

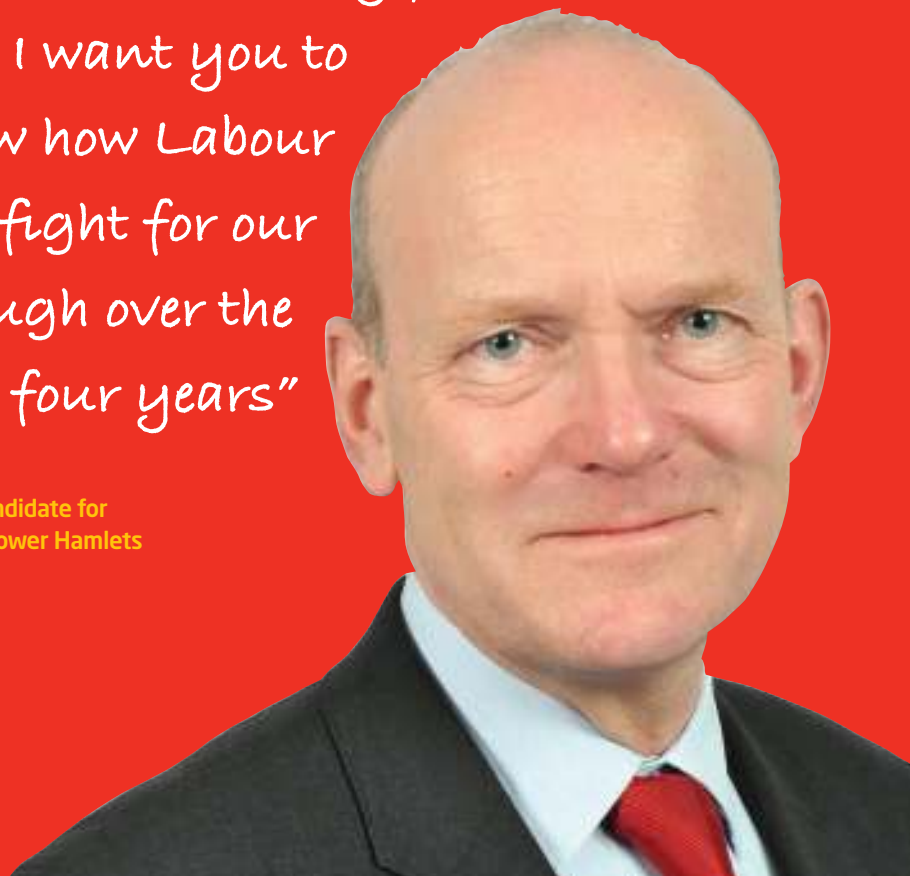
**TOWER HAMLETS
MANIFESTO 2018
FOR THE MAYOR AND
LOCAL ELECTIONS, 3 MAY**



"I've delivered on my promises.

*Now I want you to
know how Labour
will fight for our
borough over the
next four years"*

John Biggs
Labour Candidate for
Mayor of Tower Hamlets



**Our Record - Cleaning Our Streets, Cleaning Up Our Air -
Making Tower Hamlets Safer - Putting Young People at the
Heart of All We Do - Fighting the Housing Crisis -
Tackling Poverty and Inequality - Being On Your Side**

FOREWORD

BY JOHN BIGGS, LABOUR CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF TOWER HAMLETS

In the coming weeks, you will decide which direction our borough goes in by electing your executive mayor and ward councillors.

I want you to be clear about what I would do if you re-elect me as your mayor. It's a job that affects the daily lives of everyone who lives here, especially as we continue to return the Council to the mainstream after the corruption of the previous independent mayor and fight to protect services from deep Conservative austerity cuts.

The Labour Party is a party of social justice, equality and the fundamental belief that we achieve more together than we achieve alone. This manifesto sets out how we will run our borough for the benefit of all of our residents, ensuring that the most disadvantaged receive significant support to transform their life chances, whilst also delivering excellent universal services for everyone that lives here.

This manifesto is about three essential things that you will need to consider as you vote for your mayor and councillors.

First, it's about our record of achievement. When I was elected in June 2015 after the previous independent mayor was removed for corrupt and illegal practices, I promised that I would return our Council to the mainstream, cleaning up his mismanagement. From getting the finances under control to investigating every



John Biggs with Tower Hamlets Labour local election candidates

allegation of corruption, we have delivered on this promise, enabling the Government last year to hand back the running of all parts of the Council it had taken over. But this progress is not assured - we are still under scrutiny and with two of the former mayor's councillors running to be mayor, a return to the problems of the past is a risk that hasn't gone away.

I also promised to focus the Council back on the core issues of concern to local people, and we have done that too. We are well on the way to deliver the 1,000 new council homes we promised in 2015, have made new tenancies genuinely affordable for local people and now license landlords to improve the quality of privately rented homes. We've got the school places crisis under control, protected our Children's Centres, and ensured that there is good quality youth work in every part of our borough. We've launched our flagship WorkPath employment service, helping thousands of local people into work, and set up a Tackling

Poverty Fund to assist those residents hardest hit by this Government's benefit cuts and austerity. We have been investing in cleaning up our streets, after deep cuts by the previous mayor made our borough dirtier than ever - we aren't yet where we want to be on this but we're starting to turn things around. And we've been paying to put police back on the streets, to counteract the loss of almost 300 police and community support officers due to Conservative austerity cuts.

Second, this manifesto is about looking forward to what we can achieve together over the next four years - a vision of a borough that is clean and well-looked after, where our air is cleaner and our streets and estates are safer; of a borough that is fairer, with more access to affordable housing and more of our most disadvantaged residents achieve their potential; and about a Council that is run to the highest standards, delivering high quality services efficiently and fairly.

Finally, it is about our Labour values. A vision that has at its core the celebration of the heritage and diversity that makes Tower Hamlets so special and a commitment to work to ensure that as a community we understand each other better, not just living parallel lives in the same place. And a commitment that, where we can't deliver something on our own - for example because it needs the Government to change the law - we will be a campaigning council, fighting alongside our residents to bring positive change for their benefit.

We can do a lot at the Town Hall, but we need two other things too. First, for you to help us to achieve these goals - a community working together. Second, whilst we will continue to do more with less and to fight austerity, cuts - in health, in education, in policing, in housing - are hurting us all and we need a Labour Government.

If you share our vision, our values and our commitment to making Tower Hamlets better for everyone who lives here, please support us at this election, electing myself as your mayor and your Labour councillors in your own ward.

Together we can build a cleaner, safer, fairer Tower Hamlets.

Our record of achievements:

- **We have cleaned up the council and got the finances under control**
- **We have invested in extra police officers to tackle drug crime and ASB**
- **We are delivering 1,000 new council houses and tackling rogue landlords**
- **We have launched WorkPath to help thousands of our residents into work**
- **We have got the school places crisis under control and improved our youth service**
- **We are investing to clean up our streets and increase our recycling rate**

LABOUR'S RECORD

WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY TO COMPLETING THE PLEDGES WE MADE TO YOU IN 2015. HERE ARE JUST A FEW:



John Biggs with Henry Moore's sculpture Old Flo, now back in the borough

In 2015, we said we would:

Abolish the previous mayor's chauffeur driven car

Clean up grant-making

Scrap the previous mayor's £15 bulk waste charge

Reduce the number of missed waste collections

Stop the sale of the borough's Henry Moore sculpture Old Flo

Prioritise neighbourhood policing

Produce a Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy

Plan the building of 1,000 new Council homes

Create a Landlord Licensing Scheme

Our progress today

Done on day one

Grant-making process totally reformed with all decisions now taken in public

Now collected for free, saving residents money and cutting dumping

Missed collections falling but still more to do

Old Flo now back in the borough

39 new police officers paid for by the Council

Launched in 2016

260 built, 249 in planning, and the rest on the way

Set up and running with thousands signed up

Take a balanced approach to development in the borough

Create a Tower Hamlets Apprenticeship Exchange

Nurture new entrepreneurs through Start-Up Centres

Urgently tackle lack of primary school places

Expand free school meals to all primary pupils

Strengthen youth facilities across the borough

No child more than a short walk from a high quality outdoor play area

Improve the provision of social care by the Council

Planning policies are now being revised to better manage development

The mayor's Apprenticeship Commitment is helping create 1,000 new apprenticeships

Our Whitechapel Enterprise Centre opened in July offering free expert advice

Additional places provided and 94% now get 1st or 2nd choice

All primary pupils now get free school meals

Youth clubs now running six days a week in every part of the borough

We have created five new pocket parks

Ethical Care Charter ensures no 15 minute visits, no zero hours contracts and workers paid properly

OUR COMMITMENTS

CLEANING OUR STREETS. CLEANING UP OUR AIR.



