

# First Annual Update- Hackney Council Strategic Plan - Working Together for a Better Hackney 2022-2026

## 1. Introduction from the Mayor

In November 2022, Hackney Council adopted its Strategic Plan, 'Working Together for a Better Hackney'. The Plan sets out the ambitions for the Council for the next four years, as well as the challenges we face, and describes how as a Council we need to respond and change, working and co-producing with residents, the voluntary and community sectors, the business community and public sector partners.

The Council's Strategic Plan is framed by the priorities for my new term as elected Mayor of Hackney and reflects the 2022-2026 Manifesto commitments of the elected Labour administration. The Manifesto commitments are underpinned by the Council's corporate values and priorities.

I committed to bringing an annual update on the Strategic Plan to Full Council in May of each year, linked to the Annual Meeting. This is the first update.

### **Financial Challenge:**

The plan is being delivered during one of the most difficult times in post war memory; the Covid-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the deep social inequalities both in our borough and wider society. In addition to this, the Council was the victim of a severe criminal cyber attack which disrupted many of its services and further eroded the Council's financial position.

Over the next three years this will make the challenge of delivering a balanced budget all the more difficult. Unfortunately, the prevailing consensus within Local Government is that a more favourable funding settlement from Government, which matches the level of demand on the sector, is not on the way.

As set out in the Annual Budget Report on 1st March our mid-case scenario for the budget gap for the medium term period 2024/25 to 2026/27 is £57m. Although the Council will seek to meet this gap through a programme of corporate transformation, and continue to put residents first, we should not underestimate the scale of the challenge, it is almost inevitable that hard choices will be forced on us all.

Despite these challenges, our Hackney Labour Manifesto remains ambitious and presents a clear set of commitments for the Council and direction for the borough. In Hackney, we are not in the business of managing decline. Instead, we work with our

residents and partners to find innovative solutions and ways of working, which meet the needs of our residents who require the most support in an increasingly complex and difficult environment.

The commitments describe what we will achieve but also how we will change the Council and the way we deliver services, through collaboration, co-design and co-production. Later this year, we will welcome peers from the Local Government Association to provide the critical professional challenge that is crucial to delivering a Council that serves our community and does it well.

This update focuses on what has been done to mobilise the activity that will be needed to ensure a positive impact on residents' lives, whilst being set against the backdrop of another challenging year for the Council and the local community since the Local and Mayoral elections in May 2022.

### **Cost of Living and Homelessness:**

The cost of living crisis is affecting more people, with inflation rates falling at a slower rate than expected and interest rates likely to increase again in coming months. Increased costs do not just affect residents, they put financial pressure on public institutions, the voluntary and community sector and businesses as well. All of this against the backdrop of over 10 years of austerity and cuts to Local Government funding, in Hackney we've seen a 41% reduction since 2010.

The cost of living crisis has led to an even greater demand for housing as the homelessness crisis worsens. We have seen an increase of 15% in the number of people presenting as homeless and as a result children in homeless families in temporary accommodation now make up 1.5% of Hackney's overall population. We are struggling to procure any new temporary or settled accommodation or place residents in London or the South East.

### **Improving housing:**

The Strategic Plan is clear about the areas of the Council that need improving, including housing management. The coroner's findings into the death in Rochdale of Awaab Ishak, who died in 2020 at only two years of age as a direct result of black mould, was incredibly upsetting and a defining moment for the housing sector. It has led to an even more focused response to improve repairs and tackle damp and mould in Council owned homes as well as introducing mechanisms to tackle damp and mould in the private rented sector.

### **Children's Services:**

Following the "requires improvement" rating in the 2019 inspection of Hackney Children's Services under the OFSTED framework, we have been progressing a comprehensive children's action plan. In September 2022, OFSTED visited again

and found that there had been key improvements to the front door services. Since then we have also engaged with a Joint Inspection of Youth Justice Services and we will receive the formal outcome soon. Last March, an investigation into the strip-search of Child Q, a Black teenage girl, by police officers in a Hackney secondary school was published. The report found that racism and 'adultification bias' - where Black children are treated more harshly than their white peers - were likely factors in what happened. Sadly, we know that this is not a one off example of racism and we have worked relentlessly to ensure that these findings and our responses substantively influence work across the system to tackle institutional racism.

### **Global Events:**

Global events affect our residents, both directly and indirectly. 15 months into the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there is no sign of an end to the conflict and, to date, Hackney has welcomed 350 people, thanks to the generosity of our residents who signed up to the Homes for Ukraine scheme. A number of hotels have been commissioned by the Home Office to house asylum seekers and we are scaling up our efforts in response to these needs and more generally to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

The recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria have also affected many Hackney residents who are either from the region or have extended families caught up in this terrible natural disaster. Many have lost friends and family and many more are still involved in the relief effort.

At the time of writing we see yet another crisis unfolding in Sudan, with reports of Sudanese people fleeing their homes, with little clarity over what the international response might be.

## **2. Summary of Strategic Plan**

### **Our vision for the next four years:**

Working together with our communities and our partners to tackle the unprecedented challenges that we face, we will make transformational change, we will co-produce and co-design solutions with residents, we will campaign for a better deal for Hackney; we will deliver outstanding public services; we will drive a fairer economic recovery; and we will make a better Hackney for everyone who lives and works here.

### **Our priorities:**

#### **Working together...FOR A FAIRER, SAFER HACKNEY**

We will tackle inequality through poverty reduction, and anti-racism, providing at least 1000 more Council homes as we improve standards of our existing homes, and

creating pathways into decent jobs. We will improve our customer services. We will create safe, vibrant, and successful town centres and neighbourhoods and foster strong, cohesive communities and a more inclusive economy.

