

BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN: APRIL-JUNE 2017 UPDATE

1. Introduction

This report is the first update on the progress made implementing the Best Value Improvement Plan 2017-18 as required under the Directions of March 2017. The Plan includes 26 strategic actions against the five areas of property, election, organisation culture, grants and communication.

This report notes that in the first three months of this action plan, covering the period between April-June 2017, 82% of milestones have been completed or are on target to be completed. We are not complacent about this figure. We are focused on those activities that are overdue or delayed and determined to address the issues causing the delays. The Best Value Improvement Board noted progress, considered delays and agreed the revised timeline for delivering on activity. In their review of the draft update report the Board highlighted the need to focus on areas of poor performance or slow progress and identifying proxy measures which help understand the impact of the work.

This demonstrates the focused determination of the council in delivering continuous improvement and provides us with momentum to deliver the remaining milestones in the plan over the next nine months.

2. Summary of key achievements

A summary of key achievements for this quarter is detailed below:

- Launch of weekly staff newsletter to 4,100 staff with a current open rate of 50%;
- Development and agreement of a Communication Strategy for 2017-18 which will further develop communication channels and targeting of information to internal and external audience;
- Completed procurement of providers for publication of statutory notices;
- Completed audit of assets and reported to Asset Management Working Group;
- Moves procedure agreed and communicated to managers;
- Review of third sector team completed and new structure finalised;
- Commissioning of community cohesion theme complete with mobilisation taking place in the next quarter;
- Recruited to 5 senior roles including Corporate Director Governance with plans for further recruitment;
- Clear up Project completed with the report and recommendations presented to Cabinet in June 2017;
- A project group involving managers, trade unions and HR have prioritised 4 employment policies and practices which have been reviewed and will be implemented in the next quarter;
- Extensive engagement undertaken with staff including survey and focus groups to refresh employee values;

- Established Children's Services Improvement Board and draft Improvement Plan developed which will be submitted to Secretary of State for Education by 20th July 2017;
- Annual residents survey 2017 complete and the results being analysed which will be disseminated to internal and external stakeholders;
- 3 meetings of Tower Hamlets Strategic Partnership held with work programme being developed to support place shaping of the borough;
- An ADASS peer review has been completed of adult social care commissioning and this is a positive account of outcome based commissioning. In addition an Adults Social Care Improvement Board has been established as a time-limited Board to both instigate new activity and coordinate various practice and performance improvement activities already taking place in Adults' Social Care. The main purpose of the Board is to drive up standards in relation to performance and practice and so improve outcomes for vulnerable adults in the borough.

Best Value Improvement Plan Summary

COMMUNICATIONS: Progress Summary

Communications in Tower Hamlets had a history of being reactive with a heavy reliance on the Council's weekly publication, East End Life. Many of the messages and activities being communicated were determined by services' willingness and ability to pay and there was little use of insight or data to identify appropriate communication channels and support the delivery of effective communications campaigns. Since the Best Value Action Plan was introduced there has been significant progress in reforming the way the Council deals with internal and external publicity management. This has included the appointment of a new Divisional Director for Communications in summer 2016 and a subsequent restructure of the service which concluded in March 2017.

Key achievements	Measurable outcomes for existing work	Areas where work continues to progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff appointed to four of eight new roles with new starters taken up post in June. Ongoing recruitment of other roles. • Council tax booklet completed and sent to all households • Communications Strategy for 17/18 completed and launched to staff in June • Workpath campaign planned and launched • Mela campaign planned and launched • General Election planned and delivered • th now - internal communications newsletter launched • Contract awarded for statutory services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tower Hamlets now has a 50% open rate - double the average for internal e-newsletters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture change regarding communications: a critical aspect of changing the culture is to work collaboratively with teams to determine delivery milestones related to key programmes so that they can be communicated widely to residents. Campaigns: Now the campaigns have been decided, during the summer officers will develop evidence led campaign plans.

Best Value Improvement Area

PROPERTY: Progress Summary

The Council owns, occupies or maintains around 860 non-HRA properties, valued at £1bn, located within the borough. The Council also owns around £800m of HRA properties (the housing element is managed and maintained by Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), the Council's arms-length management organisation) as well as a further £50m of community assets.