We will deliver a cleaner, greener Tower Hamlets, with 10 new pocket parks and 1,000 new trees, safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists, and cleaner air for everyone to breathe.

We have reversed many of the previous mayor's cuts in street cleaning and scrapped his bulk waste charge that had increased dumping. We will enforce tougher standards for cleaning our streets and work with social and private landlords to improve the cleanliness of the borough's estates. We will continue to roll out 'Smart bins' across the borough to keep our streets tidy, introduce recycling into street bins, and encourage residents and visitors to keep their litter off the streets. We will bring in a Graffiti and Street Art policy, specifying how and where street art will be allowed and adopting a zero tolerance approach to graffiti and tagging everywhere else, increasing investment in our graffiti removal team.

We are committed to increasing our recycling rate to 35% by 2022, up from 28% currently, with the long term ambition of recycling the majority of our waste. To achieve this we will introduce a recycling incentive scheme, expand food waste recycling to blocks of flats where practical, and provide community composters

to council, social housing and private estates and blocks that want them. We will work with businesses to improve their access to, and use of, recycling services. We will install water fountains in public places across the borough, introduce a Tower Hamlets water bottle and work with small business to establish a re-usable cup scheme for the whole borough.

We will continue the mayor's Neighbourhood Refresh programme to remove clutter, repair broken pavements, and install trees and traffic calming measures. We will plant 1,000 street trees and install 50 'green benches' with planting and cycle parking.

Our many award-winning parks are the green lungs of our borough. We will invest £13million in a parks investment programme, prioritising those - like Allen Gardens and King Edward Memorial Park - needing improvement, and will deliver at least 10 new pocket parks, particularly in areas of severe open-space shortage.

Commercial events in parks - from small markets and charity fun runs to the major All Points East festival in Victoria Park - are enjoyed by thousands of people and raise much needed revenue. But they cannot detract from the free enjoyment of our parks and the

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impacts on surrounding residents must not be too great. We will review our Commercial Events in Parks policy to ensure that we do not over commercialise our public spaces.

We will become London's first Growing Borough, supporting residents to create and expand community food growing projects, and starting a Streets in Bloom programme to allow residents to adopt and plant up tree pits and planters in their neighbourhoods.

TRAFFIC AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We recognise that many residents need their cars - for work, for family - but we recognise too that levels of congestion and poor air quality mean that something must change. Electric and lower emissions cars will help, although for many those are not easy to afford and Government must help through a scrappage scheme or other measures. We will recognise the many essential reasons residents and businesses have for driving in our borough, including for family and employment reasons, and will respect and facilitate these.

But we cannot stand still and wait - hundreds of local people die prematurely each year and our children's lungs are permanently damaged by pollution. A Tower Hamlets child will have smaller and less developed lungs than a child where the air is clean. And anyone with a breathing problem - a child with asthma, or an adult with COPD - will suffer more in Tower Hamlets because of our poor quality air. We must help each other by changing behaviour.

We will make our roads and streets better

for residents to live, work and travel through, making them safer, more attractive and accessible for all residents in Tower Hamlets. We will make cycling, walking and using public transport the best ways to travel in Tower Hamlets. We want to make it harder for commuters to use our borough as a car park, while letting local people go about their lives, recognising that for many carers and workers, a car or other vehicle is a necessary part of life.

WE WILL BE THE BEST PLACE IN LONDON TO WALK AND CYCLE

As a part of our strategy we will make Tower Hamlets friendlier for pedestrians and cyclists, because this will make our borough safer and healthier for everyone.

Through our planning process, the new Local Plan and our Green Grid Strategy, we will increase the number of low emissions routes for walking and cycling.

We will update the Tower Hamlets Cycling Strategy to include all five strategic routes identified as having significant potential for cycling. We will prioritise these routes for completion as high-quality, flagship cycling routes by 2022.

We will make a major investment in new Quietways, the network of cycling routes along quieter streets and parks.

We will actively support the proposal for a new pedestrian and cycle crossing between Canary Wharf and Rotherhithe on the northern alignment.

Tower Hamlets has many main arterial roads

going through it, serving the strategic Transport for London road network. Through-traffic should by and large stick to these main roads but many of our residential neighbourhoods have seen huge increases in rat-running traffic, making them more dangerous, noisy and polluted. We will create low traffic neighbourhoods, keeping through-traffic to main roads, in any residential area where residents want them, with an ambition to have started on at least half of the borough's neighbourhoods by 2022.

All new roadwork schemes in Tower Hamlets will have the London Cycling Design Standards applied to them and all cycling schemes will be planned to cater for non-standard cycles, including disability adapted bikes, bike trailers, cargo bikes and bikes adapted to carry small children. All new roadwork schemes will not detriment pedestrians or public transport users.

Many of our residents do not have space in their homes to securely store cycles and so we have introduced secure estate and on-street cycle hangars. Demand has rapidly out-stripped supply and we will install an additional 100 on-street cycle hangars.

We will work with Tower Hamlets Homes and other housing providers in the borough to ensure that every resident who needs it has access to suitable secure cycle parking, to allow residents to rent garages for cycle storage of non-conventional bikes that won't fit in other on-street and estate storage, and to stop the practice of renting garages and parking spaces to residents who live outside of Tower Hamlets and who use them to commute into the

borough, increasing congestion and worsening air quality.

We will continue to install 'Car Bike Ports' to expand bike parking in areas of high or growing demand and will work with commercial landlords to increase commuter and resident cycle parking where we don't own the land. Our streets should be safe and more accessible to all residents. We will adopt a zero tolerance attitude to danger on our roads. We will maintain the borough's 20MPH limit and take action with our partners to ensure that it is better enforced. We will work to ensure that our roads are safe for cyclists and that in return, cyclists cycle responsibly, avoiding creating a danger for pedestrians. We will aim to reduce collisions involving construction heavy goods vehicles by requiring all development sites in the borough to sign up to the Construction Logistic Community Safety (CLOCs) standards.

We will invest in making our bus stops more accessible and bus routes more reliable. We will also lobby TfL to make more Tube stations step-free and to increase the Stratford to Canary Wharf DLR route to three car service, increasing capacity by 50%. We will increase car club provision - including by introducing point-to-point schemes across the borough - and support them to swap to electric vehicles. We will explore ways we can provide support and incentives for local residents to better use car clubs. And we will continue to support, and lobby others for, accessible transport, and specialist transport for individuals and carers for those with a disability, including dedicated nearby parking.

CLEANING OUR STREETS. CLEANING UP OUR AIR.

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We want to encourage all our residents to make the best decisions in how they travel across the borough. Helping residents use active and sustainable travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport, is the best way to combat obesity, improve air quality and reduce congestion.

We will invest in good quality road and footway surfaces to reduce accidents and make all journeys more pleasant. We will push for better public transport services, working with Transport for London and developers to make sure we have the right services and infrastructure for a growing and prosperous Tower Hamlets.

WE WILL CAMPAIGN FOR AND DELIVER CLEANER AIR

Air quality in Tower Hamlets is a public health emergency, with over 40% of our residents living in, and 48 of our schools located in, areas that exceed safe levels. Several hundred Tower Hamlets residents die early every year as a result of long-term exposure to air pollution, with many of our residents, particularly children and the elderly, living with life-limiting conditions such as asthma and heart conditions.

We will install additional air quality monitors across our borough so we can better understand and tackle the local impacts of poor air quality.

We will continue our Boiler Scrappage Scheme, replacing old inefficient boilers and installing heating controls and insulation for residents on a range of qualifying benefits, reducing

emissions and reducing fuel poverty. We will continue to fund a Carbon Emissions Reduction programme across council buildings and schools to replace old polluting boilers, improve energy efficiency, and install renewable energy, such as solar panels on roofs. We will ensure that the Council's new town hall at Whitechapel is both air quality neutral and carbon zero.

We will phase out all diesel vehicles from the borough's fleet and increase the number of electric, hybrid and cleaner vehicles in their place. We will introduce School Streets around our primary schools to reduce the traffic around our most polluted and congested schools at drop-off and pick-up times. We will aim to cover half of our primary schools with this initiative. We will support residents to introduce playing streets.

Our planning policies will ensure that new buildings are built to the highest carbon and air quality standards.

We have already signed the UK100 pledge, committing the Council to achieve 100% clean energy across the borough by 2050, and will work with the public sector, business and residents to devise ambitious, cost-effective plans to deliver this.

We are already rolling out electric vehicle charging points across the borough to accelerate the take-up of electric vehicles, with an ambition to have 300 by 2025. We will increase this target to 500 by 2025, with 250 installed by 2022. We will campaign to persuade Transport for London to make all buses zero emission.

CLEANING OUR STREETS. CLEANING UP OUR AIR.

We will switch all of our street lights to low-energy LEDs, reducing CO2 emissions and energy costs by up to 80%, whilst improving safety and visibility at the same time.

