



TOWER HAMLETS



Toynbee Hall

**LUTFUR  
RAHMAN**

**MAYOR OF  
TOWER HAMLETS**

**FAIRNESS**

**COMMISSION**

**TOWER HAMLETS**

**TIME**

**TO**

**ACT**

**TOWER HAMLETS**

**IS AT A  
CROSSROADS.**

**HISTORICALLY A PLACE WHERE MANY DEEP-SEATED SOCIAL ISSUES HAVE EXISTED AND RISEN TO PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS, THERE IS ARGUABLY NOWHERE IN THE COUNTRY WHERE INEQUALITY IS MORE PRONOUNCED.**

The last ten years have seen an increase in public sector investment and improvements in life chances for many. However, this model of public sector investment has come to an abrupt end, and there is a fear that progress made so far could dwindle or recede.

**THE CHALLENGES  
ARE CLEAR:  
THE POLITICAL AND  
FINANCIAL CLIMATE  
AND A RAPIDLY  
CHANGING POLICY  
LANDSCAPE MEAN  
THAT PUBLIC  
SERVICES CAN NO  
LONGER BE DELIVERED  
IN THE SAME WAY;**

Public opinion of big business, particularly some of those companies based in our borough, is at an all-time low; The borough's population is growing and the demography changing into something less familiar; Technological advances are fundamentally changing the way organisations operate and the way people interact; Community and voluntary sector organisations, and individual residents themselves, might have the ideas for change but not necessarily the resources.



A pressing question for those with a stake in the borough's future is

**WHERE DO  
WE GO FROM  
HERE?**

To generate new perspectives on this issue the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Lutfur Rahman, launched the Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission in November 2012. The fourteen Commissioners are independent of the Council and the main political parties.

Over the last ten months, the Commission has:

**1**

**BROUGHT TOGETHER PEOPLE, IDEAS, OPINIONS, EXPERTS AND EVIDENCE TO GENERATE A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON HOW TO MAKE TOWER HAMLETS A FAIRER PLACE TO LIVE IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL CLIMATE**

**2**

**ENGAGED PEOPLE IN THE BOROUGH IN A DEBATE ABOUT ITS FUTURE, FROM BIG BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICES TO SMALL COMMUNITY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTS**

**3**

**DRAWN ON THE STRENGTHS, ASSETS AND HISTORY WHICH MAKE TOWER HAMLETS A UNIQUE PLACE TO BE, AS WELL AS ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY MANY**

**4**

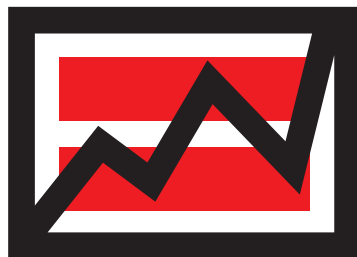
**DEVELOPED A NEW VISION AND A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE**

**THIS BOOKLET SUMMARISES THE COMMISSION'S CONCLUSIONS.**  
**DESPITE THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGES, THERE EXISTS REAL POTENTIAL TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF INEQUALITY IN THE BOROUGH.**

Through its work the Commission has identified people, places and organisations who have the capacity, connections, skills and insight to build lasting change. Key to their success will be devising new forms of collaboration, bringing together the public sector, business, local people and civil society, making clear their respective and collective responsibilities.

Each sector has a role and in its report the Commission sets out detailed proposals for action in three key areas:

**MONEY**



**NOW WE HAVE A CLEAR AND CONSOLIDATED VISION FOR WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE,**

**IT'S TIME TO ACT.**

**JOBS**



**HOMES**



Set out below is a description of the part key sectors in the borough in making these proposals a reality:

## THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY BECOMES A LONG-TERM PARTNER IN THE PROSPERITY OF THE BOROUGH AND EVERYONE WHO LIVES HERE:

- to commit to providing 25% of work experience placements in the borough each year, supporting all schools to offer a wide curriculum and provide aspirational opportunities to students
- to contribute to a support package for the borough's Credit Union to include marketing, ICT and product development support
- financial institutions work with the local authority and house builders to develop new models of long term investment for social housing
- to contribute to the development, and active use, of a new 'Jobs Exchange' in the borough
- to commit to paying the London Living Wage to all employees
- to commit to working with the local authority to eradicate the poverty premium in Tower Hamlets

## THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TAKES A LEAD ON CREATING THESE NEW COLLABORATIONS AND ENSURING FAIRNESS BY:

- working with financial institutions and house builders to develop new models of long term investment in social housing
- working with Job Centre Plus, the third sector and business on creating a new 'Jobs Exchange' for the borough
- setting ambitious targets for the expansion of childcare provision and lead work to develop new and alternative models of provision such as workplace childcare, co-produced and co-operative provision
- working with the business community to eradicate the poverty premium in Tower Hamlets
- working closely with local organisations who support people in financial crisis to develop a holistic response to residents affected by welfare reform
- taking a lead across London in illustrating the negative impact of investment in the London property market

## NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ACTS AS ENABLER TO LOCAL INNOVATION BY:

- giving local authorities greater power to limit unhealthy businesses, including fast food, payday loan and gambling outlets
- reducing restrictions on local authority borrowing to build social housing, abolishing the Housing Revenue Account debt cap, not 'toplicing' the New Homes Bonus and allowing local authorities to keep all the proceeds from Right to Buy sales, to reinvest in new homes
- enabling local authorities to introduce covenants on Right to Buy sales to limit the ability of leaseholders to convert properties into buy-to-let.
- supporting the development of the credit union sector so it can provide a viable alternative to payday loans and competitive banking services for people on low incomes, by raising the cap on interest rates that can be charged by credit unions

## THE LOCAL THIRD SECTOR WORKS TOGETHER TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN NEW FORMS OF COLLABORATION:

- the Credit Union to partner with financial service businesses to improve their service and impact
- through working with the local authority, Job Centre Plus and businesses to create a new Jobs Exchange in the borough
- by working closely with local organisations who support people in financial crisis to develop a holistic response to residents affected by welfare reform



TOWER HAMLETS

FAIRNESS  
COMMISSION

# TIME TO ACT