### **Working together...FOR A GREENER, HEALTHIER HACKNEY**

We will continue to lead the way in the fight against climate change, working towards a net zero Hackney, with cleaner air, less motor traffic, and more liveable neighbourhoods. We will transform adult and children's social care, tackle physical and mental health inequalities and continue to support, value, and give voice to our older and disabled residents.

### **Working together...FOR EVERY CHILD IN HACKNEY**

We will work to ensure every child and young person in Hackney has the best start in life; shaping a more inclusive and high performing education system, maintaining our early years and youth services, keeping children safe and investing in their mental health and well being, providing access to outstanding play, culture, and sport, and opportunities; tackling child poverty, and supporting those families who need us most.

### **Our approach to addressing inequality:**

- We will tackle structural and systemic discrimination - embedding an anti-racist approach and ensuring accountability;
- We will take protective, preventative and positive action that tackles underlying issues, recognising there is proven bias in the system;
- We will promote prosperity and wellbeing with targeted, positive action when needed;
- We will build strong, cohesive communities that are part of the solution;
- We will develop a workforce that is inclusive, anti-racist and reflects the diversity of Hackney at all levels.

### **Our values:**

#### **We are...**

OPEN AND INCLUSIVE  
AMBITIOUS AND PROUD  
PIONEERING AND PROACTIVE

#### **We will...**

- **Put our residents first:** with a Council that works for the people who live and work here;

- **Secure Hackney's future:** with a Council that is financially sustainable and investing in what matters;
- **Change Together:** with a Council that is modernised, flexible, collaborative, and skilled to meet our future challenges.

### 3. How we will work

The more our residents struggle as a result of cumulative crises and inequalities, the greater the demand for council services and support, whilst the pressures of inflation make those services more expensive to deliver. This also puts a greater strain on staff. This means we will need to fundamentally change the way we deliver some of those services, so we can safeguard our workforce for the future. Ultimately, we want our residents, staff and our peers in local government to all think that Hackney is one of the best Councils in the country. Without the changes set out below, we do not think we will be able to achieve this ambition and the aspirations set out in this plan.

The way we work is going to be as important as what we do, because this is how we can be most impactful and create the right working relationships and conditions for work to be sustained. We want to be a Council that works for the people who live and work here - putting residents first. We need to be financially sustainable and invest in what matters to have a secure financial future. We want to be a Council that is modernised, flexible, collaborative, and skilled to meet our future challenges.

We will do this by:

- **Using data more effectively to help us understand problems in a more holistic way** - This will ensure we're able to use our resources most effectively to support residents in the best way possible and ensure we can make decisions that are well supported by evidence, but not blocked by unnecessary bureaucracy;
- **Building capabilities across our Council services** - Bringing frontline staff directly into how we do change and creating development opportunities for all staff;
- **Enabling Council service areas to access a broad set of skills to support change** - Connecting knowledge and expertise within service areas with core design capacity and capability;
- **Implementing a Corporate Landlord Operating Model and creating the right governance frameworks** - The concept of a Corporate Landlord is that

management around all property assets is carried out at a corporate and strategic level, rather than at a service level;

- **Measuring and evaluating our work** - So we know what to do more of and what we need to do less of in the future;
- **Working in the open by creating opportunities for residents to participate in our work** - Ensuring our services and decisions are co-designed and informed by the communities we serve;
- **We will work to close the digital divide and make better use of digital technology to modernise and innovate** where we can to create better experiences for our residents and staff.

The following ways of working were developed over the last four years and put into practice during the pandemic and we are now seeking to embed this further through working at all levels to support staff and partners with the right skills and tools:

### **Seeing communities as assets and putting residents first**

We have been working with London Metropolitan University to provide critical challenge to the way we work with residents to co-produce ideas and co-design new services.

### **Inclusive, open and humble and anti-racist**

A full update is provided in the following section below, under “Trust and Confidence in the State.”

### **Place shaping and community wealth building**

Updates are provided throughout this plan about the work we are developing to support place shaping and place based approaches.

### **Collaborative and strategic partnership working**

As a Council, we need to be more outward facing and collaborative, working across the whole system to find the right sustainable solutions. This will require leaders to work across boundaries with a greater degree of flexibility and openness to change than they have perhaps been used to.

Working with universities can help us improve many of the challenges in this Strategic Plan, developing the way we work and tackle the most intractable issues in an evidence based way, as well as shaping a more inclusive economy by working with local institutions to design learning for local people and businesses.

The Council is proactively developing local partnerships, as well as assessing all the partnerships already in place across the Council, so we can maximise and strengthen these links in support of this Strategic Plan.

We need to ensure that we have systematic ways to engage with a diverse range of partners, whether they are large or small, focused on the whole borough of hyper local and across all sectors - other statutory partners, the voluntary and community sector and social enterprises and the private sector and business community.

We have discussed the Strategic Plan priorities with partners. The following are emerging shared priorities for what we will focus on together, and which will be developed further:

- Our role as anchor institutions - to develop an inclusive economy
- Rebuilding trust and confidence with communities
- Tackling poverty and the cost of living crisis
- Tackling inequality
- Net Zero Commitment
- Shared challenges for our workforce

## 4. Updates

### 4.1 - FOR A FAIRER, SAFER HACKNEY

#### Tackling poverty

Hackney is a borough where **poverty and inequality** is becoming more entrenched after a decade of austerity measures and a pandemic. Tackling Poverty has been a key priority for the Council in recent years and we adopted a poverty reduction framework in March 2022.

