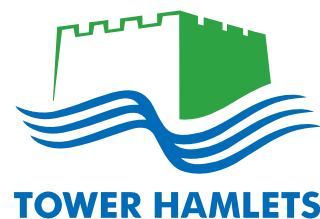


# Tower Hamlets Community Engagement Framework 2018-2021



# Foreword

The people of Tower Hamlets are our greatest asset. My main priorities are to make the council more transparent and accountable and to encourage more local people to get involved in shaping their neighbourhoods, council services and the future of the borough. This Community Engagement Framework, and the Transparency Protocol I



John Biggs  
Mayor of Tower Hamlets

launched in December 2015, will help make sure that residents remain at the heart of everything we do. This framework provides a model for a new kind of relationship with local people.

It builds on how we currently involve our communities and outlines what we will do to improve the way we consult and involve local people over the next three years.

The current economic climate and continuous reductions in public sector spending by Central Government mean that we will need to make difficult decisions about our budget over the next few years. So it is more important than ever that we work together with the residents of Tower Hamlets to help us identify local priorities and develop solutions to the challenges we face.

I am grateful for all the input to this framework that we have received from local people and stakeholders. I will be leading this council's approach to community involvement and look forward to meeting and working with even more local people over the coming years.



# Our commitments

## 1. Involve

We will make our borough a better place to live by encouraging and helping residents to get involved in shaping local services.



## 2. Be open and connected

We will work openly and honestly, and keep connected to communities and partners so that they can help us improve our performance and shape our borough.



## 3. Keep it simple

We will make it easier for residents to have their say in decisions which affect them.



## 4. Share it

We will keep up with digital technology, so that residents can communicate with us across all platforms.



## 5. Enable

We will provide our staff with high-quality training and tools to design and deliver programmes of involvement which are effective, meaningful and inclusive.



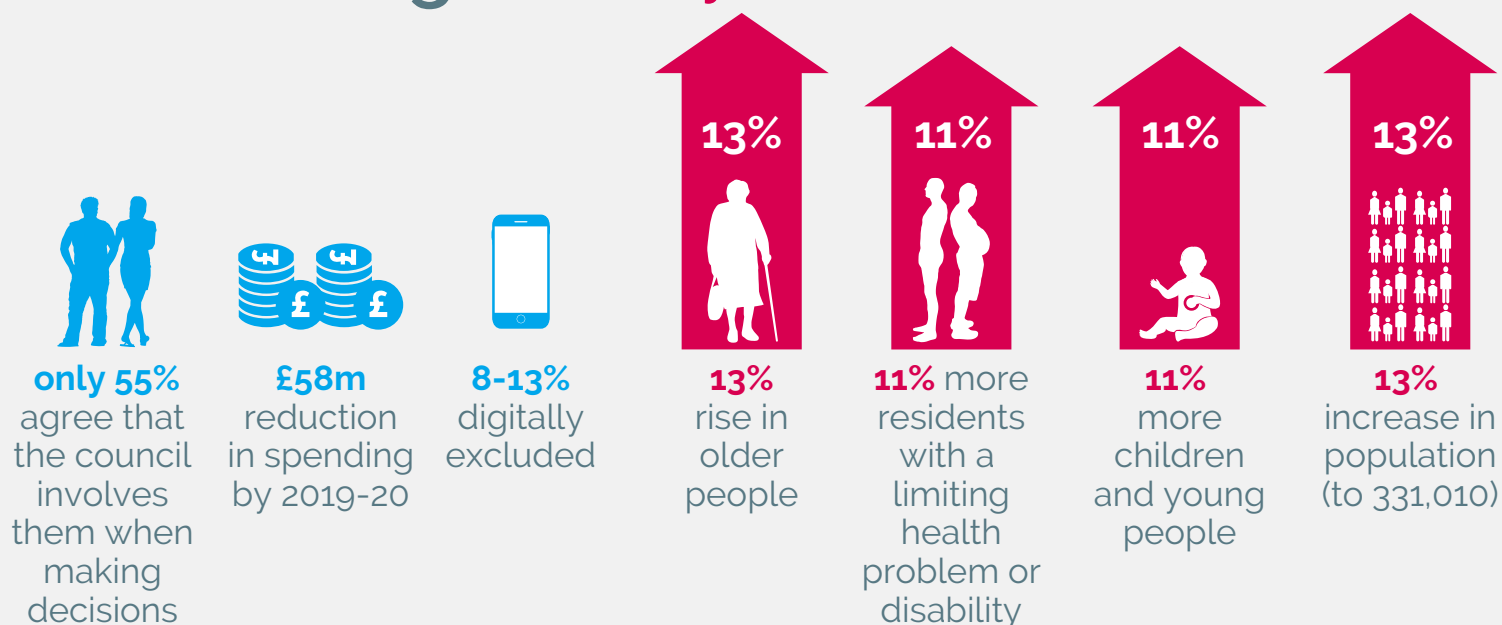
# Introduction

Councils are at the heart of local democracy. They provide leadership for the local areas and communities they serve, are accountable for a wide range of public services, and support the development of strong and prosperous communities. Tower Hamlets has one of the fastest-growing populations in London and is expected to be one of the fastest-growing local authority areas in England over the next 10 years. By 2020, the population in the borough is predicted to increase by 13%, rising to 331,010. Each year the borough experiences high numbers of people moving into or out of the area. One of the main reasons for this is international migration. The 2011 Census shows that the number of residents in Tower Hamlets born outside of the UK rose from 35% to 43% between 2001 and 2011, making it the 16th most diverse local authority area in the country, with over 90 languages spoken in the borough.

