods so that all residents and visitors, young and old, feel safe and confident in their homes and on the streets.

Tackling the root causes of crime will pay off as schemes designed to turn people away from crime and onto more productive paths succeed.

Everyone will have a choice of quality support services so that they can achieve their full potential and receive support in the way they want and need. Services will ensure everyone, particularly the vulnerable, is protected from risk of harm and enabled to live a full and independent life.

Parents and families will get the support they need to give children the best possible start in life.

Schemes which address the problems of families and individuals at an early stage – and offer support - will be key to improving the safety of local communities.

### **A healthy community**

By 2020 local people will live longer and healthier lives.

The wider influences on health such as poverty, housing and employment will have improved making it easier for people to lead healthy lives.

Everyone in our communities will be aware of how lifestyle choices affect their own and their family's health and wellbeing and there will be more opportunities and support to make healthy choices.

Health inequalities will be greatly reduced as people choose to stop using tobacco, have safer sex, eat a balanced diet, be more active and get advice sooner for health concerns.

Health care will focus more on health promotion and prevention of illness and schools, workplaces and all partners will promote health lifestyles.

More children and young people will make healthy lifestyle choices, improving their health now and as they grow up.

Everyone will have access to high-quality, local health and social care services, from primary care at GP surgeries to maternity care and mental health services.

In the following section – TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY - we explain how the 2020 Community Plan aims to achieve the goals it has set itself. It looks at the priorities and objectives set under each of the four themes – and also shows some of the results residents can expect over the next three years.

The vital role that everyone who lives and works in Tower Hamlets has in the Plan's success is also highlighted - stressing that we all have a part in delivering each theme's objectives and supporting One Tower Hamlets.

## **TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY**

In the Looking to the Future section, we gave a brief run through of the four main themes contained in the 2020 Community Plan – and looked at where we wanted to be by the year 2020.

This section looks at each of the themes in detail, including charting the key objectives and priorities that have been set by the Partnership to deliver the 2020 Community Plan.

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

A Great Place to Live reflects our aspiration that Tower Hamlets should be a place where people enjoy living, working and studying and take active pride in belonging.

Central to the Partnership's vision, and its Great Place to Live aspiration, is ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford.

Housing in Tower Hamlets continues to be a major issue for the people who live or want to live in the borough. Whether it involves getting a basic repair done, living in an overcrowded house or waiting to get on the first rung of the home ownership ladder, there are a range of housing challenges that are in the way of people getting on with their day-to-day lives and achieving a decent standard of living.

The housing challenge is immense. There is currently not enough housing supply in the borough to meet housing needs. There is also mismatch in available affordable housing supply, with not enough homes for families. The affordability of homes is a key concern for many local people – whether they've grown up in the area or recently moved in. House prices have gone up significantly over the last decade – making home ownership unrealistic for many who live and work here. In addition, high levels of overcrowding remain and much social housing, including Council homes, need improvement.

Although significant progress has been made in reducing overcrowding, the issue continues to be a major blight on some of the most vulnerable groups in the community. It is a major constraint on children and young adults who are learning at school and college but have little or no space at home to study. Ensuring supply of affordable, family housing is a key priority: the Partnership aspires for all children to have a bedroom of their own.

The Partnership is committed to using every tool available to ensure that residents can live in a decent home which they can afford. Tower Hamlets already delivers a comparatively large amount of affordable housing - over 1,000 affordable homes in 2007/08 – more than any other council but even more progress is needed.

The Partnership is keen to ensure that there is a better supply of intermediate housing – such as shared ownership and key worker home-buy - for families

on low to medium incomes in Tower Hamlets. Historically, many residents whose housing requirements have grown have – if financially able – chosen to move out of the borough where prices are lower and where the typical house type – with a garden – is more in line with their aspirations of a family home. Tower Hamlets is committed to creating more housing choices for residents on low to medium incomes with children that wish to stay in the borough.

However, much more also needs to be done to help develop more affordable housing for rent. Given the significant gap between household income and house prices locally, intermediate ‘affordable’ homes will remain out of reach for many people. Given the high proportion of children and young people in the borough and the comparatively large household size, there will be a particular focus on affordable family homes for rent in the social sector – with three or more bedrooms.

