

A Cleaner and Greener Future for Tower Hamlets



Foreword

I've made it clear in our strategic plan that producing a serious clean and green agenda for Tower Hamlets would be central to my strategic vision for the borough. I am pleased to see the launch of this pamphlet and the Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change, which will help to deliver my pledges and build upon the existing work currently taking place within the council.

Tackling the climate emergency is not just a global issue – it is a local one too. The fight against climate change begins right here at home, on our streets and in our buildings. Our strategic plan pledged to tackle the climate emergency, while protecting working people from the economic and social impact of this transition.

We have already seen the devastating impact that rocketing energy prices have had on the residents of our borough. Energy bills have risen by thousands of pounds per year, with many residents – not just the poorest – struggling to afford to keep their homes warm, and making the difficult choice between heating and eating.

Businesses too have been adversely impacted by this crisis, and now more than ever we need to be brave and robust in our handling of the challenges that this energy crisis poses, while retaining our commitment to making our borough cleaner and greener.

That is why today I am proud to publish the Cleaner and Greener Future for Tower Hamlets pamphlet, in conjunction with the launch of the Mayor's Climate Advisory Board.

The council's ambitious budget for 2023-2024, published and adopted at the council's cabinet on 25 January, demonstrated that this is an administration that is not afraid to invest to save, and that will not bend to the recent economic orthodoxy that austerity and cuts are the only solution.

This pamphlet will demonstrate that being green and supporting residents is not an either-or choice and are instead complementary targets that can reinforce and strengthen one another.

It will outline the excellent work our council is already doing, and what more is to be done in the fight back against climate change and the cost of living crisis. It will also introduce four key bodies – one in existence and three launched today – that will ensure that Tower Hamlets ranks among the cleanest, greenest and most energy efficient boroughs, not just in London, but in Britain. This includes:

- **The Mayor's Energy Fund** – to provide help and support to our residents with the cost of living crisis and promote the greening of energy, buildings and homes in Tower Hamlets.
- **The Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change (MABCC)** – The Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change will work alongside other existing bodies to ensure delivery of Mayoral pledges on climate emergency and provide support and advice on policy to the Climate Partnership Board as and when required, and vice versa.

- **The Mayor's Waste Management Taskforce** – following the declaration of the waste emergency at November's Full Council, this body will oversee the delivery of cleaner, presentable streets across the borough.
- **The Mayor's Keep Our Borough Moving Forum** – this will provide residents, businesses and community groups with the opportunity to discuss their views and opinions on how we make roads in our borough more accessible, particularly for those who depend on their car, such as

those with mobility issues or those earning low incomes working in the gig economy.

These bodies will work holistically to help deliver our vision for a Cleaner and Greener Future for Tower Hamlets, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you in delivering this transformative programme.

Lutfur Rahman
Mayor of Tower Hamlets



The Mayor's Energy Fund

The Mayor's Energy Fund has made available £1million of funding to ease pressure on energy bills for the borough's most vulnerable residents. This is delivered through post-office vouchers and the council's tackling poverty team.

Alongside this, the council also has a dedicated Carbon Fund which helps to fund several energy and efficiency-oriented projects.

What has been done?

Mayor's Energy Payment

Since its launch in August 2022, the Mayor's Energy Fund has provided **3,342** residents with over **£475,000** of energy bill support payments.

This includes:

- 469 payments of £250 and £300 to recipients of pension age
- 2,870 payments of £150 and £100 to recipients below pension age

The council continues to promote the schemes, and will be looking to replenish the funds throughout the year to support those most in need in the borough.

The Carbon Fund

Similarly, through the Carbon Fund, the council has successfully delivered:

- **Sustainability Education Packs** (£15,000) – Sustainable education packs provided to schools including support of educational resources rollout to schools in the borough. 27 schools benefited from the pack, including teacher training events.