Over the last year we have been working to **develop a more coordinated emergency support and advice offer with more preventative help**. Ultimately we are trying to create one connected system of support, with the Council, statutory partners, food partners and community organisations working together. **This year the Council passed a Right to Food Motion** which ensures a continued focus on the joining up of efforts around financial support, food security, healthy and sustainable food.

The Council **has established the Money Hub team** within the Council, creating a single point of access for emergency funding. Residents in financial distress now only have to fill out one form, instead of four, and Money Hub also uses data proactively to contact people we know are in financial difficulty. When offering financial support, we also look for opportunities to maximise income and encourage benefit take up. The Money Hub's outreach workers collaborate with community partners and share their resources, so that they have a wider value and impact.

So far:

- 3,200 residents have requested support from the team in its first 5 months of operations, double the number who accessed financial support from the Council in all of the previous year. More than half of applicants are already in rent or Council Tax arrears;
- The team has distributed £395k of discretionary funds, and delivered £293k worth of increased incomes through benefits uptake work;
- This represents a positive return for residents: for every £1 we've invested in staffing, we've increased annual incomes of our most vulnerable residents by £1.49.

The 2023/24 budget had to include a 4.99% increase to Council Tax. This is never an easy decision as any rise can have an impact on those that are on low and fixed incomes. However, this will raise £5 million to help us continue to run the services our residents need. Hackney Council Tax rates remain low compared with other Councils and **we are seeking to support our hardest-hit residents by making a one-off payment of up to £50 to all Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants** to cover the impact of the increase in the Council's and the GLA's element of the council tax for the majority of these residents. We are also topping up the Council Tax Reduction Hardship Scheme to double its usual level.

The Council cannot, however, operate in isolation. We are limited in what we can deliver directly that meets the scale of the challenge. We have brought partners together through the Integrated Care System to establish a cost of living crisis response across the borough and we are running **fortnightly online sessions to share tools and resources** with resident-facing practitioners from across sectors.

The Council has recently **identified a further £850k** to support poverty reduction working with partners:

- £300k will be used to support tackling child poverty in schools - this was in advance of the Mayor of London announcing that the GLA would fund free school meals in all primary schools;
- £200k will support Money Hub support: topping up grant funding support for in home appliances and investing further in income maximisation officers;
- £100k will create hardship support and preventative help for those who have no recourse to public funds;
- £250k will support the coordination and partnership development needed to ensure that we can develop more sustainable approaches to poverty reduction in communities.

We welcomed the **£5.6m continued support from central government via the Housing Support Fund**, and the fact this has been secured for 2023/24. We used this funding to provide support to a wide range of groups identified by professionals, including children and families from 0-19, pensioners, people identified by Benefits and Housing Needs, Childrens and Adults, including Foster Carers. Funding was also distributed via [Hackney Giving](#) - funding community organisations that provide financial support to residents, Citizens Advice and Food Hubs.

A task group **has reviewed food poverty affecting children in schools**. The task group has listened to schools and community organisations to inform thinking about how we might expand the FSM offer in a financially sustainable way to a wider group of children and look at models that reduce unit cost, improve quality, but do not simply rely upon Councils picking up the funding. The announcement that the Mayor of London will be funding universal free school meals for the 2023/24 academic year in primary schools is welcomed and we are taking on board the implications and opportunities for local work to complement this, drawing on the £300k injection of funding outlined above.

We are also doing what we can to support organisations on the ground, who are struggling with rising costs and demands. This is vitally important because it is these organisations that have **the greatest reach into diverse communities**. For example, we helped secure £180k to invest in the three food hubs that coordinate the distribution of food waste (Woodberry Aid, Hackney City Farm, Morningside and Gascoyne).

To support the joining up of efforts on the ground, especially in local areas:

- Two members of staff are dedicated to creating a bridge between community activity, health partners and the community, and working with local ward councillors;
- Earlier this year we also created [new grant funding](#) for [20 organisations](#), which have good connections to those residents who we all need to reach. Each organisation is linked to a Council officer who will help working between the Council and partners.

We have already designated libraries as warm hubs and **are supporting more organisations to develop warm hubs and get onto the [online map of hubs](#)**.

Housing Services have awarded small grants totalling £39,966.00 to 14 organisations to expand their offer and provide a warm space. Hackney's energy advice contractor, the London Energy Saving Squad (LESS), are running energy advice drop-in sessions at designated hubs across the borough.

## Tackling key inequalities

The Strategic Plan proposes new equality objectives which build on the ones adopted in 2018, and take on board what we have learnt through the pandemic and the development of our work on anti-racism.

Last March, an investigation into the strip-search of Child Q, a Black teenage girl, by police officers in a Hackney secondary school was published. The report found that racism and 'adultification bias' - where Black children are treated more harshly than their white peers - were likely factors in what happened. Sadly, we know that this is not a one off example of racism and **it has been important to ensure that these findings and our responses substantively influence work across the system to tackle institutional racism. Progress was recently considered at a [Special Scrutiny Meeting](#), which is a meeting held in public, led by backbench members.**

**These equality objectives will be tested publicly over the next few months** as we develop a new equality plan for Full Council to approve later this year. **The plan will include a Council wide anti-racism action plan and the LGBTQIA framework**, alongside a wider set of *priorities* for the next four years, that respond to the evidence of inequality and our understanding of what is driving inequality.