The Partnership also has to deal with the legacy of poor quality social housing erected in the past, which is now in need of renovation. To ensure all local social housing meets the Government’s Decent Home Standard, the Council has transferred many estates to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), mostly housing associations, who have the money to make the necessary improvements. Community Plan housing targets will also be supported by a new Arms Length Management Organisation, Tower Hamlets Homes, which is being set up to attract much-needed investment into homes retained by the Council.

Ensuring the effective management of social housing is also of paramount importance. The Partnership will work closely with the Council and RSLs to ensure residents are getting an excellent service both in terms of housing quality and activities designed to improve the quality of life of residents.

Market housing – both to rent and to buy – will remain a key issue. Helping residents to rent homes in the private sector is an important part of this theme and the Partnership is committed to seeing the decent homes standard delivered for vulnerable tenants in the private rented sector.

Decent living conditions are not defined simply by providing high-quality affordable housing, important though this is. They are also about the availability of local community facilities - like schools, parks and health services, and the safety of shared space. The Partnership will work so that housing is not developed in isolation, and that transport, schools and other services are developed side by side. Schools will be at the heart of their communities, opening their doors to people of all ages.

Whilst the borough has seen major development and improvements in public services over the past ten years, there are still many areas that require attention and improvement.

Residents want quality services in their communities - located in buildings that are easy to use and get to - and attractive to visit. Where these services don’t currently exist, the Partnership must work together to provide them.

As a small inner London borough, green open space is at a premium - so challenges lie in providing more and better quality open space for recreation and ensuring old and new urban environments are designed or remodelled to high standards of cleanliness and safety, with good lighting.

A commitment to environmentally-friendly improvements is also at the heart of this theme. With so many changes taking place in people's neighbourhoods, partners must ensure that developments don't harm the local environment – and improve it wherever possible. This means contributing to national and local targets for improving energy efficiency, improving air quality and tackling and adapting to climate change.

Local people also want access to services and opportunities that bring fun and enjoyment into everyday life. With this in mind, the Partnership will work to ensure that more leisure, sport, entertainment and cultural opportunities are developed and delivered in the area - building on the success of well-received projects like Spa London, Mile End Park and Leisure Centre, Tower Hamlets' four Idea Stores and the over 80 community festivals delivered every year. We will also work to make the Olympic Park site (the largest urban park to be created in Europe in the last 150 years) and its venues accessible to local people.

Something else local people want is vibrant communities, prosperous town centres and community buildings – easy-to-get-to places where they can meet friends and neighbours. It is the Partnership's vision that Tower Hamlets, and particularly our town centres, should offer a variety of opportunities for entertainment, shopping, culture and enterprise befitting both residents and visitors.

Central London's venues, landmarks and job opportunities are nearby - so decent transport links are also very important. We have secured important transport improvements such as Crossrail and increased capacity on the Docklands Light Railway. We will continue to work closely with partners such as Transport for London so that people can move around as easily as possible and minimise any disruption during improvement works. We also want to promote the value of green transport like cycling and walking, working with partners to make getting around the borough easier for cyclists and pedestrians.

There are a number of challenges in achieving the progress we aspire to - not least the cost of land, the scale of change and speed of local growth - but we have many unique opportunities that will help us ensure all residents believe Tower Hamlets is a great place to live. We cannot succeed without the active involvement of local communities, particularly through our thriving Third Sector. It is the residents and businesses that shape local improvements - by making positive use of better public facilities, while respecting public spaces and each other.

## **The Priorities**

Providing affordable housing and strong neighbourhoods by:

- Increasing the overall supply of housing for local people including a range of affordable, family housing
- Providing decent homes in well designed streets and neighbourhoods
- Planning new neighbourhoods with supporting services like primary schools, healthcare facilities and local parks
- Improving the quality of housing management and related services provided to tenants and leaseholders

Strengthening and connecting communities by:

- Improving public transport networks and enabling more residents to walk and cycle safely
- Bringing together communities to foster mutual understanding, a collective sense of wellbeing and avoid people being isolated
- Ensuring communities have good access to a full range of facilities - including health services, schools and leisure

Supporting vibrant town centres and a cleaner, safer public realm by:

- Providing first-class and well managed centres where people come together for business, shopping, leisure and recreation
- Supporting and improving open spaces
- Improving street lighting and reducing graffiti and litter

Improving the environment and tackling climate change by:

- Reducing energy use and using more renewable energy sources
- Focusing on reusing wherever possible and recycling more
- Adapting our built environment to cope with the changing climate and weather patterns

