



**London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Children's Services**

Tower Hamlets Youth Service Plan 2007-2009

**A three year strategy for the
development of Youth Services in
Tower Hamlets**

Draft for consultation – November 2006

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Foreword

Councillor Helal Abbas, Lead Member Children's Services

[To be completed]

Aiming higher together... We look forward to working together to implement the plan and to make life better for young people in Tower Hamlets.

Kevan Collins, Corporate Director Children's Services

[To be completed]

Steve Sipple, Head of Youth and Community Services

[To be completed]

Introduction

In April 2006 the Tower Hamlets Partnership published the borough's first Strategic Children and Young People's Plan. It sets out our vision for children and young people, the values that inform it and the steps we will take to achieve the vision and make the values work in practice. The plan includes the Partnership's high level priorities and the targets that flow from them.

This Youth Service Plan is one of many service plans which sets out more detail about the actions we will take. It is the first three year plan that we have developed for Youth Services and aims to provide a longer term focus for our work. However, it builds on the three successful one year Youth Service Plans developed annually since 2003 and the Post-Ofsted Action Plan developed in 2005/06.

It is particularly timely to produce a three-year Youth Service Plan beginning in 2007, as from January 2007 we have recommissioned the Youth Service contracts representing about two-thirds of the Council's youth work provision. This Plan will give the development of the new Contractors.

The purpose of this Youth Service Plan is to:

- Set the focus for the Council's Youth Service and for our Contracted Youth Work Providers for the next three years;
- To provide a clear statement of the Youth Service's objectives and targets for young people, staff, key partner agencies, senior officers and elected members;
- To provide a basis for evaluating progress towards service targets, and to identify our impact; and
- To support our self-assessment under the Ofsted framework.

Context

About Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets is a culturally and ethnically diverse area and is the fifth most densely populated borough in Britain. Its population grew by 17.9% between 1991 and 2001, which was the second largest rate of growth of all London boroughs. It has a population with an age profile that is significantly younger than East London as a whole, with just over half the population under 30 years of age and a quarter under 16 years of age. The Greater London Assembly projections for the population show an increase to 270,115 by 2016 with the 15-19 cohort remaining fairly stable until 2011 and then growing. There are currently 18,964 young people aged between 13 and 19 years.

Figures from the 2001 census show that of the whole community, 51% are white and almost one third are of Bangladeshi origin. There are also sizeable Caribbean, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Pakistani and Eastern European communities within the Borough. In the 16-19 age group there are a significantly lower proportion of white residents compared to London East as a whole, and the ethnic profile is much more skewed towards the Asian or Asian British in this age group. Over 50% of the school-aged population are Bangladeshi, and 76% of school pupils are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

Tower Hamlets enjoys rich cultural diversity and in Canary Wharf has a major world centre for business and commerce. It is also one of the most economically deprived areas in the country, with many people suffering poor health and living in poor quality and overcrowded housing. 57% of pupils are entitled to free school meals compared to the national average of 18%. Overcrowding is four times the national rate, 22% of households are owner occupied (national 69%), unemployment is nearly twice the Inner London average and just over a third of the population have no qualifications.

Despite the many challenges, young people within Tower Hamlets are achieving well at the end of both the primary phase and statutory schooling. The achievements of primary pupils are now at the national average in English and 1% above for maths. Similarly, the GCSE results have improved rapidly in recent years and the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A*- C grades was 48% for 2004.

The Council

The trend in Tower Hamlets towards an increasing youth population means that young people are a key focus for the Council and all departments of the Council are involved in providing services for them. The community profile means that one of the Borough's greatest challenges is to develop services across the Council that fit the needs and requirements of all their young people whilst securing service development that reflects the needs of **all** residents.

The council is meeting this challenge by articulating and securing a vision and direction for the Borough that will result in service delivery reflecting local needs. The vision has been developed through the Community Plan that sets out the Council's aspirations for the kind of place that people who live and work in the borough want Tower Hamlets to be - a vision of a brighter, better Tower Hamlets. The Council's strategic role is seen in the strategic objectives set out in the Community Plan. These aim to make Tower Hamlets:

- a better place for living safely;
- a better place for living well;
- a better place for creating and sharing prosperity;
- a better place for learning, achievement and leisure; and
- a better place for excellent public services.

Youth and Community Services

The Council's relentless drive for improvement is mirrored in its aspirations for Youth and Community Services.

