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| **Board of Directors** | C:\Users\paul.davey\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\XVC5Y2E4\yellow_right_cmyk SMALL.jpg |
| **25th July 2018** |
| **Report Authorised by**: Sarah Pace  **Report Author:** Fokrul Hoque – Community Partnerships Manager | **Report type:**  Information |
| **Title:** Community Investment – End of first year report | |

1. **Introduction**

1.1 . This paper provides a progress on the work on delivering the community Investment Strategy.

1. **Recommendation:**

2.1 That Board notes the content of this report and the significant progress and achievements in the last year.

**Introduction**

Tower Hamlets is a fast paced, fast growing and changing borough. Its economy is thriving, more homes are being built here than anywhere else in the country, more and more people want to live here, and large-scale and ambitious regeneration and infrastructure projects continue to bring fresh opportunities. The population is diverse, but there are many active communities who get on well together, with a thriving community and voluntary sector. The borough has seen unprecedented educational success, opening up more opportunities to the young people coming through school, and employment rates are rising.

Despite all this, Tower Hamlets still has challenges to face. Too many residents are not in work and struggle to make ends meet, especially as reforms erode the welfare state and costs of living rise. One of the biggest challenges the borough faces is ensuring that the benefits of growth and prosperity reach all parts of our community, with a fairer distribution of wealth and income across Tower Hamlets.

With extraordinary demand for housing in Tower Hamlets, only those with high needs qualify to become new tenants. This situation is contributing to the already high levels of vulnerability, poverty, and ill-health among our residents. As cuts to public services deepen, there will be fewer support services available. This increasingly puts Tower Hamlets Homes on the front line of a community response.

A recent NFA best practice briefing, ‘Improving Lives’ (April 2017), has highlighted a key role that ALMOs are playing in working to improve the life chances of those living in the properties they manage, as well as the wider community.

Tower Hamlets Homes over the last few years has been playing its role, both in providing safe and secure homes, but also investing in our neighborhoods and our residents. We have been investing in our residents, by supporting them into training, jobs and apprenticeships; developing community food gardens to create healthier and cohesive communities and by supporting those being impacted by the welfare reform changes, to name a few activities.

In September 2016, the THH Board approved a renewed Community Investment Strategy with four broad objectives:

1. Create safer neighbourhoods
2. Increase financial resilience
3. Support mental wellbeing and vulnerability
4. Build resilient and cohesive communities

Following partnership development work, project development and commissioning, delivery on the actions in the strategy commenced in April 2017.

The work programmes under these objectives are now beginning to provide some significant outcomes and impact, and this report provides a summary of this work.

**Summary** – in numbers

* 102 residents supported into work - 28% reduction in rent arrears.
* 300 hours of street work with young people - 111 Young people supported – 48% reduction in ASB reports in targeted neighbourhoods.
* 1023 residents supported with welfare reform & financial inclusion - £1,076,742 in benefit claims supported.
* Over 1,500 people use the 24 community food gardens, with 79% reporting improvement in health and wellbeing and 84% improvement in cohesion.
* £23,703 in Inspiring Communities Fund Grants distributed to 21 estate based groups, benefiting over 1000 residents.
* 216 residents participated in the 25 courses of the Joint Residents Training Programme, delivered in partnership with 11 other housing providers.

Total number of people engaged & benefiting from our projects / activities:

**5895**

Total number of people our projects have had a meaningful impact on:

**2199**

Social value net benefit the programme has delivered:

**£1,270,258**

Social value return on investment

**£1:£12.76**

Engage/involve = Residents attending or participating in a THH funded event/activity

Meaningful impact = Recorded outcome such as attendance on a training programme, securing a job or self-reporting of a positive impact or outcome from participant.

Social value = Social value produced using HACT Social Value calculator, based on Wellbeing Valuation (WV) theory, the latest thinking in social impact measurement and an approach developed and used by government.

1. **Create Safer Neighbourhoods**

**1.1 ASB Diversionary Project**

The key project that we commissioned in partnership with the ASB Team was our ASB Diversionary Project, which is being delivered by Streets of Growth.

