


Cabinet 26 July 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Steve Halsey, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
Annual strategic delivery and performance report 2022/23	

Lead Member	Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor
Originating Officer(s)	Stephen Bramah, Head of Strategy and Improvement
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	April 2023
Reason for Key Decision	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	All priorities

Executive Summary

This report provides the Mayor in Cabinet with an annual update on the delivery and implementation of the council's Strategic Plan throughout 2022/23. Since May 2022, the council has focussed on supporting residents and businesses through the current cost of living crisis and the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic. Our new [Strategic Plan 2022-26](#) sets out eight priorities designed to improve outcomes for residents. This report provides an overview of the planned activity we have delivered resources prioritised to focus on the needs of our communities.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the strategic delivery and performance report for 2022/23;
2. Review the performance of the strategic measures, including those measures where the minimum expectation has been missed; and
3. Review progress in delivering the council's Strategic Plan.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The council is committed to improving outcomes for residents. Our corporate priorities and outcomes are found in our Strategic Plan and provide a framework for action.
- 1.2 Our Performance & Accountability Framework used by the council provides the mechanism for monitoring the timely and effective delivery of the Strategic Plan to improve outcomes for residents. In line with the framework, Cabinet receives regular update reports to ensure oversight of delivery and performance of strategic improvement.
- 1.3 This report promotes openness, transparency and accountability by enabling Tower Hamlets residents to track progress of activities that impact on their lives and the communities they live in.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet may decide not to review the delivery and performance information. This is not recommended as Members have a key role to review and challenge underperformance and to utilise performance information to inform resource allocation.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 *Background*
- 3.2 The last year has seen a new administration begin work following the council and mayoral election of May 2022. The council has created a new strategic plan for the 2022-26 period and started investing in a range of services to delivering strategic improvement in the way the council serves its residents.
- 3.3 In 2022 we adopted eight new corporate priorities that provide a framework for action to improve services and bring about strategic change for Tower Hamlets.
- 3.4 *Performance summary*
- 3.5 Over the past year our collective efforts were focused on converting the Strategic Plan into operation. We prioritised cost of living, housing, education, business, jobs and leisure, investment in public services, community power and safety, the climate crisis, and being a listening council.
- 3.6 At the end of year monitoring stage, 51 performance indicators are reported: 25 performance indicators have met or are exceeding their target, 5 are between target and minimum, and 9 are falling short. Four indicators await monitoring data, 6 are not targeted but are included for reference, and 2 await the universal free school meals service to be in place at secondary schools.

3.7 **Tackling the cost of living (Priority one)**

3.8 We are tackling the cost of living crisis by investing £1.1 million per year to establish the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and the University Bursary Award (UBA) to support young people into post-16 education.

3.9 A £2.7 million cost of living relief package was agreed in July 2022 to support low income residents through the current cost of living crisis.

3.10 Council tax has been frozen to protect the poorest from rising living costs (with a 2% rise to cover the social care precept) offering one of the lowest rates in London.

3.11 Tower Hamlets council has become the first in the country to offer free school meals to every secondary school pupil up to the age of 16.

3.12 **Homes for the future (Priority two)**

3.13 In addition to building more homes, tackling overcrowding continues to be a key priority and a review is currently under way to consider what provisions are currently in place and what more can be done to reduce overcrowding for residents.

3.14 There are now 248 one-hour free parking spaces near our nine local markets.

3.15 We have developed an interactive visual tool to showcase the development of the new Local Plan.

3.16 A homelessness and rough sleeping strategy steering group is in the process of being established to refresh the council's current approach.

3.17 The council agreed to bring its current housing management services in-house following consultation with residents.

3.18 We consulted private landlords about the new additional HMO licensing scheme.

3.19 Information, advice and guidance is being provided for leaseholders affected by cladding issues.

3.20 The forthcoming Adult Social Care Reform bill will influence the strategy for adapting homes for residents with physical disabilities.

3.21 **Accelerate Education (Priority three)**

3.22 After 3 years of closure, Watney Market Idea Store library re-opened in January 2023 following a £487k investment to protect space where young people can study and work.

