

# Tower Hamlets Community Plan

Tower Hamlets Partnership  
improving today, shaping tomorrow



2020 Vision | Issue 01 2008/09

## I am delighted to present the new Tower Hamlets Community Plan on behalf of the Tower Hamlets Partnership.

This plan explains how we will improve the quality of life in Tower Hamlets over the next decade or so in a whole range of areas – from education for our children and young people to support and care for some of the oldest and most vulnerable people in the borough.

The Tower Hamlets Partnership has put this Community Plan together. The Partnership brings together all the key stakeholders in the borough - residents, the council, the police, the health service, housing associations, other public services, voluntary and community groups, faith communities and businesses.

We have been listening. To develop the vision and priorities we've held public meetings across the borough which hundreds of people attended to give their views. The Community Plan reflects the aspirations and needs of residents and people who work and invest in the borough.

The consultation brought out many of the positive features of Tower Hamlets – its great diversity, the wealth of opportunities and strong communities.

People in Tower Hamlets have much to be proud of. However, I know that much more needs to be done and there are immense challenges facing us across a whole range of areas.

Everyone should realise their full potential in Tower Hamlets. We want to raise ambitions and increase opportunities, particularly in our most deprived areas and communities.

The aspiration of 'One Tower Hamlets' runs throughout the Community Plan. One Tower Hamlets is about reducing the inequalities and poverty that we see around us, strengthening cohesion and making sure our communities continue to live well together. Most of all, One Tower Hamlets is about recognising that we all have a part to play in making this a reality.

The challenges ahead are significant, but so are the opportunities. The aims of this Community Plan are very ambitious – and I make no apologies for that. The residents of Tower Hamlets deserve the very best. We will continue to aim high and seize opportunities.

Of course, a plan won't change Tower Hamlets - only its delivery can. I am looking forward to working with you all to make this work for Tower Hamlets.



**Councillor Lutfur Rahman**  
Chair of the Tower Hamlets Partnership  
Leader of Tower Hamlets Council

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# The story so far

## Tower Hamlets is changing. It's changing fast – and for the better!

The landscape has altered vastly since the first Community Plan was published by the Tower Hamlets Partnership in 2001. The population has grown and diversified. East London is preparing to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games - and new local and national priorities have emerged.

All this at a time when significant investment in local public services is bearing fruit.

Crime has been cut by over 24% over the past four years, thanks to a range of initiatives and campaigns targeting crime hotspots. This represents a drop in all crime types including violence, burglary, motor vehicle crime and robbery. Also, our success in reducing reoffending was recognised with a Beacon Award.

Health and fitness levels show signs of improvement – with leisure centre attendances soaring to a record 1.45 million. The number of older people using local facilities, in particular, is up by around 5% – one of the many ways that the major review of older people as citizens has helped to boost local services for older people.

Our Children's Centres offer health, employment, education and parenting support to families with children under five. Education standards in the borough have improved dramatically - we are the most improved borough in the country for GCSE results.

As a borough, we have invested in high quality activities and places to go for our young people. Around a third of all young people are in contact with our youth services and we are opening our schools to local people to provide sporting, recreational and cultural opportunities.

Since 1998, the number of jobs has increased in the borough by nearly 40%, and it is projected that there will be over 250,000 jobs in Tower Hamlets by 2020 – making us one of the top growth areas in the country.

In recent years, over £420 million of much needed investment has been secured for local estates – and through the setting up of Tower Hamlets Homes - a new way of managing council housing – further significant investment could be available.

As a result of all this activity, Tower Hamlets is now ranked by the Audit Commission as a 4 star council. Throughout all this change and improvement, Tower Hamlets remains a place of contrast, where wealth and affluence sit beside poverty in many areas. It is also a place of diversity, variety and considerable opportunity. The key facts opposite give a sense of some of these contrasts.

**“Our challenge is, and will continue to be, to make sure that the many different and specific needs that exist in Tower Hamlets are identified, understood and addressed.”**



Expensive new private riverside housing developments sit alongside social housing estates. Tower Hamlets has one of the highest population densities in inner London. By 2020, it's projected that there will be a further 31,500 new homes in the borough.

Housing affordability is low by national standards - with an average price of £380,835 which is more than double the average in England and Wales - and out of reach for most local people.

The inequality is stark: whilst the average salary for those working in Tower Hamlets is nearly £69,000, 18% of families are living on less than £15,000. This means that Tower Hamlets is the third most deprived borough in the country.

Tower Hamlets is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the country. About half of the total population are from black and minority ethnic communities, and around 110 different languages are spoken by our school pupils.

There are many new communities moving into the borough which will contribute to a changing community profile over the next ten years.

Our population is expected to reach nearly 300,000 by 2020.

Although things are improving, average life expectancy at birth is 75 for men and 80 for women, ranking Tower Hamlets 383rd and 361st respectively, out of 432 local areas.

The proportion of young people living in Tower Hamlets currently stands at 35%, which is much higher than the 18% average for the rest of inner London, and over 70% of our young people are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

When Tower Hamlets helps to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, we will have the world's greatest sporting occasion on our doorstep. A number of events will be taking place right here in Tower Hamlets, including the marathon which will pass along Whitechapel Road, Mile End Road and Bow Road – our "High Street 2012".

An emerging priority, which wasn't prominent in the borough's first Community Plan, is climate change. As a dense urban area with a high level of development, local energy use and CO2 emissions are high. Helping to tackle climate change and improving air quality is therefore a significant challenge. Lifestyle changes and difficult choices will have to be made in future years.

The new Community Plan recognises that Tower Hamlets is a 'community of communities' - so a one-size-fits-all approach to problem solving, services and improvements will not work.

Our challenge is, and will continue to be, making sure that the many different and specific needs that exist in Tower Hamlets are identified, understood and addressed.

The next section – Living Up To People's Aspirations - explains how the Partnership has set about achieving these aims in preparing the new Community Plan to 2020.



Tower Hamlets Map,

## Living up to People's Aspirations

A Community Plan must represent the aspirations of the people it serves - recognising differences between people, as well as common issues affecting neighbourhoods and community groups.

That's why the Tower Hamlets 2020 Community Plan was produced only after comprehensive resident involvement. It takes on the views of partners and of recent consultation findings and the latest research on social and economic trends.

The consultation process included four large community events, involving over 400 local residents from all eight Local Area Partnership areas. Residents of all ages and backgrounds came together to talk to senior managers and councillors about the issues that matter to them. There has also been consultation with different groups in the borough including sessions with the Interfaith Forum, the Disabled Access Group, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum, Tower Hamlets Housing Forum and additional work with young and older people.

In addition to consultation events with residents, the Partnership also consulted widely with local business groups and individuals, and organisations reflecting the diversity of our communities.

In short, residents, businesses and partner agencies have worked side by side in developing the 2020 Community Plan - so that the final vision is informed by the aspirations of the community as a whole. The Plan's priorities address the consultation findings, and these have helped shape the Local Area Agreement – which sets out our key targets for the next three years.

A number of common issues has emerged as significant priorities:

- The need for more affordable housing - particularly for families
- Concern about the level of crime and the fear of crime
- The need for more opportunities for residents to get into training, access lifelong learning opportunities and acquire the skills for employment to exploit job opportunities
- The importance of retaining the richness of Tower Hamlets' diversity
- The importance of 'place shaping' and ensuring connected and cohesive communities through planning and design
- Reducing health inequalities
- The need to have, and encourage, respect among communities
- The importance of personal responsibility
- Making sure that the whole community benefits fully from growth

**“ In short, residents, businesses and partner agencies have worked side by side in developing the 2020 Community Plan”**



These are the key drivers for the idea of One Tower Hamlets - a borough of shared and equal opportunities for all our residents. These priorities have shaped and informed the 2020 Community Plan.

The Partnership also looked at the evidence of past and current data on performance and context – including a large-scale needs analysis.

This highlighted current issues for different service areas, how well services were currently performing and levels of need expected over the life of the plan. This part of the plan’s development included looking at existing service plans, policies and performance reports, in addition to analysis of London-wide and national research papers.

The Community Plan provides the long-term vision for Tower Hamlets. Many individuals and organisations have helped to develop it, and will help to deliver it.

There is already a number of key long-term plans in place, such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Children and Young People’s Plan, which have helped to inform this Community Plan’s development.

The new Community Plan has also been developed alongside the borough’s Local Development Framework (LDF) – which sets out the plan for the physical changes taking place in the borough – so that the new LDF reflects the ambitions, aspirations and priorities of the Community Plan.

But the 2020 Community Plan is more than the sum of existing plans – it provides a new vision and framework, from which all future Partnership strategies will take their lead.



The diagram above shows the link between the LDF, Local Area Agreement and Community Plan.

# Building One Tower Hamlets

The aim of the 2020 Community Plan is to “improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough.”

To turn this vision into reality, the plan is split into four themes – each designed to meet the challenges and opportunities highlighted in previous sections and deliver lasting improvements for local people.

The four themes are

- A Great Place to Live
- A Prosperous Community
- A Safe and Supportive Community
- A Healthy Community

Underpinning all these themes is a desire to build One Tower Hamlets - a borough where everyone has an equal stake and status; where people have the same opportunities as their neighbours; where people have a responsibility to contribute; and where families are the cornerstone of success.

Tower Hamlets has benefited from massive inward investment over the past ten years, along with a changing skyline and significant service improvements, but this has not filtered through to enough local residents’ day to day lives. Given this, tackling poverty and inequality will be a prime focus of the Partnership so that over the life of this Community Plan such stark differences no longer remain a reality.

