

# Ministerial Envoys to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets



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

**Ministerial Envoys**  
Town Hall  
160 Whitechapel Road  
London  
E1 1BJ

9<sup>th</sup> December 2025

## **Tower Hamlets improvement journey and deep dive project**

Dear Steve and Ally,

We were pleased to meet you on 20 November to provide an update on the progress of the Tower Hamlets improvement journey.

Since the intervention commenced in January 2025, we have been working intensively with the council to provide holistic support, and to work in partnership under the envoy led intervention model set out by your predecessor. As you know, we wrote to Minister McMahon in June of this year with our first report setting out that the council was in its set up phase and that we looked forward to seeing their progress in switching from intention to action through the coming months. When we met we updated you on the council's progress since then, and on a core piece of assurance work that we are undertaking and which we write with further detail on today. Our update included discussion on the council's audit position, the budget position, the Transformation Assurance Board (TAB), the Golden Triangle, and the ongoing commitment of the council's officers.

We described that through our work with the council to date we have been made aware of ongoing negative perceptions that exist about the council's activities which have been raised over a number of years. More recently these are brought to us by a wide range of stakeholders and are underpinned by varying degrees of documentation. Some of these concerns have been raised directly with you and other Ministers. These perceptions undermine public trust in the council's leadership, governance and culture and as these are the areas of Best Value failure set out at the commencement of the Intervention, we believe it is necessary to tackle them directly in order to be able to provide you with assurance in these areas. The council recognises that restoring public trust in the delivery of their Best Value duty is a core part of their improvement journey. This project will look into patronage in recruitment and staff promotions, resource allocation (community assets and community grants), housing allocations, licencing and planning decisions and finally the structure, functions, activities and roles



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within the Mayor's Office and Mayoral Advisory team. We have been clear with the council that this project should not distract them from the delivery of the Continuous Improvement Plan.

The TAB is used for information sharing and giving steers on the Continuous Improvement Plan. We believe Envoy led assurance, which reports directly to you, is required in this instance and we will set up distinct governance for this project. Overseeing these strands of improvement work will involve an uptick in our input to ensure the robust governance, independence and timely delivery required and it may be advisable to consider how we can streamline the assurance routes for the councils improvement journey. Since our meeting, we have sought to agree the scope in partnership with the council, which is not yet finalised. The council have written to us (appendix 1) recognising the opportunity this work provides to demonstrate transparency and we will continue to work with them to refine the scope in line with the Envoy model of working in partnership. Whilst the five strands will run to different timelines based on their requirements and political sensitivity in an election period, we anticipate the project will run through the first half of 2026 and that we will be able to provide a detailed update in summer 2026, after the local elections.

Yours sincerely.

Ministerial Envoys

**Kim Bromley-Derry**

**Pam Parkes**

**Shokat Lal**

**Parveen Akhtar**

Consultant to the Envoys

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