In 2000/01 a review was completed which recommended that the elected members consider outsourcing the service in order to achieve the step change in improvement that was needed. Following the development of a comprehensive service specification and tendering process, the service was contracted out to new voluntary and community sector providers. In 2006 we have reviewed and recommissioned these contracts. The new Contractors are:

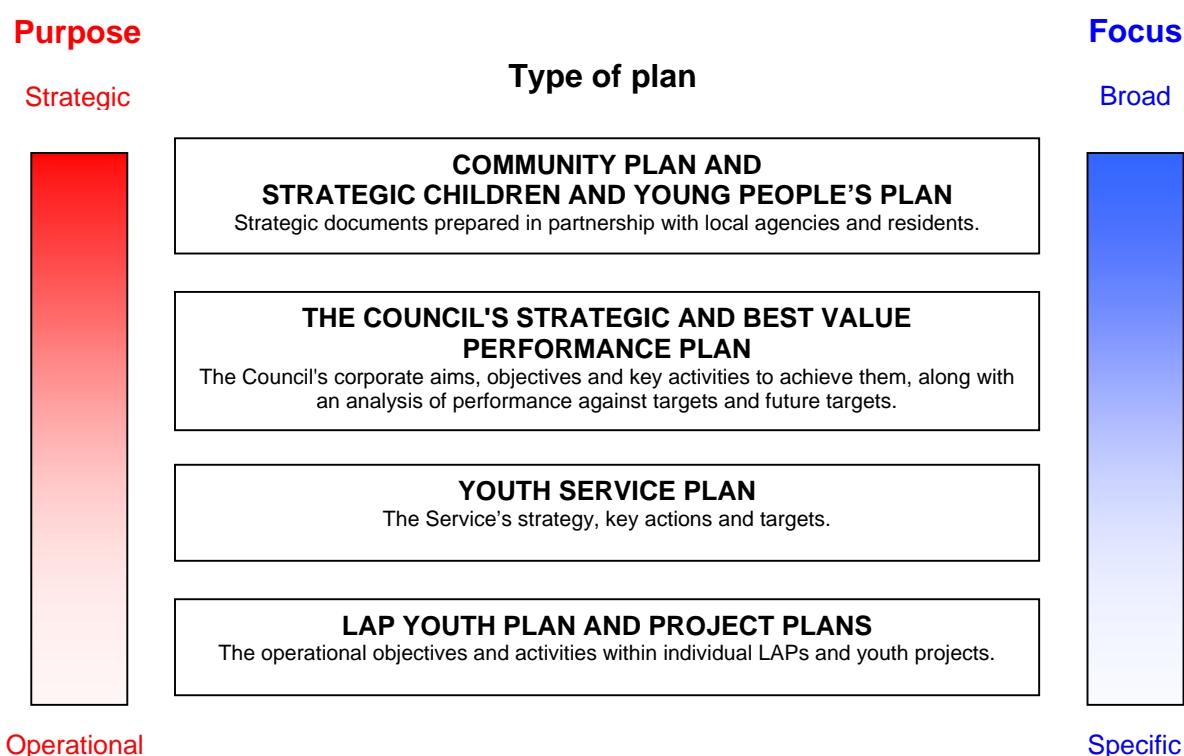
Contracts have also been awarded to 'A' Team Arts for the delivery of youth arts across the Borough and to the Council's sports development team for the delivery of outdoor education across the borough.

Unlike in 2002, we have not contracted one provider to deliver special educational needs provision and have instead mainstreamed it within every contract.

Links to other plans

The Youth and Community Service Plan reflects the actions contained in the Community Plan, the Strategic Children and Young People's Plan and the Council's Strategic Plan and in turn contributes to the following corporate strategies:

- Young People's Preventative Plan;
- Neighbourhood Renewal Plan;
- Youth Crime Reduction Strategy;
- Community Cohesion Strategy; and
- Third Sector Strategy.



Drivers for change

National drivers

The development of Youth Services is a key strategic responsibility for Local Authorities. A number of current national initiatives establish a framework which local services must reflect as they develop to meet local need, as well as targets and service outcomes that will have to be met by Local Authorities. This section provides a brief contextual overview for the Youth Plan 2007-09. The full text of the policy documents referred to are available from Youth and Community Services.

Transforming Youth Work and Resourcing Excellent Youth Services

Transforming Youth Work is a key Government initiative for Youth Services and has been a fundamental development for Local Authorities. It is part of a wider approach to the provision of services for young people and sets out a range of minimum requirements for all youth services.

The Government paper 'Transforming Youth Work' recognised the positive and dynamic contribution that good quality youth work can make to the personal and social development of young people. However, it also recognised that while some youth work approaches can have excellent results, in practice much of the work is unfocussed, unplanned and unchallenging to young people. In reality, young people receive lots of low- level leisure activity. There is therefore a need to raise standards in the quality of provision delivered.

'Resourcing Excellent Youth Services' set out some parameters for what the Government expects future Youth Services to look like. There is a clear expectation on the part of Central Government that Local Authorities across the country will reform the way their Youth Services are developed, delivered and managed. There is also an expectation that Local Authorities will demonstrate strategic leadership and have a clear understanding of local circumstances which impact upon the lives of young people. Perhaps the most radical elements within the document are externally imposed nationwide targets together with the identification of a range of learning achievements that young people are expected to attain when engaged in youth work.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children

In 2003, the Government published a green paper called Every Child Matters, focusing on four key themes:

- Increasing the focus on supporting families and carers - the most critical influence on children's lives;

- Ensuring necessary intervention takes place before children reach crisis point and protecting children from falling through the net;
- Addressing the underlying problems identified in the report into the death of Victoria Climbié - weak accountability and poor integration; and
- Ensuring that the people working with children are valued, rewarded and trained.

