

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper

“What matters to residents?”

Overview of resident engagement

The engagement of the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan – ‘Tower Hamlets (TH) for All’ sought to gather views of those who live, work, study and visit the borough using various methods and wide-ranging channels to ensure the views of different groups in the borough are heard. Over 700 people were involved. This included: a Tower Hamlets for All Survey resulting in 262 responses over a period of two months (December 2022 – January 2023); virtual engagement events and a series of in- person events with 464 people engaged.

This background paper also draws on a number of other research and engagement exercises carried out with residents since 2020, with a focus on those exercises where residents shared their views on a wide range of topics. It includes information from the 2023 Annual Residents Survey which provides responses from a representative sample of 1,117 residents. In addition, it includes information from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey, the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review, the 2023 New Grants Programme Engagement, the 2021 Health and Wellbeing Strategy engagement, the 2023 Healthy Neighbourhoods project, and the Children’s and Families Strategy engagement.

The purpose of this is to help inform the priorities of a new Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 2023-2028, by providing an overview of the issues that residents think are most important, what they do and don’t like about the borough and services, and the changes they would like to see.

It is important that the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan takes account of the views of residents from diverse backgrounds. The ‘Tower Hamlets for All’ engagement worked with younger and older residents from different backgrounds and communities, including groups which are part of the Equality Network. Where possible, this paper notes where specific groups of residents had a particular view of an issue, but this level of disaggregated information is limited.

What residents like about Tower Hamlets

Very positive varied views about what makes the borough a special place

Respondents to the Tower Hamlets for All engagement had varying things they liked about the borough and what they felt makes it special. Respondents could select multiple responses. 37% liked the arts, culture, shops, restaurants, and historical parts of the borough, 37% liked the diversity in the borough, 33% liked the location of the borough including the good transport links to central London

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

and the proximity to River Thames and the canal, and 25% liked the public spaces in the borough such as the local parks and green spaces. Below were some of their responses:

“There’s growth and opportunities in the borough.” (Residents webinar)

“I like the sites and attractions.” (Residents webinar)

“It’s one of the oldest parts of London.” (Residents webinar)

“I like the Canary Wharf development and the growing arts, culture and restaurant scene. Excellent transport links and proximity to central London and Greenwich - best of both worlds.” (TH for All Survey)

“It’s History and cultural significance.” (TH for All Survey)

“The infrastructure that supports the needs of Muslims - mosques, restaurants range of halal cuisines, shops etc.” (TH for All Survey)

“The IDEA stores, markets, and the parks in Wapping.” (TH for All Survey)

“It’s a great part of London with lots of diversity, multiculturalism and unity, the skyline, the limitless food options and shops, open parks, and the sites and attractions.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“I like the youth centres and programmes.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“The schools and fun stuff to do, the local accessible youth clubs.” (Haileybury Youth Centre)

“The multiculturalism and history of the borough.” (Haileybury Youth Centre)

“The diversity and good sense of community.” (Youth Council)

“What makes Tower Hamlets a special place to live is the sense of community and community work.” (Residents webinar)

“The diversity, limitless food opportunities, and the MIND recovery pathway.” (MIND Activate Café)

“Neighbours and support systems, the opportunities to get involved in groups.” (MIND Activate Café)

“It is an incredibly diverse, exciting and resilient place to work in and has a council that supports inclusive growth.” (TH for All Survey)

“Diversity, sense of community, low traffic neighbourhoods, vibrant economy, good parks, and good public transport.” (TH for All Survey)

“The diversity of people living and working in the borough, who have access to much green space, the waterways and cultural activities that don’t cost anything to enjoy.” (TH for All Survey).

“I like the diversity and multiculturalism, this is a caring borough.” (TH for All Survey)

“The diversity of nationalities and social classes/economic groups.” (TH for All Survey)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Friendliness of the people, and that I know my neighbours, first time in all my stay in London. The Multi-cultural vibe (including all the different shops and restaurants). That it is near the Thames and has a lot of green space, including the Cemetery Park Woodland.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tower Hamlets is nice place to live, that’s a handy location for the city and West End, with good facilities and public transport links.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Proximity to the city, Victoria Park, River Thames, Canary Wharf, Brick Lane, Hackney Wick, Regents Canal.” (TH for All Survey)

“Closeness to city, green spaces, community events, good transport links.” (TH for All Survey)

“We love our local school, Victoria Park, cafes, the Bethnal green library, the book shops and the sense of community and neighbourliness.” (TH for All Survey)

“I love where I live! So many parks and green spaces, love the people and the community.” (TH for All Survey)

“I like the outdoor gyms and free football courts.” (TH for All Survey)

Similarly, results from the 2023 Annual Residents Survey reveals that a large proportion of residents (78%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Findings from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey show that 62% of children and young people think that the park and play areas in the borough are good. Even more so the case for primary aged children (65%), who were significantly more likely to think positively of their local parks and play areas than secondary aged young people (46%).

Feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement told us that 43% of residents feel somewhat proud of their neighbourhoods. When comparing different demographics, residents from Bangladeshi backgrounds were most likely to feel extremely proud of their local area, while LGBT+ people were most likely to feel not so proud. The majority of the people also told us that they are likely to continue to live in their area for the next 2 years due to being settled down, having grown up in the area, or generally being happy living in their neighbourhood. While the main reasons for people moving out included traffic and pollution, and the high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Top 3 challenges facing Tower Hamlets

This section describes the top three challenges identified by residents, organised in order of priority in the engagement responses.

