Cohesion Plan summary

A Plan for a More Cohesive Community 2020-25 (Summary)

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# What we mean by community and cohesion

By ‘community’ we mean people from different backgrounds and interests who live, work or study in Tower Hamlets.

Tower Hamlets has adopted the definition of community cohesion linked to the Cantle and Denham reports. This definition is widely accepted and is embedded in both national and regional approaches to social integration.

It states that a cohesive society is one in which:

* *there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities;*
* *the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued;*
* *similar life opportunities are available to all; and*
* *Strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.*

# Our vision

***We will have a strong and cohesive borough, where different parts of the community are connected, and people of all backgrounds feel they belong; participate in community life; and have equal opportunities***

# Our priorities

Our 2020-2025 cohesion plan has 3 key priorities, each with different areas of focus and commitments to achieve them. The priorities are:

# Priority 1: Connected people

## Outcome: People have strong and positive relationships with others from the same and different backgrounds

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **We will** | **So that** |
| Our Places and Spaces   * Embed cohesion principles in the regeneration delivery plan so the regeneration projects and programmes help development of positive relationships between people of different backgrounds * Help ensure that the design of new high-density development in the borough contributes toward a high-quality of life. This will mean encouraging mixed and balanced communities, providing opportunities for inclusive play and enabling people to be better supported in the different aspects of their everyday life * Waive street closure charges when residents make a successful application to close local streets for community events such as for street parties   Children and young people   * Strengthen the connection of children and young people from diverse backgrounds across different schools, so they can interact and build positive relationships. * Work with a range of services to develop a *Play Charter* which emphasises the importance of inclusive play and promotes play across all cultures, ages and abilities | * We have a stronger and more resilient community * People have opportunities to mix with others from different backgrounds * A greater understanding of people from other backgrounds   Fewer people are lonely or isolated |

# Priority 2: Involved and empowered community

## Outcome: People have a common vision and a greater sense of belonging in the community

| We will | So that |
| --- | --- |
| Celebrating diversity   * Review and reorganise our funding for events that celebrate particular parts of the community to create a celebrating diversity fund. This will enable more community groups to hold events celebrating e.g. disabled, LGBT+, faith communities and women as well as overall diversity * Build on the success of the 2019 Youth Achievement Awards, using them as a platform for enabling adults in the community to have greater recognition of the contributions of young people to the community * Promote the Great Get Together campaign and encourage local residents and groups to run events or street parties.   Strengthening leadership and bringing leaders together   * Develop a clear localism policy that sets out how we will encourage and empower the community to take the lead * Work with our partners and local businesses to deliver on our priorities to create a more cohesive borough. This will include building on the importance of the workplace as a place where different people can come together. * Use council grants and procurement to ensure that the things we fund reach our diverse communities and contribute to community cohesion   Effective volunteering   * Encourage volunteering in the borough that creates civic pride and a sense of belonging * Build on volunteering during the pandemic, empowering people to be active in their local community, to address the impacts of Covid-19 * Extend the children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) parent ambassador programme to all schools.   Participation and social action   * Support and encourage social action, including through programmes such as The *Big Clean Up* and the public health led *Communities Driving Change* programme * Launch an interactive engagement programme to increase democratic participation of residents including registering to vote and voting. * Improve the quality of engagement and consultation by the council. This will enable hearing a range of community voices to support greater resident participation in the development and cocreation of projects. | * People take part actively in community life in ways that are positive for them * Community assets grow across the borough (people, associations, institutions) * Communities help shape their local area and services * People have greater pride in their local area |

# Priority 3: Bridging the equalities gap

## Outcome: Similar life opportunities are available to all

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| We will | So that |
| * Reorganise our diversity networks to empower the community to identify and tackle inequalities they share with others and to enable hearing their voice in shaping the future of the borough. This includes provision for disabled, LGBT+ and faith communities. * Work with our partners to enable more people to take up *Skills for Life training* (which includes ESOL, English, Math’s and IT), and develop a new element of the programme to support participation in community life. * Support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and women to enter into employment. * Deliver the *Poverty Proofing the School Day project* in the borough which supports schools to create a fair experience of the school day for all children, regardless of their parental income. * Work to tackle violence against women and girls by providing support and protection for victims, bringing offenders to justice and engaging with communities to raise awareness and challenge misogyny * Improve the way that council staff understand about our diverse communities and the inequalities people face by launching a new equality and diversity training offer * Continue to work with our partners to tackle hate crime through the *No Place for Hate Campaign* * Explore how we address digital exclusion and digital poverty of people in our community to ensure that everyone has access to digital tools | * New communities feel supported * There is less inequality in the borough * People feel the diversity of the community is valued * Women are visible in our community and in leadership roles * The people of our borough are instrumental in tackling the inequalities they face |

# How we will know this is working

The table below shows whether our actions to strengthen cohesion in the borough are having the impact we want. Part of our approach to cohesion is to work in individual neighbourhoods. We will measure the impact of this locally. Measures relating to cohesion will be influenced by a wide range of factors, far wider than the actions we commit to in this plan. Even so, taking together the measures below should give a strong picture of how cohesive the borough is.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Outcomes | Measure |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **People have strong and positive relationships with others from the same and different backgrounds** | More residents feel people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area |
|  | More young people feel Tower Hamlets is a place where young people from different backgrounds get on well together |
|  | People have friends /acquaintances from different backgrounds ((by ethnicity, age, level of education, income, religious group) |
|  | Fewer residents feeling lonely some of the time or all the time |
| **People have a common vision and a greater sense of belonging in the community** | More residents are satisfied with their local area / neighbourhood as a place to live |
|  | More residents and staff undertake volunteering |
|  | More people register to vote and use their vote |
|  | More people feel the council involves residents in making decision |
| **Similar life opportunities are available to all** | More women and residents from BAME backgrounds are supported into sustainable employment and level of hate crime |
|  | Level of hate crime |
|  | Adults from the most deprived postcodes complete training & skills programmes |
|  | Percentage of learners who complete their ESOL programme and the percentage who achieve the outcomes of the programme. |