Following consultation, the Government published *Every Child Matters: the Next Steps*, and passed the Children Act 2004, providing legislation for developing more effective and accessible services focused around the needs of children, young people and families. *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* was published in November 2004 and contained an outcomes framework for ensuring the well being of children and young people from birth to age 19.

The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

This means that the organisations involved with providing services to children - from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups – need to team up in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.

In April 2006 the Tower Hamlets Partnership published the borough's first Strategic Children and Young People's Plan. It sets out our vision for children and young people, the values that inform it and the steps we will take to achieve the vision and make the values work in practice. The plan includes the Partnership's high level priorities and the targets that flow from them.

Youth Matters Green Paper

Youth Matters, published in July 2005, included a range of proposals to give young people a "new, integrated youth offer" guaranteeing them places to go, things to do and someone to talk to.

The new Education and Inspection Bill places a statutory duty for local authorities to ensure that young people have access to a range of positive activities. The national standards will include access to two hours per week of sporting activity and access to two hours of other constructive activities in clubs in clubs, youth groups and classes.

Funding over two years has been made available through the Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds, to allow young people to make collective decisions about spending priorities for constructive activities in their local area. The funding provides £800,000 for young people in Tower Hamlets.

Ten local authorities, including Tower Hamlets, are piloting the Youth Opportunity Card. All 13 - 19 year olds will qualify for a card, which will give them access to a range of discounts on things to do and places to go. Monthly payments to the most disadvantaged young people will be made by government.

The participation of young people is reinforced. Volunteering proposals developed by V, the Russell Commission Implementation Body, include the recruitment of one million more young volunteers by 2011. In Tower Hamlets Toynbee Hall successfully bid to deliver a range of volunteering opportunities across the borough.

Local drivers

Views of young people

A key local driver for the priorities in this plan is the views of young people themselves. 1350 young people were contacted as part of a major piece of research in 2004 for the Young People's Community Plan. Additionally, 200 young people were interviewed in youth clubs for the Youth Service annual satisfaction survey in 2006.

The results indicate some key areas that young people consider to be of greatest concern including:

- **Staying safe:** As with many young people living in inner city London, the young people from Tower Hamlets who participated in the research were concerned about issues of safety, gangs, bullying and racism. As well as more CCTV and police, young people want safer schools, more education about personal safety, more integration in youth clubs and better facilities open for longer hours.
- **Healthy Living:** Young people were concerned about drugs and alcohol, the overcrowding in homes, quality of housing and access to information relating to health issues. Young people want an environment they can be proud of, for example less litter and dog mess as well as advice about healthy eating, teenage pregnancy, sexual health and drug use.
- **Access to quality facilities:** Many felt that they would like to access more youth facilities and services that were of a better quality and that were open in the evenings and weekends. The young people also wanted access to a variety of affordable services such as sports and leisure facilities.

- Having their voice heard and actioned by the decision makers: Young people said that they would like to have the opportunity to express their views to those who will listen and act. The Youth Service Plan addresses this through the ongoing implementation of the Youth Participation Strategy.

Views of LAPs

The Tower Hamlets Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership) is a key driver in both the development and delivery of the Community Plan. Eight Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) support the Partnership. The LAP forums provide a voice for local communities, including young people, and a vehicle for residents' involvement in shaping service delivery.

Consultation with residents through the LAP forums has identified the need to focus attention on young people. Residents across the borough emphasised the need to help young people play a positive role in their community. Residents also said that they want to see a more effective response to young people at risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour and crime. Consultation with young people themselves has established that they want to become actively involved in their local communities so that their views can impact upon services and make a difference to life in the borough.

The Local Area Partnerships have identified a number of priorities for Youth Services that are incorporated into this Plan:

LAP	Action
1	Make more effective use of community facilities and resources to provide community based learning and leisure services.
2	Improve services and facilities across the LAP, particularly for youth and young people.
3	Increase the range and improve the quality of provision for young people.
4	Improve youth provision and community facilities in the area.
5	Improve the range and quality of provision for young people in the area, especially in Victoria Park.
6	Improve the range and quality of provision for young people.
7	Educational achievements and lifelong learning with an emphasis on youth facilities.
8	Improve lifelong learning and achievement through developing programmes and initiatives beyond the full curriculum to combat underachievement.

More detail about each of these actions can be found in the ALP Youth Plans available from Youth and Community Services.

Ofsted inspection and post-Ofsted action plan

Ofsted carried out an inspection of the Tower Hamlets Youth and Community Services in January 2005.

Ofsted found that Tower Hamlets provides an adequate youth service. They said that the standards of young people's achievement and the quality of youth work are adequate and the service's efficient use of resources provides satisfactory value for money. In their report, Ofsted recommends that the council should:

- implement the service's curriculum framework to ensure all provision has educational purpose;
- ensure a wide range of curriculum resources is used, particularly ICT (Information and Communication Technology), to improve the standard of young people's achievements;
- improve the overall quality of accommodation in all centres;
- involve young people more rigorously in the planning and evaluation of local provision; and
- increase the participation of all groups of young people, particularly girls and young women.

