TOWER HAMLETS LABOUR: ON YOUR SIDE

100

Achievements from your Labour Mayor and Council

ONE EAST END
Over the next few weeks, you will set the direction for our borough and our community through the election of the Mayor and councillors for Tower Hamlets.

I have had the privilege of serving this borough as an elected representative, in one role or another, for over 30 years. It has been the greatest honour of my life. I want to be clear about what I stand for and what I will do if you re-elect me, and our Labour councillor candidates, this May.

We have come a long way together over the last 7 years but there is still more work to do. It was not just about repairing the wreckage left by my predecessor, although that was a significant task, but also about developing a culture of improvement. One that embeds our values, my values, of fairness and of supporting all our residents but particularly those who need us most.

Tower Hamlets has been tested by years of funding cuts, the pandemic and now we are facing a cost-of-living crisis. It has been challenging, particularly for residents for whom life was already tough. Despite that, we pulled together regardless of religion, ethnicity, or class - truly one Tower Hamlets.

This document is about our record of achievement and what we have delivered for you - the community and our borough. From protecting support such as free school meals, children's centres, and welfare advice; to our improvements in services like children's social care. It's about the investment which has put more police on the streets, delivered over 1,000 more council homes, and helped thousands of residents into work. It's about the action we have taken on the climate emergency which led us to being named the greenest council in the country.

This is a snapshot of our work. We want to continue to move Tower Hamlets forward, together, and we will publish these plans in our separate manifesto.

John Biggs
1. Transformed our children's social care from 'Inadequate' to 'Good' in all areas, in just two years.
2. Established a Social Work Academy to support and recruit the best social workers to help our children and families.
3. Provided free school meals to all primary aged children – one of only four councils in the country to do so.
4. Supported high quality schools - performance at both primary and secondary far exceeds national averages and 97% of our local authority schools are judged ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted.
5. Seven of our schools have been named in the nation's top 500 schools by ‘Parent Power Schools Guide’.
6. Funded the expansion of special educational needs schools.
7. Brought forward proposals for investment in new and improved secondary school provision in the borough – a package totalling more than £100m.
8. The Tower Hamlets Holiday Child Care Scheme received the Millie's Mark Award, a national recognition that demonstrates commitment 'above and beyond' the minimum requirement for children's first aid.
9. Cared for, and provided a home to, 177 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
10. Funded dozens of youth projects across the borough, including arts and sports, and specialist provision for LGBT+ and disabled young people.
11. Set up a youth ‘build a bike’ programme using second-hand bikes which engages young people identified as being at risk of committing cycle related crime or anti-social behaviour.
12. Our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) team was awarded a Quality Mark in 2021 from the educational charity ‘Achievement for All’ for its work in helping young people get back on the right path after contact with the criminal justice system.
13. Supported over 7,000 people into jobs or training since 2016, including 1,052 young people (16-24).

14. Created more than 1,000 apprenticeship opportunities in the borough.

15. Created 700 Kickstart placements - one of the highest in the country - including 33 roles at the council plus funding to top up those roles to London Living Wage.

16. Launched a new employment and skills centre at the former Fruit and Wood Exchange in the heart of London's Spitalfields. This will provide access to job and career support for people living in Tower Hamlets.

17. Created the Tackling Poverty Fund, investing £6.6m since 2017 to support our most vulnerable residents. This includes a £600k p/a Resident Support Scheme for residents facing crisis, and we increased that support to £950k during the pandemic.

18. Provided 17 Innovation Grants to residents totalling £200,000. This fund reached over 2,000 residents and offered projects such as a clothes bank across local schools, a community fridge, digital skills workshops for older people, and a mobile money advice service.

19. Set up Tower Hamlets Connect, a new information and advice service co-produced with residents and local organisations, which helps residents access support around health and social care, including housing, welfare and benefits and consumer issues.

20. Delivered the Together in Tower Hamlets programme - an initiative set up to empower those who speak little or no English by improving language skills and building confidence, reducing isolation, and ensuring everyone can participate in their local community. The council, in partnership with voluntary and community sector organisations, delivered English classes to over 300 residents from across the borough in 2021.

21. Established a Black, Asian and minority ethnic Inequalities Commission to look at how we can make our community fairer and more equal, and we committed £1.5m towards a series of actions to combat racial discrimination and inequalities in the borough.
22. Set up a food hub which has distributed 1,200 tonnes of food so far – equivalent to feeding 35,000 households for a week. Our holiday food scheme provided 102,359 meals from Easter 2020 to summer half term.