Affordable and social housing

Housing was the biggest challenge in the borough raised by respondents to the Tower Hamlets (TH) for All engagement (36%). With some residents saying there’s a lack affordable housing for locals and felt they would have no choice

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

but to move out of the borough. Some of these respondents also highlighted issues with overcrowding, saying that they know many single people who have multi-room housing while others are having to live in overcrowded homes. They suggested that there be a re-assessment of local authority rules around tenancy.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, over half of people (53%) said quality and affordable homes was extremely important to them.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 13% of people who responded to the question said housing was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

Below were some of their responses:

“Cost of living crisis will continue in the coming years, especially housing eviction rates.” (Equality Network)

“Cost of living and homelessness.” (MIND Activate Café)

“TH has become very overcrowded (in my area Bethnal Green) – really overcrowded and lots of construction.” (Youth Council)

“Lots of spaces in TH, but not used properly. If you can build houses and help the people who are most in need first. Use the space properly, have some actual grass and green areas with trees and nature... need to modernise and provide with more things for kids, games, benches, grass, toys.” (Youth Council)

“We’re having to move out of the borough, but not because people want to – due to housing costs.” (TH for All Survey)

“Housing – it’s a national problem but you have to start local.” (TH for All Survey)

“Locals are being priced out of housing.” (Resident’s Webinar)

“There is housing shortage for locals - gentrification.” (Resident’s Webinar)

“Overcrowding is an issue – multi-generations and families living together”
(Resident’s Webinar)

“Housing are supposed to do an annual stocktake of stock. Where I live, somebody passed away, they ripped out the adaptations, and gave it to able bodied tenants. They could have kept it and given it to my mum or another person with needs.”
(Carers Forum)

“Where I live, a lot of the 2- or 3-bedroom properties have been bought up in right to buy.” (Carers Forum)

“I’ve noticed a few people in 3-bedroom properties, their partners have died.”
(Carers Forum)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Housing has changed a lot. There isn't the accountability. They don't care about the HCA, not even scared of the ombudsman. It used to be more about community, now it's about profit.” (Carers Forum)

“The housing crisis is a public health crisis.” (VCS engagement event)

“We need more opportunities for getting social housing in the borough.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Lack of adequate social housing available, housing waiting lists are very long.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Crisp Street)

“Housing allocations system not working – unfair and properties misused.” (Warm Hub – Tarling Centre)

Findings from the recent 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review further reiterates that overcrowding and unaffordable housing is a challenge for some residents, with detriment to their quality of life as well as strong knock-on effects. The review's findings shows that people felt housing issues affected them in multiple ways. One of the most common issues - especially during the pandemic - was that participants had been unable to pursue other opportunities such as part-time work due to the lack of space at home to work. Children had insufficient space at home to do homework and teenagers said they had little privacy. Furthermore, some residents related stories of having teenage children move out or wanting to move out at 16 or 18 as there simply wasn't the space to accommodate them and their needs, which in turn led to having to support another precarious household over time.

One parent noted *“...all I keep saying is well wait till eighteen and see what you can afford ... it has such a knock-on effect”*. (TH Poverty Review)

Having larger homes where children could stay into adulthood was seen as preferable, both in terms of ensuring a better financial future for young people in the borough, but also in terms of freeing up smaller properties that those teenagers would have originally sought to move into.

The 2021 Annual Residents survey also indicates that the second top concern for residents was lack of affordable housing (36%). In 2023, residents cited the quality of housing as their sixth most top concern (18.2%), followed by homelessness (16.7%).

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement also supports this view, with a quarter of respondents (25%) saying that housing in the borough currently does not meet their needs, and only slightly more people (26%) said that it does. Respondents' comments on this centred on a lack of affordable housing in the borough and the poor condition of social housing.

Public spaces, air quality and transport

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

The second biggest challenge highlighted by the TH for All respondents (34%) was air pollution, sanitation of the local environment and waste management. Some of which said it had a negative impact on their perception of the borough, their health, and sense of belonging.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, the most extremely important to people (71%) was good walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure. Also, extremely important (68%) was improved air quality, and cleanliness and beautification of all parts of the borough, not just the affluent parts.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 67% of people who responded to the question said air quality, transport and public spaces were areas we could all work in partnership to do differently.

Some of their responses included:

“Air pollution is a big challenge in Tower Hamlets.” (MIND Activate Café)

“Expansion of ULEZ and the impact of this.” (MIND Activate Café)

“More efforts to tackle road traffic and air pollution.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“More green spaces that improve air quality.” (VCS engagement event)

“More environmentally friendly decisions/initiatives and encouraging people to walk to the shop rather than drive.” (TH for All Survey)

“Encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tower Hamlets' streets and public spaces should be improved through ensuring consistent, high quality cycling and walking infrastructure.” (TH for All Survey)

“More needs to be done to introduce traffic calming and speeding deterrents.” (TH for All Survey)

“Air Quality is currently poor in Tower Hamlets due to current high levels of polluting vehicles using tower hamlets as a through route, and it affects all children badly.” (TH for All Survey)

“Making tower hamlets a greener place to visit will not only help local residents dealing with health impacts of living in inner city London but will encourage strong investment into the area.” (TH for All Survey)

“It depends on the area, how safe or clean the park is. If a park isn't clean it doesn't get used.” (Youth Council)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“We need a cleaner borough.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

Findings from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 engagement also reiterates these findings, where one of the main priorities of residents was wanting a local environment which consisted of better access to nature, green spaces, good air quality achieved through reducing car traffic, and cleaner and safer public spaces.

Furthermore, the 2023 Annual Residents Survey highlights that the third top concern for residents was the level of litter and dirt in streets (30%).

Feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates that over a third (36%) of the residents who responded said they would like to see an improvement in the overall cleanliness in public spaces by stopping littering and graffitiing, increasing the number of recycling facilities and improving the waste collection services and the maintenance of parks. They also would like to see more parks and the planting of trees and flowers. Making these changes would improve the overall image of the borough and enable residents to have more positive thoughts about the area they live in. It would also help to reduce pollution levels and encourage people to use public spaces to better maintain their health and well-being. 29% of respondents also told us they would like to see a reduction in motorised traffic is having a negative impact on residents' health and well-being through pollution and the inability to safely travel around the borough by cycling or walking. It was suggested that there should be more cycling and walking infrastructure put in place in the form of cycling lanes, bike storage spaces, and low-traffic neighbourhoods to encourage more people to cycle and walk.