Our rapid population growth also coincides with significant changes across the public sector in recent years. Cuts to Government funding for local authorities have meant we have had to deliver savings of over £138m from 2010-2016, with a further £58m reduction in spending by 2019-2020. This presents a huge challenge to our ability to meet growing demand and means we have to find new ways of working to make sure we continue to secure the best outcomes for our residents.

The Community Engagement Framework 2018-2021 has been developed to allow and encourage local communities to play a greater and more active role in the things that matter most to them, and help decide the priorities for the borough, particularly as we enter this challenging period. Its aim is to improve the way in which we involve communities and open up more opportunities for residents and stakeholders to be heard.

## Our challenges



# What will we do

## Pledge 1: Involve

We will	So that
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce a 'co-production framework' to help us work together with communities to develop council plans and commission all services (where appropriate), including jointly delivered services.</li> </ul>	<p>Services are better at delivering improved outcomes and customer satisfaction.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use co-production in commissioning, starting with adult social care, health and wellbeing, and youth and cohesion services (which bring people from different backgrounds together).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Co-produce new versions of key council plans, such as the Community Plan, Community Safety Partnership Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Report to our cabinet each year on our progress on co-producing commissioning across the council, and make sure this information is easily accessible on our website.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify and involve community assets (things like physical spaces and the skills, knowledge, ability, resources, experience or enthusiasm of groups and individuals) to decide local priorities and design services.</li> </ul>	<p>Communities are recognised and valued as experts and put at the heart of deciding priorities and services.</p>

## Pledge 2: Be open and connected

We will	So that
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve our 'Ask the Mayor' events by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sharing local information relevant to the ward hosting the event;</li> <li>– providing opportunities for communities and partners to be involved; and</li> <li>– using digital tools (such as social media and short films) to improve how people can take part.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Information and insight from local communities (community intelligence) are clearly reflected in the decisions we make.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve council and committee meetings by introducing digital tools so that people can take part remotely, and introduce new features on our website to report on our performance.</li> </ul>	<p>Information is easily accessible to communities and open to scrutiny.</p>

## Pledge 2: Be open and connected

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a Strategic Partnership Board that is responsible for developing a borough-wide vision, and a new Community Plan which sets the priorities and outcomes for the borough.</li> </ul>	<p>Local people are better able to influence issues that affect their communities and be involved in improving their local area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage and support communities to get involved through schemes such as neighbourhood improvement plans that are locally led.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with the voluntary and community sector to make sure there is appropriate support for building people's skills and developing communities.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer networking opportunities and events to encourage partnerships between local businesses, communities and the voluntary and community sector.</li> </ul>	

## Pledge 3: Keep it simple

We will	So that
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set out minimum standards for all of our involvement activities and make sure that people are aware of opportunities to get involved.</li> </ul>	<p>Local people find it easy to be involved with us and feel that they make a difference.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pilot the use of a range of involvement techniques, such as participatory appraisal, peer research, appreciative enquiry and others (see the main strategy document for more details).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce an online involvement tracker to provide information on how feedback from consultation has shaped outcomes.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce a consultation and involvement calendar that lists all opportunities to get involved in our consultation and involvement activity.</li> </ul>	<p>Local people are more aware of how and when to get involved.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support councillors to promote opportunities to get involved in local activities and decision-making, and work with the Young Mayor and the Youth Council to encourage young people to take part.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set up permanent guidance and information points online, in the borough's Idea Stores and other key locations to promote the opportunities available to get involved.</li> </ul>	

## Pledge 4: Share it

We will	So that
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Widen use of social media across key council services such as Community Safety and Public Health to offer new ways to interact with and involve residents.</li> </ul>	Local people are able to contact us through a range of digital methods that meet their needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gain the Local Government Association's Social Media Friendly Mark.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce an online 'My Tower Hamlets' hub to deliver a personalised and single point of access to key council services.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage communities to use digital platforms such as Spacehive by promoting them through our website and social media.</li> </ul>	Local people are aware of digital services and are supported to use them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with our partners to deliver initiatives to increase people's digital skills and confidence and look at opportunities to increase access to the internet for vulnerable people and other priority groups.</li> </ul>	

## Pledge 5: Enable

We will	So that
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and promote a 'community engagement toolkit' to support our staff and the wider community to design and deliver involvement activities that are effective and inclusive.</li> </ul>	Our staff have access to the tools and support they need to design and deliver involvement which is effective and inclusive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Publish online resources to help our staff and partners to identify the range of voluntary and community groups operating in the borough and involve community assets.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve our training and development programme to include more training and professional networking opportunities for our staff.</li> </ul>	Our staff have the skills and confidence to involve communities and understand their needs.

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