One Tower Hamlets also means bringing different parts of the community together, encouraging positive relationships and tackling divisions

between communities – as well as providing strong leadership, involving people and giving them the tools and support to improve their lives. People’s participation in the Partnership is critical. We will only be successful if we keep listening to, and acting on, feedback – so that together we can drive forward the improvements we all want to see.

It’s also about the Partnership working together efficiently and effectively to achieve One Tower Hamlets. Making sure that we join up our resources and services to deliver the Community Plan priorities and provide value for money to local people.

There’s more detailed information about the four themes, and how they support One Tower Hamlets, in the later section headed, ‘Turning the Vision into Reality’. What follows is a taste of how the Partnership would like to see Tower Hamlets develop through the Community Plan by 2020.

# Looking to the future



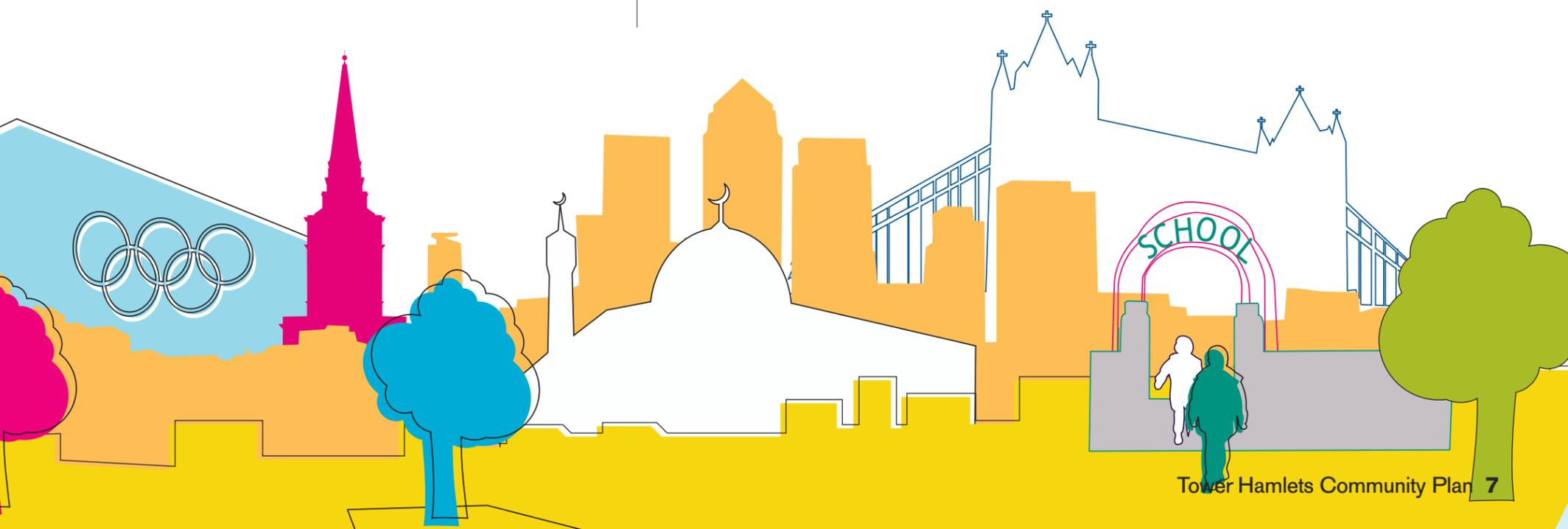


## A great place to live

- By 2020 Tower Hamlets will continue to be a place that attracts people – to settle and raise families, to study, to work in a thriving local economy and enjoy the rich cultural life.
- The ambition is for everyone to have the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford – and for all children to have a bedroom of their own.
- Many neighbourhoods and estates will undergo major investment to improve the quality of homes and public spaces.
- Residents will benefit from improved transport networks, linking communities to different areas of the borough and key services.
- Older residents will enjoy fulfilling retirements with access to first class leisure and support services with more activities delivered from improved community centres.
- Our focus on long lasting and environmentally-friendly improvements will benefit current and future generations.
- The economic growth in Canary Wharf and elsewhere in the borough will be used as a vital tool to secure improvements for local people.
- Our town centres will be vibrant places to shop, spend our leisure time and do business.
- The Olympic Park will be a distinctive, high quality new place providing world class sporting venues and parkland for local people.
- Schools, children's centres and youth services will be at the heart of their communities.

## A prosperous community

- By 2020 partnership working with both large and small businesses will help to ensure that employment opportunities are available to all local people.
- Local people will have the skills and training to get employment and the range of issues associated with worklessness, such as poor housing and debt, will be tackled together.
- Tower Hamlets will be known as a place where entrepreneurship and local enterprise are successful.
- Our children and young people will learn from the best teachers and gain qualifications that allow them to pursue their career goals.
- Lifelong learning opportunities will be plentiful with more people achieving qualifications that enable them to pursue further and higher education and get jobs.
- Fewer children will be living in poverty.
- New residents will be supported to learn English, so that they can make friends, feel integrated and seek employment.
- Our Third Sector will thrive, contributing more to Partnership efforts to improve the quality of life for all those who live and work in the borough.



# Looking to the future

## A safe and supportive community

- By 2020 crime and antisocial behaviour will be greatly reduced in our neighbourhoods so that all residents and visitors, young and old, feel safe and confident in their homes and on the streets.
- Tackling the root causes of crime will pay off as schemes designed to turn people away from crime and onto more productive paths succeed.
- Everyone will have a choice of quality support services so that they can achieve their full potential and receive support in the way they want and need.
- Services will ensure everyone, particularly the vulnerable, is protected from risk of harm and enabled to live a full and independent life.
- Parents and families will get the support they need to give children the best possible start in life.
- Schemes which address the problems of families and individuals at an early stage – and offer support - will be key to improving the safety of local communities.



Line Dancing at an Older People's Day Event

## A healthy community

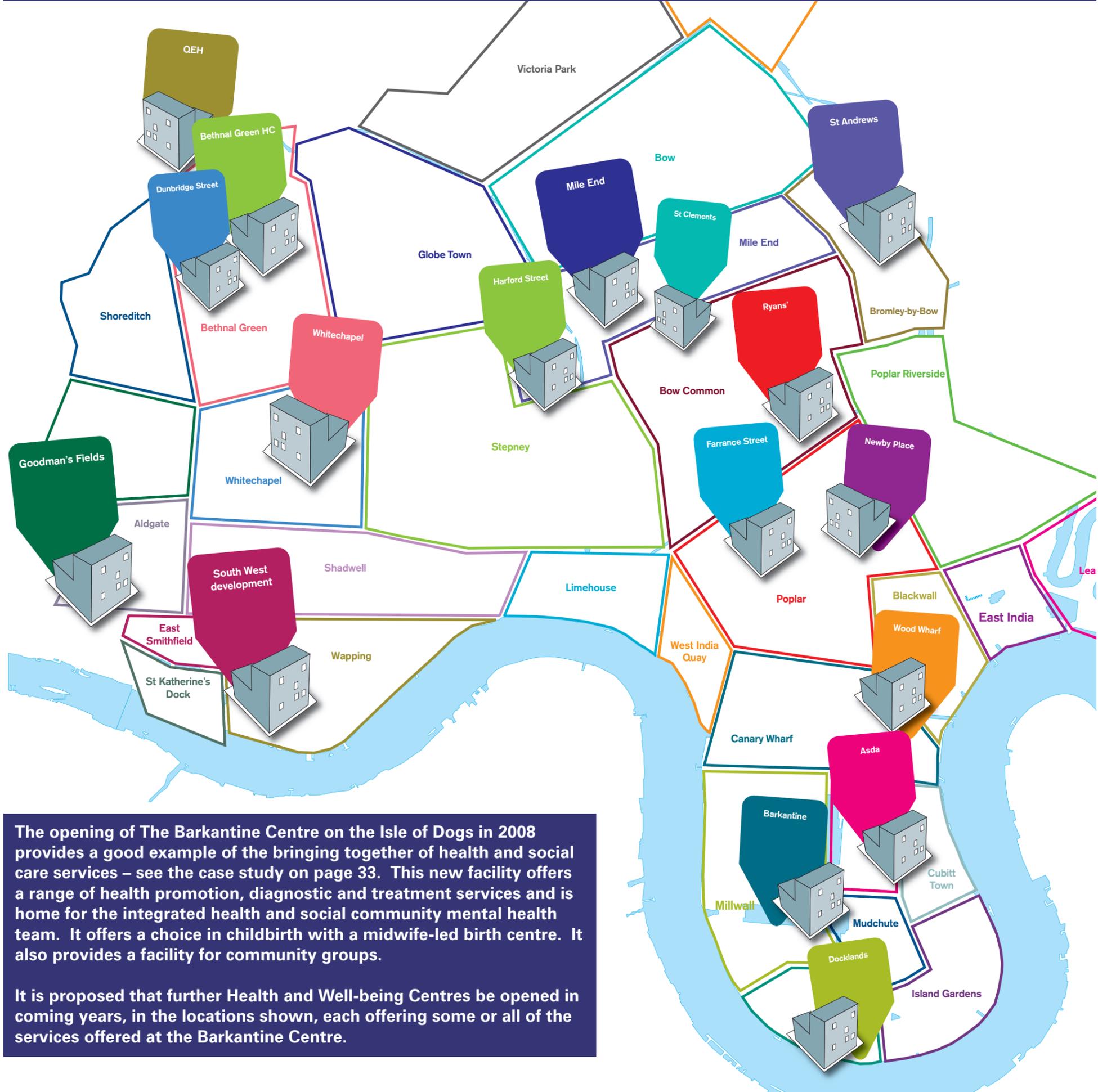
- By 2020 local people will live longer and healthier lives.
- The wider influences on health such as poverty, housing and employment will have improved - making it easier for people to lead healthy lives.
- Everyone in our communities will be aware of how lifestyle choices affect their own and their family's health and wellbeing, and there will be more opportunities and support to make healthy choices.
- Health inequalities will be greatly reduced as people choose to stop using tobacco, have safer sex, eat a balanced diet, become more active and get advice sooner for health concerns.
- Health care will focus more on health promotion and prevention of illness, and schools, workplaces and all partners will promote healthy lifestyles.
- More children and young people will make healthy lifestyle choices, improving their health now and as they grow up.
- Everyone will have access to high-quality local health and social care services, from primary care at GP surgeries to maternity care and mental health services.