### **We can all help to achieve this by:**

Committing to Tower Hamlets' fight against climate change by reducing the amount of energy and water used in the home, cutting back on waste and recycling wherever possible

Taking pride in, and responsibility for, community facilities such as local open spaces for the benefit of everyone

Being considerate of others by not littering - and by reporting problems like antisocial behaviour and graffiti

Supporting local business and enterprise initiatives by shopping locally – including using Tower Hamlets' vibrant markets

Recognising what new and existing communities have in common - and valuing the borough's diversity

Getting involved in our community – perhaps by volunteering to help a local organisation or group

For those building in the borough – by prioritising environmental sustainability and quality design

and make **One Tower Hamlets** by:-

- ~ improving access to facilities and services that exist in different parts of the borough
- ~ thinking about how our actions affect our neighbours – and taking tough decisions when it comes to personal responsibility for things like not using cars, turning off lights and not dropping litter
- ~ engaging communities in important decisions so that choices are made with the community, not on their behalf
- ~ using culture, leisure and sport to bring together communities across all ages and backgrounds
- ~ ensuring the built environment is designed to high quality standards so it is inclusive and safe for all
- ~ helping people to get decent homes

**Over the next three years we will:**

Support the supply of 8997 more new homes

Support the supply of 5064 affordable homes, including xxx family sized social rented homes, xxxx smaller social rented homes; and xxx intermediate Low Cost Home Ownership homes

Increase the proportion of Council homes meeting the Decent Homes standard by 12% and RSL homes by xx%

Increase residents overall satisfaction with the local area

Increase the proportion of people from different backgrounds who get on well together in their local area

Reduce the level of CO2 emissions that are produced in the borough by 10%

Increase the proportion of waste that households recycle or compost to 32%

Make our streets cleaner and reduce incidents of graffiti and fly tipping

Reduce the number of people that are killed or seriously injured on our roads in road traffic accidents by 15%

Support the environment for a thriving third sector with an increased proportion of local voluntary and community organisations recognising this support

### **Delivering success**

The Partnership's Local Area Agreement (LAA) will set targets to drive progress over the first three years of the Community Plan – to help keep Tower Hamlets as a Great Place to Live. The LAA includes ambitious targets around new affordable homes built, cutting local CO2 emissions and increasing the proportion of waste recycled.

A number of key strategies are being put in place to deliver specific priorities and objectives identified in this theme - most notably the Local Development Framework (LDF), which is being developed alongside the 2020 Community Plan. The LDF will set policies to guide investment in infrastructure for the next 10-15 years as well as setting criteria to support new development and regeneration projects.

The LDF along with other local strategies will ensure that community facilities are in place to support the large number of new jobs and homes expected in particular areas – whilst also improving the quality of life for existing residents. For example the Council and Primary Care Trust will work together to implement its Health and Wellbeing Strategy, including an investment programme to bring local health facilities up to the highest modern standards.

The Council will establish an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) as part of a borough wide housing investment programme to make improvements to our social housing estates.

The Council is also developing a Public Realm Strategy to improve the quality and safety of our neighbourhoods, particularly town centres, and link this extended investment programme to the borough's open space network. We will use High Street 2012 as a model project to improve the quality of our road corridors as places for people.

The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics in East London are a real opportunity for the borough and our existing Legacy Strategy is helping to ensure that the Games really benefit local people. We will continue to work with other boroughs, the London Development Agency and Greater London Authority and the Olympic Authorities on the Legacy Master Plan to shape development beyond 2012.

### **Changing People's Lives**

Case studies - Millennium Quarter / St Paul's Way

## **A Prosperous Community**

Much of Tower Hamlets is booming - thanks largely to the unprecedented growth of Canary Wharf and our closeness to the City.

The average business size is the second highest in the capital, because there are so many major employers, and there is also a healthy enterprise culture. The economic activity has led to Tower Hamlets having the fastest employment growth in the country.

Yet, despite this, unemployment levels are higher than both the London and national averages. This is mainly due to comparatively low levels of basic skills but also because of a range of other factors which affect worklessness. The Partnership is aware that worklessness is a complex issue, with contributing factors ranging from ill-health to transport, debt to cultural barriers and discrimination.

We will help people to confront these different causes of worklessness – whether it be barriers faced by specific groups, like disabled people and vulnerable adults, the existence of ageism or because some people lack family role models to see employment as an option.

