

# The New Town Hall update

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 March 2021

Mayor John Biggs

Ann Sutcliffe – Corporate Director Place

Yasmin Ali – Project Director



# Purpose of the session



Overview and Scrutiny request for spotlight session on the new Town Hall, covering:

- New Town Hall programme update and timescales
- Covid implications and how potential changes are being addressed
- Financing and long term savings
- New Town Hall 'Front Door' and the relationship with Whitechapel Idea Store
- Whitechapel Idea Store future model and staff/books implications
- New Town Hall library space including events, meetings and classes that currently take place in Whitechapel Idea Store
- Do we have to 'buy out' of the lease at Mulberry Place
- Cabinet members accommodation



# New Town Hall Background



- January 2015 - The Former Royal London Hospital Grade 2 listed building, purchased by the Council
- July 2015 - Previous decision Mayor at Cabinet in April 2015 withdrawn and new report requested
- November 2015 - Cabinet agreed RLH Whitechapel to be the preferred location for new 'Civic Centre' and agree to appoint the professional team to develop design to RIBA Stage 3
- June 2017 - Cabinet- Capital estimate adopted and approved CEO to enter into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement and initiate Main works contractor procurement.
- Feb 2018 - Following Stage one of a two-stage tender, Bouygues UK awarded PCSA
- May 2018 - Planning approval granted for refurbishment and partial demolition of the retained heritage building and new build providing new civic space council chambers, office space, library facilities and resident/customer facing functions
- August 2018 - Enabling works contract commences to carry out Asbestos removal and other temporary works to prepare the site and retained building for the main works contractor
- November 2018 - IMD agreed to authorise CEO to enter a JCT Design and Build Contract with Bouygues UK
- December 2018 – Main work Contract signed with Bouygues UK



# Progress



*Progress of project delivery?*

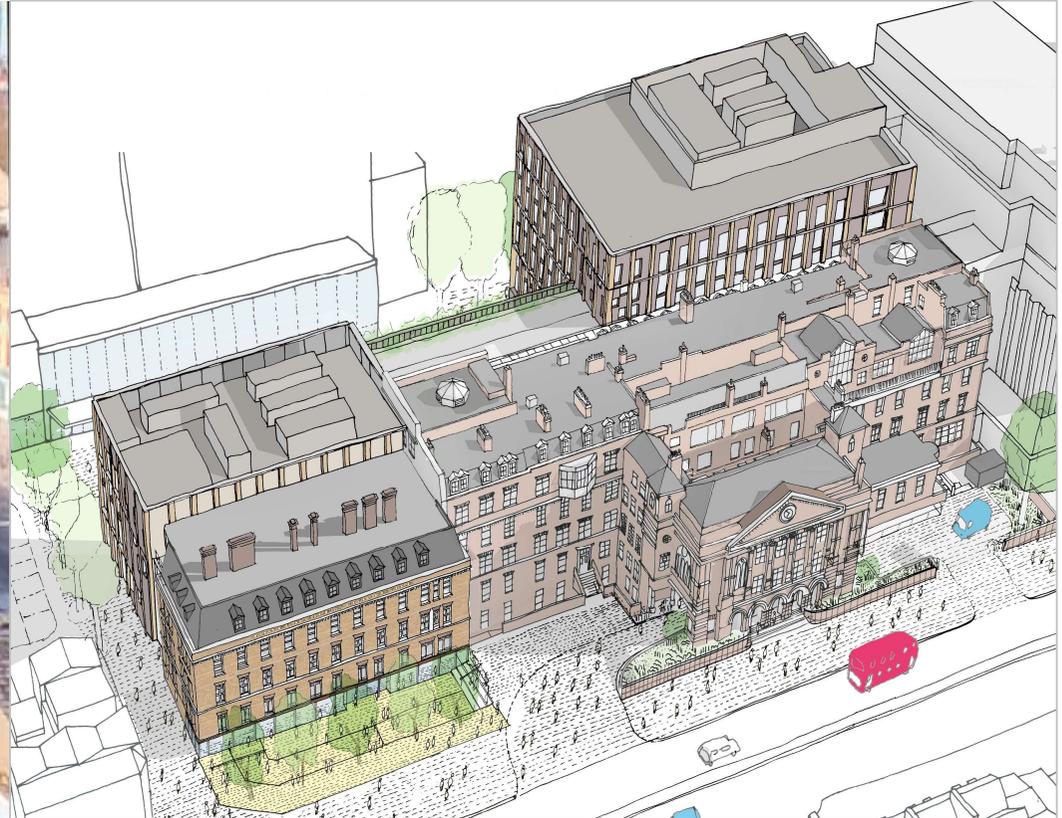
*Will council be moving in without having to negotiate a lease extension on Mulberry Place?*