The project seeks to engage with 100 high risk young people, and help change the life trajectories of at least 50 of them, through targeted intervention. As well as taking referrals from the ASB team, Streets of Growth also carry out estate based outreach work, targeted on the Sidney, Shadwell & Chicksand neighbourhoods.

**In numbers:**

* 300 hours street outreach work, engaging over 80 young people
* 71 young people referred by ASB team, with successful engagement with 64
* 47 young people have completed an accredited training programme
* 10 Young people have secured full-time employment
* Average reduction of 48% in ASB reports in the 3 targeted neighbourhoods (Average reduction of 18% across the borough)

**1.2 Locksley Youth Project**

With ASB as a key concern for the TRA, we had a unique opportunity to bring in a community partner to deliver some targeted interventions and diversionary activity at the Locksley Community Centre, as we manage this centre under a licence from LBTH.

Working with the TRA, we brought in Newark Youth, a local youth organisation that delivers a range of diversionary activities for young people, as they had their own funding and were looking for premises from which to deliver their services from. They deliver two evenings of youth club activities from the centre as well as carrying out outreach work on the estate.

**In numbers:**

* 2 evening youth club sessions
* 65 registered members
* 25 – Average attendance each session

1. **Increase financial resilience**

**2.1 Employability Programme**

With the ever increasing impact of welfare reform and the increasingly rolled out Universal Credit, our residents are feeling the pressure, which is causing even greater poverty and financial exclusion. This project, being delivered by Go Train who won the contract following a tendering exercise, works with residents impacted by welfare reform as well as other residents seeking work, to help and support them with IAG, training, work experience and ultimately support them into employment.

The project is delivered from the Wyn Garrett Residents Resource Centre, with drop-ins taking place every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10-12 and by appointments at other times. Go Train bring with them to this project other sources of funding and provide residents with employability skills, CV writing, interview skills as well as other soft skills to make them work ready.

**In numbers:**

* 17 outreach events
* 177 residents engaged and attending regular job search and support
* 77 completed an accredited training course
* 54 supported into full-time employment and a further 5 into apprenticeships
* Average 28% reduction in rent arrears of those supported into employment

**2.2 Childcare Training**

In 2015, working with Limehouse Project, Account3 and Somali Integration Team, we brought in an external fundraiser to access funding for longer term and bigger project, following a pilot project that we seed funded in 2014. The fundraiser was able to help us secure just over £350,000 from the National Lottery for a three-year training project. By the end of the project, the three organisations would have engaged 500 women and provided them with a range of training and development, with at least 198 of the women gaining a CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Early Years Education & Care (QFC). The project is now in its third year, with 440 women engaged by the project to date with 127 women receiving the qualification and many securing employment, with the others participating in a 12 week confidence and capacity building training programme. The figues outlined below are for the 2017-18 period:

**In numbers:**

* 178 women actively engaged in programme
* 143 participating in 12 week capacity building programme
* 51 participating in CACHE Level 2 Certification in Early Years Education and Care
* 25 have secured employment

**2.3 Caretaking Apprentice**

The Community Partnership Team supported the HR and Environment Services Teams with the recruitment of the Apprenticeship Scheme for trainee caretakers.

**In numbers:**

- 2000 residents being impacted by welfare reform written to with the apprenticeship opportunity

- 3 Drop in sessions held with 52 people engaged

- 7 registered for the pre-apprenticeship training programme

**2.4 Girls Mentoring Project**

We are working with a organisation called The Girls Network to provide young female residents with mentoring so that they are able raise their aspirations and fulfil their full potential acedmically and then in their chosen career fields. The Girls Network recruit mentors from the corporate sector, who are then trained in mentoring and vetted and matched with a young female student who they mentor for a year.

With Tower Hamlets being a deprived area and with many of the young women living in our homes, having no female role-model within their home or family/friends network that has exceeded in a professional capacity in the world of work and thus no-one to seek advice and guidance from, this project provides a vital line of support for these young women to succed academically and professionally and raise their aspirations.