One thing is common: worklessness traps families - denying them the money and choices to get out of poverty and improve their quality of life.

In short, there is no shortage of jobs in the borough – but many local people don't have the support, confidence or necessary skills to take advantage of the work on their doorstep.

We know that education is the best way to break the cycle of poverty and give people a step-up into employment, so a key priority for the Prosperous Community theme is to ensure that local people have access to lifelong learning opportunities. This means making high quality education available for residents of all ages - from those entering nursery and primary school to older people and pensioners wanting to learn new skills. Opportunities for lifelong learning will be diverse to suit all needs, whether you're a new resident trying to improve your English or just wanting to try something different in your spare time.

Many nurseries and schools in Tower Hamlets are offering our children and young people an outstanding education that gives them the opportunity to thrive. But we know that there is more to do so that every child makes the progress they are capable of, especially in English and mathematics.

We are putting considerable investment into our schools buildings so that every local child has the best possible start in life in terms of schooling. This investment will pay dividends by 2020, when more young people will leave school with qualifications and skills that will help them into employment and successful careers. We also recognise that people learn in different ways - so more high-quality and stretching apprenticeships and vocational courses will

be made available to young people, leading to stable jobs. The Third Sector will play a significant role in developing and delivering lifelong learning opportunities in an environment that supports and empowers them to do so.

The Partnership chose to include a number of employment and skills related targets in Tower Hamlets' Local Area Agreement - reflecting the importance of this issue in making Tower Hamlets a more prosperous place.

These targets will help drive our progress against our ambitions as we improve skills and the employment rate in the borough, increase the number of disabled residents in work and reduce the number of residents on out of work benefits.

The Local Area Agreement, and the work that supports it, will bring about real and significant improvements for local people by 2011; progress that will be further built upon up to 2020.

It will also be important for the Partnership to shape national and regional regeneration programmes so that they meet the needs of local people.

Tower Hamlets is a 2012 Olympics and Paralympics host borough and the importance of this cannot be understated. 30,000 new jobs will be created in nearby Stratford and the Olympic Village in East London will create 4 million square feet of commercial space – providing additional opportunities for local residents and businesses.

Tower Hamlets is experiencing growth in every sense - with more and more people moving in to live and work, new businesses and employment sectors relocating here and the economy growing fast. In addition, the development of the Thames Gateway is set to bring even more growth for Tower Hamlets.

But prosperity is not just about wealth. It is about ensuring all residents have the support, skills and encouragement to make the best of their lives. Jobs provide people with fulfilment, purpose and the means to enjoy life.

We are committed to making this a reality for all residents by actively supporting more people into work, giving people access to the training they need to be job-ready and by encouraging enterprise and fostering new industries.

### **The Priorities**

Supporting excellent learning opportunities for all by

- Investing in the under 5s whose development provides the best possible foundation for long term success
- Providing high quality schools, so that young people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their full potential
- Providing continuous learning opportunities, so everyone can learn basic and new skills at any age

Reducing worklessness by

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- Helping families escape poverty, by providing employment support and advice on debt management
- Identifying and removing barriers to employment for target groups
- Helping people to get and keep employment by ensuring there is support and training before and after they get a job

### Fostering enterprise by

- Providing incentives that encourage both business and social entrepreneurship
- Maximising the opportunities for local businesses to benefit from key growth sectors, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Promoting Tower Hamlets businesses and encouraging growth and tourism, with particular emphasis on the Olympics and Paralympics

### **We can all help to achieve this by:**

Taking responsibility for our own learning and development - by pursuing lifelong learning opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge

Encouraging young people to get the most out of their education

Creating more employment and training opportunities for local people, if they run a business

and make **One Tower Hamlets** by:

~ continuing to focus on improving school results and skill levels, further narrowing the gap between ourselves and the best performing parts of the country

~ highlighting opportunities, and supporting people to seize them, including the employment potential offered by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

~ recognising that people have individual needs when designing and delivering services – and ensuring that nobody is discriminated against on account of their race, disability, gender, age, sexuality or faith

~ recognising the importance of the family in supporting prosperous communities

### **Over the next three years we will:**

Increase the proportion of local people in employment by 2.5% to 55.7% - around 3,500 additional people into work

Reduce the number of local people on out of work benefits by 2% - a reduction of 2876 people