We will continue to campaign against the plans for new bridges in Fish Island, which we believe will dramatically increase rat running and pollution in the area.

Climate change not only represents a major environmental risk to our planet but also a significant financial risk to our pension fund, through exposure to potentially stranded assets. In order to mitigate this risk, ensuring we always meet our fiduciary duty to scheme members, we will progressively divest from the top 200 fossil fuel companies, with the ambition of having no holdings in these companies by 2022. ■

OUR COMMITMENTS

MAKING TOWER HAMLETS SAFER



Since May 2010 when the Conservative Government was elected, Tower Hamlets has lost 197 police officers and 98 Police Community Support Officers because of Conservative austerity cuts. This has had a huge impact on the ability of the police to fight crime in our borough, forcing them to prioritise the most serious crimes and ignore others. We will not stand by and watch crime rise here.

We will campaign against the Government's on-going cuts to police budgets and demand that they reinstate police numbers to the levels seen under the last Labour government.

The primary responsibility for tackling crime clearly lies with the police but we can do a number of things to support them, and to increase community safety. In response to police cuts, we have funded an additional 39 police officers to work in Tower Hamlets and we have expanded the Council's Community Safety Team. We will continue to pay for additional police officers to patrol our streets and estates, prioritising tackling the drug dealing and anti-social behaviour that residents tell us is their top concern.

We will target hate crime and high profile crime such as knife crime and acid attacks to make

our borough safer and to reduce the fear or crime, bringing together the police, schools, our youth service and the community early in the next mayoralty to consider what more can be done to protect our young people.

Everyone must be free to enjoy their life, respectfully and without fear. This includes reducing the risk or fear of crime against people because of their gender identity, race, faith, sexuality, disability, immigration status or age. Alongside the fear or risk of crime we will celebrate and promote our borough's diversity and the equal rights of all, including by challenging Islamophobia and anti-Semitism wherever it is found.

We will continue to run our successful No Place for Hate campaign, signing up residents and organisations to work together to tackle hate crime in our borough. We will work with the police to continue to improve reporting of, and response to, hate crime. And we will work with our faith communities, civic bodies, campaign groups and individual residents to make our streets a place where those that divide us will not be welcome.

We will actively challenge attempts to divide us, particularly far-right attempts to target our Muslim community and mosques and we will

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always stand side by side with those in our community who are, or who feel they are, being targeted or attacked. This includes those EU nationals who have experienced more hate crime since the Brexit vote.

We acknowledge the concerns of some in our community with the Prevent programme, in particular its potential to stigmatise young people. Any such strategy can only work where it has the confidence and buy-in of local people, including our large Muslim community. Following the example of the Labour Mayor of Greater Manchester, we will review the operation, successes and failures of Prevent with local partners and community representatives, with the aim of developing a more effective radicalisation and counter-extremism strategy that better commands the confidence of our community.

Likewise, stop and search continues to be a practice that causes concern and tension within our community. When based on intelligence, properly focussed and performed professionally it is a vital tool for the police in keeping our community safe, particularly in fighting knife and other violent crime. The introduction of body-worn cameras for all officers offers the opportunity to improve stop and search and we will work with the police to improve its use in our borough and to help them to engage with our community to reduce concerns around its use.

WE WILL CRACK DOWN ON DRUG DEALING AND REDUCE DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE
Drug misuse and dealing is a serious problem in Tower Hamlets, accounting for 52% of all calls to the police here. It causes much

of the anti-social behaviour and violence in the borough, harming users, their families, and the wider community. Drug dealing is a criminal matter and responsibility for tackling it rests firmly with the police. However, the Council will always use all of the powers available to us to ensure that this is a priority for the police and that we do all we can to reduce the negative impacts of drug use and dealing on our community.

With the police, we have launched a number of operations, such as Operation Continuum in early 2018, an aggressive programme to disrupt and reduce the sale of hard drugs, such as heroin and crack cocaine, in our communities. We will support other operations to prioritise the reduction of heroin and crack cocaine use and dealing in the borough, through joint action with the police to arrest and prosecute dealers.

Each year, we invest £8million in our Drug and Alcohol service, helping over 350 residents successfully complete treatment. We have recently launched an enhanced Drug and Alcohol service, improving access to recovery services through GP surgeries, to support those in recovery. We will continue to invest in specialist and mainstream drug and alcohol dependency treatment to reduce demand for drugs and enable users to improve their health and wellbeing. We will ensure that the service meets the varied cultural needs of our diverse borough.

Many residents report visible drug dealing from cars as a major concern. We will use the Council's CCTV network - including the 32 cameras equipped with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology - to

enable the police to stop dealing from cars as it happens, and will support the police to seize cars used for dealing and to reduce the use of hire cars for dealing.

We will invest in an innovative education and awareness programme to young people about drugs and alcohol, including through schools and our network of youth centres. We will continue to fund the Hidden Harms programme, so that we can reduce the number of children put at risk by drug and alcohol misuse or drug dealing by a family member.

The rapid escalation of nitrous oxide misuse is a concern felt by many of our residents. Our No Laughing Matter campaign targeted known hotspots and increased education for young people about the dangers. We will use our Trading Standards and enforcement teams to reduce the sale of nitrous oxide and 'legal highs' in the borough, as well as signing shops up to our Acid Charter to reduce the sale of strong acids which can be used to commit violent crime. We will continue our successful work to reduce the sale of cigarettes and alcohol to children.

WE WILL PRIORITISE THE RESPONSE TO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
Anti-social behaviour can have a devastating impact on residents and communities, undermining people's ability to live in peace and severely damaging their quality of life. We know that for vulnerable residents it can have an even greater impact and can at times be life threatening.

We take ASB seriously and will make reducing its impact on victims a major priority.

MAKING TOWER HAMLETS SAFER

Effective action on ASB relies on good intelligence and consistent, victim-centred action on the ground. To deliver this, we will trial a Neighbourhood Management model, putting in place a Neighbourhood Manager and local community wardens in areas where residents identify high levels of ASB. This will be backed up by a Neighbourhood Agreement, which sets out the minimum standards and the services that residents can expect from partners to tackle ASB.

Our CCTV network has over 350 cameras that are monitored 24 hours a day. This network enables the police to make three arrests every day, often stopping crime whilst it's happening. We will continue to invest in our CCTV network and will work closely with the police to ensure that it is used effectively for preventing, detecting and prosecuting crime. We will also continue to use our CCTV network to inform the police of drivers using Nitrous Oxide whilst driving, enabling the police to intervene.

In some cases, good design can reduce ASB, for example by improving lighting. We will fund a police Design Out Crime officer to design out crime and anti-social behaviour across public spaces and estates and invest in designing out ASB from our parks. We will review street lighting across the borough, asking residents to nominate poorly lit areas for improved or new lighting.

The night-time economy is an important part of a vibrant culture and economically successful borough, and we will continue to support it to thrive. However, ASB associated with poorly managed night-time venues can cause serious problems for local people. We have introduced

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a saturation policy for new licences on and around Brick Lane, but many local residents question its efficacy. We will review the Brick Lane saturation policy to see whether it can be made more effective at dealing with the negative impacts of the night-time economy in the Spitalfields area. We have introduced a Late Night Levy to create responsibility of venues to improve the late night economy and minimise impact on residents. We will use the money to fund measures to reduce the impact from these venues, including additional police patrols, noise monitoring and enforcement.

WE WILL MAKE TOWER HAMLETS SAFER FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Tower Hamlets should feel safe for everyone but we know that many women face particular challenges feeling safe at home, in the workplace and in public spaces - 97% of all known victims of interpersonal violence in Tower Hamlets are women.

In 2016, we launched our Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy to tackle the disproportionate impact of gender-based oppression and violence on women in our borough and reducing the level and impact of gender-based violence will continue to be a major priority in all of our work.

We will educate young people in our schools and youth centres about violence against women and girls, consent, and healthy relationships, and ensure that both young men and women in the borough understand what is and isn't appropriate behaviour.

We will extend our existing VAWG Champions

programme, recruiting additional champions amongst both frontline professionals and members of the public, and extending the programme to young people, so that Youth Champions are available to other young people.

We will make women's safety a key consideration of the Council's licensing policy and introduce the Ask for Angela scheme to improve safety for women in the night-time economy.

We will continue to support and promote the East London Rape Crisis Service, continue to support the provision of IDVAs and Violent Crime Caseworkers and develop a One Stop Shop model for VAWG survivors to enable multiple needs to be met under one roof. We will continue to provide the Sanctuary scheme to ensure domestic violence victims can stay living in their own homes when they wish and develop 'safe havens' for victims to be protected on a short term basis.

We will work closely with the Specialist Domestic Violence Court and family courts to improve survivor access to justice.