Crime and safety

The third biggest challenge for TH for All respondents (31%) was wanting to feel safe from crime (especially for young people), domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, and trust in police service.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, the second most extremely important ambitions to respondents (70%) were low crime, violence and anti-social behaviour (ASB). People said they would like the borough to have safer streets, which they felt would be best can be achieved by providing more opportunities and things to do for young people, thus leading to less ASB and crime (especially gang and drug-related crime).

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 12% of people who responded to the question said community safety was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“Trust in police service is a challenge.” (MIND Activate Café)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper "What matters to residents?"

"Domestic abuse is a challenge facing the borough." (MIND Activate Café)

"Lack of women-only space where women can meet together and feel safe."
(Equality Network)

"Early education to reduce violence, especially VAWG." (VCS engagement event)

"Substance misuse is most visible in the borough, it's not a TH specific issue, but an ongoing cross border issue, and partnership working is need to tackle this issue."
(Resident's Webinar)

"Anti-social behaviour is a challenge for the borough". (Resident's Webinar)

"More youth centres – but with a lot of flexibility – spread more around – don't have to be like the conventional youth centres." (Youth Council)

"More policing – want to feel the presence of the police – police cars in the park. More police going around and checking that everyone is ok. Having a police car outside each school – can involve the military." (Youth Council)

"Old Bethnal Green road is going to be open – 4 schools on that road,.. but it's not really safe for the kids, so need at least local police outside the schools." (Youth Council)

"Youth need to feel safe from knife crime." (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

"More youth clubs, to help tackle knife crime e.g. sports clubs like football/boxing clubs, to keep the youth busy." (Warm hub – Idea Store Crisp Street)

"Life-course approach to crime needed, start changing youth mindset from an early age." (Warm hub – Idea Store Crisp Street)

"More youth activities/programmes/after school clubs, many of these closed down during covid and have not been re-opened." (Warm hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

"More work to address anti-social behaviour and drugs in the borough." (Warm hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

"Invest in more youth clubs and programmes, to prevent young people to involved in drugs, and more training and skill development programmes." (TH for All Survey)

"More action should be taken to make the streets safer and to reduce violence and drug related crime." (TH for All Survey)

"Low crime, violence and anti-social behaviour - This is very important as we have seen a high rise in crime and ASB, which has not been the case for many years. Within the last 15-20 years people have lived in LBTH without fear, now you have young men and teenagers carrying knives, open drug dealing, car thefts, burglaries and not forgetting the laughing gas that is being inhaled and thus increase in car

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

crashes as a result. Lack of Police presence, on foot and in patrol cars as well as lack of joint work with housing providers is an issue.” (TH for All Survey)

“Everybody should feel safe to go about their daily (and nightly) business and enjoy their environment. Anti-social behaviour, including public drinking and drug-taking and the littering of nitrous oxide canisters, syringes, etc, has a depressing effect on the environment.” (TH for All Survey)

“It doesn't feel safe to be out at night.” (TH for All Survey)

Similarly, results from the 2023 Annual Residents Survey shows that the second top concern for residents was crime and anti-social behaviour (39% in 2023). Residents were less like to feel safe at night (66%) than during the day (94%). Only 47% of residents felt that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with safety issues in the borough.

Findings from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey also indicates that secondary aged young people (73%) were less likely to feel safe in their local area than primary aged children (86%).

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) was also a challenge highlighted by the Tower Hamlets for All respondents, with some saying that to overcome this there needs to be a coordinated response to domestic abuse, women's safety, parks need adequate lighting, police need to improve prosecutions for perpetrators of abuse against women, there needs to be enough health care for women in women-only spaces, flexible working for carers and job share opportunities need to be normalised. More public transport at night and well-lit areas and CCTV across the borough so that men cannot target women.

Additionally, more than half of respondents (55%) surveyed as part of the New Grants Programme Engagement revealed that VAWG is an extremely important issue. Many stated the importance of having a safe space for women and girls who have been abused or exploited should be accessible.

Feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates that majority of respondents (41%) told us that they feel safe in their local area, while more than a quarter (27%) said they do not feel safe. Residents mentioned the crime and anti-social behaviour as the main reason for feeling unsafe. LGBT+ people and people from White other backgrounds were most likely to say they do not feel safe. 41% of respondents said that they would like to see a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour, specifically around drug dealing and substance abuse, speeding, and rat-running. Residents also felt that there should be an increased police presence on the streets to help reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour.

One female resident said... *“As long as I stay where it's lit, I feel OK. Walking the dog at night feels less safe. I bought a rape alarm for the first time ever recently because of this.” (Healthy Neighbourhoods project)*

Views on key policy areas

This section describes the residents' views on other key policy areas, organised in order of priority in the engagement responses.

Tackling poverty and financial difficulty

Financial support and advice for those struggling financially

Another main priority raised by TH for All respondents was poverty and the cost-of-living crisis. With a quarter of them (25%) saying that support is needed for people facing financial hardship, as poverty has major implications for health, wellbeing and crime rate in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 42% of people said support for people in financial difficulty was extremely important.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 6% of people who responded to the question said support for people in financial difficulty was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“Poverty is a big challenge facing the borough.” (Residents Webinar)

“Poverty is driving the mental health crisis.” (LGBT Forum)

“Poverty needs to be addressed.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“More support for people in poverty, and support for residents with utility bills.”
(Warm Hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Tackling poverty (not just cost-of-living crisis, which is temporary), which will in turn help reduce crime.” (VCS engagement event)

“Growing poverty and inequalities in the borough.” (Equality Network)

“It's important to help people in financial difficulty. Poverty can lead to worse health outcomes. It can also lead to increased crime rates by youth who have grown up in poverty and seek to make money for their families through any means necessary especially if not academically strong. They can be exploited easily.” (TH for All Survey)

“Support for people in financial difficulty because housing and living costs in Tower Hamlets are unaffordable for a large percentage of the community, many have restricted ability to access financial support due to language, learning, age, digital etc. Poverty is strongly linked to mental and physical health issues, and to child development and later life outcomes. Resolving financial issues would have a huge effect on the overall quality of life.” (TH for All Survey)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

One of the main inequalities highlighted by the Health and Wellbeing Strategy engagement is that women, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, younger people, and parents of disabled children are less likely to be able to support themselves and their families financially.