Increase the number of adults with learning difficulties in jobs

Increase the number of adults, who are getting support from mental health services, in jobs

## Council draft

Ensure the proportion of 19 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification (GCSE, Intermediate GNVQ, BTEC First Diploma, NVQ 2), rises by 13.8% to 71.8%

Ensure the proportion of 19 year olds with a level 3 (Intermediate GNVQ, 4 GCSEs) qualification rises by 9% to 46%

Increase the proportion of young people achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics

Reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds who aren't in education, employment or training from 8.2% to 6%

Increase the number of young people from families with low incomes going on to higher education

Reduce the number of children living in poverty by 4.5% - around 1078 fewer children

Increase the number of young people participating in positive activities

Increase the opportunities to learn English as a second language (ESOL)

### **Delivering success**

In addition to the Partnership's Local Area Agreement, a number of important strategies and plans will help to deliver results within this theme.

Most notable are the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and the borough's Regeneration Strategy. The CYPP outlines how we will deliver services for children and young people, and is focused on the Partnership commitment to continuous improvement.

It brings together, in one place, the most important actions planned to make sure that services work together and make a difference to the lives of all children and young people – particularly around skills and achievement.

The borough's Regeneration Strategy aims to bring more investment into the borough and ensure that all our residents and businesses are in a position to benefit from, and contribute to, increasing economic prosperity.

This strategy sits within various sub-regional and regional economic development strategies, most importantly the London Economic Development Strategy. At the same time, it supports other key strategies such as the London Plan and the London Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework. As Europe's largest regeneration project, the scale of the Gateway development is breathtaking. It will create thousands of new jobs and better connect London to the South East.

<b>Changing People's Lives Case-study - To be agreed</b>
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## **A Safe and Supportive Community**

The Safe and Supportive Community theme represents a desire for Tower Hamlets to be a place where everyone can achieve their full potential.

This means a place where crime is rare and tackled effectively, and where communities live in peace together. It also means somewhere where everyone, young and old, has equal access to choices, chances and power.

The Partnership recognises that the disadvantages faced by many local residents - in terms of employment, housing and health - increases the risk of them not feeling part of the local community. Local public services need to identify those who are most at risk and support them so that they can fulfil their potential.

Reducing inequality and removing the causes of crime are strongly linked. Local crime has fallen by nearly a quarter over the past four years, with a reduction in all crime types including violence, burglary, motor vehicle crime and robbery. In the past year alone, violent crime has fallen 9% and personal and commercial robberies by 27%. However, crime remains significantly higher than the national average – and a sizeable stumbling block to progress. It is recognised that the most disadvantaged people are often most at risk of becoming both perpetrators and victims of crime. This knowledge places us in a strong position to focus resources and action over the coming years.

Delivering a Safe and Supportive Community has two key aspects.

The first is providing excellent services to everybody - including high-quality housing, schools and healthcare. Such services form part of every theme in this plan. The second involves providing excellent services for our most excluded groups and to those at risk of becoming excluded. Over time, work on both of these areas will make a powerful impact on both disadvantage and crime.

Alongside this long-term approach, we will continue to crack down on crime through effective law enforcement and crime prevention. Violence – especially domestic violence and hate crimes – will not be tolerated. Fear of crime will be reduced, so that local people feel safe in their homes and in their neighbourhoods.

Another challenge within this theme is to ensure our crime and antisocial behaviour services are transparent and accountable to local people - seeking, and responding to, local views.

Victims of crime will be provided with timely and appropriate support and we will continue to encourage residents to report incidents of crime whilst publicising enforcement successes. Action will be focussed on crime and anti social behaviour hotspots - such as Whitechapel, Bethnal Green and Brick Lane, along with some housing estates.

When looking at both the causes of this crime, and the roots of disadvantage, the family is the single most important factor in shaping a child's well-being, achievements and prospects. Poor parenting and early exposure to dangers like drug abuse, domestic violence and offending increase the likelihood of children not making the most of their potential.

Against this background, we will make sure a family-inclusive approach is taken to these problems. We will focus on families who are at risk or experiencing serious disadvantage and make sure that in doing so we co-ordinate the right services around them. We will also offer more support to those families who, with a little extra help, might avoid more complex problems later.