We will publish a VAWG Charter, setting out clearly what women and girls who have been subjected to violence can expect from the Council and others in response, including how those from different backgrounds or for whom English isn't their first language will be served. We will provide support through our WorkPath employment service and our Tackling Poverty scheme specifically targeted at improving the economic independence of women to increase their range of life choices. We will convene a working group of local employers and others to

discuss how we can increase flexible and non-linear working in the borough, to enable more parents with childcare responsibilities to work. We will undertake a regular Gender Pay Audit to ensure that, as an employer, we are leading the way in tackling conscious and unconscious bias.

We will support women to exit prostitution/sex work where they want to, also offering support with housing, skills, parenting issues, health and wellbeing, and will continue our innovative Stop and Think programme, working to prevent arrested kerb crawlers from reoffending. We will support the Mayor of London's #BehindEveryGreatCity campaign to mark the centenary of the first women winning the right to vote and to drive forward gender equality across our city. We will ensure that the role of East End women is celebrated and further steps identified to improve gender equality in the borough. ■

MAKING TOWER HAMLETS SAFER

OUR COMMITMENTS

PUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO



Over the past twenty years, Tower Hamlets' schools have undergone a transformation, from being in the bottom place of the Ofsted league table to now enabling our young people to outperform the national average at primary school and in GCSE. With schools funding facing deep cuts from the Conservative Government, this improvement is at risk. We will campaign to protect our schools and work to ensure that our young people are supported to thrive from early years to adulthood.

WE WILL GIVE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THE BEST START IN LIFE

When we took over the Council in 2015, many of our Children's Centres were failing to achieve the reach or outcomes that they should have been. We will continue to protect and invest in our network of Children's Centres to ensure a high quality, universal service is available for all our children from birth, supporting children and their carers with additional targeted support and outreach to the most vulnerable or those with additional needs.

We will oppose the Conservative under-funding of under-5s early years education and childcare

and work to ensure that there is a high quality, affordable childcare place for every family that needs it, across our diverse range of settings; nursery schools, nursery classes in primary schools, independent nurseries, child-minders and nannies, and newer models such as parent-led co-operatives. We will hold an Early Years Summit, to bring together the expertise of parents, campaigners and childcare providers in our borough to discuss the challenges faced in achieving this ambition and agree priorities for reaching it. We will continue to enable families with particular needs - such as those supported by social care or whose children have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) - to access specialist childcare, such as the hearing loss support offered at Overland Day Nursery.

We will seek to make early years childcare in the borough more accessible and affordable by using our WorkPath employment service to train new, and upskill existing, childcare workers, by using planning powers to secure long-term affordable space for child care provision and by providing business support, including help to find suitable, affordable premises, to parents, community groups and other providers wanting to start or expand nurseries in the borough. We will continue to invest capital funding to expand existing outstanding nurseries and offer more

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places, particularly for disadvantaged 2 year olds eligible for Government-funded places.

We will support working families with older children by working with our schools to increase the number and affordability of breakfast and after-school clubs, and fund a trial expansion of school-based wrap-around care to include school holidays.

We will protect and strengthen our excellent support for children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families through our Children's Centres, a range of childcare provision and in nurseries, mainstream and special schools.

We will deliver a new Play Strategy, to increase the number of play areas in public spaces across the borough, ensuring this includes inclusive play equipment for children with a range of needs. We will design these as far as possible to avoid them being misused for anti-social behaviour that causes a disturbance to nearby neighbours.

We will provide targeted support to our families in many ways, including through our Early Intervention and Family Support teams, our WorkPath service, our benefits advice and Tackling Poverty Fund, our housing service, and continuing support to our strong voluntary sector and faith organisations.

WE WILL KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE AND HELP THEM LEAD HEALTHY LIVES

We will prioritise child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing and will hold an annual Children's and Young People's Mental Health

Month, co-produced with and led by young people, to raise the profile of the issue and promote best practice.

We will continue to fund the Council's dedicated child and adolescent mental health team (CAMHS) within children's social care, providing mental health support for our most vulnerable young people who have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma. And we will campaign for the Government to increase funding for the universal NHS CAMHS services to tackle high waiting times.

We will work with young people - for example, through the youth service, the Youth Council and our Young Mayors team - to co-create services that tackle the most pressing issues for them - such as healthy relationships, online safety, body image, bullying, racism, sexuality and gender identity.

We will work with our partners in the NHS, schools and local business to promote healthy lifestyles and aim to significantly reduce childhood obesity, including by reducing the amount of sugar in school meals and snacks by 50%. We will continue to invest in universal free school meals for all primary school children and will work with partners to explore how to tackle so-called 'holiday hunger' when young people aren't receiving free school meals during school holidays.

We're committed to working with our partners to identify and protect children and young people at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, and we've already achieved "significant and positive change" in our services meaning "no children

PUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO

are at risk of immediate harm" [Ofsted, Jan 2018]. We will carry on this improvement in children's social care services for our most vulnerable children and families, implementing the recommendations of Ofsted, and will make Tower Hamlets one of the best places in the country to be a social worker, attracting the very best professionals to keep our young people safe.

We will strengthen our support for young people leaving care, providing more financial and practical assistance as they become adults, building on the mayor's decision to exempt care leavers from council tax and to replace the university grant scrapped by the Tories.

WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE WILL DELIVER EXCELLENT EDUCATION, POSITIVE YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT INTO ADULTHOOD

We will support our schools to maintain excellent standards of education, building on the high Ofsted ratings awarded to many of our nursery, primary, special and secondary schools. All our nursery and special schools are rated outstanding, with all our primaries and the vast majority of our secondaries rated good or outstanding. Just three secondaries, including two free schools, are rated requires improvement. We will work with schools to ensure that all pupils in Tower Hamlets go to a Good or Outstanding school. We will continue to invest in the schools-led Tower Hamlets Education Partnership, to drive school improvement and strengthen our family of local schools working in collaboration, not competition, to achieve the very best for our young people.

By providing additional places, we ended the school places crisis we inherited from the previous mayor. We will ensure that every child can access a good quality school place close to home and respond to development pressures by bringing forward new schools where and when needed. The Government has changed the law so that councils can no longer open new schools, and other organisations can open schools even in places where there are already sufficient places. We believe that the local authority is best placed to deliver additional schools, meeting the needs of our whole community, and believe in directly maintained schools, playing a full role in our family of local schools and will campaign for a change in the law to allow this again. We will commit to a fully transparent process for identifying providers for any new schools, to ensure parents, carers, other schools and the local community can inform the recommendation the Council makes to the Department for Education.

We will support and celebrate the continued achievements of our young people at GCSE level and take focussed action to improve both academic and vocational qualifications for our young people at 16-18, with parity of esteem for young people, regardless of whether they follow an academic or vocational route. We will develop and deliver an ambitious new strategy to coordinate a much stronger post-16 offer for all our young people, across the council, schools, New City College and businesses.

We will continue to fund the Tower Hamlets Educational Maintenance Allowance to support young people from disadvantaged families to stay in education post-16 and campaign for the

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national EMA scheme to be restored.

We remain concerned about student debt caused by tuition fees and the rising cost of living, and will campaign for changes by the Government to reduce its burden. We will work with partners to improve access to bursaries and other assistance to enable young people to make choices about higher education and vocational training based on what's right for them, not what they can afford. Between schools and Young WorkPath we will provide expert career advice and mentoring to better support young people to make informed choices about their futures.

Proposals drawn up by the Conservative Government could result in Tower Hamlets schools losing over £33m under the so called 'National Funding Formula'. This translates into cuts of up to £905 per pupil equivalent to the loss of 891 Tower Hamlets teachers. Overall real terms spending on schools in England by the end of the decade will have been cut by nearly five per cent, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies. We will continue to campaign with schools, trade unions, our MPs and parents against Government education cuts which will be devastating for Tower Hamlets and undermine years of educational progress.

Tower Hamlets has the second biggest youth service in London and now delivers high quality youth work six days a week from a network of youth hubs in every part of our borough. We will extend this provision to include 11 year-olds and improve the offer for girls, who previously have been poorly served by youth services here, including by increasing the proportion

of female youth workers. We will continue to invest in and strengthen our network of youth centres, listening to what young people want and delivering a range of high quality, popular activities for boys and girls, available on evenings and weekends across the borough. This will include promoting healthy respectful relationships, staying safe, including online, and in addressing issues around bullying, racism and identity.

Your Labour council introduced the award-winning Idea Stores and they continue to provide spaces for learning and leisure for our young people and adults, including daily sessions for under 5s. We are proud that, unlike many other councils who have had to close libraries as a result of Conservative cuts, we have not shut a single Idea Store. We will reverse the previous independent mayor's deep cut to the book-buying budget of our Idea Stores so that we can ensure they are able to update and replenish their shelves.

