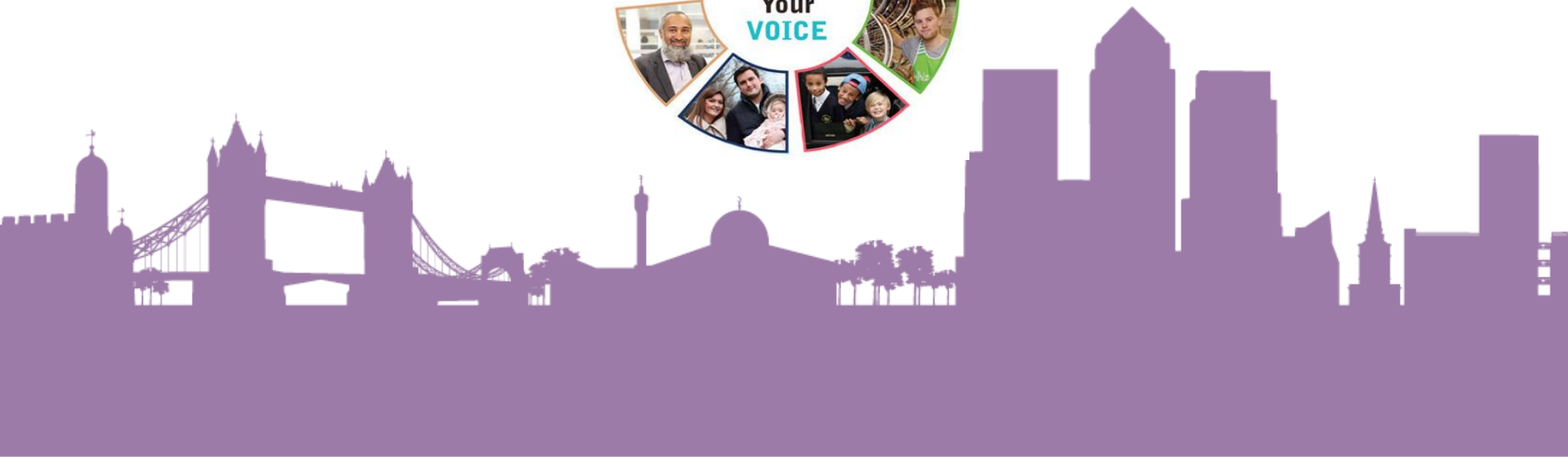




TOWER HAMLETS

LBTH Community Engagement Strategy 2017-2020



Strategic Drivers

- **Community Plan 2015**
 - Empower residents and build resilience
 - Residents better able to support themselves and reduce reliance on public services
 - Residents more engaged in designing and delivering public services
- **National emphasis on active citizenship**
- **Benchmarking other Local Authorities**
- **No previous strategy/model**



Strategy Vision

Local people will be effectively informed, engaged, involved and empowered by the council. They will actively help define local priorities, design, deliver and evaluate services and inform council decision making in areas that impact on their lives.



The Community Engagement Strategy in context

- **Lack of Co-ordination:**
 - No previous council strategy/model for community engagement
- **Climate of continuous reductions to public spending:**
 - Need for communities to have a greater say in shaping the priorities of the organisation
 - Minimise risk of consultation fatigue
- **Loss of the East End Life:**
 - New viable alternatives required to support continued engagement and maximise reach
- **Embracing Digital Communications:**
 - Demands for stronger digital presence
 - Need to explore potential of social media and other platforms whilst recognising issues of digital inclusion



Strategic Priorities

Four key 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*



Priority 1:

Sharing power with communities to make Tower Hamlets a great place to live

- **Co-produce council plans and policies (e.g. Community Safety Partnership Plan, Health & Wellbeing Strategy) that reflect local priorities and ambitions**
 - Embed a model of co-production to maximise the use of community led intelligence and promote a stronger sense of shared ownership in determining new priorities.

Residents to be engaged in assessing community needs; reviewing impact of previous strategies; inform needs assessments and play an active role in evaluating options and shaping delivery plans

- **Adopt commissioning approaches that focus on collaborative working between the council and local people**
 - Embed principles of co-production as the normative approach to commissioning
 - Commit to an outcomes based approach to commissioning to support cultural change in commissioning processes and provide greater flexibility to co-produce innovative solutions



Priority 2:

Create an open and transparent Tower Hamlets

- **Use the democratic model to increase opportunities to engage**
 - Increase opportunities for residents to engage directly with the Mayor e.g. monthly podcasting sessions , more frequent Mayoral Assemblies
 - Explore greater community leadership roles for local councillors
 - Increase awareness of the opportunities to engage through a programme of education and outreach to communities
 - Build on the drive to improve transparency and accountability around decision-making by enhancing information provision and opportunities for resident participation

- **Enhance local structures to support participation in community life**
 - Review of procedures and mechanisms to enhance role of community groups in policy making through localised forums



Priority 3:

Engagement is more meaningful

- **Deliver a co-ordinated approach to engagement**
 - Creating a simpler and more streamlined experience by joining up consultation activities to improve our management of engagement activities and reduce the risk of duplicating activities and resources
 - Embed 'Community Engagement Link officers' to serve as point of contact and expertise within directorates
 - Sharing information more effectively with local partners by developing joint platforms to reduce the risk of consultation fatigue
 - Adopt consistent branding for all engagement

- **Enhance the engagement experience**
 - Developing a consultation and engagement calendar to promote opportunities for participation and improve accessibility
 - Creating permanent 'engagement spaces' to promote involvement and provide key information (details of forums and groups, links to committee pages)
 - Establishing a feedback loop by developing an engagement tracker to give information on consultation exercises and offer feedback from services on how engagement has shaped outcomes



Priority 3 continued...

- Using new tools and opportunities such as crowdsourcing to generate ideas and gather feedback
- **The role of community groups is stronger**
 - Embedding asset based community development (ABCD) to strengthen communities by recognising, identifying and harnessing existing community assets (i.e. skills, knowledge, experience or enthusiasm) to help improve things locally
 - Joining up intelligence with partners to improve understanding of our communities and the voluntary and community sector by developing online resources to support community planning



Priority 4:

Tower Hamlets is digitally active

- **Increase the use of digital technology to connect with people in the borough**
 - Support council services to have a social media presence e.g. use of social media to improve submit questions to committees, online petitions
 - Rollout an online 'My Tower Hamlets' hub that will deliver a personalised and integrated point of access to key council services
 - Promote digital inclusion by delivering a range of targeted initiatives aimed at developing digital confidence and life skills amongst vulnerable groups
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of using online tools and systems**
 - Work with partners to understand who is engaged and the quality of engagement and how it contributes to bring other people into discussions
- **Engage innovatively using digital tools**
 - Work with local partners and the community to co-ordinate digital engagement
 - Reach out into established digital communities and involve local people in shaping policy and providing feedback about how services are delivered



Enabling Objective: Supporting staff to work differently

- **Ensure the right support is provided to help staff interact with local people**
 - Develop a community engagement toolkit to help set out roles for staff and provide step by step guides on different consultation and engagement techniques
 - Offer training and development opportunities including networking opportunities with local partners to provide peer support and share good practice
- **Expand intelligence on local communities and groups**
 - Adopt methods such as community-led research and participatory approaches to map and maintain profile of new communities and improve understanding of their needs



Next Steps

- **Ongoing development of Strategy**
- **Sign off at CMT paving the way for Stage 2 of development**
- **Late October – December 2016 (Stage 2 - Post-Strategy Development)**
 - Undertake public consultation and engagement on the draft strategy and finalise strategy response to this (including an online survey)
- **Committee Process**