*Do we have to buy out of the lease clause at Mulberry Place.*

- The contracted Design & Build works are to complete in **Spring 2022**
- A post contract fit out in planned over **Spring/Summer 2022**
- A phased moves programme commences **Summer to Autumn 2022**
- **London Square** - works to the public realm behind the new Town Hall - 80% of land in in Barts Ownership 20% in LBTH the designs are developing to be delivered post practical completion of Town Hall. The project team are exploring inclusion of 'Old Flo' into the design, subject to required approvals and funding.
- Mulberry Place completion of phased move of staff by December 2022
- Remedial works in Mulberry Place Jan/Feb 2023
- Mulberry Place lease expires in March 2023, there are no buyout clause provisions in the lease.



# The new Town Hall



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# Changing the culture and the way we work



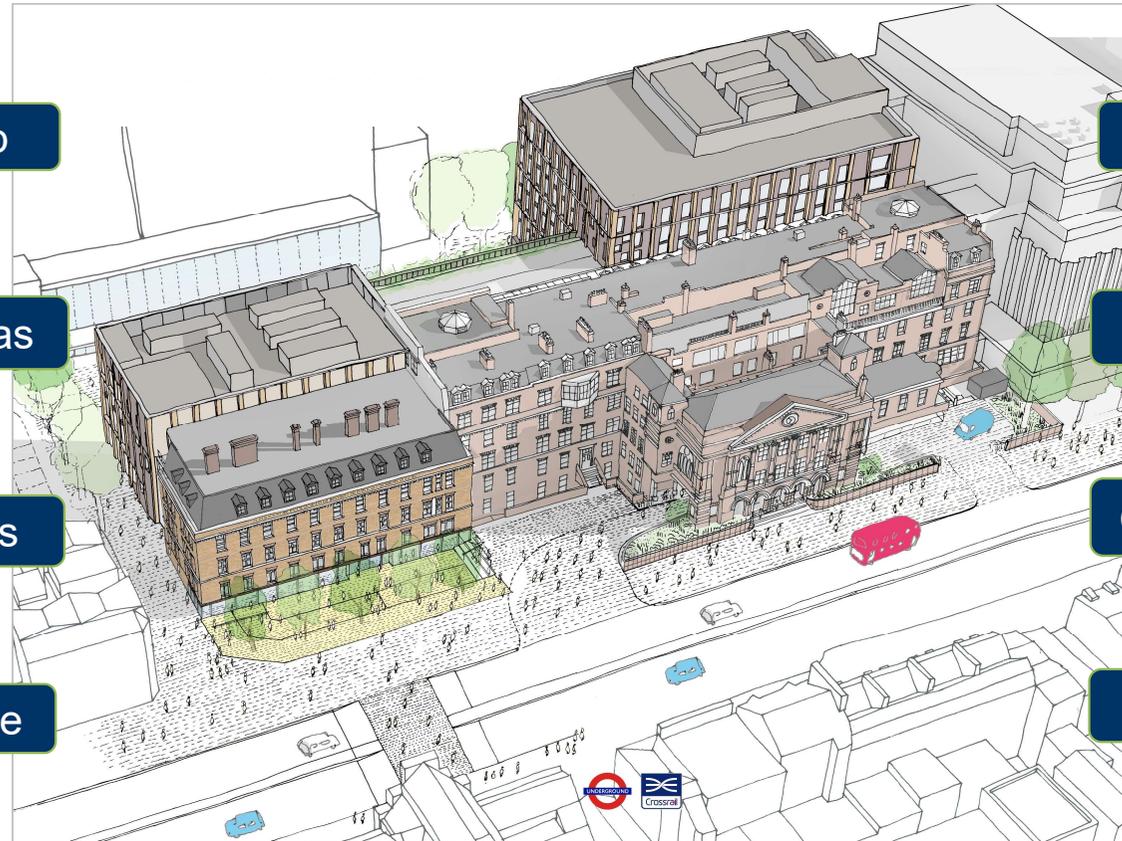
*Has there been any change implications as a result of COVID and how are these being addressed within the plans? Will it be adequate for the Council and how will this work in terms of the current remote working arrangements because of COVID/Post COVID?*