We will aspire to becoming a borough where every young person is in education, training or employment, by launching Young WorkPath to extend our flagship employment service to young people, offering the highest quality higher education and careers advice, vocational training and a network of mentoring, work experience and paid internships, including tailored options for care leavers and young people with special educational needs or disabilities.

We will work with young adults who have previously been involved in youth justice, gangs or other criminal activity to develop a network of peer support to help prevent

PUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO

young people at risk of getting involved in gangs to make positive choices about their future. In order to better support young people in making the right choices we will also train our youth workers so that they have a better understanding of youth justice issues and develop an awareness and training programme for schools and youth centres.

We will set up an Exploitation Team, drawing on expertise across different teams in the council and with partners to tackle issues such as gangs, youth violence and child sexual exploitation, ensuring a more co-ordinated approach to these issues. We will work with the police to ensure that they play their role in undertaking disruption activity and targeting perpetrators.

We will expand the reach of our Rapid Response service so that it engages with young people over the age of 18 to 24, where there is currently a gap in coverage. ■

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TACKLING THE HOUSING CRISIS



The shortage of housing in Tower Hamlets leaves too many of our residents living in sub-standard, expensive and over-crowded accommodation. The cost of buying and even renting a home here outstrips the wages of many ordinary people. And developers too often want to deliver dense, poorly designed housing that damages communities and puts strain on local infrastructure. Tackling the housing crisis is a major priority for the Labour Party nationally and in Tower Hamlets.

WE WILL INCREASE THE NUMBER AND AFFORDABILITY OF HOMES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

At the last election, we pledged to deliver 1,000 new council homes, owned and let by the Council on secure tenancies - these are now either built, under construction or waiting for planning permission. In the next four years, we will start the delivery of an additional 1,000 new council homes on top of these. We will campaign for the Government to properly fund councils to build new council homes, including by lifting the ban on borrowing to build, so that we can meet the needs of our community.

We will work with other housing providers

to secure another 4,000 homes for social rent, either by housing associations building their own homes or through compelling developers to build social homes as part of their developments.

We will continue to reject the Government's so-called affordable rents for social housing as they are not affordable for local people, and all new lettings - of both council and housing association homes - will either be at Social Rent or Tower Hamlets Living Rent, saving tenants up to £6,000 a year.

We remain committed to seeing East London's housing estates regenerated, where it makes sense and where residents consent to change, but where this happens it must benefit existing residents and those on the housing waiting list as well. We will ensure that future estate regeneration schemes - whether by the Council or other landlords - always result in an increase in affordable housing for rent, properly respect the need for open space, and are not driven through without proper consent. On our own schemes this consent will be sought by way of a resident ballot. It is only fair that residents who endure building works on their estates get a chance of living in the new homes that are built, and that the environment is liveable. We

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will develop a Local Lettings Plan, so that local people get preference for new homes in estate regeneration schemes.

We will continue to use our planning powers to raise the standard of social housing provided by private developers through S106 agreements.

We will support self-build schemes with residents who want to be able to build their own home, supporting up to 50 self-build homes over the next four years.

Larger family homes are in short supply in Tower Hamlets and many families find they have to move out of the borough as their families grow. In response to requests from residents, we have changed planning rules to allow the building of mansard roof extensions on residential properties in two Conservation Areas. Subject to this change not causing undue and unexpected negative impacts in these areas, we will consult on extending the policy of allowing mansard roof extensions to other Conservation Areas where there is demand from residents.

London's first Community Land Trust was in Tower Hamlets, on the former St Clements site, delivering genuinely and permanently affordable homes, and the Mayor of London has released land for another CLT in Shadwell. We will work with CLTs to identify at least one more suitable site for further CLT development.

Many residents tell us that homes in their areas have become permanent short-term lets, through services such as Air BnB. This reduces the number of homes available locally

for people to live in, and can cause problems of noise and nuisance to neighbours. In 2015, 3% of homes in Tower Hamlets had the whole property let out through Air BnB, of which 25% was for more than 90 days. Whilst we support the ability of residents to occasionally let their homes when they are not using them (such as during holidays), a home should not be a short-let business and we will use planning powers to prevent homes being let out for long periods or exclusively as short-term lets and prosecute landlords who break the rules.

Because of this Government's changes to housing and benefits policy, rough sleeping and street homelessness are rising fast. At the annual street count in 2016, 21 rough sleepers were found on the streets of Tower Hamlets - double last year's total and the highest number for many years. We will continue to participate in the No First Night Out project, which aims to reduce rough sleeping in the borough to zero.

WE WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND FAIRNESS OF HOUSING
Whether renting privately or from a social landlord, tenants should expect to be treated fairly and to live in decent, warm, safe homes.

We have introduced a Landlord Licensing Scheme and the Private Tenants Charter to help protect tenants in the Private Rental Sector. We will create a Private Rental Enforcement Unit, with an increased number of Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers, to investigate complaints against private landlords, and we will always prosecute where necessary.

We will introduce a new Landlord Licensing

Scheme to cover all of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) being privately rented in the borough, and not just those larger properties covered by the Government's limited mandatory scheme.

We will campaign for a rent cap across London, so that the price of renting your home cannot increase by an unreasonable amount each year.

We will support residents to set up Tenants and Residents Associations on our estates where there isn't currently one.

We will increase the monitoring of the performance of housing associations and use all legal means available to ensure that those that had estates transferred to them under the stock transfer process stick to the original transfer promises. In general, we oppose the merger of housing associations that moves them away from locally-based, locally-accountable organisations and will campaign against this where it's not in residents' interests. We will campaign for the Government to return powers to the Homes and Communities Agency to regulate the performance of housing associations and to give the right of return to stock transfer tenants, where a majority of tenants wish to do so.

When we took over running the Council from the previous mayor, 170 homeless families had unlawfully been housed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation from greater than six weeks, often without any access to private bathrooms or cooking facilities. This was a disgrace and we have reduced this figure to zero. We will continue to ensure that no family is housed in

TACKLING THE HOUSING CRISIS

Bed and Breakfast accommodation for longer than six weeks.

The Government's changes to the Local Housing Allowance have dramatically reduced the number of privately owned properties within the borough available to the Council to house homeless families on the housing waiting list. We have started a programme of buying back former Council homes which had been lost through Right to Buy, so that we can use them to house homeless families in temporary accommodation within the borough. We will continue our Council house buy-back programme to increase the number of homeless families housed within the borough.

To keep improving the quality of the Council's own housing, we will introduce the Better Neighbourhoods programme. This will invest £150million in maintaining Decent Homes standards, increased fire safety works, external block decoration, additional lift replacements, new door entry systems in blocks where there is anti-social behaviour and upgrades to communal heating systems.

Following Grenfell we are already investing £13million across our housing to ensure that all works identified by Fire Risk Assessments are completed quickly. While we are waiting to see the final recommendations from Grenfell, we support the principle that, subject to detailed advice and consultation, blocks over ten storeys should have sprinkler systems. We could never fund this from existing budgets - we will campaign with residents to get the Government to fund the installation of sprinkler systems in blocks over ten storeys.

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We introduced the New Deal for Tower Hamlets Homes leaseholders, increasing repayment terms for Major Works bills from three to nine years, giving all leaseholders an online MyTHH account to access service charge accounts and real time repairs data, and giving leaseholders access to our contractors for minor works to their properties. We will continue to improve the treatment of THH leaseholders and will campaign to persuade other housing providers in the borough to do the same, including by adopting our new deal for their leaseholders.

We will review the operation of the Tower Hamlets Homes and the benefits and costs of retaining it as a separate body or bringing the management back into the Council. Any change will require the agreement of tenants and leaseholders.

MAKING DEVELOPMENT WORK FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Whilst the Council and housing associations will continue to build new housing in our borough, most development will still be delivered by private developers, who have the funding to build much-needed housing for rent and sale.

But if developers want to operate in our borough, they must play fair, abiding by the rules that we set to ensure that development meets the needs of local people.

It is likely that Tower Hamlets will continue to face strong development pressure and population growth over the next four years. Our area is going through an unprecedented change and how we respond to this, accepting

that some change will bring benefits to our residents, whilst resisting damaging change and setting out the rules developers must follow, is an important part of our task.

We recognise that some parts of the borough feel 'under siege' from development, and that there is widespread cynicism that development of expensive apartments is 'not for us', even where some is 'affordable'. Our new Local Plan attempts to address this, supporting growth that meets local needs, including the needs of London's economy, but opposing development that damages our borough, by being unsympathetic to its neighbours or too dense or tall for its setting.