Delivering improvements for all our residents means a focus on easily available and high quality support services for key groups - such as older people, 'looked-after' children, youngsters leaving care, disabled people, offenders, victims of domestic violence, those with drugs and alcohol issues, homeless people and new communities. Research also shows us that it is not enough simply to provide a strong set of services to tackle deep disadvantage affecting all age groups. The most disadvantaged often fall through the net. What enables people to access and stay engaged with services are qualities such as resilience, confidence, and the ability to develop strong relationships.

There is strong evidence that raising young children in a supportive and nurturing environment has a very significant impact on their later life chances. We have a range of services to work with families with children under five, from our 21 children's centres that reach out to all families in the borough to specialist services designed to support those most at risk as they prepare to start a family. We were awarded Beacon status for Early Intervention for Children at Risk for this support.

Building on this approach is a priority, and essential in making Tower Hamlets a borough where everyone can achieve their full potential.

### **The priorities**

Empowering older and vulnerable people and supporting families by:

- Providing responsive and appropriate services for adults which promote independence, choice, security and community
- Protecting children from harm and neglect
- Preventing and reducing homelessness, and helping more people into settled homes and employment
- Improving support for children and young people with disabilities and their families

Tackling and preventing crime by:

- Reducing crime and promoting successes effectively to reduce fear of crime
- Reducing re-offending through holistic intervention with all who become involved with the criminal justice system

## Council draft

- Making crime prevention a key element of all service planning - and improving community trust and engagement in strategic planning and service development

Focussing on early intervention by

- Improving parental engagement and support
- Using joined-up approaches to address links between health, drugs, alcohol, education, skills, employment, accommodation, mental health, debt and benefits across all age groups
- Tackling the causes of crime by working with 'at-risk' groups, to nip problems in the bud

### **We can all help to achieve this by:**

Having a zero-tolerance approach to crime and antisocial behaviour – and by reporting incidents

Supporting family, friends and neighbours who have been victims of crime, encouraging them to seek professional advice and support

Teaching young children the consequences of crime - and the value of taking responsibility for one's own actions

Recognising that we all need help sometimes - and that vulnerability may affect us all over our lifetime

Respecting, valuing and safeguarding our older citizens

Working with local service providers to improve services - by telling us what we want and need to live more independent, fulfilled lives

Challenging prejudice and making Tower Hamlets 'no place for hate'

and make **One Tower Hamlets** by:

~ recognising the strong link between reducing inequality and removing the causes of crime

~ making sure that nobody is discriminated against on account of their race, disability, gender, age, sexuality or faith – and that hate crime is reported and dealt with

~ supporting everyone to access the services they need, and making sure nobody feels excluded

~ recognising that tackling issues effectively sometimes involves a family-inclusive approach

**Over the next three years we will:**

Reduce the number of serious violent crimes in the borough

Cut the serious acquisitive crime rate to 32.7 incidents per 1000 people

Reduce the proportion of local people that think drug use or drug dealing is a problem by 8%

Increase the number of residents who believe that the Police and council are dealing with local concerns about antisocial behaviour

Cut reoffending by adults under probation supervision and reoffending by young people

Build resilience to violent extremism

Reduce the rate of arson from 51 incidents per 1,000 residents to 46 incidents

Increase the proportion of carers who are receiving a specific carer's service, or advice and information by 15%

Increase the number of drug users in effective treatment by 10%

Prevent **xxx** households becoming homeless

**Delivering success**

There are a number of key strategies already in place to deliver the desired results outlined within this theme - including the Partnership's Crime and Drugs Reduction Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

Tower Hamlets Homelessness and Supporting People strategies outline the approach, and support available, to people most vulnerable in terms of housing – helping to enable residents to remain at home and keep their tenancies while going through a rough patch.

There are also a number of local networks that play a key role in delivering the Community Plan objectives identified in this theme. The Safer Neighbourhood Teams provide ward-based community policing - while the Better Tower Hamlets teams bring together service providers at a local level to have a greater impact on tackling residents' community safety concerns. The teams are made up of police, safer neighbourhood team officers and staff from cleaner, safer services. They are located together in local teams to support close working and deliver coordinated responses to local crime, ASB and environmental issues.

**Changing People's Lives**

Case-study - Sonali Gardens / Reducing Reoffending

## **A Healthy Community**

Local residents want Tower Hamlets to be a place where more people lead healthy and longer lives, where differences within the borough are reduced and where everyone has access to world class primary care, community, mental health and hospital services.