In the following section – 'Turning The Vision Into Reality' - we explain how the 2020 Community Plan aims to achieve the goals it has set itself. It looks at the priorities and objectives set under each of the four themes – and also shows some of the results residents can expect over the next three years.

The vital role that everyone who lives and works in Tower Hamlets has in the Plan's success is also highlighted - stressing that we all have a part in delivering each theme's objectives and supporting One Tower Hamlets.



# Proposed locations for health and well-being centres across Tower Hamlets



The opening of The Barkantine Centre on the Isle of Dogs in 2008 provides a good example of the bringing together of health and social care services – see the case study on page 33. This new facility offers a range of health promotion, diagnostic and treatment services and is home for the integrated health and social community mental health team. It offers a choice in childbirth with a midwife-led birth centre. It also provides a facility for community groups.

It is proposed that further Health and Well-being Centres be opened in coming years, in the locations shown, each offering some or all of the services offered at the Barkantine Centre.

# Turning the vision into reality

In the Looking to the Future section, we gave a brief run through of the four main themes contained in the 2020 Community Plan – and looked at where we wanted to be by the year 2020.

This section looks at each of the themes in detail, including charting the key priorities and objectives that have been set by the Partnership to deliver the 2020 Community Plan.

## A Great Place to Live

A Great Place to Live reflects our aspiration that Tower Hamlets should be a place where people enjoy living, working and studying and take pride in belonging.

Central to the Partnership's vision, and its Great Place to Live aspiration, is ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford.

Housing in Tower Hamlets continues to be a major issue for people who live or want to live in the borough. Whether it involves getting a basic repair done, living in an overcrowded house, waiting to get an affordable home to rent or on the first rung of the home ownership ladder, there is a range of housing challenges that are in the way of people getting on

“ This theme of ‘place-shaping’ focuses on so many important areas of life for local residents and workers, from housing supply and management and leisure to the quality of our public spaces and streets. I want to ensure that we develop improvements in these areas in a joined up way so that improvements are experienced by whole communities. I also welcome the challenge of meeting new environmental priorities to ensure our communities are sustainable and I feel confident we can make real headway in this area to the benefit of both current residents and future generations.”



Adrian Greenwood, Chair of Tower Hamlets Housing Forum

with their day-to-day lives and achieving a decent standard of living.

The housing challenge is immense. There is currently not enough housing supply in the borough to meet housing needs. There is also a mismatch in available affordable housing supply, with not enough homes for families. The affordability of homes is a key concern for many local people – whether they've grown up in the area or recently moved in. House prices have gone up significantly over the past decade – making home ownership unrealistic for many who live and work here. In addition, high levels of overcrowding remain and much social housing, including council homes, need improvement.



Although significant progress has been made in reducing overcrowding, the issue continues to be a major blight on some of the most vulnerable groups in the community. It is a major constraint on children and young adults who are learning at school and college but have little or no space at home to study. Ensuring a supply of affordable, family housing is a key priority: the Partnership aspires for all children to have a bedroom of their own.

The Partnership is committed to using every means available to ensure that residents can live in a decent home that they can afford. Tower Hamlets already delivers a comparatively large amount of affordable housing - over 800 affordable homes in 2006/07 - more than any other council in London but even more progress is needed.

The Partnership is keen to ensure that there is a better supply of intermediate housing, such as shared ownership and key worker home-buy, for families on low to medium incomes in Tower Hamlets. Historically, many residents whose housing requirements have grown have - if financially able - chosen to move out of the borough where prices are lower and where the typical house type - with a garden - is more in line with their aspirations of a family home. Tower Hamlets is committed to creating more housing choices for residents on low to medium incomes with children who wish to stay in the borough.

However, much more also needs to be done to help develop more affordable housing for rent. Given the significant gap between household income and house prices locally, intermediate 'affordable' homes will remain out of reach for many people. Given the high proportion of children and young people in the borough and the comparatively large household size, there will be a particular focus on affordable family homes with three or more bedrooms for rent in the social sector.

The Partnership also has to deal with the legacy of poor quality social housing erected in the past, which is now in need of renovation. To ensure all local social housing meets the Government's Decent Home Standard, the Council has transferred many estates to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), mostly housing associations, who have the money to make the necessary improvements. Community Plan housing targets will also be supported by a new Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), Tower Hamlets Homes, which has been set up to attract much-needed investment into homes retained by the Council.

Ensuring the effective management of social housing is also of paramount importance. The Partnership will

work closely with the Council and RSLs to ensure residents are getting an excellent service both in terms of housing quality and activities designed to improve the quality of life of residents.

Market housing - both to rent and to buy - will remain a key issue. Helping residents to rent homes in the private sector is an important part of this theme and the Partnership is committed to seeing the Decent Homes Standard delivered for vulnerable tenants in the private rented sector.

Decent living conditions are not defined simply by providing high-quality affordable housing, important though this is. They are also about the availability of local community facilities - like schools, parks and health services, and the safety of shared space. The Partnership will work so that housing is not developed in isolation, and that transport, schools and other services are developed side by side. Schools will be at the heart of their communities, opening their doors to people of all ages.

Whilst the borough has seen major development and improvements in public services over the past ten years, there are still many areas that require attention and improvement.

Residents want quality services in their communities - located in buildings that are easy to use and get to - and that are attractive to visit. Where these services don't currently exist, the Partnership must work together to provide them.

As a small inner London borough, green open space is at a premium - so challenges lie in providing more and better quality open space for recreation. It's also important to ensure that old and new urban environments are designed or remodelled to high standards of cleanliness and safety, with good lighting.

A commitment to environmentally-friendly improvements is also at the heart of this theme. With so many changes taking place in



# A Great Place to Live

people's neighbourhoods, partners must ensure that developments don't harm the local environment – and improve it wherever possible. This means contributing to national and local targets for improving energy efficiency, improving air quality and tackling and adapting to climate change.

Local people also want access to services and opportunities that bring fun and enjoyment into everyday life. With this in mind, the Partnership will work to ensure that more leisure, sport, entertainment and cultural opportunities are developed and delivered in the area - building on the success of well-received projects like Spa London, Mile End Park and Leisure Centre, Tower Hamlets' four Idea Stores and the many community festivals delivered every year. We will also work to make the Olympic Park site (the largest urban park to be created in Europe in the past 150 years) and its venues accessible to local people.

Something else local people want is vibrant communities, prosperous town centres and good community buildings – easy to get to places where they can meet friends and neighbours. It is the Partnership's vision that Tower Hamlets, and particularly our town centres, should offer a variety of opportunities for entertainment, shopping, culture and enterprise befitting all our residents as well as our visitors.

Central London's venues, landmarks and job opportunities are nearby - so decent transport links are also very important. We have secured important transport improvements such as Crossrail and increased capacity on the Docklands Light Railway. We will continue to work closely with partners such as Transport for London, so that people can move around as easily as possible, and minimise any disruption during improvement works. We also want to promote the value of green transport like cycling and walking, working with partners to make getting around the borough easier for cyclists and pedestrians.

There is a number of challenges in achieving the progress we aspire to - not least the cost of land, the scale of change and speed of local growth. But we have many unique opportunities that will help us to ensure all residents feel Tower Hamlets is a great place to live. We cannot succeed without the active involvement of local communities. It is residents and businesses that shape local improvements - by making positive use of better public facilities, while respecting public spaces and each other.

“ ...it's the residents and businesses that shape local improvements - by making positive use of better public facilities, while respecting public spaces and each other.”