The Girls Network is working with Year 12 students from Central Foundation Girls School and Tower Hamlets College and have matched them all with mentees.

**In numbers:**

* 10 THH residents participating
* 98 1-2-1 mentoring sessions held
* 4 corporate events held
* 80% increase in motivation and confidence

**2.5 Welfare reform & financial inclusion support**

As well as the above programmes our welfare reform teams in Rents & Leasehold Services provide a range of interventions and support to residents impacted by welfare reform as well as those falling into rent and service charge arrears.

The government’s welfare reforms are designed in a way that encourages people to get into employment and for many residents this is the best or only option. Both the rents & leasehold welfare reform officers refer those residents who are being impacted by the reforms and are seeking work to our employment support provider, Go Train.

**In numbers:**

* 1023 residents supported with welfare reform and financial inclusion
* 435 residents referred to and accessing debt and welfare advice from Account3
* 35 residents impacted by welfare reforms referred to Go Train
* £1,076,742 in benefit claims support for residents

1. **Support mental wellbeing and vulnerability**

**3.1 Community Food Gardens**

Over the last 7-8 years THH have been supporting our residents to set up Community Food Gardens in their estates, as a means to bringing underused land into productive use to help reduce ASB, reduce social isolation, improve community cohesion and improve people’s health.

To date we have developed 26 food gardens across our estates, with over 527 growing beds and over 1,500 people using them on a regular basis.

**In numbers:**

* 24 Community Food Gardens
* 527 growing beds
* 1,500 people regularly using the gardens
* 79% have reported improvement in health and wellbeing and 84% improvement in cohesion\*

*\*Based on independent research we commissioned earlier this year to assess the impact of the gardens on individuals and communities.*

1. **Build resilient and cohesive communities**

**4.1 Residents Training Programme**

THH has for the last four years developed and delivered a residents training programme aimed at empowering residents to develop their skills, so that they can play a more active and effective role in the community as well as develop their own personal skills.

The 2017-18 programme was a huge success with nine other housing providers involved and buying into our programme which was also supported by Tower Hamlets Federation of TRAs and Idea Stores. Training courses ranged from setting up and managing a community food garden, fundraising skills, chairing meetings, first aid, running an event, amongst others.

**In numbers:**

* 11 housing providers involved in programme
* 25 Separate training courses
* 216 residents participating in programme
* 98% satisfaction with training courses

**4.2 Community events**

Over the last year we have delivered a number of events that help bring communities together to celebrate the various cultural and religious events that our residents celebrate. This helps forge a better understanding of each other’s cultures and religions and build stronger relationships. In turn this will help residents feel safe and happy in the neighbourhoods that they live in.

Community events are also known to help bring positive perceptions of landlords by residents, as it provides visible presence of landlord staff in fun and interactive settings. They also help organisations improve perceptions and relationships with partners, such as the local authority, police and community organisations.

We delivered the following events throughout the year in partnership with our residents, TRAs and community partners:

Eid, Christmas, Iftar, Fun days x 2, Brodick House Opening, Somali Open Day, THH OSCCAs (THH Residents Awards), Chicksand Open Day, Fun Palace.

**In numbers:**

* 10 Community events
* 1375 residents attended and participated in events
* 87% rated the event as good or excellent

As well as the above events, we supported our TRAs, community food gardens and other groups to deliver a range of other events with practical support and funding.

**4.3 Inspiring Communities Fund**

We deliver a small grants programme each year with three funding rounds per year, with groups being able to apply for up to £2,000 to deliver small community projects to help improve the neighbourhoods people live in, through environmental and social/community projects. The grant is open to THH residents, TRAs and other local estate based groups. As well as giving out the grants, THH staff provide advice and practical support to the groups to help them deliver their projects.

