

# Our corporate narrative

## Council story

Tower Hamlets Council supports the UK's most dynamic place.

We are working to make our borough a safer, cleaner and fairer place to live.

We have one of the fastest growing populations in the UK with more homes being built here than almost anywhere else. Our average age is just 31.

Our economy has the third largest output in the UK with 291,000 employees working for 16,925 businesses.

### Our strengths are also our greatest challenges

We are a borough of contrasts.

As with any inner city area, Tower Hamlets has issues including crime, pollution and ensuring new developments support our existing communities as well as new ones.

Tower Hamlets is the second most densely populated local authority in the country.

Almost 19,000 people are on our council house waiting list – the second highest in London – and 35,110 additional homes are needed over the next decade.

There are great disparities of wealth. One in four residents live below the poverty line.

The average household income of our most wealthy ward is more than double that of our poorest.

Our borough has also significant health problems. Tower Hamlets has the lowest life expectancy rates in London (disability-free) and 43 per cent of Year 6 children are overweight or obese.

Tower Hamlets experiences the third highest emissions of air pollution which contribute to the average lung capacity of our children being 10 per cent smaller than other parts of the UK.

### Financial pressures

64 per cent of our core government funding has been cut since 2010.

We have saved £176 million since 2010 and continued cuts and rising pressures on services mean we have to save a further £44m by 2022.

There is also great uncertainty for future budgets with the fair funding and spending reviews, along with the business rate reset.

Our council has to change to meet these challenges.

## Smarter Together

We are becoming smarter, more agile and strategic in our approach.

We need to be brave, take more risks and deliver change at a faster pace. We push ourselves to improve by measuring our outcomes and using external reviews.

At the heart of our change will be digital innovation and partnership working to achieve the best outcomes we can for our residents and businesses. That means commissioning services when other organisations are in a better position to provide them.

We are overhauling our IT infrastructure and the way customers transact with us so council services will feel similar to other online experiences.

**New town hall**

The changes we make now will be built into our new town hall when it opens in Whitechapel in 2022.

We are rescuing the borough’s most historic building, the Grade II-listed Royal London Hospital, which has been vacant since 2012.

We will save money in just eight years compared to our current set-up by bringing most of our services into one building along with key partners such as Tower Hamlets Homes and the Clinical Commissioning Group, making it easier for people to get things done in one go.

**Big ambitions**

We have come a long way over the past few years. We are already winning awards but our ambition is much greater than being good.

We want to become a recognised leader in excellent public service and help improve more lives at a faster rate than ever before.

We will achieve that by bringing together our residents, partners and other stakeholders to solve problems and create more opportunities.

We will lead by example by living our TOWER values of being being together, open, willing, excellent and respectful.



**Our challenges**

**Highest** child and pensioner poverty rates in England



**15%** of households have no adult in employment



**18,726** on the housing waiting list



**35,110** new homes needed by 2029



**756** racist and religious hate crimes – second highest in London



**3 in 10** households rely on housing benefit to pay their rent



**39% increase** in older people expected by 2028



Poor air quality – **3rd highest** CO2 emitter in London



Only **27%** of household waste is recycled