Tower Hamlets is mostly a 'low-rise' borough, and residents tell us that in most places they like that. We will oppose tall buildings other than in areas where they are already allowed (essentially parts of Canary Wharf and the edges of the City of London) and we will oppose 'clustering', where a single tall building is used to justify similar neighbours. Where there are clusters of tall buildings, their heights should fall to the existing level in adjoining areas, and they should not be used as a precedent for a never-ending series of neighbours of the same height, as many developers appear to desire on the Isle of Dogs. We will continue to strongly oppose buildings that are too tall and too dense.

We will expect developers to meet our targets for 35% of all new developments to be for social rent and 50% overall affordable and will adopt tougher standards of assessment. We will publish the financial information provided

by developers to justify their level of affordable housing, so that local people and others can scrutinise it.

In the past, Tower Hamlets was expected to solve too much of London's housing crisis, with disproportionate housing targets for our borough and much smaller targets for other boroughs. We have worked with the Mayor of London to reduce the overall number of homes that will be built in Tower Hamlets, so that we strike a fairer balance of development across London, whilst still providing new homes for local people.

New homes built in Tower Hamlets should be available to live in for local people, and not advertised only to overseas buyers or kept sitting empty whilst their value rises. We will use our planning powers to ensure that homes that are built here must be advertised solely in the UK for the first year and that they must be in residential use and occupied.

We are opposed to the practice of land-banking, where developers buy land and fail to develop it, sometimes for many years, leaving the land derelict and preventing the building of much-needed housing. This needs a national solution and we will campaign for a change in the law to stop land-banking. In the meantime, we will use the full planning powers available to us to limit the practice.

We have been successful at securing large sums of money for new infrastructure from developers but too often the delivery of infrastructure lags behind the new housing, putting pressure on existing GP surgeries,

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schools and transport links. We will ensure that where possible developers have to pay for infrastructure at the beginning of their developments, so that infrastructure will be funded and built at the same time as housing.

The Council - democratically elected and accountable - is best able to understand and represent the needs of our community from new development. We will campaign to have the London Legacy Development Corporation wound up and our planning powers on Fish Island and the Lea Valley returned to the Council.

Tower Hamlets is a place of many neighbourhoods, and we will support the identity and quality of life of our neighbourhoods. We support Neighbourhood Planning Forums, where there is demand for them. They should be vibrant, open and representative forums. ■

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REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY, IMPROVING HEALTH



One of the most transformational things that the Council can do is to help lift our residents out of poverty. Our work on improving educational attainment and supporting local people into work benefits whole families, and our broader community, and we have hugely increased the resources we invest in this. But many of our residents are slipping deeper into poverty as a result of the Government's ideological welfare reforms, which target unfair austerity cuts on the neediest in our society. These cuts compound the inequalities in wealth, health and life chances that many of our residents already suffer. We will do all we can to protect our residents from these cuts and to lift them and their families out of poverty.

WE WILL BUILD AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE AND WILL HELP DELIVER FULL EMPLOYMENT

Tower Hamlets has always sat at the heart of the UK's economy. From the time when the wealth of Empire flowed through the borough's docks, to today's wealth of the world's financial services industry flowing through Canary Wharf, there has always been huge economic activity here. But that opportunity has passed too many of our

residents by, leaving them living in poverty alongside enormous wealth.

Today we have the chance to do what has never been achieved before, fusing the economic prospects of all of our residents with the huge economic opportunity happening on their doorsteps. Our employment rate - fuelled by the extraordinary transformation of our schools - is now the highest it has ever been and is approaching the London average, enormous progress when we lagged 15 points behind not so long ago. We have one of the highest numbers of new business start-ups in the country here. And we have more jobs than we have residents - 1.8 jobs for every adult. But there is much still to do.

The conditions are right for us to be able to aim high for our residents and to commit that, in the long term, we will achieve full employment for our residents, with a good-quality, well paid job for everyone who wants one, and the training, mentoring and support needed to get it and to progress once in it.

That means targeted work to tackle the entrenched pockets of worklessness that persist in our borough, particularly amongst Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) women, the

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over 50s and those with poor mental health; to address the under- and unemployment of too many of our residents, including graduates; and to ensure that we support our least skilled in-work residents to upskill and progress into better paid, more rewarding work.

Our flagship WorkPath service will support 5,000 local people into work, with specific programmes to address the needs of Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) women, care-leavers, those with poor mental health, the over 50s, those with low skills, and graduates.

The mayor's Apprenticeship Commitment will support businesses to create 1,000 new apprenticeships for local people.

Poor functional skills are a major barrier to work and Conservative cuts have reduced the availability of English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes. We will invest in additional ESOL and basic skills training, including running vocational ESOL training in specific sectors, such as construction and catering. We will invest in our Lifelong Learning Service to ensure that all of our residents have access to learning for both work and pleasure, continuing to provide learning free to many based on their income.

We will proactively try to shape our local economy, adopting a Community Wealth Building approach so that wealth is fixed within in our community, rather than passing over it or leaching out of it. Tower Hamlets is already a Living Wage borough, with the Council paying the Living Wage to its employees and requiring contractors to do the same, and signing up to the Ethical Care Charter, which has improved

pay and conditions for home care staff working with vulnerable children and adults.

We will now become a Living Wage Landlord, requiring all businesses signing a new tenancy agreement with the Council on commercial premises to pay the Living Wage to all of its employees. We will work with UNISON and others to extend the principles underpinning the Ethical Care Charter to the other often zero hours and low-paid caring services, such as at nursing and residential homes, and in child care, in Tower Hamlets. This is the right thing to do but it is a massive financial undertaking, which we can make some progress with but cannot achieve alone.

We will campaign to persuade locally-based businesses - large and small - to adopt fair working practices, recognising trade unions, paying the Living Wage, signing up to the Fair Tax Mark and adopting flexible working practices that allow all of our residents to work. We will campaign for Councils to be allowed to enforce the National Minimum Wage.

We will continue to support, through grant funding and commissioning, and partnership with others, a strong network of support, advice, training and community capacity building projects, centres and initiatives. These both help people in poverty, reducing social exclusion while also providing ladders and opportunities.

We will continue our successful support programme for our SMEs and start-ups across the borough and will ensure that the programme includes support for those residents wanting to create or grow social enterprises or co-operatives.

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We will work across Tower Hamlets public sector providers to make more contracts available to locally-owned and -run small businesses, social enterprises and co-operatives, and we will continue our successful Supply Now training to help them bid for these contracts.

We will set up a Co-operative Commission, to explore how to expand the co-operative sector in Tower Hamlets.

Access to fair finance is important for both local residents and small businesses. We will continue to support the Tower Hamlets Credit Union and we will support other initiatives to increase access to fair finance for local people, including the unbanked and under-banked, and the small businesses they run.

We will support those clusters of growth industries that will provide routes into work for our growing number of higher skilled residents, including cultural industries and technology, and will support the development of a Life Sciences cluster around the new Queen Mary Life Sciences campus in Whitechapel.

Our existing retail businesses and street markets are a vital part of an economically successful borough and we will continue our programme of investment in high streets and markets, including through our Retail and Marketing Ready training programmes and shop front restoration grants, and will explore the introduction of a Tower Hamlets Pound. We will support the retention and further provision of SME workspace, including developing models for affordable start-up space, and for more affordable rents for existing businesses.

We will encourage the cultural economy, including crafts and design but also the development of arts and entertainment venues both as employers and for their role in place making. We will more broadly promote better development of our local visitor economy - especially in the West of the borough, where the major visitor and tourist attractions of the Whitechapel Gallery, Brick Lane, Petticoat Lane, Spitalfields, and Columbia Road can be better connected and developed into a cultural quarter, better drawing the large number of tourists from the Tower of London who often do not venture further into the borough.

We will address the poor digital connectivity in parts of the borough, including through rolling out free wifi in our town centres, working with the Mayor of London to increase access to fibre across the borough and identifying rooftop sites for additional broadband capacity. Alongside this, we will address the digital exclusion of some of our residents, supporting them to improve their digital skills.

WE WILL TACKLE POVERTY AND ITS IMPACTS

Our new £5million Tackling Poverty Fund will continue to protect those residents struggling to make ends meet and provide more support for schemes to help residents out of poverty and into employment. This Fund includes £3million to protect vulnerable residents from homelessness and the impacts of the Government's Welfare Reform agenda, covering both rent payments and other costs, as well as £1 million to assist residents affected by Universal Credit.

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The transition to Universal Credit is already hurting many of our residents, a problem compounded by the cuts to the level of Universal Credit. We will campaign against the cuts, sanctions and other punishing regulations of Universal Credit, which is causing massive harm to many low income families. Our Tackling Poverty Fund includes £1 million to assist residents affected by Universal Credit, and we will also invest a further £1 million in expert technical benefits advice for those residents moving to Universal Credit, half of which will go to voluntary benefits services working across our community.