- **Boiler Replacement Programme** (£840,000) – The scheme replaced old, inefficient gas boilers and faulty radiators as well as upgrading heating controls. The scheme was eligible for homeowners on low income and in receipt of a qualifying benefit. To meet carbon reduction targets, the scheme was only open to residents with inefficient non-condensing boilers and replaced them with high-efficiency, low NOx condensing boilers.
- **Schools Carbon Emission Reduction Programme** (£940,000) – Supported 32 schools with carbon reduction projects to reduce energy consumption and improve energy-efficiency of the buildings, install renewable and low-carbon technology resulting in lower energy costs, consumption and related carbon emissions.
- **Small and medium-sized enterprises** (SME) Energy Efficiency Grants Programme (£845,000) – Project provided SMEs across the borough with grants to deliver energy-efficiency improvements, heating upgrades and renewable energy technologies. Outcomes included lower energy costs, consumption and related carbon emissions. The programme is a match funding programme and has therefore seen a significant amount of private investment generated in the borough for the delivery of the projects.
- **Public Sector Retrofit (£350,000)**
 - The project replaced gas boilers with air source heat pumps in four council buildings to provide decarbonised heating. The project secured £720,00 of Salix funding.

What are we doing next?

Renewable Energy Generation (£950,000)

- Project to install solar panels onto council offices and leisure centres is key to delivering

the council's carbon neutral aspirations and will have a significant financial benefit to the operating costs of the buildings through the on-site power generation and the use of renewable energy, instead of purchasing grid electricity.

Residential Energy Efficiency Project

(£1,000,000) – It is proposed that households can receive support up to £10,000, including:

- Replacement boiler (non-condensing)/radiators/controls and associated works
- Heat pumps
- Electric heating upgrades
- Renewable energy generation (PV array)
- Insulation and double glazing
- Low-energy lighting

The project will assist residents who are experiencing fuel poverty and ensure housing is efficient and affordable to heat. This has the potential to positively impact on health inequalities and reduce the number of heat and/or cold related deaths through ensuring housing is at comfortable temperatures all year round.

Carbon Reduction Community Grants

(£700,000) – Funding made available to community groups to install low-carbon heating and energy-generating technologies, energy-efficiency retrofits and to promote learning and behavioural projects. The initial phase of the project has seen funding for renewable energy technology projects provided to Bromley By Bow Centre, Stepney City Farm, Hermitage Community Moorings and Development Through Challenge (Mile End Climbing Wall). The scheme has also assisted a number of community organisations with energy-efficiency retrofits, including LED lighting and insulation projects,

and improved the waste and recycling facilities through funding the expansion of the SOURCE anaerobic digestion plant in Poplar.

Bio-solar Project (£500,000) – Project to deliver biodiverse roof area and renewable energy-generating technologies to buildings across the borough. The current ongoing scheme with initial scoping has been completed with Tower Hamlets Homes and the pilot project is in final design stage. Initial review of 10 blocks identified as potential for 144 tonnes CO2 saving per year.

Sewardstone Road assisted housing

refurbishment (£252,000) – Provides funding to an assisted housing scheme to ensure refurbishment is undertaken to meet council's zero carbon requirements. Funding provided for heat pumps, solar PVs and insulation/energy-efficiency measures. The measures delivered will reduce the energy needs of the buildings, and therefore, the energy bills of the scheme.

Community Tree Planting (£175,000)

– Proposal to deliver tree-planting to community land owned and managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.

Other carbon reduction projects

planned across the borough – Projects in development to assist borough residents, community organisations and businesses through this uncertain period of energy price fluctuations, including:

- Renewable energy generation projects
- Energy-efficiency and insulation of housing
- Retrofitting of buildings

How will we do it?

Carbon fund contributions

Growth in the population and delivery of new development will make it challenging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet targets for becoming carbon neutral.

The delivery of the proposed carbon offsetting projects will help to tackle the existing building stock and play a key role in working towards delivering a carbon neutral borough.

To tackle future emissions arising from new development within the borough, the council is developing a suite of policies to deliver low-energy developments.

Delivering buildings that require minimum energy for space heating, providing ultra-efficient systems for heating and hot water, combined with high levels of insulation will minimise the costs to future occupants.

Improving green skills and access to sustainable education opportunities is important for successful delivery of low-carbon retrofits and renewable energy technologies and ongoing maintenance.

The Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change

The Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change (MABCC) will provide strategic direction and oversight in order to achieve the Mayor's pledges relating to climate emergency and the environment, as well as monitor the Council Net Zero Carbon Action Plan.

It will work with existing bodies in the borough to provide and seek advice and ensure that

a greener, cleaner network of cooperation is established between the council and key stakeholders.