## The Priorities

### Providing affordable housing and strong neighbourhoods by:

- Increasing the overall supply of housing for local people including a range of affordable, family housing
- Providing decent homes in well designed streets and neighbourhoods
- Planning new neighbourhoods with supporting services like primary schools, healthcare facilities and local parks
- Improving the quality of housing management and related services provided to tenants and leaseholders

### Strengthening and connecting communities by:

- Improving public transport networks and enabling more residents to walk and cycle safely
- Bringing together communities to foster mutual understanding, a collective sense of wellbeing and avoiding people being isolated
- Ensuring communities have good access to a full range of facilities - including health services, schools and leisure



**Supporting vibrant town centres and a cleaner, safer public realm by:**

- Providing first-class and well managed centres where people come together for business, shopping, leisure and recreation
- Supporting and improving open spaces
- Improving street lighting and reducing graffiti and litter

**Improving the environment and tackling climate change by:**

- Reducing energy use and using more renewable energy sources
- Focusing on re-using wherever possible and recycling more
- Adapting our built environment to cope with the changing climate and weather patterns

**We can all help to achieve this by:**

- Committing to Tower Hamlets' fight against climate change by reducing the amount of energy and water used in the home, cutting back on waste, and recycling wherever possible
- Taking pride in, and responsibility for, community facilities such as local open spaces
- Being considerate of others by not littering - and by reporting problems like anti-social behaviour and graffiti
- Supporting local business and enterprise initiatives by shopping locally – including using Tower Hamlets' vibrant markets
- Recognising what new and existing communities have in common - and valuing the borough's diversity

- Getting involved in our community – perhaps by volunteering to help a local organisation or group
- And for those building in the borough – by prioritising environmental sustainability and quality design

**and together, the Partnership will make One Tower Hamlets by:**

- Improving access to facilities and services that exist in different parts of the borough
- Engaging communities in important decisions so that choices are made with the community, not on their behalf
- Using culture, leisure and sport to bring together communities across all ages and backgrounds
- Ensuring the built environment is designed to high quality standards so it is inclusive and safe
- Helping people to get decent homes

**By March 2011 we will:**

- Support the supply of nearly 9,000 more new homes
- Support the supply of new affordable homes, including up to 1,400 social rented homes for families (three bedrooms or more)
- Increase the proportion of Council homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard by 12% and increase the proportion of Decent Homes that have been transferred to RSLs
- Increase residents' overall satisfaction with the local area



**Caribbean Party at St. Paul's Community Centre in Bow**

# A Great Place to Live

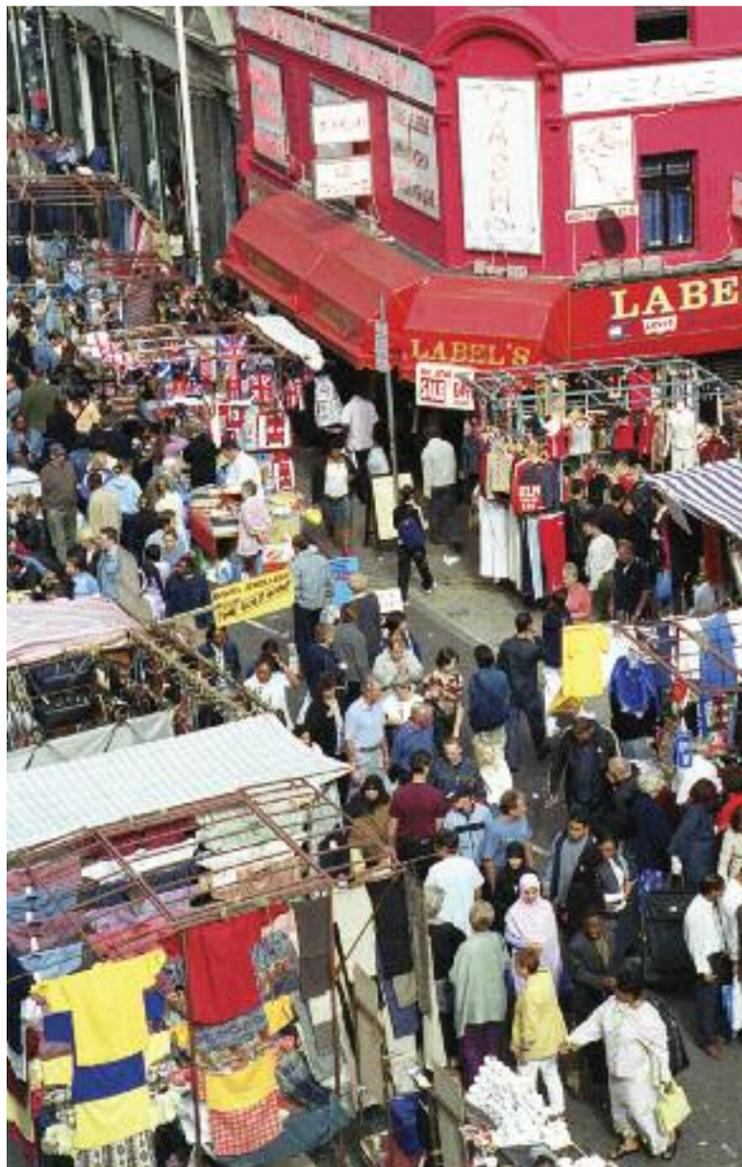
- Increase the proportion of people from different backgrounds who think people get on well together in their local areas
- Reduce the level of CO2 emissions that are produced in the borough by 10%
- Increase the proportion of waste that households recycle or compost to 32%
- Make our streets cleaner and reduce incidents of graffiti and fly tipping
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads in road traffic accidents by 15%

## Delivering Success

The Partnership's Local Area Agreement (LAA) sets targets to drive progress over the first three years of the Community Plan – to help keep Tower Hamlets as a Great Place to Live. The LAA includes ambitious targets around new affordable homes built, cutting local CO2 emissions and increasing the proportion of waste recycled.

A number of key strategies is being put in place to deliver specific priorities and objectives identified in this theme - most notably the Local Development Framework (LDF), which has been developed alongside the 2020 Community Plan. The LDF will set policies to guide investment in infrastructure for the next 10-15 years as well as setting criteria to support new development and regeneration projects.

The LDF along with other local strategies will ensure that community facilities are in place to support the large number of new jobs and homes expected in particular areas – whilst also improving the quality of life for existing residents. For example, the Council and Primary Care Trust will work together to implement the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, including an investment programme to bring local health facilities up to the highest modern standards.



Petticoat Lane

The Council has established an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) as part of a borough wide housing investment programme to make improvements to our social housing estates.

The Council is also developing a Public Realm Strategy to improve the quality and safety of our neighbourhoods, particularly town centres, and link this extended investment programme to the borough's open space network. We will use High Street 2012 as a model project to improve the quality of our road corridors as places for people.

The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics in East London are a real opportunity for the borough and our existing Legacy Strategy is helping to ensure that the Games really benefit local people. We will continue to work with other boroughs, the London Development Agency, Greater London Authority and the Olympic Authorities on the Legacy Master Plan to shape development beyond 2012.



# A picture of Development & Regeneration



# A Great Place to Live



The Festival of Earth at Mile End Park

“The LDF along with other local strategies will ensure that community facilities are in place to support the large number of new jobs and homes expected in particular areas.”



Bug search in Mile End Park



# Case Study

## Bridging Communities Project (BCP)

### Investigating the local meaning of community cohesion

#### Background

Local Strategic Partnerships, and especially local councillors, have an important community leadership role to play in bringing communities together. Community cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. The Bridging Communities Project was launched to further explore the idea of cohesion in Tower Hamlets.

The project drew upon research and analysis but was mainly informed by views from a series of focus groups. These involved nearly 400 local people, who were representative of the local community, and included representatives of community and voluntary organisations, elected members, council employees and a significant number of young people.

Participants were asked to consider what community cohesion meant to them. They were quizzed about what contributed to cohesion and asked to consider how the council and its partners could strengthen community cohesion within the borough.

#### The Findings

The Bridging Communities Project confirmed that Tower Hamlets has a strong track record of community cohesion. Participants acknowledged that the council and its partners have worked hard to promote and develop links within and between local communities. However, overall it was felt that further work needed to be done to achieve truly cohesive and integrated communities and build One Tower Hamlets.

Participants spoke about the richness and diversity of Tower Hamlets' communities and how this was its greatest asset and something to be celebrated. Residents had noticed that the investment in services such as education, policing and healthcare has reduced inequality. However, there was a sense that despite these efforts, communities have not always come together and mixed. Feedback was that community cohesion will not happen by chance but that a proactive approach is required to encourage communities to come together.

Many people felt that better communication between different communities would reduce tension and mistrust. Recommendations included events, activities and more community venues in which to bring groups together.

Participants saw housing as a key issue, with the view that better housing and mixed estates would lead to a more cohesive community. Working together to develop a better environment was also discussed, with even the youngest participants very passionate and knowledgeable about green issues – an area this Community Plan is geared to address over coming years.

#### What does this mean?

The Building Communities Project has been recognised nationally as a unique project which has tackled a sensitive issue openly and honestly. A key lesson is that community cohesion will not just happen by chance and that a proactive approach is required to encourage communities to come together.

The Partnership has taken this lesson on board to put together a Community Plan that will strengthen and connect communities – and by making One Tower Hamlets the central aspiration for Tower Hamlets 2020.



# A Prosperous Community

## Much of Tower Hamlets is growing

thanks largely to the unprecedented growth  
of Canary Wharf and our closeness to the City.

The average business size is the second highest in the capital, because there are so many major employers, and there is also a healthy enterprise culture. This economic activity has led to Tower Hamlets having the fastest employment growth in the country.

Yet, despite this, unemployment levels are higher than both the London and national averages. This is mainly because of comparatively low levels of basic skills but also other factors which affect worklessness. The Partnership is aware that worklessness is a complex issue, with contributing factors ranging from ill-health to transport, debt to cultural barriers and discrimination.

We will help people to confront these different causes of worklessness – whether it be barriers faced by specific groups, like disabled people and vulnerable adults, the existence of ageism or because some people lack family role models to see employment as an option.

One thing is common: worklessness traps families - denying them the money and choices to get out of poverty and improve their quality of life.

In short, there is no shortage of jobs in the borough – but many local people don't have the support, confidence or necessary skills to take advantage of the work on their doorstep.