23. Our leadership across food issues and the climate emergency was recognised with two awards from Sustain.

24. Undertook work to help pensioners claim the benefits and support they are entitled to.

25. 93% of care users tell us that the care and support services we provide help them have a better quality of life.

26. Supported public health activities in our community with £35m per year of investment into children’s centres, community development, mental health services, and projects to take loneliness.

27. Our drug and alcohol treatment service has seen £8m a year of investment and we maintained the provision throughout the Pandemic, getting more drug users into treatment.

28. Developed an award-winning asthma project that reduced child asthma-related hospital admissions by 22%.

29. Set up a pioneering Loneliness Taskforce which tackles isolation and invests in grassroots action to support wellbeing.

30. Invested in Linkage Plus networks across the borough to support older people to stay healthy.

31. Aided Recovery through Walking Football and our inclusive children’s football coaching sessions at Mile End Stadium Mini Pitches.

32. We have the most schools in London with a Healthy School Award and 93% of Tower Hamlets schools have Healthy School Status. This means they have excelled in areas such as healthy food choices and water consumption, increased physical activity, and improving mental health in the classroom.
33. Supported over 60% of Tower Hamlets schools to start The Daily Mile where young people run, walk or skip for approximately 10 - 15 minutes around their school playground each day for their health and well-being.

34. Worked with the NHS to invest in a new £5.5million health centre in Bethnal Green which provides modern, purpose-built medical facilities for thousands of people in Tower Hamlets.

35. Worked with our partners in the NHS and the voluntary sector to provide mental health support to young people in Tower Hamlets through the Tower Hamlets Educational Psychology Service (THEPS).

36. Our Drug and Alcohol Action Team won Team of the Year at the 2018 LGC Awards.

Our Response to the Pandemic

37. Set up a new Integrated Discharge Hub to get people home from hospital quickly and safely during Covid-19.

38. Established a network of 471 Covid community champions to share up to date information with residents about staying safe and encouraging vaccine take-up.

39. Delivered 6,000 food parcels to residents during lockdown.

40. Distributed over 10,000 laptops and over 82,000 books and other resources to children to support home learning.

41. Supported over 57,000 residents through our Covid-19 helpline.

42. Provided £310 million in grants and rate reliefs for local businesses.

43. Paid a total of £2.4 million in self-isolation grants.

44. Provided around £100,000 in rent relief for community-based organisations who lease council premises.

45. Introduced a Covid-19 vaccination bus which tours the borough to engage with members of the community, provide information, reassurance, and increase vaccination rates.

46. Provided Covid-safe market support and outdoor dining spaces at Middlesex Street, Brick Lane, Whitby Street, Brushfield Street, Boundary Street, Roman Road East for local hospitality businesses.

47. Delivered webinars at the height of lockdown to engage with residents on the latest Covid-19 advice and prevention.
48. We were one of the first boroughs to declare a climate emergency in March 2019.
49. Named England’s greenest local authority and we adopted a net zero partnership action plan, committing to become a net-zero carbon council by 2025 and a net zero borough by 2045 or sooner.
50. Decarbonisation of the council’s pension fund.