As part of the New Grants Programme Engagement, when asked what was most important for supporting residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, almost two thirds (59%) of respondents felt crisis support was an extremely important. There are individuals and families in the borough currently facing real financial difficulties, and they need financial support, help with debt management, and managing life in general. 43% of respondents felt that advice and information services was also very important for tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, with many saying that people need advice and information around budgeting, buying and cooking healthy food, and staying warm on low income, and on where to get information on benefits, support with debt, and eviction notices.

Findings from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review indicates that stigma and lack of confidence are barriers. Many participants highlighted how issues compound when a low-income family faces a crisis. People feel unable to access help without shame, find it difficult to share that they are struggling, lose confidence in themselves, and many also experience worsening mental health as a result. Consequently, a more holistic approach was seen as necessary by participants, with a focus on integrating signposting and services into atypical places such as festivals to remove the barriers that stigma may create for someone going to a traditional support location. On top of this residents felt it was important to make sure that people who sought financial support were also given holistic wellbeing checks, since financial stress also creates wider mental and physical stress. Peer mentoring was also mentioned as an offer that would be useful in helping families and individuals who are struggling to unburden themselves of that shame.

Environment and climate change

Lower carbon emissions

19% of respondents said that climate change was a big challenge facing the borough.

60% of TH for All respondents felt that lower carbon emissions were extremely important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study, or visit.

1% of people who responded said climate change was something we could all work in partnership to do differently. Majority of people (24%) wanted air quality to be a priority and working together to tackle this.

“Climate change is a big challenge we need to address.” (LGBT Forum)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Climate resilience is key and sharing information, setting up community energy infrastructure/farming/welcoming climate refugees will be important.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

“Society is on the road to climate/environmental catastrophe, and we fail to recognise the urgency to act now. Everything else will pale into comparison as this crisis gets worse and worse. At a local level, this is impacting on our health through air pollution. Taking this on could bring so much economic opportunity, and a chance to cut our long-term cost of living.” (TH for All Survey)

“Low carbon emissions as it's important for the planet's future, and it is also connected to cutting air pollution (and therefore residents' health).” (TH for All Survey)

Health and wellbeing

Improved access to health, social care and mental health services

15% of TH for All respondents said accessing health, social care, mental health and wellbeing support was a challenge in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 68% of TH for All respondents said high-quality health and social care services, and mental health and wellbeing support (including elderly people struggling financially and mentally) was extremely important to them. Some reported facing difficulties accessing the health care they need.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 16% of people who responded to the question said access to health and care services was something we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“More support and funding for mental health support services, they are struggling to support residents and lack enough funding.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“We need adequate mental health support – culturally appropriate.” (VCS engagement event)

“Better use of data and evidence: Healthy neighbourhoods – implement results from engagement (Healthwatch).” (Loneliness Connection Event)

“Lack of leaders, i.e. leadership and accountability who are willing to make needed changes in addressing health inequalities.” (Equality Network)

“Women's Health has only increased by 2 percentage point in 10 years, which is alarming, and needs to be addressed.” (Equality Network)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“I really value having both emergency and routine health care when needed.” (TH for All Survey)

“Healthcare for me is a basic human right but access to medical attention is diabolical. I have been turned away from doctors as they are 'too busy', but as non-native English speaker I have issues understanding or knowing to do. You only have one GPs surgery close by you can register with due to catchment zones, you get turned away at the end of the day when you are on a call back list, you cannot see a doctor face to face, you can't make an appointment to see a doctor at a given time meaning people who work have to take days off just in case.” (TH for All Survey)

“We need more social care for elderly people that is free.” (TH for All Survey)

“We need to share more good practice/information on mental health, and more free counselling as it's currently a two-month waiting list.” (TH for All Survey)

The 2023 Annual Residents Survey asked residents questions on their perceived health and wellbeing, to which 81% of residents perceived themselves to be in good health, 13% felt lonely all or most of the time, and 42% of residents enjoyed doing physically activity in their spare time.

However, findings from the New Grants Programme engagement shows that over half of respondents (52%) felt that health and wellbeing support through tackling inequality is extremely important. Some felt that the borough should tackle residents' unhealthy lifestyle, poor mental health and the general impact on health and wellbeing after Covid-19. They reported that residents have dipped into unemployment, and many have lost friends and family to Covid, leaving society in a difficult situation. Half of the respondents (50%) also felt that developing community activities aimed at tackling loneliness and promoting active lifestyles was also needed for residents. They also felt that support for older and vulnerable people, including luncheon clubs, and meals on wheels was important (39%).

The 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey shows that secondary school pupils scored lower than primary pupils on a number of questions related to health and wellbeing. Secondary pupils (7%) were less likely to eat 5 or more fruit and vegetables in a day than primary pupils (27%), secondary pupils (31%) were less likely to find their school meals healthy than primary pupils (70%), secondary pupils (65%) were slightly less likely to have done something active after school than primary pupils (67%), and secondary pupils (43%) (down from 65% in 2017) were less likely to report feeling happy about their life than primary pupils (69%) (down from 75% in 2017).

Results from the recent Tower Hamlets Poverty Review in 2021 indicates that a common theme was that for many low-income residents, their financial situation proved a barrier for accessing spaces to pursue physical activities. Gyms, swimming pools and clubs all had costs that were often too high to justify regular use, leading to a decline in physical movement, especially during periods of bad weather. Developing spaces in the borough and creating funding for people to

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

pursue enjoyable activities, such as meditation or yoga, or work out was seen as important for maintaining positive emotional well-being as well as physical health.

The Poverty Review also found that residents felt that affordable, healthy eating should be a focus for maintaining wellbeing in the borough. Whether by improving access to healthy food, increasing education around healthy eating, or providing free community cooking classes, it was widely agreed that interventions are needed in this area. Some called for nutrition classes led by public services, while others favoured linking up learning about healthy eating and cooking, with building relationships with their neighbours, and wanted to see residents lead community cooking.