We know that education is the best way to break the cycle of poverty and give people a step-up into employment, so a key priority for the Prosperous Community theme is to ensure that local people have access to lifelong learning opportunities. This means making high quality education available for residents of all ages - from those entering nursery and primary school to older people and pensioners wanting to learn new skills. Opportunities for lifelong learning will

“ To me, prosperity is about giving people the support and skills they need in order to make the best choices; choices that will improve their quality of life. This theme is about creating opportunities and ensuring we have the skills and support to access them. We will be working hard in the next few years to support learning, foster enterprise and reduce worklessness. We all have the potential to prosper.”



Liam Kane, Chief Executive, East London Business Alliance



Docklands Development



be diverse to suit all needs, whether it be a new resident trying to improve their English or just wanting to try something different in their spare time.

Many nurseries and schools in Tower Hamlets are offering our children and young people an outstanding education that gives them the opportunity to thrive. But we know that there is more to do so that every child makes the progress they are capable of, especially in English and mathematics.

We are putting considerable investment into our school buildings so that every local child has the best possible start in life in terms of schooling. This investment will pay dividends by 2020, when more young people will leave school with qualifications and skills that will help them into employment and successful careers. We also recognise that people learn in different ways - so more high-quality and stretching apprenticeships and vocational courses will be made available to young people, leading to stable jobs.

The Third Sector will play a significant role in developing and delivering lifelong learning opportunities in an environment that supports and empowers them to do so.

The Partnership chose to include a number of employment and skills related targets in Tower Hamlets' Local Area Agreement - reflecting the importance of this issue in making Tower Hamlets a more prosperous place.

These targets will help drive our progress against our ambitions as we improve skills and the employment rate in the borough, increase the number of disabled residents in work and reduce the number of residents on out of work benefits.

The Local Area Agreement, and the work that supports it, will bring about real and significant improvements for local people by 2011; progress that will be further built upon up to 2020.

It will also be important for the Partnership to shape national and regional regeneration programmes so that they meet the needs of local people. Tower Hamlets is a 2012 Olympics and Paralympics host borough and the importance of this cannot be understated. 30,000 new jobs will be created in nearby Stratford and the Olympic Village in East London will create 4 million square feet of commercial space – providing additional opportunities for local residents and businesses.

Tower Hamlets is experiencing growth in every sense - with more and more people moving in to live and work, and new businesses and employment sectors

relocating here. In addition, the development of the Thames Gateway is set to bring even more growth for Tower Hamlets.

But prosperity is not just about wealth. It is about ensuring all residents have the support, skills and encouragement to make the best of their lives. Jobs provide people with fulfilment, purpose and the means to enjoy life.

We are committed to making this a reality for all residents by actively supporting more people into work, giving people access to the training they need to be job-ready and by encouraging enterprise and fostering new industries.

## The Priorities

### Supporting excellent learning opportunities for all by:

- Investing in the under 5s whose development provides the best possible foundation for long term success
- Providing high quality schools, so that young people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their full potential
- Providing continuous learning opportunities, so everyone can learn basic and new skills at any age

### Reducing worklessness by:

- Helping families escape poverty, by providing employment support and advice on debt management
- Identifying and removing barriers to employment for target groups
- Helping people to get and keep employment by ensuring there is support and training before and after they get a job



Social Enterprise in Tower Hamlets

“ We are putting considerable investment into our school buildings so that every local child has the best possible start in life in terms of schooling.”

# A Prosperous Community

## Fostering enterprise by:

- Providing incentives that encourage both business and social entrepreneurship
- Maximising the opportunities for local businesses to benefit from key growth sectors, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Promoting Tower Hamlets businesses and encouraging growth and tourism, with particular emphasis on the Olympics and Paralympics

## We can all help to achieve this by:

- Taking responsibility for our own learning and development - by pursuing lifelong learning opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge
- Encouraging young people to get the most out of their education
- Creating more employment and training opportunities for local people, if running a business

## and we'll help to build One Tower Hamlets by:

- Continuing to focus on improving school results and skills levels, further narrowing the gap between ourselves and the best performing parts of the country
- Highlighting opportunities, and supporting people to seize them, including the employment potential offered by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Recognising that people have individual needs when designing and delivering services – and ensuring that nobody is discriminated against on account of their race, disability, gender, age, sexuality or faith
- Recognising the importance of the family in supporting prosperous communities

## By March 2011 we will:

- Increase the proportion of local people in employment by 2.5% to 55.7% - around 3,500 additional people into work
- Reduce the proportion of local people on out of work benefits by 2% - a reduction of more than 2,500 people
- Increase the number of adults with learning difficulties in jobs
- Increase the number of adults, who are getting support from mental health services, in jobs
- Ensure the proportion of 19 year olds achieving a level 2 qualification (GCSE, Intermediate GNVQ, BTEC First Diploma, NVQ 2), rises by 14% to 72%
- Ensure the proportion of 19 year olds with a level 3 (Intermediate GNVQ, 4 GCSEs) qualification rises by 9% to 46%
- Increase the proportion of young people achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics
- Reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds who aren't in education, employment or training from 8.2% to 6%
- Increase the number of young people from families with low incomes going on to higher education
- Increase the number of young people participating in positive activities
- Take more than 1,000 children out of child poverty
- Increase the proportion of students completing entry level 1 ESOL courses by 8%
- Support an environment for a thriving third sector with an increased proportion of local voluntary and community organisations recognising this support



## Delivering Success

In addition to the Partnership's Local Area Agreement, a number of important strategies and plans will help to deliver results within this theme.

Most notable are the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and the borough's Regeneration Strategy.

The CYPP brings together, in one place, the most important actions planned to make sure that services work together and make a difference to the lives of all children and young people – particularly around skills and achievement.

The borough's Regeneration Strategy aims to bring more investment into the borough and ensure that all our residents and businesses are in a position to benefit from, and contribute to, increasing economic prosperity.

This strategy sits within various regional and sub-regional economic development strategies, most importantly the London Economic Development Strategy. At the same time, it supports other key strategies such as the London Plan and the London Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework. As Europe's largest regeneration project, the scale of the Gateway development is breathtaking. It will create thousands of new jobs and better connect London to the South East.

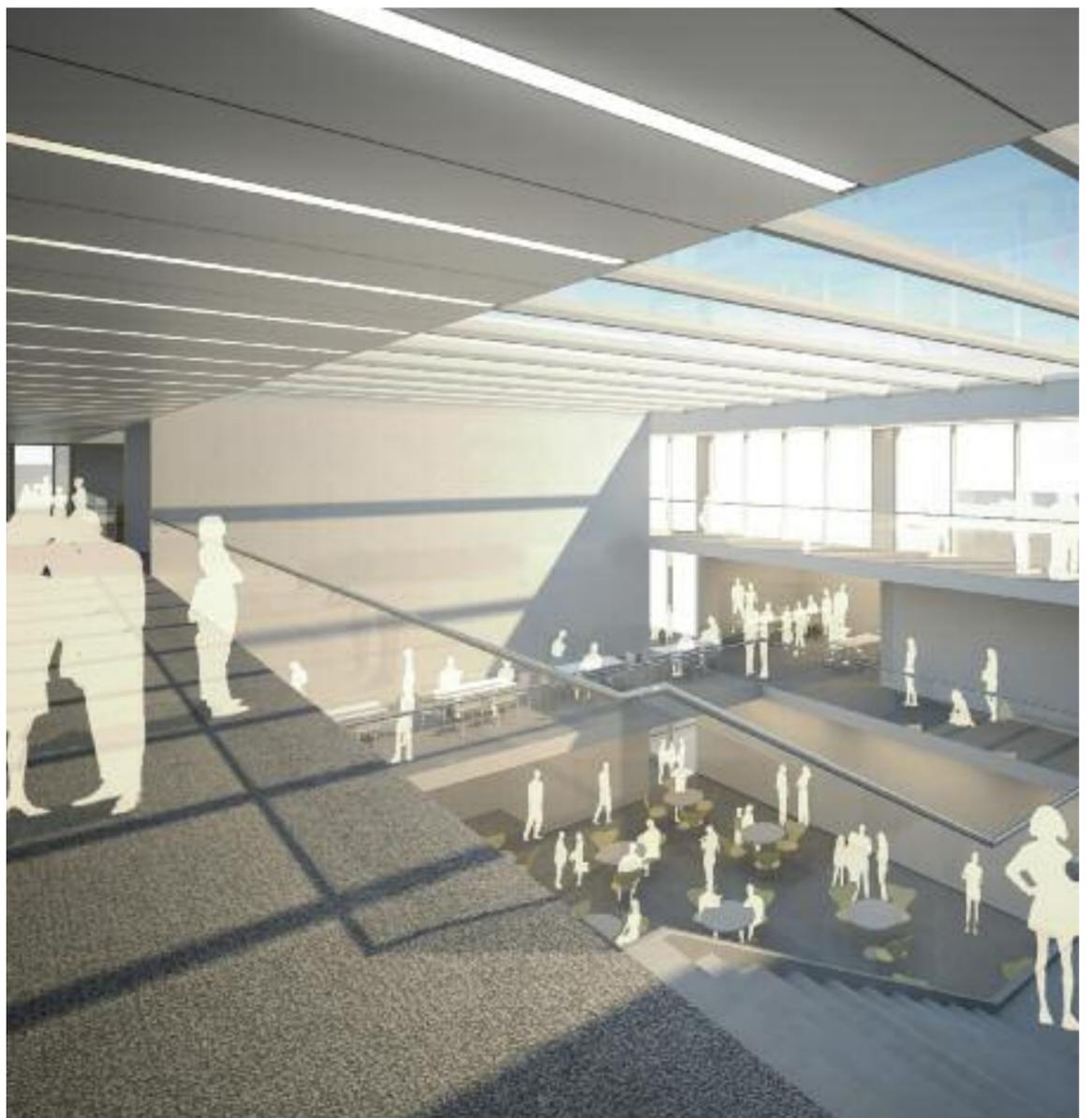
## Building Schools for the Future

Launched by the Government in 2003, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a programme that aims to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England over a fifteen year period, with a projected budget of £45 billion. Tower Hamlets' BSF programme will invest over £180 million in secondary schools to provide world class 21st century facilities that help transform the educational outcomes of young people.

