



Community Investment

Annual Report
2017 – 2018

**Tower
Hamlets
Homes**



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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 that 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. 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), highlighted the 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.

Over the last few years, Tower Hamlets Homes has been playing its role, in both providing safe and secure homes, and investing in neighbourhoods and residents. We have been supporting residents into training, jobs and apprenticeships; developing community food gardens to create healthier, more cohesive communities; and advising those affected by the welfare reform changes, to name just 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 started 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 and its impact.



Summary

- 102 Residents supported into work - 28% reduction in rent arrears.
- 300 hours street work with young people - 111 young people supported – 46% reduction in ASB reports in targeted neighbourhoods.
- 1023 Residents supported with welfare reform and 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.



5895

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



2199

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



£1,270,258

Social value net benefit the programme has delivered



£1:£12.76

Social value return on investment

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

Meaningful impact = Recorded outcomes such as attendance on a training programme, securing a job, or the 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 these young people, through targeted intervention. As well as taking referrals from the ASB team of young people that they have come in contact with, Streets of Growth also carry out estate based out-reach work, targeted on the Sidney, Shadwell and Chicksand neighbourhoods.

300

hours street outreach work, engaging over 80 young people

71

Young people referred by the ASB team, with 64 successfully engaged

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)

Case study

Scott, who is a 19 year old THH resident, was picked up by the ASB team and referred to the ASB diversionary programme delivered by our partners, Streets of Growth, to support him with his journey away from causing trouble on the estate and guide him to do something more constructive with his time.

At the time of coming to the ASB Team's attention, Scott was already looking to head in a more positive direction and took the opportunity as soon as it was offered, to get support to build a positive future for himself. It was challenging making changes and having a new routine and structure but Scott stayed resilient. Working with Streets of Growth, getting the support and coaching he needed, he has been propelled to where he is today. Scott is currently on a 1 year apprenticeship programme with the Caretaking Team from THH. This achievement has really motivated Scott, who is very happy in his post and is working hard towards a career in caretaking.

"Before working with Streets of Growth and THH, I was not doing anything and was at a point in my life where I wanted to make positive changes. Luckily, Streets of Growth came in at the right time, showing me what I could do and helping me build my confidence. I was lucky to get into the caretaking apprenticeship with THH and now I really love what I do. The caretaking team are fantastic and have helped me out a lot."

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 to deliver their services from.

2

Evening youth club sessions

65

Registered members

25

Average attendance at each session

2 Increase Financial Resilience

2.1 Employability Programme

With the ever increasing impact of welfare reform and the roll-out of 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 reforms, as well as other residents seeking work, to help with IAG, training, work experience and ultimately to support them into employment.

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

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 get funding for a 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 will 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. 440 women have been 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 figures outlined below are for the 17-18 period:

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

Case study

Participants in the Child Care Project faced multiple disadvantages, including under- or unemployment, poverty, low confidence and low aspirations. They not only gained in concrete terms, with many achieving the CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Early Years Education and Care, but also in broader terms. 80% reported a perceived improvement in personal and communication skills, 80% reported improvement in confidence and team building skills, and 47% reported increased engagement with wider social networks.

One of the women enjoyed the course so much that she is now taking an IT course and is looking to take the Level 3 Certificate in order to further improve her skills. Prior to taking part in the programme, she had been out of education for 24 years, and was initially sceptical about her ability to come back into training.

"It's more than a qualification – it was life changing. After being out of education for so long, it helped me by not just getting me out and talking, but also getting the pen working again. I had stopped believing that I could do anything involving studying and writing but the capacity building course helped me believe in myself again."

2.3 Caretaking Apprenticeship

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

2000

Residents being impacted by welfare reform written to with the 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 an 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 academically and pursue chosen career fields. The Girls Network recruits mentors from the corporate sector, who are then trained in mentoring, vetted and matched with a young female student who they mentor for a year.

Tower Hamlets is a deprived area and many of the young women living in our homes have no female role-model within their home or family/friends network that has succeeded in a professional capacity in the world of work. As they therefore have no-one to seek advice and guidance from, this project provides a vital line of support for these young women to succeed academically and professionally, raising their aspirations. The Girls Network is working with Year 12 students from Central Foundation Girls School and Tower Hamlets College and has matched them all with mentors.

