


<p style="text-align: center;">Health and Wellbeing Board Tuesday 18 October 2016</p>	
<p>Report of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Presentation on Draft Community Engagement Strategy</p>	

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Executive Key Decision?	No

Summary

This presentation provides an overview of the draft Community Engagement Strategy. It provides information on the strategic drivers informing the development of this strategy alongside our proposed priorities and activities to embed community involvement at all levels of service design and delivery.

Recommendations:

The Health & Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1. Comment on the scope and direction of this developing strategy which is intended for delivery from 1 April 2017

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Tower Hamlets is a diverse borough made up of many communities. The borough is currently the 16th most diverse local authority area in the country, with 43 per cent of residents born outside the UK and a high level of population churn. This growing and changing population puts increasing pressure on local services and infrastructure.
- 1.2 The context in which the council operates has changed significantly with savings of over £100m delivered by the council in the last four years. Further savings of £59m over the next three years are required. Effectively engaging our communities in prioritising and making difficult decisions about services is likely to become more important.
- 1.3 The draft Community Engagement Strategy 2017-2020 aims to enhance the council's approach to community engagement as part of an attempt to empower communities and ensure services and priorities are better aligned to local need.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To take no action and continue with existing arrangements for community engagement. This is not recommended. The key priorities and actions proposed in the emerging draft strategy aims to support strong, active and inclusive communities who are empowered to influence and shape the borough in which they live and work. These strategic priorities draw on good practice that already exists within the council and sets out our vision to create a more transparent and accountable council, increase the numbers and diversity of people who engage with us and build closer relationships with statutory, voluntary and community partners for the benefit of all local people.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The development of this strategy is focused on how the council can work in partnership with local people where appropriate, to encourage greater ownership in the design and accountability of service provision. To achieve this, the strategy aims to:
 - Engage local people so that they have greater participation in shaping local services;
 - Use the capacity and skills of local people and the council to co-produce services that meet community needs;
 - Help support service improvement, improve collaborative working with local people and bolster democratic engagement;
 - Develop public understanding and confidence in local services so they are used more effectively and efficiently;
 - Help create resilient communities that are self-supporting.

Development of the Strategy

- 3.2 The draft strategy is being developed through open dialogue with representatives from a variety of council services. A cross-directorate Working Group meets regularly to lead the strategy and provide input on behalf of directorates. This Group also includes a social housing provider and a community based organisation that is responsible for engaging with, and feeding in voices of the community. Whilst the strategy is being developed in close collaboration with local stakeholders, it represents the council's approach and plans.
- 3.3 The strategy is also being informed by engagement with councillors and the Mayor who provided views and insight into community aspirations. This has included meetings with the Mayor's Office and a cross-party Members' Seminar. A presentation on the Community Engagement Strategy was considered as part of the Transparency Commission. There have also been a number of articles in Managers' and Members' Briefings, to encourage a wide range of officers and members to feed into the development of the strategy.
- 3.4 Consultation Undertaken
A programme of consultation has been carried out, including with:
- Representative bodies for particular issues or interest groups;
 - Community groups;
 - Service user forums;
 - Steering / taskforce groups;
 - Other community forums of residents.
- 3.5 A study was conducted by Urban Inclusion an independent research organisation, commissioned by the council, to explore in greater detail the four priority areas of co-production of local services, community leadership, use of digital technology and how engagement could be made more effective. The study was comprised of focus groups, interviews with stakeholders and residents, and a literature review. A survey allowed residents to contribute their thoughts and ideas directly to help shape the draft strategy.

Vision & Objectives

- 3.6 The strategy's vision sets out how local people will be effectively informed, engaged, involved and empowered by the council. Local people will actively help define local priorities, design, deliver and evaluate services and inform council decision making.

The strategy sets out four strategic priorities:

1. Sharing power with communities to make Tower Hamlets a great place to live
2. Create an open and transparent Tower Hamlets
3. Engagement is more meaningful
4. Tower Hamlets is digitally active

These four priorities will be underpinned by an enabling objective to support staff to work differently and be at the centre of driving forward the commitments proposed in the draft strategy.

Major Dependencies

- 3.7 The Community Engagement Strategy will provide an overarching framework which will be further developed in forthcoming work, in particular it will inform:
- The Executive's response to the Transparency Commission
 - The Communications Strategy
 - The Digital Strategy and Customer Access Improvement Programme
 - The Local Strategic Partnership / Local Governance Review
- 3.8 As part of the development of the strategy, Corporate Strategy and Equality is working closely with council leads in these areas. A range of useful input from across service areas is helping to shape the strategy.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 There are no specific additional financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. However, approximately £19,600 was spent on general public and more targeted community group consultations that have informed the strategy presented and this was funded through existing general fund budgets. In addition, £330k has been set aside within the Councils specific reserves to enable delivery of the Community Engagement Strategy.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 ("the 2012 Act") makes it a requirement for the Council to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board ("HWB"). S.195 of the 2012 Act requires the HWB to encourage those who arrange for the provision of any health or social care services in their area to work in an integrated manner.
- 5.2 This duty is reflected in the Council's constitutional arrangements for the HWB which states it is a function of the HWB to have oversight of the quality, safety, and performance mechanisms operated by its member organisations, and the use of relevant public sector resources across a wide spectrum of services and interventions, with greater focus on integration across outcomes spanning health care, social care and public health.
- 5.3 In respect of the consultation process, any consultation will be required to:
- i. Be proportionate to the changes proposed, bearing in mind the impact on those potentially affected and the extent to which these may be controversial
 - ii. Give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response
 - iii. Set out the realistic alternatives to the strategy chosen and the reasons these have not been selected
 - iv. It should be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage
 - v. Provide a reasonable period for consideration and response, allowing that this strategy is intended to be in place by 1 April 2017.

- vi. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account and may require inviting and considering views about possible alternatives, including other areas in which savings may be made.
- vii. Give due regard to the Council's Equalities duties.

5.4 When considering the recommendation above, and when finalising the strategy, regard must be given to the public sector equalities duty to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010. The duty is set out at Section 149 of the 2010 Act. It requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination (both direct and indirect discrimination), harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The draft Community Engagement Strategy is being developed as both a policy document and a practical resource. As a policy document it will set out the council's commitment to, and understanding of, what community engagement means to both citizens and the council. As a practical resource it will provide a clear definition of 'community engagement' and a framework which will ensure that engagement opportunities are provided in the most appropriate way for all stakeholders to be involved and give feedback.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The draft Community Engagement Strategy aims to support the Best Value duty through its proposed approach to engaging and involving the local community to better meet local needs. The strategy will set out how we will embed opportunities for participation in the council's work where appropriate to improve decision-making about local services informed by consideration of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This includes co-production of services with local people to help shape the borough and empowering communities by building community capacity and resilience.

7.2 For example, as part of the strategy the council will look to increase its usage of technology and digital information to achieve improved efficiency and delivery of better outcomes.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

8.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the report or recommendations.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report or recommendations.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct implications of crime and disorder as a result of the recommendations of this review.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- NONE

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

- N/A