### *Refugees and asylum seekers*

Hackney has long welcomed refugees and migrants who come to make Hackney their new home as they rebuild their lives and we celebrate the tolerance and diversity of the community that has long welcomed migrants and those seeking sanctuary.

Over the last year **we have scaled up our efforts to respond to those who arrive in Hackney, whether as unaccompanied asylum seekers who are children or adults who have been placed in Hackney hotels over the last three years**, as well as those supported through the formal schemes. This means that there are now a number of teams across the Council involved in supporting vulnerable refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, as well as the community activity. We are now working to develop more seamless support so that there is more consistent and greater parity of offer.

- Homes for Ukraine - Adults, Health & Integration - ~300 residents have applied to sponsor and host over 500 Ukrainian guests so far, with ~350 arrived to date;
- Afghan resettlement scheme - 37 people in six households;
- Community Sponsorship schemes - one live scheme;
- BNO Hong Kong visa routes - we have worked with community partners to deliver integration support funded by the GLA.

## Responding to the Housing Crisis

### *Housing affordability and supply*

We will continue to do what we can to respond to the housing crisis that Hackney has experienced for many years, whilst recognising that much of this is beyond our control and needs national policy change.

The operating context has become even more challenging in recent years. It now costs more to build a house because of the steeply rising cost of construction and, quite rightly, new building safety and sustainability requirements. Our build costs have gone up by around 40% in the past two years, and this has not been offset by any additional income. Consequently, we are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that Hackney can keep building the affordable homes it needs.

An overheated rental market, with demand outstripping supply, is putting more people at risk of homelessness. Housing benefit levels (Local Housing Allowance) have long been set at too low a level to make private renting viable for those on benefits. With a 15% increase in demand from residents becoming homeless we have 3100 households in temporary accommodation, with 1000 of these placed outside the borough, and increasingly outside of London.

Despite having developed our own large temporary accommodation provision of more than 800+ self contained units, it is getting even more challenging to find private housing and temporary accommodation and it is virtually impossible for the Council to accommodate people in Hackney in accommodation that they can afford.

**In December 2022, we secured approval from Cabinet for a new house building programme to deliver 300 new social rented homes as part of our commitment to deliver 1,000 social rent homes between now and 2026.** We are also looking at other opportunities for development on sites we own and exploring new development partnerships. We know, however, that we cannot solve the housing crisis on our own and the scale of the challenge calls for national policy interventions and funding, including to improve standards in private rented housing.

To support our response, **a new Housing Needs Survey has been commissioned.** An assessment of overcrowding (and under occupation), that includes a full demographic analysis, will also report later this year.

### *Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping*

The **refresh of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is nearing completion**. The Council has commissioned Homeless Link to assist with this programme of work which has included surveys, focus groups, workshops and one to one interviews with residents, homeless people, organisations and charities working in the sector and Council staff. The first draft is currently being reviewed with an expected publication date of June 2023.

Challenges that the strategy will need to respond to are:

- A steep and rapid increase in overall homelessness and rough sleeping, particularly young people;
- An increase in the number of homeless people with multiple and complex needs;
- A shrinking private rented sector;
- Increasing competition for accommodation, both temporary and settled homes resulting in increased costs.

Strategy oversight will sit with the Homelessness Partnership Board which was relaunched last month.

A programme of training for council wide staff and NHS colleagues continues to be rolled out to enable full understanding and consistent, helpful messaging for residents.

London Councils data survey results for Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation pressures is being collected and shared bi monthly. This combined with other pan london reports show that the investment and development of temporary accommodation hostels in borough has meant less placements outside London, kept families in borough near support networks and kept spend stable when compared with other local authorities. A temporary accommodation delivery group continues to meet monthly pursuing several large lease deals and are currently in talks with investment firms. Modelling has shown a requirement for an additional 1000 units of temporary accommodation over the next two years.

Hackney continues to lead the way in high standards for temporary accommodation with 87% of placements made into registered buildings with the Pan London inspectorate. This is the highest percentage any authority has made since records began. This achievement is even more exceptional when you consider the average across London for the same period was 30% when compared to East London sub region peers. Homeless prevention activities have been front loaded with staff trained in mediation and trauma informed practice and a new team to assist residents with searching for affordable privately rented homes has been stood up.

Due to an increase in people sleeping rough, a new 15 bedspace assessment centre in the borough has been opened in conjunction with charity partners.

### *Improving standards in the private rented sector*

We have continued to campaign to improve standards in the private rented sector through our Better Renting Campaign, and offer support to residents who face the risk of eviction. **This includes lobbying against no fault evictions and short term lets. In addition to the mandatory landlord licensing scheme, we are looking to also extend the selective licensing scheme across the whole of Hackney for 2024.** The Private Sector Housing team undertakes enforcement action where necessary but seeks to work preventatively with landlords to improve housing, guided by a new strategy for Private Sector Housing that is under development. As part of this, both the Landlord Forum and Private Renters Forum will be relaunched in summer 2023.

We have set aside **£400k for environmental health officers** to help those in the private rented sector **secure the repairs needed to ensure their homes are safe and free from damp and mould.**

### **Improving the way we manage Council housing**

This £400k investment builds **on the additional £1 million investment in our Council homes, included as part of our 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account budget proposals.** This is funding a continued expansion of our repairs service to provide a swift, more focused response to improve repairs and tackle damp and mould in our own homes.