BSF isn't only about building better schools - it aims to bring schools closer to the community by enabling shared access to improved facilities such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This will place schools at the heart of the community, providing local people with increased opportunities for lifelong learning and community development.



Community Day at Mulberry School



One of the proposed atria for St Paul's Way School

# A Prosperous Community

## Case Study



### Idea Stores

**Improving educational achievement and employment skills, and supporting regeneration through the library service**

### Background

In 1998 Tower Hamlets had more libraries per head than any other London borough but annual visits had reached a low of just 690,000. Only 5% of the population used the Adult Education Service and over 24% of adults had reading difficulties. In January 1998, the Council set out to review the borough's library provision and identify how it could be improved.

### Giving residents what they want

The Council wanted local people to be the driving force behind the changes to libraries and the largest ever public consultation on the future of a library service was launched. Hundreds of local people got involved in designing 'the perfect library' and had their say on what the new libraries would look like.

During the consultation, the message from residents was clear: libraries were seen to be lifeless and boring; their locations were inconvenient and the buildings and facilities were old and outdated, making it especially hard for disabled users to use them. Local people wanted to be able to combine a trip to the library with other day to day activities, such as shopping.

### Idea Stores

By listening to residents' views the Council re-thought its approach to libraries and the concept of Idea Stores was born.

Idea Stores would be located in high profile locations which people would pass every day. They would be modern, light and welcoming and open for longer hours so that users had the option of going later in the evenings or at weekends. A bigger variety of books would be ordered, access to computers and the internet would be free and a variety of courses, from dancing to IT skills, would be on offer.

### Idea Stores a roaring success

Since 1998, four Idea Stores have opened in the borough in Whitechapel, Chrisp Street, Bow and Canary Wharf. They are open seven days a week, making Tower Hamlets a great place for access to libraries and lifelong learning opportunities.

Visitor numbers have increased from 690,000 in 1998 to 2.1m in 2007/08

- Satisfaction with Library Services has shot up from 43% in 2003 to 63% in 2006/07
- Nationally, visits to libraries increased by 4.4% from 2002/3. In Tower Hamlets visits increased by 84% in the same period
- The number of books issued has bucked the downward national trend.

A range of partners work together to develop the learning programmes in Idea Stores with Tower Hamlets College, London Metropolitan University and the Council's Lifelong Learning Service providing a wide range of opportunities to learn new skills.

The borough has moved from having the lowest level of library visits of any inner London borough to one of the highest. The Idea Stores have been a great success to date and are a great example of how we can use public services to encourage prosperity, through giving people access to continuous learning opportunities, whatever their age. Idea Store achievements to date have been recognised by numerous national awards, including the Academy for Sustainable Communities national award in 2007 for the best local authority contribution to developing sustainable communities.

# A Safe and Supportive Community

## The Safe and Supportive Community Plan theme represents a desire for Tower Hamlets to be a place where everyone can achieve their full potential.

This means a place where crime is rare and tackled effectively, and where communities live in peace together. It also means somewhere where everyone, young and old, has equal access to choices, chances and power.

The Partnership recognises that the disadvantages faced by many local residents - in terms of employment, housing and health - increase the risk of them not feeling part of the local community. Local public services need to identify those who are most at risk and support them so that they can fulfil their potential.

Reducing inequality and removing the causes of crime are strongly linked. Local crime has fallen by nearly a quarter over the past four years, with a reduction in all crime types including violence, burglary, motor vehicle crime and robbery. In the past year alone, violent crime has fallen 9% and personal and commercial robberies by 28%. However, crime remains significantly higher than the national average – and a sizeable stumbling block to progress. It is recognised that the most disadvantaged people are often most at risk of becoming both perpetrators and victims of crime. This knowledge places us in a strong position to focus resources and action over the coming years.

Delivering a Safe and Supportive Community has two key aspects.

“ The Partnership has an important role to play in supporting residents to fulfil their potential so that everyone in the borough, whatever their individual needs, has choices and power. We must also ensure everyone feels safe.

Residents and partners are united in a view that crime, anti-social behaviour and drugs will not be tolerated in Tower Hamlets. The Partnership has made great strides in recent years and we must continue to build on these successes. I look forward to the challenges ahead.”



Paul Rickett, Police Borough Commander

The first is providing excellent services to everybody - including high-quality housing, schools and healthcare. Such services form part of every theme in this plan. The second involves providing excellent services for our most excluded groups and to those at risk of becoming excluded. Over time, work on both these areas will make a powerful impact on both social disadvantage and crime.

Alongside this long-term approach, we will continue to crack down on crime through effective law enforcement and crime prevention. Violence – especially domestic violence and hate crimes – will not be tolerated.

# A Safe and Supportive Community

Fear of crime will be reduced, so that local people feel safe in their homes and in their neighbourhoods.

Another challenge within this theme is to ensure our crime and anti-social behaviour services are transparent and accountable to local people - seeking, and responding to, local views.

Victims of crime will be provided with timely and appropriate support and we will continue to encourage residents to report incidents of crime whilst publicising enforcement successes. Action will be focussed on crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots - such as Whitechapel, Bethnal Green and Brick Lane, along with some housing estates.

When looking at both the causes of crime, and the roots of disadvantage, the family is the single most important factor in shaping a child's well-being, achievements and prospects. Poor parenting and early exposure to dangers like drug abuse, domestic violence and offending increase the likelihood of children not making the most of their potential.

Against this background, we will make sure a family-inclusive approach is taken to these problems. We will focus on families who are at risk or experiencing serious disadvantage and make sure that in doing so we co-ordinate the right services around them. We will also offer more support to those families who, with a little extra help, might avoid more complex problems later.

Delivering improvements for all our residents means a focus on easily available and high quality support services for key groups - such as older people, 'looked-after' children, youngsters leaving care, disabled people, offenders, victims of domestic violence, those with drugs and alcohol issues, homeless people and new communities. Research also shows us that it is not enough simply to provide a strong set of services to tackle deep disadvantage affecting all age groups. The most disadvantaged often fall through the net. What enables people to access and stay engaged with services are qualities such as resilience, confidence, and the ability to develop strong relationships.

There is strong evidence that raising young children in a supportive and nurturing environment has a very significant impact on their later life chances. We have a range of services to work with families with children under five, from our 21 children's centres that reach out to all families in the borough, to specialist services designed to support those most at risk as they prepare to start a family. We were awarded Beacon status for Early Intervention for Children at Risk for this support.

Building on this approach is a priority, and essential in making Tower Hamlets a borough where everyone can achieve their full potential.

## The Priorities

### Empowering older and vulnerable people and supporting families by:

- Providing responsive and appropriate services for adults which promote independence, choice and control, security and community
- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm and neglect
- Preventing and reducing homelessness, and helping more people into settled homes and employment
- Improving support for children and young people with disabilities and their families

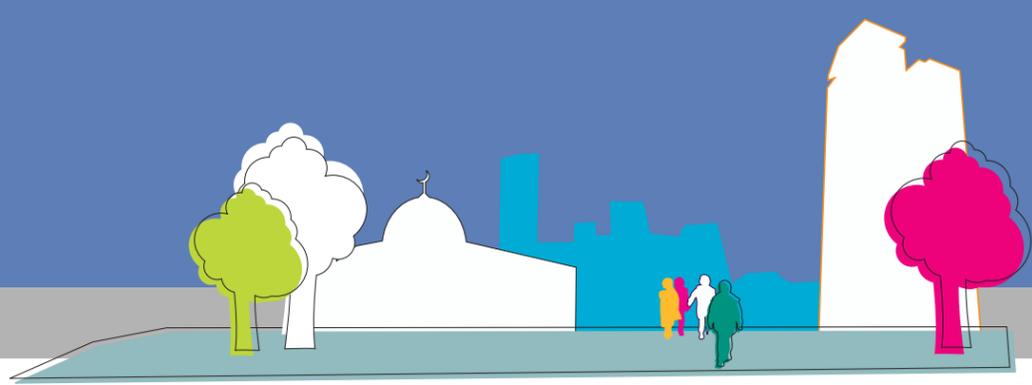
### Tackling and preventing crime by:

- Reducing crime and promoting successes effectively to reduce fear of crime
- Reducing re-offending through holistic intervention with all who become involved with the criminal justice system
- Making crime prevention a key element of all service planning - and improving community trust and engagement in strategic planning and service development

### Focussing on early intervention by:

- Improving parental engagement and support
- Using joined-up approaches to address links between health, drugs, alcohol, education, skills, employment, accommodation, mental health, debt and benefits across all age groups
- Tackling the causes of crime by working with 'at risk' groups, to nip problems in the bud