Our Post-Ofsted Action Plan implemented between August 2005 and August 2006 included over 40 actions addressing these recommendations.

Overview and scrutiny by the Youth Service Plan Scrutiny Working Group

In July 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Working Group to consider the Youth Service Plan. The review focused particularly on accommodation and partnership working.

The Working Group's findings and recommendations were approved at Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in May/June 2005. Their report makes 17 recommendations to improve further the borough's Youth and Community Services. The recommendations were considered and incorporated into the Service's Service Plan 2005/06 and continue to shape our work.

Equalities Impact Assessment of the Youth Service Plan 2005/06

Youth and Community Services carried out an Equality Impact Assessment of the last Youth Service Plan from February to May 2005. By law, the council must complete an equalities impact assessment - checking out the equalities implications - for every new policy. This

ensures that everything we do is, as far as possible, accessible and does not discriminate against groups of staff or sections of the community. The assessments cover six equality strands: race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religious belief.

The assessment found that there are a number of areas in which Youth and Community Services must develop its service planning if equality targets are to be fully embraced. This includes developing more robust services for girls and young women, lesbian, gay, bisexual young people and young people with disabilities. As a result we have developed an action plan, which has been incorporated into the work plan in section 5.

Contract Monitoring Systems Audit by Internal Audit

Strong contract monitoring systems are vital within a commissioned service such as ours. A systems audit of the Youth and Community Services was carried out between February and March 2005 as part of the Council's Audit Plan 2004/05. The audit aimed to:

- To assure management that the system in place for controlling and monitoring the youth service contract are sound, adequate and secure;
- To assure management that the services provided by the contracted providers are clearly specified, that the roles and responsibilities are clearly identified and that the work of the providers is effectively monitored to secure good value for money and high quality of service; and
- To evaluate the potential consequences which could arise from any weaknesses in internal control procedures.

At the end of the audit, recommendations were made to address some weaknesses in the contract monitoring systems and these have been incorporated into the new Youth Service contracts.

Our vision

The vision within the Tower Hamlets Children and Young People's Strategic Plan is that:

“The children and young people of Tower Hamlets should get off to a flying start and should continue to learn in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. These foundations will give them the grounding they need for a happy, prosperous life so that they can shape their own futures and become creative responsible adults.”

The Youth Service contributes to this vision by delivering a range of informal education opportunities for young people aged between 11 – 25 years and with a particular focus on the 13-19 age group.

We believe the purpose of youth work to be to:

“Work with young people to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, and enable them to gain a voice, influence and place in society in a period of their transition from dependence to independence.”

In Tower Hamlets we will:

“Work in partnership with young people and other key services to will provide coherent, comprehensive and high quality youth services, which will enable all young people to maximise their opportunities and achieve their potential.”

Towards an integrated youth offer

In 2007 we will be developing our integrated youth offer, to meet the standards set out Youth Matters. The Youth Service has already drafted a Pledge for young people, so that they know what they can expect from us:

‘Young people are an important part of our community. In recognition of this, Tower Hamlets Council pledges that all young people will have equal access to a specialist Youth Service that will provide:

- Safe, well-equipped local facilities offering opportunities to meet, to get involved in discussions, projects and activities and to take part in drama, music, sport, volunteering and youth action;

- Opportunities to learn new skills and to pursue informal education that will be recognised through accreditation whenever possible;
- Support from knowledgeable and well qualified staff;
- Confidential information, advice and counseling services; and
- Local forums through which young people can take part in planning new activities and programmes; report their views on the quality of the services offered; and participate in discussions on a wider range of issues affecting everyone in Tower Hamlets.'

Both the vision and the pledge underpin all the work undertaken by our Youth Services.

Strategic priorities

In the next sections of the plan we have set the actions we will take between 2007-09. We have organised them around the following five strategic priorities, which are based on the five Every Child Matters outcomes:

- Being healthy – we want young people to grow up healthy in body and mind;
- Staying safe – we want young people to grow up free from harm, fear and prejudice;
- Enjoying and achieving – we want young people to grow up enjoying life, feeling proud of where they live and what they have achieved;
- Making a positive contribution – we want young people to grow up understanding of differences, confident and courageous about the future, able and willing to make a positive contribution to a strong cohesive community in Tower Hamlets; and
- Economic well-being – we want our young people to grow up for themselves, their families and their communities, with the skills to achieve their ambitions.

While they are five separate outcomes, they are of course inter-related and many of our actions will make a contribution to achieving better outcomes in more than one, or all five of these areas.

In identifying our priorities and actions we have been guided by:

- The key national priorities for improving outcomes for young people and the development of Youth Services; and
- The key local priorities identified by young people, adult residents and our partners.

The priorities and actions will be used to:

- Inform the use of resources by all service deliverers within the Youth Service; and
- As the basis for all unit and sessional plans.