To improve the way we approach repairs in Council housing, **we are growing our in-house maintenance team by a fifth as part of our efforts to be more responsive.**

By growing our in-house team we aim to provide local employment opportunities, and reduce cost and reliance on external third party contractors. This will give us greater control over the quality of work and demonstrate better value for money for the delivery of repairs and maintenance services. A stock condition survey will be undertaken which will help reset our Asset Management Strategy to determine future investment needs on estates.

Since last year we have also:

- **Cleared our backlog of repairs** work caused by the cyber attack and pandemic and increased call response times;

- **Improved the way we resolve complaints and turnaround times** (averaging 20 days now, down from a high during the cyber attack of 30);
- satisfaction has increased - 36% of residents giving us at least 8/10, up from 17% last March;
- **Set a new target for leaks to be tackled within 24 hours**  
This is a significant change from where a controllable leak would be responded to within 20 working days. We have seen an increase in demand for repairs overall (including leaks) over the last 12 months, carrying out over 85,000 repairs in 2022/23, 28,500 more than the previous year. This increase has impacted on our ability to achieve this target and currently we are only attending just over 51% of leaks within 24 hours. However, the average time to attend a leak since this target was introduced is 1.45 days;
- **Changed our lift maintenance contract** and improved communications on lift breakdown. We recognise that there is still work to do on lifts and we are procuring a contractor to undertake major refurbishment / renewal of lifts as well as repair and service them. An Independent review of the lifts with the most reoccurring issues has identified a priority list of 37 lifts for when the contractor is in place;
- **Reviewed our leaseholder services** and relaunched as a Home Ownership Service, identified key improvements to put in place over the next two years; this is underpinned by a new charter;
- **Introduce Local Housing Surgeries** - We have piloted and are now rolling our housing surgeries out across the borough with a commitment that each Housing Officer will undertake a weekly surgery in or close to their patch.

Improving resident engagement is a key part of becoming more responsive. In December 2022 we approved the [Resident Engagement Strategy](#) which set out our commitment to place residents at the heart of how we deliver the Housing Services.

We will continue to expand the involvement of residents using different communication channels and not rely only on face to face meetings. This is supported by our resident participation budget of **£191k which has been used to help tenant resident associations to develop their membership**. We have also developed youth projects on New Kingshold, Fellow Court, Geoffrey Estate in partnerships with residents. Having established a new youth engagement framework, **we have now established a Housing Youth Forum which will deliver targeted youth projects across each neighbourhood** and engage more young people into the engaged structures. Improving youth engagement was also a key commitment from the Young Futures Commission.

The Resident Engagement Improvement Fund (REIF £500k) continues to be an important way for us to engage with residents about the priorities for improvements on their estates. **Resident Estate Improvement Fund walkabouts, with residents,**

**housing officers and the communal works team, took place on all estates during September and October last year.**

We have also launched a [new online booking system](#) for our community halls, which will open up access to local community groups.

## **Making Hackney Safer**

### *Community safety*

To continue to make Hackney a safer place, we need to address the concerns of groups who feel or are less safe. We also need to address trust and confidence in policing which is low according to MOPAC confidence and satisfaction data. We are committed to work with the Police to build trust and confidence through shared actions between the Police, Council and community, and a full update on this work is provided below.

We work in partnership with the Police and local businesses to make Hackney a safe place to be at night and to reduce related ASB, **with Council enforcement officers working in areas identified as particular hotspots around Ridley Road, Gillett Square and London Fields in the warmer months.** The late night levy has also provided funding for a Senior Enforcement Officer to work in the Dalston area. Last year **we launched a new accreditation scheme that encourages licensed venues to become safer and better equipped to deal with issues around the sale of alcohol and to encourage a healthy environment** for all staff, customers and visitors. Premises who successfully gain the accreditation will benefit from a 30% reduction to late night levy fees. The scheme is also part of the council's commitment to ending violence against women and **venues taking part in the scheme are required to sign up to the [Women's Safety Charter](#)** and promote Hackney's ongoing work to protect women against sexual harassment.

The reduction of crime and ASB are primary community safety objectives contained within a number of manifesto commitments and the Hackney Community Safety Plan.

**Overall Crime has come down slightly by 0.7% and violent crimes, including injuries from knife crime, have stayed the same.** We have seen burglary come down by 9% and car theft down by 2.8%.

**We remain concerned about personal safety however, as the number of knife crime incidents without injury have increased by just under 9%, and this seems to be linked to the night time economy. Robbery has also increased by 2.1%.** To combat the increase in knife crime without injury the Community Safety

Team has focused on a range of interventions working with local businesses selling knives, supporting licensed venues to ensure appropriate searches are carried out, conducting weapon sweeps, installing knife bins, working with schools and undertaking outreach to raise the awareness of the negative impact of knife possession. Mediation sessions have also been held between rival gangs to prevent knife crime.

**The number of calls about anti-social behaviour (ASB) has reduced by just under 9% from 10,274 in August 2021 to 9,373 in August 2022.** In addition the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has been working hard to reduce ASB on estates and public spaces. In particular the CSP has been working in Gillet Square and Ridley Road Market to ensure that these spaces are safe for visitors. Recently nine arrests were made for drug supply in Ridley Road with a positive impact being witnessed by market traders in this area. Gillet Square has seen the investment of six CCTV cameras to provide enhanced safety in the area and we have been working with Hackney Cooperative Developments to ensure that events in Gillet Square are safe and trouble free. We have also invested in three additional Enforcement Officers in Gillet Square and Ridley Road to work with communities to reduce ASB. Over the last year patrols in these locations have increased exponentially with valuable community intelligence being obtained that has led to reductions in ASB.