Key achievements	Measurable outcomes for existing work	Areas where work continues to progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Community Buildings previously used by THH caretakers formerly handed back to Housing Management • Fitting out work for 1st Community Hub building to complete shortly and this building will be opened and made available for sessional use • All vacant Community Buildings that could be converted to residential use handed back to Housing Management to progress. Two planning applications submitted to date. • Specialist consultants appointed to provide advice on the creation of a 'super depot'. Work ongoing to identify scope and feasibility exercises needed. • Property inspection audit completed and all actions for regularising occupations allocated to asset managers to progress as business as usual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of terms agreed for leases to 5 of the 8 nursery/ playgroup properties within the CB portfolio and these have all been reported to legal services to progress to completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for the refurbishment of all community buildings needs to be clarified and agreed. Works need to be undertaken before leases are completed. Condition survey reports are being completed to inform this work. • Location of second hub has changed over time but now agreed to be Raines House, Wapping Community Centre. Feasibility work to be commenced as alterations will require listed building consent. • Third hub to be agreed formally but exploring Caxton Hall or Granby Hall. • Specialist consultants appointed to provide advice on depot consolidation proposals. Feasibility study due for completion by end of Dec 2017. • Regularisation of occupation of properties needs to be completed following inspection audit • Work will be undertaken in the next quarter to scope the parameters of the review of leisure facilities • Creating assessment criteria for TRA's to qualify for a rent reduction will be done at a later stage as focus is currently on progressina imolementation of nurseries and community halls

Best Value Improvement Area

ELECTIONS: Progress Summary

The Council has successfully delivered a number of successful elections and referendum since 2015 which include:

- UK Parliamentary Election May 2015
- Election of Executive Mayor June 2015
- Election of Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Greater London Authority elections May 2016
- EU Referendum June 2016
- Whitechapel ward by election December 2016
- UK Parliamentary Election May 2017

Key achievements	Measurable outcomes for existing work	Areas where work continues to progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful delivery of 2017 UK Parliamentary Election • Increase in postal votes with overall at 17% • Over 19,000 additions to the register (6 April - 9 June) • Engagement with universities to increase registration of students • Additional privacy barriers within each of the booths at polling stations • Introduced new form to record number of postal votes handed in at each polling station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase partnership working and improved relationships with partners • Fewer allegations and greater recognition amongst stakeholders of successful delivery of UK Parliamentary Election • 5% increase in voter turnout in each of the borough's constituencies • Postal voters = 32,686 (17%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for 2018 elections • Pilot ID scheme put on hold due to the UK Parliamentary Election. The Returning Officer has significant concerns about the risks of piloting a voter ID scheme so close to the local election in 2018. The work required locally to develop and implement a pilot so close to the next local election would carry a significant risk to the success of the administration of the election. Concerns will be raised with the Cabinet Office to convey the intention to withdraw from the pilot. • Annual canvass between July-Nov 2017 • Canvassers using tablets which improves efficiency and effectiveness • Revised Register of Electors 2018 to be published December 2017 • Awareness raising and publicity for 2018 elections

Best Value Improvement Area

GRANTS: Progress Summary

All actions in the original Grants Best Value Action Plan have been completed. Work has been undertaken to review and develop approaches to, and processes for, grant making with the Grants Determination Sub-Committee. The Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee continues to provide cross party members review and challenge to the grants decision making process.

Key achievements	Measurable outcomes for existing work	Areas where work continues to progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going delivery of the Action Plan of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy • The Grants Determination Sub-Committee (GDSC) and Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee continue to meet every six weeks and have held 2 meetings during April-June 2017 • Grants Scrutiny Committee membership agreed • New third sector team structure developed which will be implemented following engagement with staff and union • Mapping of ICT system required to deliver new role for the team • Completion of commissioning of community cohesion theme which was co-produced with the local voluntary and community sector • External evaluation of the MSG Programme which has engaged a range of stakeholders with the final report expected in July 2017 • Quarterly monitoring of MSG projects which is reported to GDSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater involvement of voluntary and community sector in commissioning of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timetable for consultation on the new Third Sector team structure has been revised to reflect the time required for the review of the team and future requirements. The documentation and JDs have been produced, consultation to commence at the beginning of June. • New team structure supported by ICT system . • The web based GIFTS software solution has been developed however the findings from the review and best practice learning from other councils requires further work in relation to workflows, monitoring and reporting which will enable all council grants to be captured. This will significantly enhance the council's ability to provide comprehensive and accessible information on all grant funding and not just mainstream grants. • Enhance strategic work with voluntary and community sector including work on voluntary sector compact arrangements.