Target groups

All young people have needs and can benefit through access to the youth work curriculum. Whilst providing a universal service, the London Borough Tower Hamlets Youth Service and its partners recognise that there are certain groups of young people who are excluded from, or do not use mainstream services, and the Council is committed to addressing this by focusing on:

- Girls and young women;
- Young people with special educational needs;
- Young gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people;
- Somali young people and other young people seeking asylum or who are refugees;
- Young people involved in or at risk of getting involved in crime, gang conflict and anti-social behaviour;
- Young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET); and
- Other young people at risk of social exclusion, including young people leaving care, young parents and young people involved in drug misuse.

Specific work addressing each of these target groups is described in the action plan.

Reach and participation

In 2006 Youth and Community Services set itself and achieved the target, based on the benchmarks in 'Resourcing Excellent Youth Services', of reaching 27% of the population of 13-19 year olds. The benchmarks have now become Best Value Performance Indicators and we have set ourselves challenging targets for 2007-09.

The challenge for the Youth Service is to continue to increase the quality of the service delivered and consequently increase the level of involvement by young people across the borough.

Performance indicators that will be measured through the Service's Quality Assurance Framework will include:

- The percentage of the 13 – 19 population to be reached (against a national benchmark of 25%);
- The percentage of the 13 – 19 population regularly attending (participating) in youth work activities (against a national benchmark of 15%);
- The percentage of participants in youth work to gain recorded outcomes (against a national benchmark of 60%);
- The percentage of participants in youth work to gain accredited outcomes (against a national benchmark of 30%); and

In order to measure performance against the indicators, the following targets have been agreed with the new Contractors:

Description/ criteria	Tower Hamlets Targets (%)										
	LAP	2005/6 baseline	2006/7		2007/8		2008/9		2009/10		2010/11
			Standard	Stretch	Standard	Stretch	Standard	Stretch	Standard	Stretch	Standard
Percentage of Young People reached [†] by the Service	All	20	22	25	24	28	26	30	27	31	28
Percentage of Young People who regularly attend the Service	All	12	13.2	15	14.4	16.8	15.6	18	16.2	18.6	16.8
Percentage of Young People who regularly attend the Service who achieve an accredited outcome	All	30	30	35	30	35	30	35	30	35	30
Percentage of Young People who regularly attend the Service who achieve a recorded outcome	All	60	60	N/A	60	N/A	60	N/A	60	N/A	60
Percentage of Young People using the Service who are satisfied with it	All	<i>Establish baseline in 2005</i>	60	74	62	76	64	78	68	82	70
Aggregate internal inspection result	All	<i>Establish baseline in 2005</i>	65	69	69	73	73	77	77	81	81

[†] As defined within Recording Young People's Progress and Accreditation in Youth Work, The National Youth Agency, December 2005 www.nya.org.uk

Finance

All of the actions identified in this plans are found from the Youth Service budget and from external funding streams, such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Youth Opportunity Fund. At our last inspection, Ofsted found that Tower Hamlets Youth Service offered satisfactory value for money, in that it is well-resourced service with high take-up. Ofsted commented additionally that the systems for collecting Management Information in Tower Hamlets Youth Service are among the most robust in the country.

Be healthy

Our vision is that:

We want our young people to grow up healthy in body and mind

Youth work helps young people to be healthy by:

- Providing young people with accessible information, education and advice on health matters including sex, drugs, and primary care;
- Supporting young people experiencing mental or physical ill-health, or particular difficulties in their lives;
- Helping young people access, improve and evaluate health services;
- Supporting and encouraging young people to be physically active and make healthy choices related to food and nutrition;
- Promoting their right and ability to choose and make decisions about health treatment.

Young people have said they want more information about health and healthy eating, sexual health, diet and weight, avoiding teenage pregnancy and drugs.

The Youth Service in Tower Hamlets is already making good progress to support young people to be healthy:

- We support young people to lead a healthier life by providing opportunities for young people to become involved in environmental issues, to adopt healthy lifestyles and to resolve personal issues
- Groups take part in workshops ranging from drugs misuse to cooking and healthy eating
- Outdoor education opportunities such as mountain biking are available from every youth club and there are climbing walls in Limehouse and Shadwell Basin
- Shadwell Basin provides a range of water sports including canoeing, kayaking and dragon boating

We will take the following actions in 2007-2009:

“What I like about my project is that I can talk about my stress and get it out of me. We have been working on my strengths and weaknesses and about my life and setting goals and this really helps me at school and helps me with my future”

- 1 Increase physical activity amongst young people by developing and delivering a borough-wide programme of specialist outdoor education provision
 - Increase the number of young people undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award;
 - Open an Urban Adventure Base in Mile End Park; and
 - Appoint a Sports Coordinator to deliver a Big Lottery funded programme of sports activities for young people and adult residents.