For 2022/23 Hackney funded an additional four Enforcement Officers to work in green spaces, including London Fields. This resulted in a reduction in ASB in those locations during the Summer months.

**The CSP continues to work collaboratively in the Night Time Economy (NTE) with support from the Late Night Levy.**

Recent successes include:

- We have undertaken a significant number of Welfare and Vulnerability Training (WAVE) with licensees. This training supports venues to better identify vulnerability, and how to take early engagement with a potential vulnerable person to ensure their safety. It also covers drink spiking, “ASK ANGELA” and other topics relevant to keeping customers and staff safe;
- Our new Accreditation Scheme offers safety training and guidance at local venues. This new scheme will grant a 30% reduction on Late Night Levy fees for those venues who gain the accreditation. At the moment 21 premises have signed up to the scheme;
- We have a partnership action plan in existence to respond effectively to those selling noxious substances (Noxs). This has led to a considerable seizure of Noxs and a 200% increase in the use of Fixed Penalty Notices;

- The Hackney Nights Portal is available to licensees and is free to access and use. It has several free online training sessions that can easily be sent to staff to complete on their own devices. This facility is one of the first in the UK;
- Hackney has adopted the Women's Safety Charter to promote Hackney's ongoing work to protect women against sexual harassment;
- The Late Night Levy is funding the Hackney Medics; two medics and an ambulance. The medics operate across the borough at weekends to provide care for vulnerable individuals and can intervene very quickly with instances of drink spiking;
- All Late Night Levy premises are provided with a handset free of charge and only pay a small annual connection fee to the network.

The London-wide Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) **was commissioned to undertake an independent review of the Integrated Gangs Unit** and our partnership approach to reducing serious violence, whilst safeguarding those exploited by gang violence and intimidation. The VRU review was undertaken at no financial cost to Hackney and the work has been highlighted to other London Borough as shared practice. The focus of the review was on prevention and victim support. The review, completed in October 2022, **highlighted the strength of the IGU, from a partnership perspective, in tackling the causes and effects of serious violence in Hackney.** In addition, the VRU made fourteen recommendations for improvement which were presented to the Gangs and Serious Violence Board (GSVB) for approval. The recommendations are contained within the single violence action plan and are reviewed for progress at the GSVB. It is anticipated that all recommendations will be delivered within existing resources by 2024.

Early successes, predicated on the feedback, include the development of partnership critical incident plans that bring together key stakeholders including the voluntary sector and community to enhance interventions in areas of gang tensions. For example, the IGU has developed a partnership with the community and Arsenal FC in London fields and the Pembury estate to refurbish the local football pitches to undertake football sessions for young people. In addition, the Wickers charity is also involved in supporting young people together with Mentivation Services who provide input to schools to raise the awareness of the pernicious effects of gang violence.

The work of the IGU Community Coordinators was highlighted as best practice by the VRU for their work in working with individuals and communities to ensure their voice is heard and responded to. In response to the VRU finding we have recruited an additional Community Coordinator to build upon their existing work with the intention of empowering communities to take action in their area to prevent gang exploitation.

*Hate crime*

Hackney is committed to offering better support to those affected by a hate crime or incident and to give witnesses the confidence to come forward and report. This includes reducing anti-semitism working closely with Shomrim and key stakeholders from the Charedi community. **We are recruiting Hate Crime Champions, to support and advise victims and witnesses of a hate incident or crime.** All champions will be supported in their role with regular check-ins and training. **The Hate Crime Forum has been created to ensure the Council's work around hate crime in the borough is representative of all Hackney's diverse communities.** The forum will be an inclusive group, who meet regularly to discuss and collaborate with the Council on best practice when sharing important messages around hate crime with different communities. The Hate Crime Awareness week in October 2022 was supported in Hackney through a series of community events. A hate Crime awareness video was released via social media to encourage people to report all forms of hate crime. During the Hate Crime Awareness Week additional training was provided to licensed premises staff to raise the awareness of LGBTQI plus hate crimes with the intention of increasing incident reporting.

We have also collaborated with the nationally recognised Heartstone to deliver school interventions to support children to report and challenge hate. The Heartstone initiative uses story circles to support people to challenge prejudice whilst providing pathways to support children who may experience hate.

### *Violence against women and girls*

As part of our **continued focus on ending violence against women and girls, a community survey was undertaken that identified six locations** where people felt unsafe in the borough. We are working through the recommendations identified.

### *Substance misuse and harms*

Project Adder, a Home Office programme intended to reduce drug related death, offending and use, is coming to its conclusion having been funded in Hackney from July 2021 until June 2023. Under Project Adder, within the criminal justice setting, we have sought to work effectively across the criminal justice and treatment system, improving communication both strategically and operationally with key partners. We have also worked with organisations who are culturally and contextually sensitive and who embed lived-experience into their practice, to truly complement and enhance our treatment offer. **Throughout the scheme we have fostered good relationships between various stakeholders who have some level of involvement in an individual's journey.** As a collective this helps us provide appropriate support and interventions to people who use drugs. There is still a lot to do, and we hope to build on this work through the auspices of the newly formed Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP), which has been largely informed by the

positive work conducted under Project Adder, and will continue to deliver on Adder objectives alongside wider efforts around substance use

### *Fire safety*

To prioritise building and fire safety recommendations for all housing in Hackney, we have been building capacity within the building control team. **Work is underway to respond to new regulatory requirements following the Grenfell tragedy, we await further details that require secondary legislation.**

### **Trust and confidence in the state**

[National trends show](#) that trust and confidence in the state is on the decline. Locally, residents still have a relatively high level of trust in the Council, although this is much lower for Black and Global Majority residents and social housing tenants. This indicates a polarisation of views and we cannot just focus on the headline. This needs attention and a much more segmented and targeted approach if we are to get actions right to become a fairer borough. This can make it more difficult to reach and engage with residents and start to tackle inequality and meet complex needs.