- 3.23 Cabinet have agreed a new Youth Service Model which significantly increases the number of youth workers and safe spaces within the borough.
- 3.24 The council is helping schools extend their provision to include breakfast and homework clubs.
- 3.25 Over 20,000 children, young people and families engaged with the council through the delivery of school holiday services for young people.
- 3.26 **Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure (Priority four)**
- 3.27 We supported grassroots arts with a networking event, and our regular digital arts newsletters and events newsletters.
- 3.28 Through Bounce Back we worked with 2,614 participants. A Season of Bangla Drama reached over 4,000 audience members across 19 event days (with 15 performances and 10 fringe events).
- 3.29 The offer of female-only sports sessions has been increased to promote female sports sessions and encourage more women to participate in sports activities.
- 3.30 A Cabinet decision was made on 1 August regarding the future of St. Georges Leisure Centre, to rebuild the centre on the same site including social housing units.
- 3.31 Locations and bays in proximity to markets that are suitable for 1-hour free parking have been mapped.
- 3.32 Agreement and resources have been secured for a council officer focused on Community Wealth Building.
- 3.33 Tower Hamlets Council have secured a £5m funding award to base a research collaborative across our local anchor institutions in government, health, and education.
- 3.34 A new Resident Hub has been in operation at the new town hall. Preparations for an additional new site at Bethnal Green are currently underway.
- 3.35 As part of the plan to bring outsourced services in house, two major strategic insourcing exercises at Tower Hamlets Homes and Leisure services are well underway.
- 3.36 Plans to invest £13.7m in Tower Hamlets Council's youth service, have been approved following a reduction in funding to youth services both locally and nationally.
- 3.37 The council is investing £500k in helping residents into employment with six-month paid placements on the London Living Wage.

- 3.38 Tower Hamlets' local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations have received a major £3.5 million per year funding boost.
- 3.39 Small businesses in Tower Hamlets are set to benefit from £185K investment from the council, through the launch of a new free programme that aims to help them reduce their energy costs and environmental impact.
- 3.40 **Invest in public services (Priority five)**
- 3.41 Investment in public services is taking place across the strategic priorities of the council.
- 3.42 Life-saving equipment which will help stop serious blood loss in an emergency is being installed around Tower Hamlets.
- 3.43 Tower Hamlets is one of just four areas in the country which residents think is improving, a recent YouGov survey has shown.
- 3.44 Ofsted carried out a focused visit to the council's children's services in July. Inspectors looked at the council's support for children in care, and noted that the vast majority of children in care in Tower Hamlets are living in placements that are meeting their individual needs well and helping to improve their experiences and progress.
- 3.45 **Empower Communities and Fight Crime (Priority six)**
- 3.46 New bins allowing people to dispose of knives safely have been installed around Tower Hamlets, with more being installed.
- 3.47 A £4.4m investment into community safety has been agreed to provide for new police and enforcement officers.
- 3.48 Applications are now open for a number of new Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEOs) in a push to drive down crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Tower Hamlets.
- 3.49 Where blue badge permits were being used fraudulently, the council has been impounding the vehicles involved.
- 3.50 The council and partners organised webinars, awareness sessions and information events for hundreds of people participating in events marking 16 days of activism against gender-based violence in Tower Hamlets.
- 3.51 The Community Safety Team continue to tackle the volume of estate based anti-social behaviour problems reported by residents through proactive joint patrols.
- 3.52 The Tackling Race Inequality Action Plan involved women from ethnic minority backgrounds. Our Ethnic Minority Network has been actively

engaged to shape the vision around key topical issues such as cost of living, housing and public services.

- 3.53 35 women including those from Somali heritage engaged with the Food Scrutiny report. The Flourishing Communities project also engaged Somali women experiencing barriers to health care.
- 3.54 The council is supporting female community leaders pioneering change through the Race Equality Leaders Forum.
- 3.55 **A clean and green future (Priority seven)**
- 3.56 The council published the Greenhouse Gas emissions report in August 2022, and the Mayoral Cleaner and Greener Future programme launched in March 2023, establishing governance structures supporting the new investment in sustainability education, replacing boilers and installing heat pumps, funding energy efficiency for SMEs, installing photovoltaic panels, investing £5 million in Electric Waste Vehicles and £180,000 on low carbon fuel supply. Governance will oversee this acceleration of decarbonisation.
- 3.57 Following the declaration of the waste emergency in 2022, the council has been auditing 550 blocks of flats across the Borough to assess options for installing recycling infrastructure for a variety of different sites.
- 3.58 Following a recruitment campaign, 33 new recycling champions have joined the council scheme.
- 3.59 The Mayoral Greener Future for Tower Hamlets programme has been developed and through this programme there are four strands of work that will be delivered: The Mayor's Energy Fund; The Mayor's Board for Climate Change; the Mayor's Waste Management Task Force; and Keep Our Borough Moving.
- 3.60 Bartlett Park was awarded Green Flag status, bringing the borough total to 13.
- 3.61 1379 children and approaching 450 adults received cycle training.
- 3.62 **A council that listens and works for everyone (Priority eight)**
- 3.63 The council engaged 309 local participants to help shape the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy & Outcomes Framework (October 2023 to March 2027).
- 3.64 Since September 2022, the Mayor has held regular surgeries In Whitechapel and Chrisp street Idea stores.
- 3.65 As part of implementing the People and Wellbeing Strategy, work is underway to scope the development of a talent and succession pool to include a focus on how staff from ethnic minorities can be developed for career progression.