- 2 Reduce the take up of smoking, drugs and alcohol and ensure prompt access to treatment services
 - Work in partnership with Lifeline to train youth workers in drug education;
 - Refer more young people who misuse substances to Lifelines; and
 - Develop a peer education programme to promote healthy lifestyles in youth centres and schools.

- 3 Raise awareness of sexual health risks among young people
 - Work in partnership with Options to develop a sex and relationships policy and train youth workers in sex and relationships education;
 - Publish better sexual health materials and resources for use in youth centre and schools; and
 - Develop a sexual health clinic in Eastside Youth Centre in Bow.

Staying safe

Our vision is that:

We want our young people to grow up free from harm, fear and prejudice

Youth work helps young people stay safe through:

- Targeted work for marginalised young people, such as those abused through prostitution, young people leaving care, or those with special needs;
- Awareness-raising work with young people in schools, college or youth organisations on issues related to risk and safety;
- Practical support such as access to housing, transport, food or laundry facilities for socially excluded young people;
- Partnership work with other organisations to enable vulnerable young people to access services;
- Providing a safe environment for young people experiencing discrimination.

Many young people are worried about drugs, alcohol, street crime, violence, racism, bullying and

The Youth Service in Tower Hamlets is already making good progress to support young people to stay safe:

- We provide safe environments to meet, challenge bullying and discrimination, redirect anti-social behaviour, promote crime prevention programmes, respond to crises and help to resolve conflict
- The Positive Activities for Young People Programme is designed to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough during the school holidays. The programme works with young people aged 8-19 years and reaches some 1600 young people each year.
- The Rapid Response Team provides a borough wide service for disaffected young people aged 13 to 21 and those who are at risk of exclusion and has responded to over 150 incidents in the last 12 months

“The Rapid Response Team do a job some times even the police cannot do”

We will take the following actions in 2007-2009:

- 1 Reduce youth offending by targeting young people engaged in youth crime or at risk of becoming involved
 - Undertake a strategic review of the Rapid Response Team;
 - Develop Youth Inclusion Programmes, initially in LAPs 1 and 2 and 5 and 6; and
 - Contribute staff and resources to the Youth Offending Team and Multi-Agency Preventative (MAP) Programmes.

- 2 Divert young people away from anti-social behaviour
 - Deliver an NRF funded programme crime prevention programme in partnership with voluntary and community youth organisations;
 - Increase the detached, outreach and mobile youth work provision across the borough; and
 - Develop a peer education programme to promote safe choices in youth centres and schools.

- 3 Continue to tackle bullying and hate crime
 - Review bullying and hate crime policies in youth centres;
 - Develop effective peer support initiatives; and
 - Promote access to confidential help-lines for young people experiencing bullying and prejudice.

Enjoying and achieving

Our vision is that:

We want young people to grow up enjoying life, feeling proud of where they live and what they have achieved

Youth work helps young people enjoy and achieve by:

- Offering a range of activities and facilities to enable young people to develop skills in areas such as arts, sports and IT, to experience challenge and to expand their horizons;
- Programmes based on a curriculum framework which support young people's personal and social education and citizenship, through project and group work, residential experiences and peer education;
- Providing young people an opportunity to design their own learning in community settings;
- Working with young people to develop provision which meets their expressed needs and interests;
- Encouraging young people to understand and articulate their own learning and achievements, and providing recognition and accreditation for that learning;
- Providing a safe environment for young people with common experiences, where they can gain non-judgemental information and advice, and provide each other with mutual support.

A high priority for young people is somewhere to go. Young people want more youth clubs, trips, events, and better access

The Youth Service in Tower Hamlets is already making good progress to support young people to enjoy and achieve:

- We offer an extensive range of challenging and exciting activities for young people across the borough and refurbishing and building new youth facilities
- A Team Arts run exciting programmes on t-shirt printing, mural projects, performing arts, pottery, music, drama, dance, fashion, modelling, silk painting, special needs work, internet radio, youth exchange, exhibitions and training events.
- Over 2000 young people achieved a recognised outcome from their youth work –many received nationally recognised awards and qualifications.

We will take the following actions in 2007-2009:

“This has helped me because I have been doing art in school and I am learning different techniques. I also feel proud because it will brighten up my area”

“What I like about my project is that I can talk about my stress and get it out of me. We have been working on my strengths and weaknesses and about my life and setting goals and this really helps me at school and helps me with my future”

- 1 Extend the opportunity for all young people to enjoy a range of informal education opportunities
 - Increase the amount of provision available to girls and young women;
 - Deliver a Somali Youth Work Development Programme to build the capacity of the Somali community in Tower Hamlets to deliver high quality and effective youth work and to promote equality of access for Somali young people to Youth and Community Services provision; and
 - Open provision for young people with Special Educational Needs in every LAP and ensure that our mainstream provision is made more accessible.
- 2 Develop high quality youth centres able to deliver the full range of the youth work curriculum
 - Review and update the Youth Service accommodation strategy;
 - Develop our hubs model to ensure that there is at least one full service youth centre in every LAP; and
 - Continue our capital programme to refurbish our existing youth centres.
- 3 Increase arts activity amongst young people by developing and delivering a borough-wide programme of specialist youth arts provision
 - Deliver a comprehensive range of arts activities from the Brady Centre and other youth centres around the borough;
 - Increase the number of young people undertaking the Arts Award and other accredited programmes; and
 - Develop an enhanced strategy for youth music and video production.