A key part of maintaining the current levels of trust and confidence and building trust where it is low, will be improving services, where needed, and this also recognises that those most reliant on Council services will be most greatly impacted by poor services. This includes management of Council Housing, and the improvements are detailed above.

We have worked hard to respond to the Cyber attack in 2020, Black Lives Matter and the review into the treatment of Child Q in 2022, as these presented key risks to trust and confidence. Progressing work towards the Council becoming more inclusive, humble and anti-racist, including future planned work such as implementing the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standards, is also going to be critical to us rebuilding trust and confidence.

### *Work with the Police to build trust and confidence through shared action*

Improving trust and confidence in policing has also been a key focus of work over the last year. **The Council has worked closely with the Police and community partners to develop a new trust and confidence in police action plan** and also to progress a pilot with the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime, (MOPAC) to establish a new approach to community-led scrutiny of police powers.

Since this work began we have:

- **Increased police and community engagement** - increased number of partners on police mailing lists and increased police attendance at community events;
- **Developed a Youth Innovation Hub partnership with Amazon** - Hackney young people developing an app with police and Amazon tech team to increase information sharing, with focus on rights of young people (<https://www.younghackney.org/advice/staying-safe/stop-and-search/>). It is planned that a QR code link to this website will be provided to all young people in Hackney who are stopped for a search. The programme will initially be tested by Safer Neighbourhood Teams and then rolled out more widely;
- **Established a Youth Scrutiny Panel held at The Crib**, including the Territorial Support Group, soon to expand to other youth groups and set up a new signposting system developed with Young Hackney for all young people searched - directing them to 'Know your Rights' and wider youth services. Young people from Hackney Young Futures, Hackney Youth Parliament, Outcomes for Young Black Men Accountability Groups have all contributed to the co-production of the Action Plan and two young people sit on the working group. Young people have also been involved in visits to the groups from the new joint borough Commander;
- **Training development** - co-designing a comprehensive training package to include Anti-Racism, Adulthood, embodiment practice and history of policing in Hackney - as well as continuing cultural competency training;
- **Exploring restorative justice approaches with Young Hackney** focused on stop and search;
- **Regular police and community conversations** launched earlier this year, hosted and facilitated by community partners;
- **Developing a Hackney addendum to the Safer Schools Protocol** - Hackney Education organised a session between Secondary school pupils and the police for pupils to give their feedback and further engagement with parents is taking place in April 2023.

*Take action at all levels to become more inclusive and anti-racist and to develop cultural humility*

Since introducing work on inclusive leadership in 2018, **views about whether senior managers are committed to inclusivity has increased from 39% to 50%**. Whilst this improvement is welcome, there is still a lot of work to do to improve staff experience. We also need to probe more on views of racism and have introduced a question in the residents survey which can also be used with staff.

Last year we continued to offer sessions on inclusive leadership and cultural humility, engaging over 100 managers in each session and have also run tailored sessions,

including for the local NHS. The Inclusive Conversation Club continues to generate inclusive thinking and dialogue.

### **The new municipal year last year started with the Anti-Racist Praxis**

**Conference led by Children and Education.** Since then, we continue to take action towards becoming an anti-racist organisations and to work with partners to develop their commitments as well:

- **Hackney led the work on behalf of London Councils Chief Executives to develop one consistent anti-racist statement** and is now piloting work to embed a London wide anti-racist standard across our work;
- Work led by Children and Education will be absolutely foundational to the impact that we can have. This is because ensuring that early years, education and early help is inclusive and anti-racist ensures that children and families receive the most appropriate support. This can have an impact on outcomes across the life course, as was identified in the early stages of the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme. **The joint Children and Education Action Plan will have a focus on Early Help, Health and Education and will seek to tackle the overrepresentation of Black and Global Majority children in exclusions and children's social care;**
- The **Children and Education Practice Model** is also helping develop a granular way of embedding anti-racism into all areas of practice and all roles;
- **Anti-Racism is an explicit commitment in the local Integrated Care System plans.** Work is under way to embed anti-racist practice into work of Neighbourhoods, which joins up primary care and community partners in specific localities to offer more preventative support. Ensuring that this early preventative work is inclusive and anti-racist is key to ensuring that people receive appropriate support;
- **The Police Action Plan in Trust and Confidence outlined above is a key part of this anti-racism action work.** The Police locally have been engaged in the development of the wider anti-racist plan, and further sessions on anti-racism are planned with them;
- **Across the Council, we are developing a tool that helps services and organisations assess where they are** against a set of domains covering organisational narrative, approach, willingness to work intersectionality and with complexity and support of proactive work. This is being used to inform service planning guidance so that all services are expected to consider how they will embed an anti-racist approach;
- There is also a key workstream which continues through the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men programme on Supporting Young Black Men's Mental Health in City and Hackney. **We are scoping out how we look at tackling inequality across the mental health system, drawing on the learning of the Black Thrive work in Lambeth;**

- Community engagement strengthens accountability and co-production. A comprehensive and far ranging Lottery Bid has been secured by Hackney CVS.

### **Community cohesion**

Hackney is a relatively cohesive borough but the community is under strain and tensions can rise quickly. There is a high level of civil society activity, but local community organisations are under strain.