The findings from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates 34% of respondents said having better access to healthy and affordable food such as fresh fruit and vegetables within their local area instead of the multitude of fast-food shops on the high streets would help them to eat better. In addition, 27% of respondents told us that having access to affordable, local gyms and leisure centres, including free exercise equipment in local parks and access to local swimming pools, would encourage them to exercise more.

Inequality and discrimination

Equal opportunities for all

11% of TH for All respondents felt that inequality and discrimination was a challenge for the borough. With some saying deaf access, homophobia, lack of understanding of the LGBT+ community, women's equality, racism and equality between different ethnic groups were issues in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 47% of TH for All respondents said equality between different groups was extremely important to them.

When also asked what we could we all do differently, so that Tower Hamlets is a place for all, 15% of people who responded to the question said equality was an area we could all work in partnership to do differently.

Some of their responses include:

“There are minorities within the BAME community in Tower Hamlets, which are usually left out. The Black African, Caribbean, and Somali population are not equally represented and not given equal opportunities (e.g., employment) as the Bangladeshi population, the larger ethnic minority group.” (Equality Network)

“Better support for women and mothers returning to work.” (Equality Network)

“Growing inequalities in the borough related to poverty.” (Equality Network)

“The homophobia from families and general society.” (LGBT Forum)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Better representation across social sectors in Tower Hamlets of Black and Somali community.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Employment and training fair access for everyone.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tackling inequality and discrimination should be a priority.” (TH for All Survey)

“Equality between different groups because I think there is still racism and Islamophobic acts being made.” (TH for All Survey)

“I see elements of racism and would like to stamp out.” (TH for All Survey)

The recent State of the Borough report indicates that a large proportion of our young people go on to higher education. In 2020/21, 71% of 18-year-olds sustained a level 4 or higher destination (such as degrees, higher apprenticeships, and national higher diplomas). This was higher than the rate for England of 66%. However, the rate of unemployment in the borough is higher than the national average, indicating unequal opportunities for residents in getting jobs after attaining qualifications. We are a net importer of workers.

Results from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review indicates several inequalities in the borough, to which a targeted approach may help reduce these inequalities. These include:

- Younger people and those in precarious housing find it harder to eat healthily and maintain healthy lifestyles.
- People in the borough's poorest wards experience more air pollution.
- Younger people and private renters feel less connected to their local area.
- Women and people living in housing association estates feel less safe.
- People with poor mental health are at higher risk of isolation.
- Women, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, younger people and parents of disabled children felt less likely to be able to support themselves and their families financially.
- Renters were less happy with their homes than homeowners; adults living with their parents were least happy with where they lived.
- People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, older people and those with more complex medical needs (particularly those with medical health issues) were less satisfied with services.
- Those who are digitally excluded find it hard to access services.
- Younger people (under 24), White respondents and parents of special needs children were less likely to think children get the best start in life.
- Children in overcrowded, deprived or digitally excluded households were more affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Local public services

Accessing public services

Some respondents felt that more accountability was needed for public services and easier access to local public and community services (11%). With some saying they had difficulty with accessing health, housing, social care, and council

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

services. These respondents complained of digital barriers to accessing services, long waiting times for accessing health services, and not enough provision for care services. As well as finding it difficult to contact the council and speak to someone. Some of their responses included:

“Communication between services users and professionals (equal access).” (MIND Activate Café)

“It’s not just housing, the pressure on services is horrendous. Try and get a GP, or a dentist.” (Carers Forum)

“Long waiting times to access NHS services.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Accessing social support services is a challenge. The community is being left behind.” (Residents Webinar)

Better access to services (health, housing, employment, etc) to make a borough to be a better place to live. No fairness and equal opportunities/access, Bangladeshi residents have more access and support in the BAME community as opposed to other minorities e.g. Bengali speaking services in GP, with no Somali speaking services offered. Interpretation services are needed for non-Bangladeshi minority ethnic groups, e.g. Somali speakers. These will help reduce inequalities. (Equality Network)

“Language and Digital Barriers to accessing services need to be addressed, particularly for those who are elderly, and people with English as a second language.” (Equality Network)

“Lack of venue spaces available for VCS organisation to deliver their services to residents.” (Equality Network)

“Public services feel undervalued & unheard – strikes causing people to leave public service jobs – need to be paid fairly.” (LGBT Forum)

The 2023 Annual Residents Survey indicates that the highest-rated council services Primary education (79%), Idea Stores / Libraries (78%), Parks and open spaces (73%) and Nursery education (73%) all show improvement on 2019 results.

Results from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review indicates that people felt more positive about actual public services once they had received them, but when it came to accessing them or getting help it was very difficult. Many people felt like there were very long wait times to speak with someone. Once on the line, people felt they were being bounced around and having to retell your story multiple times to different people was a common experience. According to the participants, this has led to people becoming disillusioned and feeling like there might be a hidden agenda with the public services to prioritise saving money over helping them.

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

The 2021 Poverty Review also found that complex application processes are a significant barrier to people getting help. Many participants highlighted that complex and confusing forms, particularly those online, prevented them and those they knew from getting what they were entitled to, and that often the information requirements were disproportionate to the potential gain. Poor signposting prevents people from being aware of what they are entitled to, residents consistently noted that it was often only through informal networks that they had been able to find resources and help from the council. In some instances, people relied on knowing someone who could provide them with a direct contact at the council rather than going through the council's own helpline.

The findings from the 2021 Poverty Review also indicated that vulnerable people were consistently missed. Some residents highlighted that one of the key issues they faced was finding they were ineligible for certain kinds of support despite being on low incomes. In particular, this was common with "working poor" families who could just about afford basics, or workers who were self-employed as gig economy workers and had fluctuating incomes that were often lower than the minimum income floor. One participant shared how signposting to council help in her school was only passed on to those families who are eligible for the pupil premium, meaning that many families missed out on essential support during the pandemic.

The Poverty Review also highlighted that digital exclusion is more than a lack of digital skills: Along with lack of digital literacy, poor internet access, limited devices, and the fact that many low-income households used mobile data or pay as you go internet limited the time they could be online. Households in overcrowded accommodation prioritized schooling and work for computer use, meaning that looking for services online was difficult and of low priority.