## We can all help to achieve this by:

- Having a zero-tolerance approach to crime and anti-social behaviour – and by reporting incidents
- Supporting family, friends and neighbours who have been victims of crime, encouraging them to seek professional advice and support
- Teaching young children the consequences of crime - and the value of taking responsibility for one's own actions
- Recognising that we all need help sometimes - and that vulnerability may affect us all over our lifetime
- Respecting, valuing and safeguarding our older citizens
- Working with local service providers to improve services - by telling them what we want and need to live more independent, fulfilled lives
- Challenging prejudice and making Tower Hamlets 'no place for hate'

## and we'll help build One Tower Hamlets by:

- Recognising the strong link between reducing inequality and removing the causes of crime
- Making sure that nobody is discriminated against on account of their race, disability, gender, age, sexuality or faith – and that hate crime is reported and dealt with
- Supporting everyone to access the services they need, and making sure nobody feels excluded
- Recognising that tackling issues effectively sometimes involves a family-inclusive approach

## By March 2011 we will:

- Reduce the number of serious violent and acquisitive crimes in the borough
- Reduce the proportion of local people who think drug use or drug dealing is a problem by 8%
- Increase the number of residents who believe that the Police and council are dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour
- Cut reoffending by adults under probation supervision and reoffending by young people
- Build resilience to violent extremism
- Reduce the rate of arson
- Increase the proportion of carers who are receiving a specific carer's service, or advice and information by 15%
- Increase the number of drug users in effective treatment
- Prevent more than 2,100 households becoming homeless



# A Safe and Supportive Community

## Delivering Success

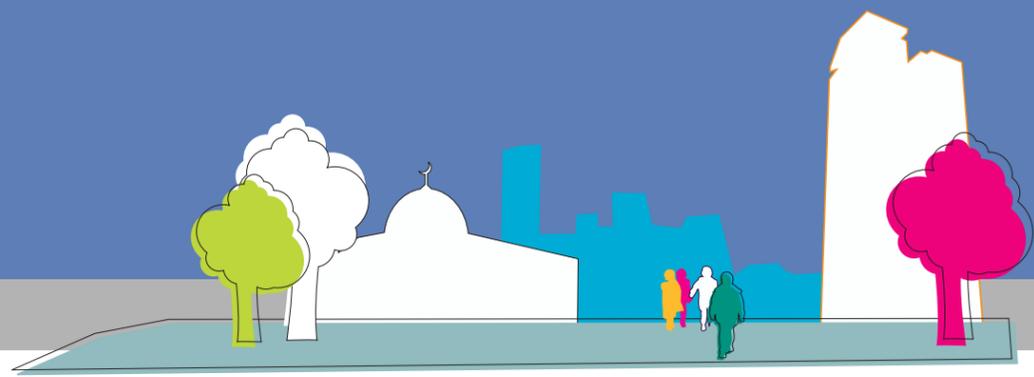
There is a number of key strategies already in place to deliver the desired results outlined within this theme - including the Partnership's Crime and Drugs Reduction Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

Tower Hamlets' Homelessness and Supporting People strategies outline the approach, and support available, to people most vulnerable in terms of housing – helping to enable residents to remain at home and keep their tenancies while going through a rough patch.

There is also a number of local networks that play a key role in delivering the Community Plan objectives identified in this theme. The Safer Neighbourhood Teams provide ward-based community policing - while the Better Tower Hamlets teams bring together service providers at a local level to have a greater impact on tackling residents' community safety concerns. The teams are made up of police, safer neighbourhood team officers and staff from cleaner, safer services. They are located together in local teams to support close working and deliver co-ordinated responses to local crime, ASB and environmental issues.



Community Support Officers at the Poplar Day Centre Open Day



# Case Study

## Sonali Gardens

### Providing targeted, culturally sensitive and joined-up services for older people

#### Background

For many older Bengali people, the idea of receiving care from strangers is an unfamiliar one. As a result, Bengali elders have been less likely to accept residential and nursing home care and have been more likely to be living in overcrowded housing or to suffer from chronic illnesses.

With elderly Bangladeshis accounting for 15% of Tower Hamlets' population, effectively addressing the issue of care provision for this community was vital.

#### The Solution

It was recognised that a culturally sensitive nursing home facility would enable Bengali elders to enjoy their retirement age. The Council worked in partnership with the Government, Sanctuary Care and a local Registered Social Landlord to design targeted services for this group. The result was Sonali Gardens; a care scheme for Bengali elders.



#### Sonali Gardens

Sonali Gardens, which means 'Golden' in Bengali, became a reality in 2004. It consists of 40 self-contained adapted flats around an enclosed courtyard. Occupants receive day centre provision from St Hildas East Community Centre, a pioneer in developing community based provision for Bangladeshi older people.

Sonali Gardens is not just for elders from the Bangladeshi community, although it is particularly targeted at meeting the needs of this group. A Bangladeshi care team ensures that the environment is culturally sensitive and that the particular religious and cultural needs of residents are met. The centre has prayer rooms for men and women, bi-lingual signage and is decorated with Bengali art and furnishings.

Care is provided around the clock by dedicated staff who are able to speak at least one of three languages - Urdu, Sylheti or Bengali. The care on offer is flexible, provided on an individual basis and delivered jointly with family members of those living within the scheme. Care provision encourages maximum contact with relatives, local clubs and the Mosque, supporting residents to be active and engage with their local community.

#### Benefits for Users

Sonali Gardens is unique and has greatly enriched the quality of life for those that use its services. It's a great example of the Partnership's commitment to equalities and meeting residents' needs in order to improve people's quality of life.

"If you want to see how culturally sensitive services for ethnic minorities work, I would recommend Sonali Gardens. It's a fabulous scheme" Stephen Ladyman MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities -February 2005.

# A Healthy Community

## Local residents want Tower Hamlets to be a place where more people lead healthy and longer lives, where differences within the borough are reduced and where everyone has access to world class primary care, community, mental health and hospital services.

At the moment, there are some stark differences in the quality of health experienced by Tower Hamlets' residents. Although life expectancy is improving, and now stands at 75 years for men and 80 years for women, this compares with 83 years for men and 87 years for women in Kensington and Chelsea.

There are also substantial inequalities between groups within the borough, with the average life expectancy for men in St Katherine's and Wapping nearly ten years greater than in Bethnal Green North.

A poor diet, smoking and physical inactivity increase the risk of serious illness, leading to a less enjoyable and shorter life. This is of course true everywhere but Tower Hamlets currently has some of the worst health figures in the country. Although improving, the borough's cancer mortality rate is the highest in London and circulatory disease deaths are second highest. These stark statistics are linked to Tower Hamlets having one of the highest rates of tobacco use in the country, with a growing number of people diagnosed with diabetes and other long-term conditions. The proportion of people who are overweight or obese is also predicted to increase.

Tower Hamlets is the third most deprived borough in the country and there are areas of deprivation in every part of the borough. There is strong evidence that areas with deprivation have worse health and greater health inequalities. Factors that contribute to poor health, such as smoking and low levels of exercise, are more common in deprived areas, as are certain associated health problems including heart disease, respiratory disorders and lung cancer.

“ It is time for health. Good health gives us the means and strength to improve our lives and plan for the future. A healthy lifestyle, with a good diet and everyday physical activities such as walking, is vital. Access to advice, support and high quality local health and social care services also really matters. We must ensure that the care on offer to everyone is world class – no one should expect less. We will work with residents and across the Partnership to make our healthy community goal a reality.”



Alwen Williams, Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust

The Partnership is committed to tackling this poverty and deprivation. It is important to recognise that the wider improvements across all the plan's themes - in housing, employment and safety - will have considerable impact on improving people's health and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in East London will provide an excellent opportunity to promote better health through exercise and sport. Residents will have the chance to attend the Games and be inspired by a historic sporting legacy, as well as having access to world class sporting facilities right on their doorstep.



Currently we are working with community organisations and others in the Time for Health campaign - giving more information to help local people to maintain and improve health and well-being for themselves and their families.

Key objectives for the Partnership are to make high quality prevention and health care services available and support healthy lifestyles throughout a resident's life.

The starting point is providing excellent maternal care for all expectant mothers in Tower Hamlets. Equally important is quality care given to older people for chronic conditions later in life.

Local people increasingly want more control and choice when getting health care and the Partnership is committed to giving people the power to shape and control their own services.

Residents want access to services locally within the community and for these services to be delivered by

the most appropriate agency - whether that is the NHS, a social care service or local community organisation. The Partnership is committed to delivering this, and co-ordinating and bringing together services so that they are better for those who use them.

Good and timely access to services and treatment is essential. For some residents this may mean home visits or an appointment with a female health practitioner. For others, it may mean access to an interpreter or other support assistance.

The Partnership will also radically improve primary and community care premises and provide services in or close to people's homes, whenever possible, rather than in hospitals and other institutions.

Improving children's health is a particularly high priority for the Partnership. With such a large, young population, it is essential that children are given the best start in life and make lifestyle choices that will safeguard their health in future years. Currently, the proportion of young people who smoke, are obese, do not exercise regularly, and eat poorly is higher than the national average. We have the third highest proportion of 4-5 year olds who are obese in the country. The Partnership is committed to achieving major improvements in young people's health.

Sexual health is a key issue for Tower Hamlets. The incidence of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, is higher than the national average and cases of chlamydia and syphilis have risen in recent years. Despite real progress in reducing teenage pregnancy there also remain high levels of sexually transmitted infections among young people. This will be reversed through effective advice and education initiatives, readily available screening and treatment services and, of course, through residents taking personal responsibility for their sexual health.

Mental health issues affect one in four people sometime during their life. And people with serious mental illness have a higher risk of physical illness and reduced life expectancy. Raising the profile of mental health services, and improving access to them, will be an important focus over the coming years.