At the moment, there are some stark differences in the quality of health experienced by Tower Hamlets residents. Although life expectancy is improving, and now stands at 73 years for men and 79 years for women, this compares with 82 years for men and 86 for women in Kensington and Chelsea.

There are also substantial inequalities between groups *within* the borough, with the average life expectancy for men in Millwall more than eight years greater than for those in Bethnal Green North.

A poor diet, smoking and physical inactivity increase the risk of serious illness, leading to a less enjoyable and shorter life. This is of course true everywhere but Tower Hamlets currently has some of the worst health figures in the country. Although improving, the borough's cancer mortality rate is the highest in London and circulatory disease deaths are second highest. These stark statistics are linked to Tower Hamlets having one of the highest rates of tobacco use in the country, with a growing number of people diagnosed with diabetes and other long-term conditions. The proportion of people who are overweight or obese is also predicted to increase.

Tower Hamlets is the third most deprived place in the country and there are areas of deprivation in every part of the borough. There is strong evidence that areas with deprivation have worse health and greater health inequalities. Factors that contribute to poor health, such as smoking and low levels of exercise, are more common in deprived areas, as are certain associated health problems including heart disease, respiratory disorders and lung cancer.

The Partnership is committed to tackling this poverty and deprivation. It is important to recognise that the wider improvements across all the plan themes - in housing, employment and safety - will have considerable impact on improving people's health and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in East London will provide an excellent opportunity to promote better health through exercise and sport. Residents will have the chance to attend the Games and be inspired by a historic sporting legacy, as well as having access to world-class sporting facilities right on their doorsteps.

Throughout a resident's life, key objectives for the Partnership are to make high quality prevention and health care services available and support healthy lifestyles. The starting point is providing excellent maternal care for all

expectant mothers in Tower Hamlets. The end point should be the care given to older people for chronic conditions later in life.

Local people increasingly want more control and choice when getting health care and the Partnership is committed to giving people the power to shape and control their own services.

Residents want access to services locally within the community and for these services to be delivered by the most appropriate agency - whether that is the Primary Care Trust, a social care service or local community organisation. The Partnership is committed to delivering this, and co-ordinating and bringing together services so that they are better for those that use them.

Good and timely access to services and treatment is essential. For some residents this may mean home visits or an appointment with a female health practitioner. For others, it may mean access to an interpreter or other support assistance.

The Partnership will also radically improve primary and community care premises and provide services in or close to people's homes, whenever possible, rather than in hospitals and other institutions.

Improving children's health is a particularly high priority for the Partnership. With such a large, young population, it is essential that children are given the best start in life and make lifestyle choices that will safeguard their health in future years. Currently, the proportion of young people who smoke, are obese, do not exercise regularly, and eat poorly are higher than the national averages. We have the third highest proportion of 4-5 year olds who are obese in the country. The Partnership is committed to achieving major improvements in children and young people's health.

Sexual health is a key issue for Tower Hamlets. The incidence of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, is higher than the national average and cases of chlamydia and syphilis have risen in recent years. Despite real progress in reducing teenage pregnancy there also remain high levels of sexually transmitted infections among young people. This will be reversed through effective advice and education initiatives, readily available screening and treatment services and, of course, through residents taking personal responsibility for their sexual health.

Mental health issues affect one in four people sometime during their life. And people with serious mental illness have a higher risk of physical illness and reduced life expectancy. Raising the profile of mental health services, and improving access to them, will be an important focus over the coming years.

### **The Priorities**

Improving health and reducing differences in people's health by promoting healthy lifestyles to:

- Reduce the use of tobacco
- Reduce rates of diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Slow down the increase in obesity
- Improve sexual health

Supporting mental health services to improve mental health by

- Providing high-quality accessible services
- Combating discrimination against individuals and groups with mental health problems
- Ensuring integrated planning and treatment for patients with multiple health needs

Improving access to, and experience of, local health services by

- Improving access to GPs, developing out-of-hospital services and improving access to high quality maternity care
- Reducing waiting times
- Promoting self-care and improving management of long term conditions

### **We can all help to achieve this by:**

Making responsible lifestyle choices which promote good health - such as exercising, adopting a healthy diet and practising safe sex

Understanding the dangers of tobacco, drug taking, and binge drinking - and seeking support when facing addiction

Having regular health checkups and attending screening and immunisation appointments

Taking an active interest in the health of family, friends and neighbours - ensuring that the most vulnerable are getting the health care services they need