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates 45% of residents said they would like to improve GP services due to difficulty booking an appointment, and Dental services because of difficulty finding an NHS dentist. Around 1 in 10 respondents told us they were not aware of any local community and voluntary organisations' services in their local area.

Community, cohesion, and diversity

More community spirit and neighbourliness

10% of TH for All respondents said people from different backgrounds getting along was a challenge in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, 46% of TH for All respondents said stronger and more cohesive communities was extremely important to them.

When also asked what we could all do differently or how we can all work together to make Tower Hamlets a place for all, the second highest response (23%) was they would like cohesion-oriented initiatives such as more community

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

spaces and inclusive activities, such as; festivals that help residents meet their neighbours and feel a sense of community, tackling inequalities, developing more collective /collaborative, and less individualistic/segregated thinking solutions towards building a cohesive community for all, together with more public spaces for communities to sit and gather together.

“Misunderstanding between communities – homophobia and lack of understanding of LGBT+ community.” (LGBT Forum)

“Community cohesion should be a priority.” (Residents Webinar)

“Cohesion to support common goals.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“A better sense of community in TH, which are very diverse borough, and there is a lot of loneliness. Need a space where all ethnicities can meet and share information, deliver/attend workshops etc.” (Equality Network)

“A stronger and more cohesive society can easily achieve other ambitions.” (TH for All Survey)

“A place isn't worth living in if there is no community. Without belonging and cohesion it isn't a community just a collection of selfish individuals or groups opposing each other.” (TH for All Survey)

“More community spaces and activities, to stop insular behaviours would be good... even if you want to know more about your neighbours, it takes a lot to go over to someone and ask them about their life and culture.” (TH for All Survey)

According to the 2023 Annual Residents Survey, 82% of residents feel that people get on well together in the borough. 76% of residents have at least some friends from a different ethnicity. While 54% of residents have friends with similar education level as themselves.

Results from the Pupil Attitude Survey indicates that just over half of children and young people (55%) think that Tower Hamlets is a place where young people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Findings from the 2021 Tower Hamlets Poverty Review – and particularly the peer led research carried out for the review - indicates that building community bonds was a priority for low income residents: Over and above any other intervention, low income residents of Tower Hamlets wanted the council to help build stronger and more integrated communities, noting that the friendships that came from this helped boost confidence and combat isolation, enabled residents to find out more about what was going on in the borough through signposting and informal connections, and also allow the development of support networks to enable simple things like free childcare when going for a job interview.

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement showed that just under a third (32%) of respondents told us they did not have good access to spaces where they could meet people. People told us that while they have

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

good access to green spaces, there is a need for more community events or centres, and affordable cafes and restaurants.

Jobs, the local economy, and education

Skills development, economic opportunities and local employment

Some TH for All respondents said jobs and the local economy (8%), and education and childcare (6%) were challenges in the borough.

When asked to rank which ambitions were important for making Tower Hamlets a good place to live, work, study or visit, what was extremely important to some TH for All respondents was good schools and educational institutions (68%), tapping into new economic opportunities and industries in the borough and more job opportunities for local residents (48%), and opportunities for skills development and adult learning (32%).

Some respondents wanted more professional job opportunities for local residents, more opportunities for employment, training, careers advice, and more funding for those who want to open a business. People also said that they would like to see more support for people with special education needs and disabilities to get into higher and further education, and job opportunities. People also wanted more after-school and homework clubs.

When also asked what we could all do differently or how we can all work together to make Tower Hamlets a place for all, people who responded said the economy and jobs (12%), high streets (4%), education (4%), and skills and adult learning (3%) were areas we could all work in partnership to do differently.

“Easier access to education and support for both youth and adults wanting to get a job/ change careers.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“More work experience opportunities, and more funding for career advice services.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Catering for special needs children need to be better addressed in schools.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“I would like Tower Hamlets to be a more thriving local economy with more local independent businesses and a thriving restaurant scene.” (TH for All Survey)

“A thriving borough, with job opportunities for local people, who have access to good quality housing, health services, community services.” (TH for All Survey)

“All residents are able to realise their potential. With existing and new communities working together for all.” (TH for All Survey)

“More pupil and youth services provision.” (TH for All Survey)

Findings from the 2022 Pupil Attitude Survey indicates that secondary pupils (69%) were less likely report that their school is giving them useful skills and knowledge than primary pupils (87%). Secondary pupils (41%) were less likely to report that their teachers make lessons fun and interesting than primary pupils (72%).

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

Results from the recent Tower Hamlets Poverty Review in 2021 indicates that as part of tackling poverty, residents felt that it's important to push for more investment from businesses and organisations based in the borough for the benefit of local people. As part of this, participants felt making links with organisations who have a community presence in the borough and who hire local residents should be prioritised, and when it comes to outsourcing and procurement there should be preference given to those companies who have strong connections with the local population. People felt that a better deal with local employers needs to be made to enable people to work in the borough they live in: participants felt strongly that there were too few opportunities for people who live within the borough to work within the borough, and that more needed to be done to push for employers to offer apprenticeships, internships, work experience opportunities, and training to local residents on low incomes. As part of this drive, participants felt that it's important to also advocate for local wages to rise to match the London Living Wage to reduce the issue of working households remaining in poverty. Some residents highlighted racism and discrimination as factors preventing low-income people in Tower Hamlets accessing jobs and felt that advocacy by the Council and its partners on this issue could help improve the situation.

The feedback from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project engagement indicates 33% of respondents state that the education and learning facilities in the borough Fully or Mostly meet their needs. They told us that while local libraries and Idea Stores are good learning resources, more affordable educational courses for adults would be appreciated.

Opportunities for children and young people

More children and youth services provision

7% of TH for All respondents said opportunities for children and young people was a challenge in the borough.