Making a positive contribution

Our vision is that:

We want our young people to grow up understanding of differences, confident and courageous about the future, able and willing to make a positive contribution to a strong cohesive community in Tower Hamlets

Youth work helps young people make a positive contribution through

- Youth councils or youth forums - structures for supporting young people's involvement in democracy and their involvement with local or national decision-makers;
- Youth action and other projects which support young people in identifying local needs or problems and taking action to address them;
- Peer education or other projects through which young people educate or support other young people;
- Young people helping shape local services, for instance through consultation, service delivery, evaluation or inspection;
- Young people engaging in a wide range of voluntary action with vulnerable groups in the local community;
- Young people managing and delivering, or helping manage and deliver, youth provision.

Our progress in Tower Hamlets

- The youth service has always involving young people wherever possible in decision making
- We have launched the Tower Hamlets Youth Partnership – a series of youth forums across the borough
- The Youth Partnership provides a platform for all groups of young people from schools, clubs and other youth organisations to set their own agenda and discuss issues that matter to them locally
- Over 2000 young people voted to elect their Member of Youth Parliament and two deputies from over 55 candidates
- The 'AMP' website www.amp.uk.net has had over 600,000 hits in the last 12 months
- Young people's editorial group producing a regular page in East End Life

“We want to make the borough a place to be proud of”

We will take the following actions in 2007-2009:

- 1 Increase the participation of children and young people in decision making and in community life
 - Develop a participation strategy for all children and young people, to include participation in learning, decision-making and design, delivery and evaluation of services;
 - Encourage all relevant services for children and young people to have regard to the ‘Hear by Right’ national framework for monitoring the quality of involvement; and
 - Build the personal capacity of children and young people to manage and respond to changes and challenges in their lives by providing them with a range of development and training opportunities.

- 2 Increase the number of opportunities for volunteering and community action by young people and supporting children and young people to develop their own plans for community action
 - Work in partnership with the Peer Work Consortium to draw together the peer work programmes delivered around the borough;
 - Work with the Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets and George Green School to ensure that the Millennium Volunteers award is available to every young person who wants it; and
 - Strengthen partnerships between young people and faith institutions by including young people in the Inter-Faith Forum.

- 3 Put the buying power in the hands of young people, so that they themselves have control of the things to do and places to go in their area.
 - Distribute the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund in partnership with young people;
 - Pilot the Youth Opportunity Card and ensure it’s roll out across the borough; and
 - Develop the AMP website as the portal for young people to access the range of opportunities available to them.

Achieving economic well-being

Our vision is that:

We want young people to grow up for themselves, their families and their communities, with the skills to achieve their ambitions

Youth work helps young people achieve economic well-being through:

- Personal development, education and life skills programmes tailored to individual need;
- Practical and educational support for the most vulnerable young people;
- Access to education for young people who have not reached their potential in school or college;
- Social, economic, educational and recreational opportunities designed to encourage social inclusion and life-long learning.

The Youth Service in Tower Hamlets is already making good progress to support young people to achieve economic well-being:

- Young people want better support when leaving school or college, more activities such as volunteering and access to work experience, and access to jobs or training.
- We making educational attainment a high priority, recognising that it has the potential to have a huge positive impact on young people
- Youth provision is being transformed to have more of an educational purpose and programmes of youth activities now encompass a much broader curriculum
- The increased confidence, self-esteem, knowledge, social skills, awareness and talents that are encouraged by these programmes can be a positive aid to higher achievement at school, gaining a place on a training course or finding a job
- New Start, which aims to motivate and re-engage into learning young people who have dropped out of education and training or are at risk of doing so, worked with 200 of the most at risk young people in the borough – 75% of them achieving a successful outcome
- Our One Stop Shop, in Mile End Park, brand new facilities are available for young people to receive personal support

“We want to make the borough a place to be proud of”

We will take the following actions in 2007-2009:

- 1 Improve the quality of advice and guidance to all young people including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and reduce the number of young people not in education, training or employment
 - Bring Connexions in-house in order to pool resources and build integrated local teams;
 - Provide advice and support with job-search to all young people; and
 - Ensure that all young people in care who have a learning difficulty are allocated a personal adviser as soon as possible.
- 2 Support young people to achieve a smooth transition from pre- to post-16 learning and remain in education, training and employment
 1. Develop a Youth Engagement Scheme to ensure that all NEET young people are made aware of the opportunities available to them and supported to take them up;
 2. Expand the New Start project to offer more opportunities each year; and
 3. Commission new post-16 programmes for young people working at level 1 or lower.
- 3 Continue to boost the life chances of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds
 4. Work in partnership with Step Forward to support young people aged 16/17 at risk of homelessness to remain in their family home or make a planned move to supported accommodation;
 5. Work in partnership with the Financial Services Authority to develop train youth workers in financial literacy work with young people; and
 - Provide more basic skills support for young people via youth centres.