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 and Leasehold Services provide a range of interventions and support to residents affected by welfare reform as well as those falling in to 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 and 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.

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

Case study

A home visit was arranged by a THH Financial Inclusion Officer to visit a couple who are joint THH leaseholders and also carers to their disabled daughter, after a referral had been made by their Collections Officer.

Having recently been invoiced with major works charges of just under £27,000, the leaseholders had requested financial assistance from the DWP due to them being in receipt of Income Support and other benefits. They had sent off all documents that were requested but had not received any correspondence after six weeks of waiting.

At the home visit the THH officer contacted the DWP in regards to the request made by the leaseholders, and learnt that the application for assistance had been denied under the assumption that the invoice sent covered the cost for the whole block. Correcting this miscommunication led to a reassessment of their application and an agreement to assist the leaseholders with the full costs.

The leaseholders were very grateful for the support of THH to resolve this issue and help them reach an arrangement whereby they will receive £522 a week from the DWP to cover housing costs, including their annual service charge.

3 Support Mental Wellbeing and Vulnerability

3.1 Community Food Gardens

Over the last 7-8 years, THH has been supporting residents to set up Community Food Gardens on their estates as a means of bringing underused land into productive use. Food Gardens help to reduce ASB and social isolation, as well as to improve community cohesion and 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.

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.

4 Build Resilient and Cohesive Communities

4.1 Residents Training Programme

Over the last four years, THH has developed and delivered a residents training programme, aimed at empowering residents 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 getting involved and buying into the 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, and running an event, amongst others.

11

Housing providers involved in programme since 2014

25

Separate training courses

216

Residents participating in programme

98%

Satisfaction with training courses

Case study

The joint training project is a unique project, with no other London boroughs offering anything similar. It aims to increase the knowledge and skills of residents, enhance their personal awareness and development in a range of topics and subjects, and empower them to progress in a range of community activities and in their personal lives.

The courses which included modules that led to an accredited certificate were particularly popular, with more than 80 residents registering for these sessions and many adding the new qualification to their CVs.

Mahmoodah, one of the participants in the First Aid Training workshop really enjoyed the course: "I learnt about CPR and the correct steps to take in the case of an emergency. The training was very useful: it was informative and demonstrated the skills you need to apply first aid"

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 builds 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 increase positive perceptions of landlords by residents, as they provide a visible presence of landlord staff in fun and interactive settings. They also help organisations improve perceptions and relationships with partners, such as 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.

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.

Case study

THH's first ever residents' award ceremony took place in November 2017 and was a resounding success, with 120 guests in attendance, and 10 THH residents rewarded for their contributions to their communities.

Having noticed that the centre was under used, Janet took the initiative in beginning to hire the hall out, as well as sorting bills, organising repairs and ensure health and safety standards are met. Patient, welcoming, and generous, Janet quickly gained the support of a wide variety of residents on her estate and began to host popular events and get-togethers.

Over the years, big lunches and festive parties have taken place on the estate, and the community centre has been used for many purposes, including a mental health group, Somali women's health group, Bangladeshi women's group, and over 50s group.

Celebrating the work of Janet and other residents making outstanding contributions to their communities not only rewarded their commitment, but also served to inspire others to work towards the same goal.



4.3 Inspiring Communities Fund

We deliver a small grants programme 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, social and community projects. The grant is open to THH residents, TRAs and other local estate based groups. As well as giving out the grants, we provide advice and practical support to the groups to help them deliver their 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 in need of extra help, and work with those residents and local partners to ensure that they are accessing the advice and support they need.



5 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.

Deutsche Bourse Group

Deutsche Bourse Group, which is based in Canary Wharf, and with whom we have partnered up over the last 2 years, worked with 12 residents and 18 of their staff at the community food garden, to clear it up, build some new trellises, do some planting and repair some damaged growing boxes. As well as their staff time, they also paid £960 towards the various material and plants used on the day.

Barclays Bank

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 to 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, and deliver health and safety sessions, as well as other employability programmes. Keepmoat also co-sponsored our Iftar and OSCCAs events.

Mears

We have worked with Mears to support some of our community food gardens with obtaining and installing Water Butts and to sponsor community events. They have also worked directly with some of our TRAs to deliver various projects. Mears also co-sponsored our Iftar and OSCCAs events.

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www.thh.org.uk