Most young people's concerns from the TH for All engagement related to wanting to feel safe from crime, and wanting more provision for youth and sports clubs, after school and school holiday activities, and help in planning their future. Youth clubs and activities should not be restricted only to children from particular backgrounds but be genuine cross-community hubs. Another priority for residents was children's centres, early years support, support for children with special education needs, and support for new parents. People also said that a life-course approach to crime is needed to start changing youth mindset from an early age.

When also asked what we could all do differently or how we can all work together to make Tower Hamlets a place for all, 9% of people who responded said providing more support and opportunities for children and young people was an area we could all work in partnership to do differently.

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“More after school and school holiday clubs to learn skills. Every child from my primary school left knowing how to play an instrument. Another school – every girl left having horse-riding or karate.” (Youth Council)

“More youth clubs, days to attend youth club, mentorships and educational talks for the youth.” (Coffee Afrique – Youth Hub)

“Lack of opportunities for young people in the borough.” (Residents Webinar)

“More youth activities/programmes/after school clubs, many of these closed down during covid and have not been re-opened.” (TH for All Survey)

“Pro-active provision of opportunities for the young and disenfranchised.” (TH for All Survey)

“Invest in more training and skill development programmes. More youth programmes - to prevent young people getting involved in drugs.” (TH for All Survey)

Similarly, the same views were iterated by both children and young people’s responses in the latest Pupil Attitude Survey undertaken in 2021. When asked what would make their life better, the top three responses for primary pupils were: more places where I can go to spend time with my friends (40%), more interesting school lessons (33%), and more help to plan for my future (33%). While the top three responses for secondary pupils were: more interesting school lessons (41%), more help to plan for my future (41%), and more places where I can go to spend time with my friends (36%).

Findings from the New Grants Programme engagement also supports these views, where just over third (36%) of respondents felt access to youth provision is extremely important. The young people in the borough need free / affordable activities, many of whom are struggling to get into employment. Respondents felt that targeted outreach will help the youth to get into the appropriate jobs. It will also help ensure the young residents do not get involved in crime and are engaged in productive activities. 34% of respondents felt that supporting young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) was also important.

Results from the recent Tower Hamlets Poverty Review in 2021 indicates that residents felt that the removal of certain youth-focused services has had a negative knock-on effect on young people: For instance, it was significantly highlighted that lack of investment in youth centres had placed extra burdens and restrictions on households living in overcrowded conditions, making it hard for people (especially during the pandemic) to pursue work as they lack room to focus, and making teenagers more vulnerable to crime as they went on the streets in the evening to have more space and not feel confined. The lack of youth services and opportunities in the borough contributes to a negative perception of young people: Many residents felt that young people are seen as a problem rather than an asset to the borough, and that this stigmatisation of youth is exacerbated by the lack of facilities available to them. Participants wanted more places dedicated specifically for young people under 25 to socialise and

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

learn skills. It was felt that a lot of the negative stereotypes around young people contributed to a greater lack of confidence and pushed some young people towards more anti-social behaviour.

As part of the 2023 engagement for the Children and Families Strategy, children and young people in the borough told us where we need to focus our efforts in order for Tower Hamlets to be a genuinely child-friendly borough:

- Online safety, including mobile phones (scams, fake websites, accessing content without adult supervision – importance of education for children and parents).
- Safer communities (more cameras, perpetrators are sad/depressed – more enrichment would help with this).
- Reducing pollution.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Mental health (removing stigma (sometimes cultural), offer is rich but hard to navigate and can seem disjointed, feeling dismissed, online appointments are a barrier, establishing trusted relationships very important, training should be co-produced with young people).
- Bullying (peer pressure, reputations, importance of/encouraging kindness, trusted adults).
- Reducing child poverty.
- Cultural capital (exposure to areas outside of Tower Hamlets as young people are culturally deprived due to their disadvantaged background).
- Standard of social housing.

Hopes for the future

Residents' vision for Tower Hamlets in 10 years' time

When asked what their vision was for Tower Hamlets in 10 years' time, residents' responses were:

1. Air quality, transport and carbon emissions - They would like it to be a cleaner and greener borough, with clean air, more green and open spaces, a tidier local environment, less motor traffic, and for it to be a place where walking, cycling and public transport is prioritised over cars, and improved health for people who live, work and study in the borough. Many said that there should be focus on improving walking (more walkable streets), cycling and transport infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions, and improve air quality and health. As part of achieving this, people said that there should also be more green spaces in the borough, and transport policies that don't just benefit car drivers, but pedestrians and those that use public transport. People said they would also like the borough to have more education for people on recycling, provision for adequate recycling facilities, improved energy efficiency, decarbonisation, and net-zero emissions.

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“I think good walking, cycling and public transport is the most important because it is the backbone of every other ambition. You need good infrastructure to fight poor air quality, carbon emissions, to improve public spaces and high streets, to help people get to school, medical care and high-quality jobs.” (TH for All Survey)

“The long-term ambition should be investing in the future of the borough, good housing, improving air quality and open spaces.” (TH for All Survey)

“I would like the borough to be the leading London borough for Net Zero, retrofit and decarbonisation. A centre of expertise for skills that can be deployed internationally.” (TH for All Survey)

“Better energy sustainability in buildings.” (Warm hub - Idea Store Crisp Street)

“Climate resilient community and more networking/sharing to combat climate pressures.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

2. Community safety – They would like to feel safe at all times in the borough, with less crime, drugs and ASB. With more opportunities for youth to be occupied, more and approachable policing and better street lighting.

“Help each other to make community safe.” (Inter-Faith Forum)

“Safe for all.” (LGBT Forum)

“A safe borough where parents and families are not scared of experiencing and engaging in activities.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“A safer borough for young people and vulnerable people.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“More youth centres and youth engagement to help motivate them to navigate their way, and more police presence.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Life-course approach to crime, to start changing youth mindset from an early age.” (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

“Police officers that are more approachable.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Better signposting – want victims of crime to know where to go.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Street lighting, and CCTV to tackle drugs.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“A safer borough – no drugs.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper "What matters to residents?"

"More policing, and better lighting." (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

"More community police to keep women and girls safe." (VCS Engagement Event)

3. Housing - They would like the borough to have more affordable homes with quicker access to social housing for those in need.