Delivering the plan

Overarching objectives

To deliver the plan, there are some further overarching actions. We will:

- 1 Implement the Youth Service **Quality Assurance** Framework, including an annual self-assessment against the Ofsted quality criteria and termly peer inspections of every project;
- 2 Work in partnership with Community Organisation Forum to engage with the **Third Sector** and deliver a capacity building programme to enable voluntary and community organisations to develop high quality services to young people;
- 3 Continue our comprehensive **staff development** programme, to build a capable and effective qualified staff team;
- 4 To develop access and inclusion strategies to ensure that services meet the needs of all young people and ensure that service providers understand the Council's perspective **equality and diversity** policy and their role in enhancing this in the provision of services.

Curriculum framework

Our Curriculum Framework sets out the way in which Youth and Community Services, its providers and partners can plan and deliver a wide variety of educational activities for young people.

In response to the Every Child Matters agenda, it is organised around each of the five outcomes identified in the plan. Each area has three elements:

- Content - a set of learning outcomes derived from themes and based on needs;
- Processes - ways of teaching and learning so the outcomes are achieved; and
- Assessment - performance criteria to measure the outcomes achieved.

Whilst the term 'curriculum' may seem formal, it provides a structured way to demonstrate young people's growth, development and achievements. It also provides a systematic approach to the planning, delivery and evaluation of youth work practice that makes clear to both youth workers and young people what outcomes young people are achieving through their involvement.

Quality Assurance Framework

The Quality Assurance Framework underpins our vision for high quality services. It is a means by which the Local Authority and Service Provider Managers can work together to measure service delivery and set targets for improvement. It provides a transparent process by which services can be monitored, evaluated and consequently improved and promotes understanding of acceptable quality standards, highlighting good practice.

The Quality Assurance Framework incorporates the requirements set by Ofsted and Transforming Youth Work into our local context and our own vision for the service in Tower Hamlets. The Framework sets out key themes and objectives, each of which have standards and performance indicators attached. As part of the annual monitoring process, providers are expected to carry out a self-assessment, which will then form the basis for an improvement action plan. It also contains a `toolkit`, which includes model pro-forma for planning and evaluating each unit.

Monitoring & evaluation of the plan

The Youth Service Plan will be monitored through the framework set by the Community Plan and the Strategic Children and Young People's Plan.

Youth and Community Services will use the following processes and procedures, in conjunction with our youth work providers and key partners, to monitor and evaluate our achievements of the targets within the plan:

- 1) Monitoring information will be collected monthly via YouthBase on the number of young people reached by our services, their attendance at the youth provision, and their ethnicity, gender, age.
- 2) Information will also be collected monthly on changes to provision, such as units opening and closing, and on staff, including an audit of their skills and details of proposed and actual training undertaken.
- 3) Youth work managers within the providers will be visiting each unit to monitor activity at least once a term, using a common Managers' Checklist. This information will then be forwarded to the Head of Youth and Community Services and will be included for discussion at the termly meetings with the Service Head for Youth and Community Learning (see point 5 below).
- 4) Peer Inspection visits will be carried out as a part of a rolling programme, when contract managers and members of the core team observe activities in individual units, then prepare written reports and provide verbal feedback to youth workers and their managers. From these visits action plans are developed to address issues causing concern and the units are then later re-inspected. The reports include grades tied to standards contained in the Ofsted Framework for Inspecting Youth Services.
- 5) The Service Head for Youth and Community Learning and the Head of Youth and Community Services will undertake quarterly contract monitoring meetings with individual providers to review progress and performance. This will include a unit-by-unit health-check, using information provided from managers monitoring visits and peer inspections.
- 6) Joint Providers Forums chaired by the Service Head of Youth and Community Learning will take place bi-monthly. The focus of these meetings will be ensuring the further development of policies, and discussions about service delivery, improvement and service planning.

- 7) There will also be bimonthly meetings of the Youth Work Training Forum comprising contract managers and providers as well as representatives from the core team and the voluntary sector. The Forum (which is a joint venture between the service and Tower Hamlets College) is responsible for overseeing the training of contract providers' youth workers as well as other workers operating in the wider community.
- 8) Other practice sharing forums will oversee the delivery of elements of the plan, including the Curriculum and Accreditation Steering Group and the Youth Participation Forum.
- 9) The Service's Quality Assurance Framework will be used annually by all contract providers to undertake a self-assessment of their performance across 10 objectives and 55 standards. Each unit is required to produce an annual unit plan that is forwarded to the Head of Youth and Community Services. Both of these measures are important parts of the annual planning process and feeds into the following year's Service Plan.
- 10) Monitoring visits and spot checks to projects delivered by Third Sector partners are carried out by various members of the core team. Last summer all Positive Activities for Young People and Crime Prevention Initiatives and nearly 90% of Summer Grant initiatives were visited.