- Changing the way we work engagement programme is underway with staff
- We have reviewed our desk to staff ratio from 6:10 to 4:10
- Office accommodation floor plans revised - Planning 1397 workstations including our three partners THH, CCH and Police
- Members accommodation is included on the 2nd floor of the retained building – the space is under review in light of new ways of working
- More flexible working furniture within the building for different work styles
- Engagement underway with staff on facilities within our buildings in a post covid environment
- Elements of the covid layout will be considered alongside the revised plans i.e. one way systems around the floor layouts

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# Changing the way we work – principles being explored



Town Hall app

4:10 ratio

Zone working areas

Prayer/Reflective space

Single-use lockers

Collaborative space

Limited storage

Residents' hub

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# Engagement



- Continuing our engagement plan with staff and stakeholders
- Since December 2020 - 3 engagement sessions have been held with staff on 'Changing the way we work'
- CLT lead on changing the way we work is James Thomas, Corporate Direct Children & Culture
- Next engagement at the Staff Conference 26 March
- Staff engagement surveys
  - All Staff
  - Managers
  - Teams
- Engagement underway with THH, CCG & Police on the impact of covid and their requirements
- Members Consultative Steering Group meetings are held quarterly



# New Town Hall Project Budget



- Approved budget £123.35m
- Works Cost £114.5m
- Project oncosts £8.85m
- £70m spend to date anticipated at end of 2020/21
- The project is/will be financed by borrowing (£119m) and the balance from revenue/reserve contributions



# New Town Hall - Savings



- Overall savings across three sites **£3,671,068**
- Accommodation revenue savings AJH – 2022/23 **£225,480**
- Accommodation revenue savings MP/JOH – 2023/24 **£3,445,588**
- On target for the early release of Albert Jacob House revenue savings in 2022/23
- Staff within Albert Jacob House and John Onslow House due to move to Mulberry Place by June 2021
- Mulberry Place lease expires March 2023