Our Council Tax Reduction Scheme is one of the most generous in the country with seven out of ten households who apply getting a 100% reduction in their council tax bill. Those who experience hardship as a result of their council tax bill, such as some self-employed claimants, will continue to be able to get support including from the Tackling Poverty Fund. We will review the impact of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the support we provide to those in most need including those affected by the

government's implementation of Universal Credit, the self-employed and those with non-dependant children.

We will consider how to adopt the good practice rules promoted by campaigning groups, such as CPAG and Citizens Advice, for ethical debt collection and the appropriate and exceptional use of bailiffs for council tax or other debts

It is a national shame that millions of people across the UK now rely on food banks to feed themselves and their families, a direct result of Conservative austerity. The London Food Board named Tower Hamlets as one of the best boroughs in London for tackling food poverty, rating us fourth out of 33 boroughs for helping the most vulnerable access food. We will continue to work with partners across the borough to reduce food poverty and to develop a food poverty action plan.

Many girls and women in Tower Hamlets experience period poverty, struggling to afford expensive sanitary products. We will work with food banks and others to explore how we can

with local employers to identify potential skills shortages as a result of Brexit and to put in place schemes to meet these shortages where possible.

Our borough's greatest strength is the diversity of our population and that includes many residents from across the EU. Like the Mayor of London, we want to see their futures in the UK protected, with secure residency, employment and social rights, so that they can continue

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make sanitary products available to any woman who is unable to afford them.

Too many of our residents have to choose between heating and eating, and we will continue our programme to insulate homes and update boilers to reduce fuel poverty. But rising energy costs and unfair practices by some energy companies contribute to the problem and we will explore setting up a publicly owned, municipal energy company - as has been successfully done in Bristol and Nottingham - to offer residents a trusted, cheaper local alternative for buying their electricity and gas.

As a result of Conservative austerity, deep cuts to welfare and funding reductions in public services, child poverty has risen by 10% in Tower Hamlets. We are committed to reducing child poverty, both through the election of a Labour Government that will reverse austerity, and by local action to tackle its causes. We will set up an independent Child Poverty Commission to examine what the Council, local partners, the GLA and Government should do to reduce the shocking levels of child poverty in our borough.

to make their valuable contribution to our community. In particular, we will campaign for the UK government to retain the voting rights in local elections of EU citizens under the EU/UK withdrawal agreement; will ensure our passport return and nationality checking services are adequately funded, so EU citizens are supported to apply for permanent residence and citizenship; and will work with the community and partners to establish Tower Hamlets EU citizens group to support people

WE WILL PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH AND HEALTHY LIVES AND REDUCE THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF POVERTY

Everyone in Tower Hamlets needs an excellent health service, and the opportunity to live a fit and healthy life. We will champion the best possible healthcare for everyone, working with the local NHS and our excellent and committed providers. Not only is this right but maintaining good health and supporting healthy lifestyles is the key to meeting the challenge of rising health costs. These needs apply to everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, the wealthiest to the poorest. Yet they are inevitably focused more on those with, and are a key contributor to, longer term health problems, compounded by poverty and economic or social exclusion.

A man born in Tower Hamlets will on average have a life expectancy five years shorter than one born in Kensington and Chelsea. Even worse, a man born in Tower Hamlets will on average live in good health for over 15 years shorter than one born in Richmond. A similar gap exists for women. This difference is down

through the registration process.

As a Party we believe that the huge cross-border challenges of the world today - climate change, extremism and terrorism, economic turmoil, mass migration - are best dealt with in partnership with our global allies. We will campaign for a referendum on the final terms of any Brexit deal, so that local people are able to express their view on the future of this country.

BREXIT We are concerned about the serious economic and social impacts that Brexit could have on our borough and its residents.

We have established a cross-party commission to examine the impacts that Brexit will have on the Council, our local economy and our residents, and to ensure that we can take action to minimise these impacts. Our WorkPath employment service is working

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to poverty, the biggest factor in determining how healthy a person's life will be here and how long they will live.

Poor health in our borough reduces the ability of our residents to achieve their full potential and imposes huge costs on the public purse.

Protecting and expanding our GP surgeries is essential to reducing our health inequalities. We campaigned successfully with our community to protect surgeries from closure as a result of Government funding cuts and will do so again if the threat returns. With a growing population, and some of the most complex health needs in the country, we need more and better GP surgeries, not fewer, and we have invested almost £4million into new, expanded and refurbished surgeries at six sites across the borough. We will invest a further £13million to meet the needs of our growing population and ensure that local people can access GP services in modern, fit-for-purpose premises at a further 11 sites.

Despite major Conservative cuts to the Public Health budget we continue to achieve significant improvements in health locally, for example, reducing teenage pregnancy by 60%, supporting over 3,000 new mothers to start breastfeeding, providing oral health screening and fluoridation to over 5,000 3-6 year olds in schools, and helping over 1,200 obese residents to lose weight. Unlike many other areas, we have continued to fund non-statutory services as far as possible, such as our excellent universal baby feeding service, living with HIV support services and our health support for families offered through our 12 Children's Centres.

We have increased the number of local people able to access sexual health services in community settings and now have the lowest level of late HIV diagnosis in London. We will improve access to STI screening and contraception services further through the introduction of an improved sexual health service across the borough, enabling residents to access services in more community venues.

More schools in Tower Hamlets have achieved Healthy School Awards than in any other London borough, with 93% of schools having an award - we will support more schools to achieve the award and to progress to higher levels. We are proud to have the most schools of any London borough signed up for the 'Daily Mile' physical activity scheme and will continue to support even more schools to take part, as part of our goal to tackle childhood obesity.

We will continue to fund free school meals for all primary school children in the borough's schools.

Our smoking cessation programmes have helped thousands of residents to quit smoking, with the proportion having fallen from 23% in 2014 to 18% in 2016 - a huge reduction. We will continue to fund innovative smoking cessation support to reduce this number further, particularly among groups with higher levels of smoking such as people with mental health problems.

Loneliness affects many residents here, especially the elderly. We support the work of the Loneliness Commission set up by Tower Hamlets resident Jo Cox MP and will lead a taskforce to identify how we can best address loneliness and isolation here.

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One in four of us will experience some form of poor mental health during our lives and we are committed to working with the NHS to improve access to treatment and support services. We have recently published our Suicide Prevention Strategy to reduce suicide in the borough and we will refresh and relaunch our Mental Health Strategy, working with partners and our community to ensure we continue to improve the lives and life chances of our residents with mental health problems. We will continue to support the Time To Change campaign, to address the stigma and discrimination related to mental health, and will support the Thrive London campaign, including by exploring establishing a Tower Hamlets Thrive Hub to address local needs. Both employment and housing can be severely affected by episodes of poor mental health and we will make improving access to work and housing a priority, including by working with employers, the NHS and through our WorkPath service to improve the number of residents with poor mental health supported to enter and stay in work, and by developing supported housing options. We will give mental health service users the opportunity to lead their own services through user led grants to fund activities which focus on recovery and mental wellbeing

WE WILL PROMOTE AND INVEST IN SPORTS AND RECREATION

Keeping physically active plays an important role in the health of our residents, and everyone should be able to use high quality leisure and exercise facilities wherever they live, and whatever their income. With the community and our network of sports club, we will develop a Sports Strategy. We

will fund an increase in the number of free outdoor gyms for our residents, improve sports facilities - including tennis courts, multi-use games areas and astro-turf pitches - in parks across the borough and refurbish all of our leisure centres that need it, funding extensions and improvements to gyms and swimming pools.

We will support the rich network of sports clubs in Tower Hamlets and particularly those that develop talent and reach out and welcome participation and ensure inclusion. While recognising the limitations, we will look for opportunities to increase the range of sports venues and facilities in the borough, either through improvement of existing venues or as a part of development. We will explore reintroducing a lido in the borough.

WE WILL SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE TO ENJOY FULL AND INDEPENDENT LIVES

The number of older people in the borough is growing. Our older residents tell us that they want to stay independent for as long as possible, and that having access to information about what is going on in the area, as well as the right housing and good support options are essential to this.

We will continue to fund the innovative LinkAge Plus scheme, delivered by voluntary sector partners across the borough and offering free outreach, support and activities for residents over 50.

Services for older people are quite naturally focused on the areas where support is needed. But for most older people for most of the time

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life should be enjoyable and healthy and we want this to be maximised, and for our older residents to enjoy and be fulfilled in their lives. We will ensure there is a good quality network of support where this is needed but we will also focus on helping to provide a positive and nourishing life for our elders. The mayor will appoint an Older Person's Champion within the cabinet, and the Council will support a range of services for older people. We are building a network of 'community hubs', which will be run by a range of community providers, and a significant part of whose offer will be for elders. We will support the range of voluntary activities operating by and for older people to provide social and other support across our communities.

To enable as many older people to stay living in their own home as possible, we will increase the amount of extra care sheltered housing in the borough. We will also increase the number of residents who benefit from assistive technology (personal alarms, monitors, safety devices) to support them to stay living in their own homes.