Aquatots in York Hall Swimming Pool



# A Healthy Community

## The Priorities

### Improving health and reducing differences in people's health by promoting healthy lifestyles:

- Reducing the use of tobacco
- Reducing rates of diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Slowing down the increase in obesity
- Improving sexual health

### Supporting mental health services to improve mental health by:

- Providing high-quality accessible services
- Combating discrimination against individuals and groups with mental health problems
- Ensuring integrated planning and treatment for patients with multiple health needs

### Improving access to, and experience of, local health services by:

- Improving access to GPs, developing out-of-hospital services and improving access to high quality maternity care
- Reducing waiting times
- Promoting self-care and improving management of long term conditions

## We can all help to achieve this by:

- Making responsible lifestyle choices that promote good health - such as exercising, adopting a healthy diet and practising safe sex
- Understanding the dangers of tobacco, drug taking, and binge drinking - and seeking support when facing addiction
- Having regular health checkups and attending screening and immunisation appointments
- Taking an active interest in the health of family, friends and neighbours - ensuring that the most vulnerable are getting the health care services they need
- Taking part in consultation that seeks to improve local services

## and we'll help to build One Tower Hamlets by:

- Focusing on reducing the health inequalities that exist within the borough and narrowing the gap between Tower Hamlets and the healthiest parts of the country
- Supporting people to lead healthier lifestyles
- Making sure that health services are accessible – including at a time and place that suits you
- Recognising the strong links between health and other areas such as employment, housing and the environment





## By March 2011 we will:

- Further reduce the proportion of under 18s getting pregnant
- Slow down the increase in childhood obesity – to ensure that less than a quarter of primary age children are obese
- Increase adult participation in sport
- Support around 5,000 residents to quit smoking
- Increase life expectancy



The new £35 million Tower Hamlets Centre for Mental Health, at Mile End, providing modern inpatient mental health care.



An artist's impression of the new hospital at The Royal London. Construction is underway and services will begin to move into the new buildings in 2011.

# A Healthy Community

## Delivering Success

Strong links and a co-ordinated approach are already in place between the Council, Primary Care Trust and health care providers in Tower Hamlets.

In 2006, the Partnership published the first Tower Hamlets Health and Well-being Strategy, developed by the Council and the Primary Care Trust. This strategy outlines the vision for primary and community care services until 2016. The Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessment will further inform the delivery of the strategy.

More recently, the Partnership has agreed with government an ambitious three-year Local Area Agreement, featuring targets that will help drive partnership action in a number of key areas - including tobacco use and obesity. The Partnership's "Time for Health" campaign will target health inequalities around heart disease, diabetes, cancer and stroke.

There is also a number of major building projects in place that will support efforts to achieve objectives within this theme. One example is a new hospital at Whitechapel, which will blend world class specialist and teaching resources with excellent local hospital services.

Already complete are new mental health inpatient services on the Mile End Hospital site. This has replaced Victorian buildings at St. Clements, and offers patients 21st century standards of care.

“ In 2006, the Partnership published the first Tower Hamlets Health and Well-being Strategy, developed by the Council and the Primary Care Trust.”





# Case Study

## The Barkantine Health and Well-being Centre Delivering high-quality, joined up health care at a community level



### Background

In 2006, the council and the Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust agreed an ambitious strategy for the development of primary and community care services in Tower Hamlets over the next decade. The Improving Health and Well-being Strategy set out the specific aims that the council and PCT would work to achieve and described a vision of neighbourhood facilities which would bring together public services spanning health, social care and other contributors to health and wellbeing. The resulting Barkantine Primary Care Centre was the first of its kind in the South East.

The Barkantine estate population, in North Millwall, has a higher household size and birth rate than average. It was recognised that the three existing GP practices in the area would not have the capacity to meet the healthcare needs of the growing local population.

The Barkantine Centre project was developed to:

- Reduce the number of people admitted to hospital with a long term condition who could be cared for outside of hospital
- Reduce the waiting times and ensure residents can get an appointment with a health professional promptly
- Reduce the time taken to get important test results
- Identify and support carers more effectively
- Join up services to the benefit of all 8,300 registered service users.

### Results

The Barkantine Centre opened in January 2008 offering a broad range of primary health care services to residents on the Isle of Dogs. Services available include a dental clinic, pharmacy, birth centre, children's centre, continence support service and a women and young people's service. Service users also have access to a community mental health team, occupational therapy, foot health services and community nursing in addition to GP services.

The Barkantine Birth Centre is one of the pioneering facilities offered, as it is the first purpose-built NHS Birth Centre in the country. Run jointly by Barts and The London and Tower Hamlets PCT, care is provided in a 'home from home' environment. The Birth Centre has capacity for up to 500 births a year and boasts five multi-purpose rooms, each with a birthing pool and en-suite facilities. The midwife-led service cares for pregnant women before, during and after the birth and also offers ante and postnatal check-ups, preparation and breast-feeding classes and support for new mums. The Barkantine Centre is an excellent example of how health care provided at a neighbourhood level greatly improves residents' quality of life – making sure users have access to all the services they need, and are part of a healthy community.

# The Community Plan: Building One Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets' diversity is a major strength - and this Community Plan recognises the richness, vibrancy and energy that our communities provide. But with diversity also comes challenge, and the Tower Hamlets Partnership is firmly committed to making sure people are treated with respect and fairness regardless of their differences. Everyone living, working or visiting Tower Hamlets has the right to live free from discrimination and prejudice - and everyone in the borough has a responsibility to make sure this happens. This is our aspiration; creating a place where everyone is free to live how they want but where we all feel proud to be part of One Tower Hamlets.

We can only make One Tower Hamlets a reality by 2020 with strong and effective partnership working to improve the quality of residents' lives. It needs major contributions from local organisations, such as the council, primary care trust, police, voluntary and community organisations, and businesses to deliver on our commitments to provide more affordable family housing, get local people into jobs and make the borough safer. We all have a unique working knowledge of local needs that will be essential in meeting our vision for 2020.

What's most important however, is involving local people - who choose to live, work, study and visit our borough. I strongly encourage everyone, of all ages and backgrounds to contribute to the Tower Hamlets Partnership and their local community - by getting involved in your Local Area Partnership, volunteering, joining the Residents' Panel or contacting your local councillor. Real, lasting improvements will only happen if we all make our contribution.

Transforming our borough will be challenging, but by working in partnership we will achieve those goals sooner.

I have the lead for doing that at the Council and I will work hard with councillors, council officers, partners and with residents to make sure it happens.



**Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Lead Member,  
Regeneration, Localisation and  
Community Partnerships**

## The Tower Hamlets Partnership

The Tower Hamlets Partnership brings together all the key stakeholders in the borough - residents, the council, the police, the health service, housing associations, other public services, voluntary and community groups, faith communities and businesses. The Tower Hamlets Partnership is about working together to deliver the goals of the Community Plan and providing better services for local people.

### Getting Involved

The Tower Hamlets Partnership wants everyone to be involved – you can attend a nearby Partnership fun day, participate in your local LAP meeting - a platform for everyone to have their say on the improvements in their area – or simply see what’s happening.

**To find out more contact:**

The Tower Hamlets Partnership

**Email:**

[towerhamletspartnership@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:towerhamletspartnership@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

**Web:**

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/partnership](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/partnership)

**Telephone:**

020 7364 4058

“ The Partnership is committed to improving the quality of life of everyone who lives and works in Tower Hamlets.”



Intergenerational Arts Project at the Kobi Nazrul Centre. Photo taken by resident Dorothy Lloyd, Community Plan photograph competition winner



Love Music Hate Racism Carnival, Victoria Park

Monday - Friday  
9.00am - 5.00pm



THCP/08/46

English	<b>For free translation phone</b>
Arabic	للترجمة المجانية الرجاء الاتصال هاتفياً.
Chinese	欲索取免費譯本，請致電。
French	<b>Pour une traduction gratuite, téléphonez</b>
Hindi	मुफ्त अनुवाद के लिए फोन कीजिए.
Malayalam	സൗജന്യമായ തർജ്ജിമയ്ക്കായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുക
Somali	<b>Turjubaan lacag la'aan ah ka soo wac telefoonka.</b>
Portuguese	<b>Para uma tradução grátis, telefone.</b>
Bengali/Sylheti	বিনাখরচে অনুবাদের জন্য টেলিফোন করুন
Gujarati	મફત ભાષાંતર માટે ફોન કરો.
Punjabi	ਮੁਫਤ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਲਈ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ
Urdu	مفت ترجمے کے لئے ٹیلیفون کیجئے۔
Serbo-Croat	<b>Za besplatne prevode pozovite</b>
Spanish	<b>Para obtener una traducción telefónica gratuita llame al:</b>
Russian	Перевод – бесплатно. Звоните.
Albanian	<b>Për një përkthim falas telefononi.</b>
Tamil	இலவச மொழிபெயர்ப்புக்கு தொலைபேசி செய்யவும்.
Greek	Για δωρεάν μετάφραση, τηλεφωνήστε.
Turkish	Ücretsiz çeviri için telefon edin.
Vietnamese	Điện thoại để được thông dịch miễn phí.
Kurdish	بۆ وەرگیران (تهرجومه کردن) به خۆرای، ته له فۆن بکه.
Lithuanian	<b>Del nemokamo vertimo skambinkinte</b>
Polish	<b>Po bezplatne tłumaczenia prosimy dzwonic</b>

Also available in audio, large print or braille, phone

**020 8430 6291**

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