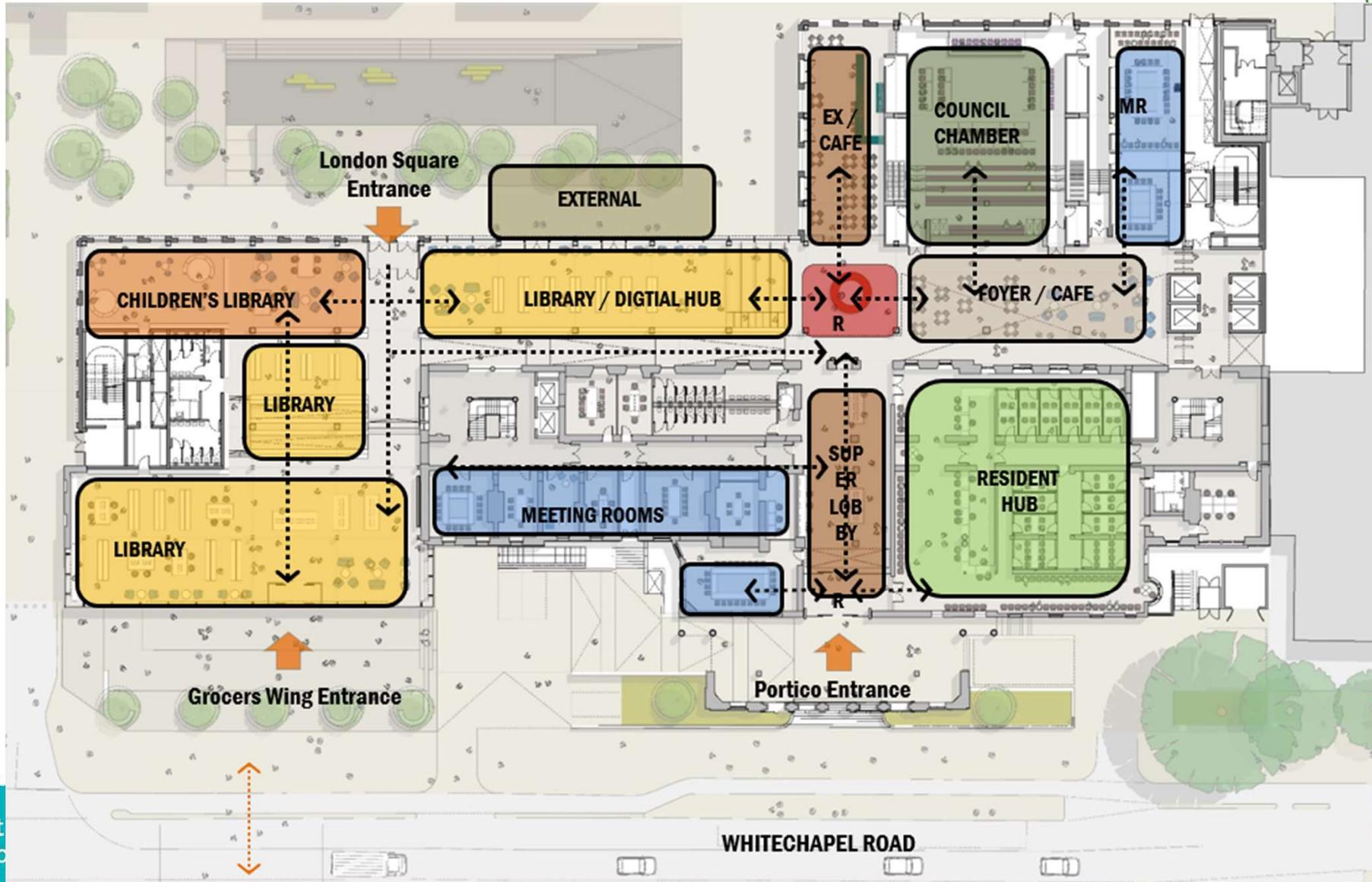


# New Town Hall Ground Floor offer

March 2021



# Ground Floor Layout



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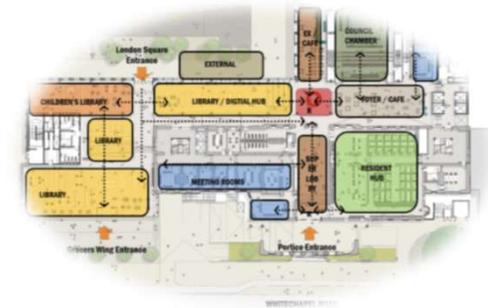


# Customer Offer



The ground floor of the new town hall will be a permeable 'local presence' space, accessible from all directions. It will include the following key facilities:

- **Reception**
- **Children's Library**
  - This will replace the current children's library in IS Whitechapel
  - The space here will be larger than the current children's library
  - We hope to encourage visitors to the hospital to drop in and join.
- **Library**
  - This space will hold our popular adult offer
  - Provide seating and workstations for visitors to use the internet, browse the papers or meet with friends
- **Digital Hub**
  - This space will be dedicated to those wanting to transact online and to helping residents to bridge the digital divide
- **Café**



# Customer Offer



- **Resident Hub**

- Will provide mainly appointment-based opportunities for residents to meet with officers from frontline services.
- It will have 8 interview rooms with dual access and 5 meeting rooms off of the main area.
- Some of the interview rooms (5) will be dedicated for housing purposes
- Others will be bookable by any service and or Members.
- The space will be staffed so that those unable to book an appointment over the phone/online and those with real emergencies can be accommodated.
- The space will also cater for those wishing simply to drop in to scan and provide documentary proof.

- **Mini exhibition zone**

- **Council Chamber and event space**



# Customer Experience

- Residents can find what they need and enjoy their visit to the New Town Hall. They can interact with technology, good signage and staff, in order to
  - Record their arrival for an appointment
  - Access information
  - Decide where they want to go
- Residents can use the building for their own purposes
  - Meet friends in the café, browse materials in the library or engage with exhibition materials.
  - Potential to hire the foyer / Café and Council Chamber for significant events (outside hours)
  - Discover the history and rich culture of the borough through exhibition materials
  - Flexible comfortable 'third space' offer for all residents



# Customer Experience

- The **Resident Hub** will help us change the dynamic with residents who need services
  - No counter or 'ticketing' to manage cues. Most meetings will be pre-booked appointments
  - Ability for those in crisis to drop in and book an appointment
  - Comfortable waiting spaces (including some more private space for those who may be most vulnerable).
  - Encourage people to use and explore the rest of the ground-floor if they do have to wait
  - Provide materials from library that make waiting in the resident hub a less 'institutional' experience
  - Encourage and support people to self-serve



# Whitechapel Cultural Campus



The new Town Hall will be at the heart of the Whitechapel Cultural Campus and work in tandem with the library, learning and information offer available at Idea Store Whitechapel across the road. Capturing the unique creative energy of Whitechapel, the two sites would exploit the synergies. The current proposals are as follows:

- The children's and popular adult book offer will move to the ground floor of the new Town Hall
- The main library will remain in the current building but will include more space for study. It will focus on
  - Study
  - Development
  - employability and learning
- The creative industries adult learning provision will move into Whitechapel IS
  - increasing opportunities for local residents to explore and engage with the arts including photography, painting drawing, screen printing etc.