51. Committed to the Council using 100% renewable energy.
52. Won the Best Local Authority Category at the 2019 Greater London Energy Efficiency Awards for the work we have done in reducing our carbon emissions.
53. Planted 1,000 street trees.
54. Installed 150 electric vehicle charging points.
55. Upgraded 98% of our street lighting to more efficient LEDs.
56. Invested in our public realm and created safer streets for walking and cycling through the Liveable Streets programme.
57. Introduced 50 school streets, improving air quality and safety near schools.
58. Funded a boiler replacement programme for low-income households with old inefficient boilers, which won the Best Small Scale Project at the 2019 Greater London Energy Efficiency Awards.
59. Brought waste contract back in-house.
60. Invested £2.1m for a six-month pilot to provide enhanced recycling facilities to residential tower blocks.
61. Received the Litter Initiative of the Year from the 2019 Keep Britain Tidy Awards for our innovative Love Your Neighbourhood App.
62. Invested £250,000 in the Mayor’s High Street Clean-Up which aims to tackle litter and grime in high streets and town centres across the borough.
63. Won the Environmental Services Award at the 2018 Local Government Chronical (LGC) Awards for establishing the Carbon Fund.
64. Invested £10m to improve parks across the borough.
65. 12 of our parks have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award, including Victoria Park, Altab Ali Park and Island Gardens.
66. Installed new outdoor gyms.
67. Undertaken the construction of the New Town Hall in Whitechapel, creating a more community civic area at the centre of the borough.
68. Kept all of our libraries open, giving free access to computers, wi-fi, and providing safe spaces to learn and take part in community activities.
69. Made over £10m of funding available through our Local Community Fund to 40 community organisations, delivering 51 projects and supporting services in the borough ranging from welfare rights/advice, toyouth projects and encouraging physical activity.
70. Delivered a Community Gardens Programme.
71. Invested £500,000 to refurbish Tiller Leisure Centre in the Isle of Dogs.
72. Opened five new community hubs, including Somali-focused Granby Hall.
73. Secured £9.3m funding for the Whitechapel Road Improvement Program which will see street improvements like better pavements and more signage and seating, as well as upgrades to market stalls and improvements to properties along the high street.
74. Invested in the Limehouse Public Realm Improvements programme to improve the general outlook of the area.
75. Funded dual language signs in English and Bengali outside and throughout Whitechapel Station to recognise the important contribution of the Bangladeshi community to East London.
76. Renovated the Banglatown Arch and commissioned a brand-new mural on Brick Lane to mark Bangladesh’s Independence Day.
77. Funded additional police officers and lobbied the government to replace the cuts to police numbers in the borough.

78. Set up the Partnership Task Force (PTF) which consists of council officers and council-funded police officers. Since April 2021 the PTF has undertaken more than 9,000 hours of uniformed patrols and issued nearly 200 antisocial behaviour warnings.

79. Seized £1.3m in cash from drug dealers.

80. Operation Continuum, a joint initiative by the Council and the Metropolitan Police, has resulted in 1,318 arrests and recovered 179 dangerous weapons.

81. Invested in the council’s award-winning Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) team to offer support for victims of domestic abuse and improve women’s safety, as well as offering training sessions to encourage male allyship and the reporting of abuse.

82. Introduced a borough-wide public space protection order banning consumption of nitrous oxide.

83. Secured £750,000 for the Isle of Dogs to tackle violence on the island.

84. Delivered youth outreach programmes to reduce ASB around housing estates in Aldgate, Whitechapel, Stepney Green, and Shadwell.

85. Set up a No Place for Hate campaign, which encourages individuals and organisations to sign a pledge and spread the message that hate should not, and will not, be tolerated in the borough.

86. Invested £3.1m to deliver a CCTV Transformation Programme which will upgrade the entire CCTV network to new digital technology, increasing visibility and allowing the council to better support the police and tackle crime.
87. Worked in partnership to deliver over 6,000 affordable home completions in the period 2015 – 2021, which was the highest out of all the London boroughs.

88. Delivered over 1,000 new council homes – with another 1,000 planned.

89. Adopted a tenants’ charter to support residents living in the private rental sector.

90. Introduced landlord licensing scheme covering all privately rented Houses for Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the borough.

91. Clamped down on landlords who are putting the safety of tenants at risk; including 57 successful prosecutions against rogue landlords in the borough over the last 3 years.

92. Launched a new intermediate housing register.

93. Acted on fire safety in the borough by investing in our fire safety team, creating our Building Safety Pledge, and lobbying the government.

94. Won the Supported Living Award at the 2019 LangBuisson Awards along with Providence Row Housing Association for Edward Gibbons House, which is a hostel with supported housing for those with substance misuse issues.

95. Successfully stood up to the government on Westferry Printworks resulting in them now overturning the decision.

96. Continued to have the 7th lowest council tax in London, and we have frozen the council portion of council tax this year to help relieve residents from the pressures of the cost of living crisis.

97. We are one of the few councils in London to offer a 100% Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which means our poorest residents don’t have to pay a single penny of council tax, and we have reduced the council tax bills for 31,000 of our lowest income households.
98. Received a Silver Award from Stonewall for our commitment to the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and queer people in the workplace.

99. Removed the statue of Robert Milligan, a known slave trader, from London Docklands and announced a review into monuments and other sites of our borough to ensure our diverse communities are proudly represented.

100. Re-established Tower Hamlets’ regional and national reputation after the failures of the former Mayor, transforming the Council from being directly run by Government Commissioners.