Taking part in consultation that seeks to improve local services

and make **One Tower Hamlets** by:

- ~ focusing on reducing the health inequalities that exist within the borough and narrowing the gap between Tower Hamlets and the healthiest parts of the country
- ~ supporting people to lead healthier lifestyles
- ~ making sure that health services are accessible – including at a time and place that suits them
- ~ recognising the strong links between health and other areas such as employment, housing and the environment

**Over the next three years we will:**

Further reduce the proportion of under 18s getting pregnant – to achieve a 55% reduction from the 1998 rate

Slow down the increase in childhood obesity – to ensure that less than 24% of primary age children are obese

Support at least one thousand residents to quit smoking per 100,000 population, every year

Increase life expectancy

**Delivering success**

Strong links and a co-ordinated approach are already in place between the Council, Primary Care Trust and health care providers in Tower Hamlets.

In 2006, the Partnership published the first Tower Hamlets Health and Well-being Strategy, developed by the Council and the Primary Care Trust. This strategy outlines the vision for primary and community services until 2016. The Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessment will further inform the delivery of the strategy.

More recently, the Partnership has agreed with government an ambitious three-year Local Area Agreement, featuring targets that will help drive partnership action in a number of key areas - including tobacco, obesity and participation in sport. The Partnership's "Time for Health" campaign will also target health inequalities around heart disease, diabetes, cancer and stroke.

There are also a number of major building projects in place that will support efforts to achieve objectives within this theme. One example is a new hospital at Whitechapel, which will blend world class specialist and teaching resources with excellent local hospital services.

Another is new mental health inpatient services on the Mile End Hospital site – which will see the transformation of Victorian facilities at St Clement's into new modern buildings better equipped to respond to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century patients.

<p><b>Changing People's Lives</b> Case-study - Barkantine Centre</p>
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## **The Community Plan: Building One Tower Hamlets**

This booklet has highlighted the main issues facing the borough and what the Partnership will do to tackle them over the next decade. At the heart of this Community Plan is the idea of One Tower Hamlets: reducing poverty and inequality, bringing local communities closer together, strong local leadership and personal responsibility.

Tower Hamlets' diversity is a major strength - and this Community Plan recognises the richness, vibrancy and energy that our communities provide. But with diversity also comes challenge, and the Partnership is firmly committed to making sure people are treated with respect and fairness regardless of their differences. Everyone living, working or visiting Tower Hamlets has the right to live free from discrimination and prejudice. And everyone in the borough has a responsibility to stop other people from being treated in these ways.

The Partnership is committed to improving the quality of life of everyone who lives and works in Tower Hamlets. Together, we can address the inequalities that can arise from people's income, race, age, disability, gender, faith or sexual orientation or from living in different areas. The Community Plan is about narrowing these gaps – reducing inequalities and making the borough a fairer place.

Reducing inequality and fostering cohesion is not easy. It requires strong local leadership and active community participation. Councillors are a key part of this: providing leadership, transparent decision making and working with communities to make sure that their views shape and influence the solutions to the challenges that face the borough.

But in the consultation events, residents also highlighted strongly the personal responsibility that we all have to make the borough better - recognising that everyone that lives, works or visits Tower Hamlets can by their own actions improve not only the borough but their own lives. We've highlighted some of these throughout the Plan.

The 2020 Community Plan is a plan for, and by, the community. Produced in consultation with local residents, we all have a stake in its delivery. The participation of those who live, work and study in Tower Hamlets is essential in supporting One Tower Hamlets and delivering the Community Plan vision.

## **The Tower Hamlets Partnership**

The Tower Hamlets Partnership's governance arrangements are being refreshed to make sure that they support the delivery of the new Community Plan. It is important the structure is effective and helps to involve everyone in the borough so that they can make a contribution to the design and delivery of local priorities. The new Partnership arrangements will be launched in autumn 2008 and will play a key role in helping to delivery the Community Plan's vision and priorities.

## **Getting Involved**

The Tower Hamlets Partnership wants everyone to be involved – you can attend a nearby Partnership fun day, participate in your local LAP meeting - a platform for everyone to have their say on the improvements in their area – or simply see what's happening.

To find out more contact:

The Tower Hamlets Partnership

Email: [towerhamletspartnership@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:towerhamletspartnership@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Web: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/partnership](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/partnership)

Tel: 020 7364 4058