Best Value Improvement Area

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE : Progress Summary

Organisational culture is recognised as a key component in moving the Council forward. The aims of the Organisational Culture Plan are to: ensure that the culture of the organisation continues to be one which strives for continuous improvement; engage and invest in staff; ensure relationships between groups of members and between members and officers are professional, respectful, open and honest and rebuild trust in the areas where this has, or is perceived to have, broken down.

The key outcomes we are looking to achieve are:

- Staff engaged with and committed to delivering the Council's vision and priorities
- Improved clarity and understanding of formal roles and responsibilities of the Executive, non-Executive and senior officers of the Council in a Mayoral system
- Effective working relationships between elected members, and between elected members and senior officers, to enable all to work together to achieve the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets and its residents
- A shared commitment to a set of agreed behaviours and cultural values to underpin formal roles and responsibilities
- A sustainable approach to maintaining and refreshing this shared commitment

Key achievements	Measurable outcomes for existing work	Areas where work continues to progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of engagement events completed over 6 months to develop a new set of core values with staff and members • Leadership development programme established, including online resources, peer to peer coaching, qualification training and external partnerships • Whistleblowing mop-up activities completed to address any remaining issues and contract awarded for independent review of whistleblowing processes and procedures. • Reorganisation of the top 3 tiers implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58% of managers registered with online leadership development tools • 14 senior managers trained as facilitators for peer to peer coaching • 180 managers inducted onto Chartered Management Institute accredited courses • 750 employees attended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke leadership development programme for the top three tiers to be commissioned • Decision Making Accountability methodology to be piloted across selected services to analyse tiers/spans of control and barriers to effective and appropriate decision making • Final core values to be launched and embedded • Continuous performance improvement to be reviewed as a way to provide ongoing and open feedback and engagement between staff and managers • Recommendations from the industrial relations review to be progressed • 5 senior posts will be advertised shortly with interim

<p>and recruitment to five key leadership posts completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Conversation Groups created from staff volunteers at all levels to provide a sounding board and increase transparency of the Smarter Together transformation programme • Independent review of industrial relations completed and actions recommended • Corporate Project Management Office (PMO) set up and resourced to Deliver MTFS savings • Smarter Together Programme set up with appropriate governance structures/framework in place • Establishment of a Children's Services Improvement Board with an independent Chair, Alan Wood (ex-Commissioner) • First Best Value Improvement Board was held with external representation from Sir Steve Bullock, Mayor of Lewisham and LGA • 2017 Annual Residents survey completed • ADASS peer review completed 	<p>the Staff Conference and staff awards presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of staff say that they are proud to work for Tower Hamlets • 60 staff trained in Outcome Based Accountability methodology • 72% residents are satisfied with the way the council runs things - higher than LGA average for other Local Authorities (65%) • 78% of residents think the council is doing a good job again and increase of 6% from the previous year 	<p>arrangements in place, and one post is subject to an extended search</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh of constitution. The progress on the remaining parts going to the Constitutional Working Party • Implementation of Clear Up Project recommendations • Implement Children's Services Improvement Plan • Analysis of Annual Residents Survey to identify what areas where we could be better e.g. 47% felt the council was difficult to get through to on the phone • Piloting outcome based accountability across a range of services to ensure we can track effort and effect • Development of Tower Hamlets Partnership and a related work programme that will include development of a borough-wide vision and community plan as well as a work programme • Updated Planning code of conduct, Member/Officer protocol and new Member/Member protocol • Continue to work with Solace, LGA and CfPS to ensure councillors are supported appropriately
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