Membership of the Mayor's Climate Advisory Board will include representation from the council, the Climate Partnership Group and other key stakeholders as agreed by the chair of the climate partnership.

Members:

- Mayor (Chair)
- Deputy Mayor (Deputy Chair)
- Cabinet Member Environment and the Climate Emergency
- Mayor's Head of External Relations
- Political Advisor to the Executive Mayor
- Director of Public Realm
- Director Housing and Regeneration
- Chair of Climate Partnership Group
- Deputy Chair of Climate Partnership Group
- Member from GLA
- Member from LLDC
- Member from London Council
- Member from East End Trade Guild

The purpose of the board will be to:

- Investigate steps that may be taken by the council and partners to deliver the Mayor's climate pledges
- Identify and provide support needed for the delivery of the pledges
- Monitor funding opportunities, making recommendations through governance structures where necessary and supporting officers to undertake bids/projects
- Work in collaboration with Climate Partnership Group to provide guidance where required for the delivery of the borough's net zero ambitions.

The Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change (MABCC) will meet at least once per quarter which will be organised by the Mayor's office in conjunction with council officers.

The board will review the Mayoral pledges and where work has been done as well as review the council's Net Zero Carbon Action Plan.

The Mayor's Waste Management Taskforce

The Waste Management Task Force will oversee the delivery of the waste improvement plan which was developed following the declaration of a waste emergency by the Mayor in November.

The members will include officers from the council as well as external organisations to ensure there is representation across the board.

Tackling the waste emergency

- Tower Hamlets is the most densely populated borough in England with 15,695 residents per square kilometre.
- 88 per cent of homes in the borough are flats, compared with the figures for London (56 per cent) and England (24 per cent).
- Around 25 per cent of collected recycling waste is contaminated, which means it cannot then be recycled.

In response, the Mayor pledged to create a cleaner borough through:

- Service improvement including education and recycling
- Encouraging our community to

become involved in community walkabouts to check standards are being maintained across the borough

- Prosecute fly-tippers – using our borough-wide CCTV and enforcement teams
- Cleaning up our borough with more bins, litter sweepers and a mission to drive down missed bin collections
- Working with trade unions to ensure that workers' voices are heard and listened to

What is being done?

- £5million investment in electric waste vehicles and charging points
- £2.13m being invested for improved recycling facilities for those living in flats
- More recycling education sessions being provided in schools
- Increasing community and home composting
- Development of new contamination policies
- Small scale food waste pilot being delivered
- Recycling champions recruited to promote recycling
- Community clean-up events being held to raise awareness about managing waste and recycling
- Tackling waste crime by increasing flytipping interventions
- Route optimisation for more efficient waste and recycling rounds
- Promoting the circular economy and resource efficiency, encouraging re-use and resale of unwanted items
- New Waste Improvement Plan agreed.

Waste Improvement Plan

The Waste Improvement Plan was developed to tackle the waste emergency. The measures in the plan include:

- Rescheduling the frequency and timings of cleansing to improve standards
- Investment in staff, training and equipment
- Ensure every team has enough time to fully complete their assigned work
- Maintain enough staff capacity on vehicles for the next 3-4 years to address future build programmes
- Remove all the commercial waste from the current rounds and place them on dedicated commercial collection crews
- Review operational managers and environmental managers supervision schedules
- Increase levels of enforcement

The Mayor's Keep our Borough Moving forum

As part of his cleaner and greener policy, the Mayor is keen to ensure the borough keeps moving by delivering on his pledges to:

- Increase the number of charging points for electric vehicles in the borough and avoid impacting those in our community who depend on their car for work or mobility
- Working with Transport for London (TfL) and emergency services to ensure improved public transport
- Working to promote use of car clubs available in the borough
- Encourage cycle use by supporting schemes to teach cycling and bike proficiency safety

To ensure the delivery and monitoring of above pledges, the Mayor will be setting up a board, consisting of specialist council officers and external stakeholders to ensure representation across the board.

Listening to you

The challenges that are posed by the climate emergency, keeping our public areas clean, and the cost-of-living crisis are complex, multifaceted and large-scale.

We will always welcome new ideas, suggestions and creative solutions to these problems and we are always looking to build relationships that will help in achieving our vision for a cleaner, greener future for us all.

If you have any views, ideas or suggestions you would like to share, please email **Mayor@towerhamlets.gov.uk**.