- 3.66 We have started working towards ensuring that consultations allow residents and stakeholders to influence decision making. An approach to the Corporate Engagement Strategy overseen by a working group has begun.
- 3.67 Several Member training sessions have been delivered by the Consultation Institute to increase understanding of best practice and consultation.
- 3.68 To help staff carry out consultation which is fair and worthwhile, internal consultation guidance incorporates the requirements of the 'Gunning Principles'.
- 3.69 Work continues from 2022/23 into 2023/24 to address minority ethnic representation at the senior level through the Council's 'Workforce to Reflect the Community' Action Plan.
- 3.70 Latest phase of Liveable Streets consultation carried out in February 2023 provided opportunities for further engagement.
- 3.71 Indicators that are exceeding or missing targets are listed in Appendix 1.
- 3.72 *Setting targets and improving outcomes*
- 3.73 The council is committed to driving improvement which sees us deliver high performing services and in turn improved outcomes for our residents.
- 3.74 We need to consider factors affecting local government today. For example, budgetary constraints mean we have to do more with less whilst our population continues to grow, and expectations rise.
- 3.75 Our improvement journey has been steep, and whilst there is no doubt that we need to continue improving, there is also recognition that sustainability is important. Improvements and new ways of working take time to bed in, and our targets need to reflect this.
- 3.76 Our target setting principles take these challenges into consideration:
- We will only set targets for performance measures and not for contextual indicators.
 - Targets will be set using a bandwidth approach consisting of a target and a minimum expectation. The target (upper bandwidth) should adhere to one or more of the following target setting principles:
 - Be aligned to an external target, such as a statutory, national or Mayoral manifesto target, or target in strategies and policies where they have been agreed by Cabinet or a Tower Hamlets Partnership group;
 - Aim to improve on our benchmark performance position within the appropriate benchmark family group or maintain a high level of performance where we are among top performing councils;
 - Be based on management information evidence, especially for new measures where targets have previously not been set;

- Take account of operational practicalities as described below;
- In relation to perception surveys, we will monitor the direction of travel rather than set specific targets.
- Targets for all measures are set against the operating realities of the service – for example service changes, funding changes, changes in legislation or in local or national policy. These changes may result in the need to re-baseline the targets from one year to the next to reflect the changing circumstances in which the service operates.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The council's Strategic Plan is focused on meeting the needs of the diverse communities living in Tower Hamlets and ensuring that everyone can play their part in a vibrant and cohesive community. The strategic outcomes and supporting activities are designed to reduce inequalities and the foster community cohesion.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 Best Value (BV) Implications

- 5.3 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires the council as a best value authority to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. Monitoring of performance information and acting on the findings is an important way in which that obligation is being fulfilled.

5.4 Sustainable action for a greener environment

- 5.5 Priority 7: A clean and green future. It focuses on key areas of sustainability, including air quality, waste and carbon emission. Key activities include work to drive up the borough's recycling rate, reducing CO2 emissions, and implementing a number of initiatives to improve air quality, including making Tower Hamlets one of the best boroughs for walking and cycling through our cycle training programmes.

5.6 *Risk management implications*

5.7 In line with the council's risk management strategy, the information contained within the strategic indicator monitoring will assist Cabinet, Corporate Directors and relevant service managers in delivering the ambitious targets set out in the Strategic Plan. Regular monitoring reports will enable Members and Corporate Directors to keep progress under regular review.

5.8 *Crime and disorder reduction implications*

5.9 Strategic Plan Priority 6 – Empower communities and fight crime – People feel they are part of a vibrant and cohesive community are dedicated to crime and disorder reductions. Activities under these outcomes are designed to improve safety, the perception of safety and community cohesion.

5.10 *Safeguarding implications*

5.11 Strategic Plan Priority 3 – Accelerate education. The activities under this area seek to safeguard children and build our Ofsted and academic performance.

5.12 Priority 5 – Invest in public services. This area covers adult social care services safeguarding vulnerable people. Key activities include work to empower people to directly engage signposted services.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Annual strategic delivery and performance report 2022/23

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

Stephen Bramah