# Whitechapel Cultural Campus



- WorkPath and its comprehensive employability offer will be based in Whitechapel IS
  - This will enable us to fully exploit and maximise the recent investment in the Business Zone.
- This new focus on learning, employability, and support for small businesses, in the existing building will sit alongside the further development of the existing Health offer,

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# Specific O&S Queries



**More detailed explanation of how the Idea Store will work in the Town Hall and what changed use there will be in the Whitechapel Idea Store. Is there a budget for books**

- NTH site will provide a library service and access to online services for residents through a Digital Hub.
- The focus will be on children and families
- There will also be an adult library service focussing on new titles, popular fiction and non-fiction general collections, our Core Collection, and the London Collection.
- We may need to identify some additional funding for an increase in stock. (part be off-set by the reduction in floor space required at IS Watney)
- The NTH will also present a shop window opportunity for our Local History and Archive service
- Idea Store Whitechapel will continue to provide library, learning and information services, and these will complement the new services at the NTH.
- The store will provide a wide range of adult fiction and non-fiction books, there will be a greater focus on teenagers and study. It will include
  - Health Zone (the largest collection of health-related books in London, complemented by health-related adult learning),
  - Business Zone (a comprehensive collection of materials, activities and adult learning for small businesses and start-ups),
  - a Surfing Space providing free internet access.
  - Work Path will deliver employability training from this site and an increase adult learning offer, particularly around the creative arts will be delivered from the store



## Slide 19

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**SS2**

I think this question is answered on the Whitechael campus slides, just need to add the point on more books <@Teresa Heaney>

Sarah Steer, 15/03/2021

# Specific O&S Queries



Will any librarians be made redundant or more Idea store staff be employed?

- The move to the New Town Hall will not require any more staff redundancies beyond those recently agreed by Cabinet as part of the IS Review.
- A further review of the whole IS service is planned for 18 months time.
- This will look at the needs of the whole borough.



# Specific O&S Queries



Need to know about the events, meetings and classes that currently take place in Whitechapel Idea Store, where the children's library will be and if there is a proposal for a café on both sites.

- Before the pandemic Idea Store Whitechapel provided a large part of the 8,000 adult learning courses provided by the Idea Store Learning service across the borough, including
  - ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
  - Foreign languages
  - Performing arts, fashion & textiles, and more
- Plans are under way to relocate the creative industries adult learning offer to Idea Store Whitechapel, becoming an essential part of the 'cultural campus' between the store and the NTH
- Library services provide reading and cultural events, regular activities for children, teenagers and older residents, book groups, conversation clubs, and more
- During the pandemic we have developed a strong online offer in both adult learning and library and this will continue, but we also expect a full return to activities on site when the restrictions are lifted.
- An important element of the Idea Store Whitechapel offer is the presence of a café that contributes to the 'third place' feel and purpose of the site. This will continue in future, although it will be relocated from the top floor to a more prominent position on the Ground Floor. The NTH will have its own café. However, given its position within the building and the target audience it is unlikely the two cafes will be in competition.



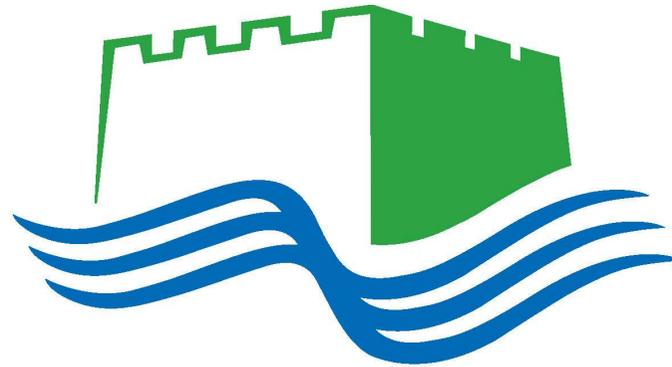


# Q&A



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**TOWER HAMLETS**

*Thank you*