We will ensure that people can live well with dementia by increasing the number of 'Dementia Friends' and making Tower Hamlets a dementia friendly borough.

Our carers provide a huge public service in the work they do in caring daily for loved ones. We created the Carer's Dignity Charter to support their work and we will continue to work with the borough's carers to ensure that their roles is fully recognised and celebrated, and their needs are met, including through a new support service, designed in partnership with carers.

We will work with the NHS to ensure that health needs are met as early as possible, to enable people to continue living in their own homes for as long as possible.

We believe that there should be a universal social care service, free at the point of use, and we will campaign for a national solution to this national problem. In the meantime, we will review adult social care charging to consider

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what additional safeguards can be put in place to ensure that only those who can afford to are asked to contribute.

WE WILL WORK WITH RESIDENTS TO BUILD ONE COMMUNITY

Tower Hamlets has for centuries been a place where generations of immigrants to the UK have started to build their new lives. Today the diversity of our population continues to be one of our biggest strengths. A record 92% of residents say that Tower Hamlets is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Yet people also tell us that whilst they live well alongside their neighbours, they often feel like they live parallel lives, rarely having real engagement with people who are different to them. For a borough like ours to work, we have to continually work at having a culture of mutual respect and active engagement, where people look out for one another, and where there are real opportunities to understand our differences so that they don't become barriers.

We will work with residents to develop a Cohesion Strategy that meets this local need and will continue to fund cohesion projects in each area of the borough, addressing local issues identified by residents. We will target resources to address disadvantage and increase community capacity where it is lacking. All parts of our community deserve respect and community organisations seeking support or funding from the Council will be expected to support these principles and, no matter where based, to include outreach and to pursue cohesion in all of their activities. Community

cohesion will be a key outcome in our voluntary sector funding and other relationships.

The huge pace of change across London can make existing residents feel that their area is no longer for them. To address this, we will pilot funding cohesion projects from S106 contributions from developers in areas of intense development.

Street parties, festivals and events like the Big Lunch or the Jo Cox Great Get Together can bring neighbours together for the first time - we will explore waiving street closure and other administrative charges where residents want to organise these. We will continue to host the Boishaki Mela to celebrate the Bangladeshi culture of our borough.

Tower Hamlets is a place of vibrant heritage and culture. Our bid to be London's Borough of Culture underlined the diversity of cultural talent and opportunity we have here and we will use the bid to work with partners to further improve our cultural offering.

We will continue to work with faith communities, and the Inter Faith Forum, to strengthen links with and between our different faith communities, and to strengthen the great work they do to improve cohesion, tolerance and understanding, and to provide services, through voluntary and community enterprise, in our borough.

From the days of Cable Street to the rout of the BNP, the East End has a proud tradition of coming together to oppose racism and hate. We will continue to have a zero tolerance of racism,

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fascism and hate on our streets and will use the full force of our resources to tackle it wherever it occurs.

The East End has changed, and in particular is no longer the low rent point of entry for many of those arriving in London and the UK. We will continue however to ensure that Tower Hamlets welcomes our new residents, including those fleeing harm or persecution and who need our, and our community's support. We will review our services to refugees and those fleeing harm, and support organisations working to develop community support programmes. Newly arrived migrants can be particularly isolated, so we have set up a New Resident and Refugee Forum and will roll out a Welcome to Tower Hamlets programme to help these new residents play a fuller role in our borough, reducing barriers between new and existing residents.

Tower Hamlets has long been home to many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents, and today LGBTQ people from across the world choose to make Tower Hamlets their home. We are proud that this year Tower Hamlets Council is the only London council to be in the Stonewall Top 100 LGBT Employers and that our LGBT Staff Network was commended for its outstanding work, including on gender identity. We will continue to ensure that LGBTQ staff are valued by the Council as an employer and that we proactively work to make the Council and our contractors a safe and supportive environment for our LGBTQ staff. We will continue to fund the East London Out Project (ELOP) to run the Tower Hamlets LGBT Forum to engage with LGBTQ residents in

the borough to improve service provision and representation for LGBTQ residents.

Like all areas of London, Tower Hamlets has lost many of our LGBTQ venues over recent years, in part because of developers closing venues in buildings they have bought. We are proud to be the first borough in the country to have secured the future of an LGBTQ venue (on the site of the Joiners Arms) through planning powers and we will continue to work with the community to safeguard other venues where we can. We know that the borough does not always feel safe for LGBTQ residents and visitors and we will continue to tackle hate crime by ensuring a strong LGBTQ strand in our No Place For Hate Work, will continue to fund specialist youth provision for young LGBTQ residents and will support our schools to run anti-homophobic bullying programmes, such as the national Diversity Role Models campaign.

We will conduct a thorough review into the accessibility of our services and employment opportunities to people who are trans or gender non-binary, including considering how we can move to gender self-declaration in service delivery.

Finally, whether it is fear of radicalisation or of sexual grooming, violence or exploitation, vulnerable people in our community need to be safeguarded. Our respect for each other needs to be underpinned by a respect for a diversity of views and perspectives but also an understanding of the need to look after the vulnerable and those at risk of exploitation in whatever way. ■

BEING ON YOUR SIDE

WE WILL RUN THE COUNCIL FOR THE WHOLE OF OUR COMMUNITY, ALWAYS AIMING TO DELIVER EXCELLENT SERVICES EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO MEET LOCAL NEED. WE WILL EXPECT THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF PROBITY, HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY IN EVERYTHING THE COUNCIL DOES.



When we took over the running of the Council in 2015, after the previous mayor was disqualified by the courts, the Council was mired in corruption and mismanagement, with key services run by Government-appointed commissioners. It was failing residents each and every day.

We have made ending the corruption of the previous mayor and his councillors, repairing council services and putting the Council on the side of all of its residents our central task. John Biggs has made transparency and accountability the signature of his mayoralty,

meeting thousands of residents in his weekly surgery and regular Meet the mayor meetings; answering questions in Council meetings (unlike his predecessor) and taking key decisions in public. From small but significant moves - like cancelling the previous mayor's chauffeur driven-car on day one and getting rid of his army of personal advisors - to major work on setting balanced budgets again, solving the school places crisis and beginning to turn around our failing children's social care, the Council has turned a corner. In March last year, the Government handed the running of all services back to the Council, saying the Council

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was on the right track to deliver the services that residents deserve.

But progress is not assured and we must continue to be vigilant. The mayor, his Cabinet and Labour councillors will continue to be bound by the Transparency Protocol, making decisions in public, increasing opportunities for residents to question and challenge politicians and making as much information available publicly as possible. They will hold regular surgeries for residents, be available by telephone and emails and meet the highest standards of probity. Your Labour mayor will vigorously, but fairly, ensure all allegations of wrongdoing by those in public positions of trust are fully investigated.

We will continue to transform the way the Council delivers services to residents, making it easier to contact the Council online and in person, improving the responsiveness of our services, particularly where they are currently slow or over-cumbersome, such as in planning, and engaging with residents better on key decisions. We believe in public services being run by the public sector and as outsourced contracts come up for renewal we will actively consider whether the service can be provided in-house. Where a service can more effectively be provided in partnership with other bodies - such as the voluntary sector - we want to effectively manage that partnership, maximising performance, value for money and community benefits.

The Government has cut our budget by £140million since 2010, and we have lost almost 2,000 staff. Whilst it is impossible to meet the scale of these cuts without impacting frontline services, we have tried to reshape

the way that services are run so that we continue to meet the needs of residents with substantially less funding. Unlike many other councils, we haven't closed libraries or children's centres and our Council Tax remains the seventh lowest in London.

We will continue to protect frontline services from Government cuts as much as we can, always consulting with residents when this is impossible and protecting services for those who are most in need of the Council's support. We will campaign to force the Government to reverse its brutal and damaging cuts to Council budgets, unfairly targeted at some of the poorest areas in the country, like Tower Hamlets. We will continue to keep Council Tax as one of the lowest in London, whilst ensuring that it is set at a level that allows us to protect the services that our residents rely on.

Our staff are our biggest asset, working with us to help improve the lives of everyone in our borough. Staff, and the unions who represent them, have worked with us to meet the challenge of deep Conservative austerity cuts. The Labour Party was formed to represent working people and our link with the unions remains one of our biggest strengths. In the next four years, we will endeavour to improve further how we work in partnership with our unions and will continue to invest in staff development, so that together we can keep delivering for our residents.

Finally, we can achieve a lot together but we are clear that to help the people of East London we need a Labour Government. This election will be a stepping stone towards that goal. ■

**TOWER HAMLETS
MANIFESTO 2018
FOR THE MAYOR AND
LOCAL ELECTIONS, 3 MAY**



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