"Build homes that locals can afford so they can live in the borough and find hope." (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

"A roof for everyone, no homelessness." (Loneliness connection event)

"Less overall poor living standards and problems getting housing." (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

"Better housing." (Women's Inclusive Team)

"Better housing provided." (Inter-Faith Forum)

"Our young people able to access safe secure housing" (VCS Engagement Event)

"Housing crisis – reduced levels of overcrowding (for e.g. 5 people incl. 2 teenagers in 1 bed flat) and its impact on living a normal life and education. More housing options – including transfer opportunities." (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

"Addressing mental health and addiction when tackling homelessness, as well as addressing homelessness from the grassroots and holistically." (Loneliness Connection Event)

"Affordable homes and rents." (Community Leadership Engagement - Limehouse Project)

"Housing conversations to be face to face." (Community Leadership Engagement - Limehouse Project)

"Support for private renters." (Community Leadership Engagement - Limehouse Project)

4. Children and young people provision, and education – They would like more educational talks and mentorships for children and young people, more sports and youth clubs opportunities, after school activities, and more catering for SEND children.

"Youth centres being open on the weekend, Young people say they are more likely to go." (Youth Council)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper "What matters to residents?"

"More awareness of different places, leisure centres, youth groups through school, online." (Youth Empowerment Board)

"Free meals. More opportunities and help for the youth." (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

"More sports clubs with better facilities e.g. better basketball courts." (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

"More mentorships for the youth, and more educational talks about following the right path." (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

"More after-school clubs, homework clubs (tuition centres are not affordable for all)." (VCS Engagement Event)

"More fun activities for children and young people e.g. pottery etc." (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

"More pupil ad youth services, more after-school and school holiday activities and provision." (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

"Better catering for special needs children in schools." (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

"More schools availability." (Warm Hub - Idea Store Crisp St)

5. Cohesion – They would like more community spaces and activities to bring people together, reduce isolation and get to know more about other people living around them. Below were a few of their responses:

"More community celebrations – e.g. queen's birthday Tower Hamlets day, special occasion for each month." (Youth Council)

"Age-appropriate parties and events – have a big event each month and during the whole month have little small events. E.g. Tower Bridge – Christmas fair. Sell tickets and buy tickets – but for specific ages." (Youth Council)

"More free community activities." (Warm hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)

"Closer-knit community." (Loneliness Connection Event)

"More community spaces and activities, to stop insular behaviours would be good... even if you want to know more about your neighbours, it takes a lot to go over to someone and ask them about their life and culture." (TH for All Survey)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“A Tower Hamlets carnival, TH being voted the happiest borough to live, learn and work. community ambassadors and community centres run by local people.” (TH for All Survey)

“Public spaces where people from all cultures and communities can interact with each other.” (TH for All Survey)

“Encourage aspiration and a sense of pride within communities. Do more to help people integrate into the community.” (TH for All Survey)

6. Public services – They would like easier access to services, and more signposting of support available.

“Local health services – make more local dentists and GPs.” (Youth Empowerment Board)

“Information on support available.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“Easy access to support – young people can just walk in and ask for support – money, friendship., easy to access, quick, comfortable, can meet someone there. A manager to cover the whole area – feel like part of the family.” (Youth Council)

“Better access to services.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Less mental health challenges, back to better health – safe support.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Increased awareness (digitally and non-digital sign-posting) of where people can go to access support.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“More support and funding for mental health support services, they are struggling to support residents and lack enough funding.” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“Better access to NHS services – the waiting times are too long” (Warm Hub – Idea Store Canary Wharf)

“More services for people with mental health.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

7. Economy, jobs and skills – They would like more employment and training opportunities for local people.

“Work more closely with local employers to provide upskilling and opportunities for local residents.” (TH for All Survey)

“More jobs for local people.” (Warm Hub - Tarling Centre)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Local people into jobs and volunteering.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“Apprenticeships for women and those not active.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“Childcare support.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

“SEND children and job opportunities.” (Community Leadership engagement - Limehouse Project)

8. Equality - They would like greater equality in the borough with lesser segregation and equal opportunities for all. Providing equal opportunities for all residents and not for specific people, i.e., equal opportunities for jobs, funding, education, accommodation, and health. People said we need to work to reduce segregation between racial groups, and implement LGBT+ awareness training to increase understanding of the LGBT+ community needs. As well as the need for strong anti-discrimination policy and anti-racism strategy.

“Equal opportunities for all.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Anti-racism and funding equity.” (VCS Engagement Event)

“Equal spread of wealth in Tower Hamlets.” (LGBT Forum)

“We need to make LBTH anti racism across every pathway, inequality is our biggest disease.” (TH for All Survey)

“I would like Tower Hamlets to be a place where people from all backgrounds can afford to live a good quality life.” (TH for All Survey)

“A leading equal borough that provides the best outcomes for children, young people and families. A borough with zero tolerance to all forms of discrimination.” (TH for All Survey)

“Tackle inequalities, build a sense of community and neighbourliness, everyone to be part of the journey. Building community responsibility.” (TH for All Survey)

9. Cost of living and financial support – They would like less people to be living in poverty, and financial support available for all who need it.

“Like it is now, but with less poverty.” (TH for All Survey)

“I would like everyone to be living above the poverty line.” (TH for All Survey)

Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan: Background paper “What matters to residents?”

“Ideally no one goes without, having enough money and food to be able to sustain a good standard of living. No more food banks, communities growing their own.” (TH for All Survey)

“Cost of living – support for people, less poverty.” (VCS Engagement Event)

*“More grants and social funds for people who want to open a business.”
(Warm Hub - Idea Store Canary Wharf)*

“Less unfunded families.” (Coffee Afrique - Youth hub)

References

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- [State of the Borough 2023](#)
- 2023 Annual Residents Survey
- [2022 Pupil Attitude Survey](#)
- [2021 Poverty Review](#)
- [Consultation and engagement on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [2023 Healthy Neighbourhoods project](#)
- [2023 New Grants Programme engagement](#)