**In numbers:**

* 2 funding rounds
* 21 groups/projects funded
* £23,703 funding distributed
* Over 1000 residents benefiting from the events/projects

**4.4 Watts Grove Resettlement Project**

In April 2017 we commissioned the Bromley by Bow Centre (BbBC) to engage and support residents moving into the new housing development at Watts Grove.

The key objectives of the work were to:

* Work in partnership with THH, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) and other key partners to settle-in and integrate the community moving into the new development
* Provide dedicated engagement and coordinated support to new residents pre sign-up and after tenancy commencement
* Support residents to settle into their new neighbourhood, making households aware of local schools, services, facilities and provision
* Encourage community cohesion and stimulate residents from both the new development and existing residents to play an active part in their neighbourhood
* Help identify those who need extra help and work with those residents and local partners to ensure that they are accessing the help and support that they need.

**In numbers:**

* 148 face-to-face household needs assessment carried out with signposting to local services
* 13 events/workshops delivered and attended by 70 residents
* 48 residents have received or registered for financial inclusion advice/support
* 31 residents have registered or taken part in training and employment projects

1. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities**

Last year we worked with our contractors and other corporate companies to deliver CSR activities that help bring much needed resources and benefits to our residents.

**Approach Gardening Project** – Deutsche Bourse Group based in Canary Wharf, with whom we have partnered over the last two years worked with 12 of our residents and 18 of their staff at the community food garden, to clear up the garden, build some new trellis, planting and repair some damaged growing boxes. As well as their staff time, they also paid £960 towards the various material/plants used on the day.

**Cleveland Gardening Project** – 12 volunteers from Barclays bank spent a day at the Cleveland Community Food Garden with some of our residents, building some new planters, clearing weeds and other rubbish as well as building trellises. They contributed £450 towards materials.

**Keepmoat** – We have worked with Keepmoat to deliver two DIY workshops for our residents so that they can learn basic DIY skills that they can use around the house. These DIY workshops have been hugely popular, with more planned over the next few months. Keepmoat have also been working with some of our partners, such as LBTH Workpath, Tower Hamlets College and local schools to provide insight into the construction industry, deliver health and safety sessions, as well as other employability programmes. Keepmoat also co-sponsored our Iftar & OSCCAs events.

**Mears** – We have worked with Mears to support some of our community food gardens with obtaining and installing water butts and sponsorship of community events. They have also worked directly with some of our TRAs to deliver various projects. Mears also co-sponsored our Iftar & OSCCAs events.

1. **Key deliverables for 18/19**

**Financial Wellbeing**

Employability Project – Ongoing delivery of the project with Go Train to provide training to at least 100 residents and support at least 60 residents into employment.

Financial Health Centre – the development of a Financial Health Centre at the Wyn Garrett Residents Resource Centre, working in partnership with a range of third sector partners, LBTH, JCP and others.

Corporate Social Responsibility - Ongoing work to support our residents into apprenticeships and other opportunities with our contractors and other CSR partners.

**Safer Neighbourhoods**

ASB Diversionary Project - Ongoing delivery of the project with Streets of Growth targeting six new neighbourhoods.

Bling my Hood – Restarting our award winning Bling my Hood project that engages young people in social action projects to give something back to their neighbours and neighbourhoods

**Support Health & Wellbeing**

Community Food Gardens – Ongoing support and development of existing community food gardens, development of a Food Garden Forum to co-ordinate support and development, and the set-up of new gardens where needs are identified.

Social Isolation Project – Complete the commission of the pilot project to support residents who are socially isolated and roll out the delivery

**Build Resilient Communities**

TRA Capacity Building Programme – Deliver a capacity building programme to support our TRAs and equip them with the skills, knowledge and tools to play a more pro-active role in creating vibrant neighbourhoods.

Joint Residents Training Programme – Ongoing co-ordination and delivery of the joint residents training programme in partnership with other local housing providers.

Community Events – Delivery of a range of community events throughout the year that brings communities together to celebrate the diverse cultures of our residents and enhance better understanding of each other and thus improving relationships.

Inspiring Communities Fund – Delivery of our small grants programme, to support small estate based community projects.