

Each year the council publishes its Strategic Plan – our contribution to achieving the Community Plan – that sets out our aims and objectives for the year ahead and explains how we'll further improve the services we provide for local people.

2007/08 was a year of successes for Tower Hamlets. Our services for Adults and Children were rated as outstanding and we're the only council to have both of them 'top rated' for the last two years.

We've been awarded Beacon status for the seventh time for Reducing Re-Offending and our work on projects as diverse as the Accommodation Strategy and Independent Travel Training have been recognised nationally.

And it looks like we're being recognised locally for this hard work as well. In the latest Annual Residents Survey over two thirds of local people said they think we're doing a good job and that the council makes the local area a better place to live in. Staff were singled out for particular praise; with over three quarters of residents saying they found council staff to be friendly and polite when they get in touch.

But one of the things we're recognised for in Tower Hamlets is the drive for continuous improvement. Despite these successes, we know there is still more to do.

The Strategic Plan for 2008/09 was approved by a meeting of the Full Council on June 25.

A shared vision

Over the last few months there has been extensive consultation on the new and improved Community Plan. Representatives of the Tower Hamlets Partnership have been asking local people, businesses and voluntary and community groups what they want the borough to look like in 2020.

The council's headline vision is "To improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough." However, a more recent theme emerging, which staff will have heard of, is One Tower Hamlets.

One Tower Hamlets will be a borough where everyone feels they have an equal stake and status, where people feel they have the same opportunities as others and a responsibility to contribute to society.

It's the over arching theme of the Community Plan, supported by four other themes: A Great Place to Live, A Prosperous Community, A Safe and Supportive Community and A Healthy Community.

For each theme we've highlighted what it's all about and the key areas of work we'll all be focusing on during 2008/09.





One Tower Hamlets

It's about working well as One Council, bringing the community together and providing clear leadership.

Tower Hamlets is a vibrant, diverse and young borough. About half of the population are from black and minority ethnic communities and over 100 languages are spoken in our schools. The council and its partners have an important role to play in providing strong leadership to our local communities and involving people in the services we provide.

This overarching theme in the Strategic Plan explores how we can work efficiently as One Council (ensuring we're the best so we can expect the best of others). It means continuing to reduce inequalities and making sure that we encourage community cohesion.

Our Key Initiatives are to:

- Develop further our workforce to reflect the local community;
- Ensure that efficiency and value for money informs everything we do by comparing our services with others and strengthening our resource planning;
- Achieve Level 5 of the revised Equality Standard, building on our current position as one of only a handful of councils at the top level of the existing standard;
- Develop a new Channel strategy and IT infrastructure network so that local people have better access our services;

- Work with councillors to extend their community leadership role and, as part of this, start webcasting council meetings;
- Support the new Tower Hamlets Partnership structure to make sure it is accountable and has strong decision making in place.

A Great Place to Live

It's about making sure people feel proud of their borough, that they enjoy living here and feel that they belong. It is about having good quality open spaces, affordable housing and effective transport links to enable people to get around their borough.

Our Key Initiatives are to:

- Provide more affordable family-sized social rented housing and low cost home ownership;
- Invest in our Estate Improvement programmes that will bring council homes up to the decent standard;
- Agree the Core Strategy of our Local Development Framework which will help us develop strong neighbourhoods where communities are well connected;
- Develop our excellent parks, leisure centres and public spaces which will include a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for Victoria Park and new strategies for playing pitches and public arts;
- Tackle litter and make sure our open spaces are clean, tidy and accessible by putting the Cleanliness Action Plan into practice and coordinating our services better;
- Implement the Recycling Improvement Plan that will increase dramatically recycling rates across the borough;
- Ensure that we all benefit from the opportunities presented by the Olympic Games and the legacy they'll leave behind, including the Cultural Olympiad and High Street 2012.





A Prosperous Community

It's about building a strong local economy, supporting our businesses to be successful and providing education for everyone so to ensure the success of future generations.

Our Key Initiatives are to:

- Make sure all local children have the chance to attend high quality early years services;
- Continue to invest in schools through the Building Schools for the Future programme;
- Provide targeted support to schools and pupils to continue to drive up educational attainment;
- Reduce the number of young people who aren't in employment, education or training (NEET) through an early warning risk system and introductory sessions;
- Put in place an action plan to improve educational achievements for looked after children;
- Develop new ways of communicating with children, parents and families to encourage them to take up services and take the opportunity to make them aware of the services on offer;
- Tackling worklessness and helping people back to work, including using Children's Centres to support parents into work.

A Safe and Supportive Community

It's about ensuring everyone is supported to reach their full potential, particularly vulnerable people or groups which might historically have received less support, like carers. It's about a borough where crime is rare, but tackling crime is targeted and effective.



Our Key Initiatives are to:

- Continue to develop new integrated ways of working with health partners and enabling people to choose how their own care is provided;

- Reduce homelessness and doing even more to support the people (and their families) who are experiencing homelessness;
- Improve the quality of support provided to children and young people with disabilities;
- Introduce new Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers to provide a high visibility presence and help tackle anti-social behaviour;
- Establish a commission to look at the public safety of children and young people in the borough.



A Healthy Community

It's about working with partners to tackle the inequalities in health across the borough, promoting healthy lifestyles and ensuring that everyone in the borough has the opportunity to live a long and healthy life.

Our Key Initiatives are to:

- Engage local people in the development of an Olympic Sports Legacy Development Programme and making sure all local people can get involved;
- Tackle obesity, particularly amongst children and making sure schools encourage healthy eating and regular exercise;
- Encourage adults to take regular physical activity (30 minutes of exercise, three times a week);
- Reduce the take up of smoking, drugs and alcohol and providing effective and timely support to people who misuse substances;
- Improve further community mental health services for adults by establishing a Community Forum and developing a new strategy.

Monitoring the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is agreed by councillors and monitored by the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Management Team every six months, with an annual review at the end of the year.

Each of the priorities in the Plan is also monitored by the relevant Corporate Director and Lead Member.

Progress against the key performance targets is reported to CMT, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee every two months through the Tower Hamlets Index and progress is also reported to our residents each year through a supplement in East End Life that goes to all homes in the borough.

A role for all staff

The themes and performance targets outlined in the Strategic Plan filter right down through service and team plans to the individual targets for staff outlined in our own Personal Development Plans (see chart below).

This means there's a 'Golden Thread' which links all staff to these high level planning documents, showing how they play a part in achieving the shared vision for the borough.

Purpose

Strategic

Focus

Broad

COMMUNITY PLAN

The vision and objectives for Tower Hamlets, agreed by the Tower Hamlets Partnership with local residents and delivered through the LAA

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Council's contribution to the Community Plan, its corporate aims, objectives and key activities to achieve them.

SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANS

These link operational aims and objectives for services to resource use

TEAM PLANS

These set out operational objectives & work programmes for teams working within the services

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

These set out performance objectives and training and development plans for individual staff

Operational

Specific