The Council continues to value the contribution that the Voluntary and Community Sector make to the life of the borough. **The £2.6m Community Grants Programme continues to invest strategically in organisations that play a key role in the borough, including a ring fenced investment in adventure playgrounds.** Last year, we increased the proportion of investment going into Advice to £1m plus a further investment of £120k from Public Health, which has allowed advice organisations to provide their services within GP surgeries. We launched a new programme funding organisations that have good reach into diverse communities, as well as retaining project grants to meet new emerging needs and support innovation. **Children and Education provide a further £225k of grant funding to invest in youth organisations.** Alongside this, we have a voluntary sector property portfolio that protects organisations from the vagaries of market rent and a discretionary rate relief scheme.

We continue to fund volunteering brokerage, specifically Volunteer Centre Hackney. This work helps keep a supply of volunteers, who are the lifeblood of so many organisations, as well as supporting over 50 organisations to develop the systems and support needed to host volunteers. **By halfway through the year, this had already led to over 400 new registered volunteers and 176 of those were placed in volunteer roles.** 92% of those who volunteer say that through their experience of volunteering they had got to know or been brought together with people from different communities. 73% of people said that their volunteering improved their vocational, employability or personal skills, or a combination of all three.

### *Shaping the cultural life of the borough*

**The focal point for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration was Springfield Park.** This was also a celebration of the recently completed £4m Heritage Lottery funded restoration of Springfield House and Cafe and the opening of a brand new play area and venue the Glasshouse. The Culture team commissioned 15 artist groups from diverse communities to deliver activities at the event and advised the

Parks team on many more to engage directly. An estimated 8,000 people attended the event.

Hackney Carnival is one of the biggest highlights in the cultural calendar, but following Queen Elizabeth's death, we had no choice but to cancel the event last year. **We committed to delivering alternative carnival showcase activities, and consequently two indoor showcase events were held in October 2022.** One was held at Hoxton Hall, focused on the creativity of young people who would have performed at the Carnival. The other was a live streamed presentation of the Carnival groups' costumes, choreography, themes and music, held at Shoreditch Town Hall. A further showcase event, the 'Carnival Earth Dragon', made with hundreds of local residents, was held at Hackney Bridge in February as part of the Lunar New Year celebrations. This was a key part of the community engagement programme. Due to its increasing scale and popularity, planning for the Carnival needs a much longer lead in and the budget has also almost doubled each year since it began. The Carnival will return in 2024 and every two years following that.

**We have a full Hackney Culture Diary for 2023 backed by £500,000 of investment by the Council.** This includes culture and community led programmes engaging the Windrush generations, a full and exciting Black History season and a vibrant Hackney Pride 365 programme. Alongside this we are continuing work with Hackney's carnival groups to deliver a £150,000 programme of carnival related activities and showcases for 2023 and our annual Discover Young Hackney continues to grow from strength to strength. We have recently recruited a lead for culture who will oversee a refresh of the Discover Young Hackney programme in consultation with Young Hackney, HYFC and Hackney Youth Parliament.

The Council is working hard to become an anti-racist borough, and Hackney's leadership **made a firm commitment to celebrating and seeking justice for the Windrush generation**, recognising the significant contributions made to the borough by Black communities now and over the last 70 years. Our Council was the first to pass a motion affirming this, and to appoint a Cabinet lead for Windrush. Our Windrush programme brought cultural diversity back to the forefront through shared understanding and intergenerational dialogue. **During the year 2021 to 2022 we celebrated the first permanent sculptures honouring Windrush heritage in the UK** and have won the internationally prestigious Turner Prize 2022. Veronica Ryan's prizewinning sculptures, and Thomas J Price's powerful 3m tall figures have put Windrush communities permanently at the heart of Hackney's physical and emotional landscape. After 12 years of austerity and a pandemic have decimated the cultural capacity of local government, we are proud in Hackney to show that important, aspirational, arts projects are pivotal in cultural placemaking.

**In the summer of 2021, the Council held an extensive Libraries conversation and listened to feedback from 8,450 residents of all ages, schools and**

**businesses to find out how happy they were with the current library service and what they would like to see offered in the future.** Hackney libraries form an important part of our cultural infrastructure across the borough; they are free to access and are trusted places offering a range of quality services that are used by thousands of residents every year. We want to make sure our libraries cater for the ever-changing needs of local people. The new Libraries Strategy 2022-26 was approved by Cabinet last October and work on the delivery of the new libraries commitments has commenced. The modernisation programme will ensure Hackney's libraries are flexible, inclusive and innovative spaces that cater to the needs of residents.

**The Capital programme for libraries will include the redesign and improvements works to Stamford Hill Library, Stoke Newington Library and Hackney Central Library.** The library spaces will become community, digital, creative and lifelong learning hubs to help people fulfil their potential wherever they are on their journey. As well as safeguarding the libraries we have, we are scoping out the potential for a new library in Woodberry Down that could showcase what a contemporary library could offer.

**Hackney Museum has secured £267k from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop the museum's permanent collection.** The 'Reimagining Hackney Museum: Connecting Communities with Collections' project will create a new permanent display, updating the stories it tells of migration and settlement from prehistory to the modern day, inspire and support young people and reach a wider range of people by digitising the growing collections. The proposed changes also aim to reduce the environmental impact of the museum and create additional storage facilities for objects which represent the everyday lives of people in the borough for future generations. The reimagined Hackney Museum is expected to open in 2027.

### **Good growth: Jobs, businesses and regeneration**

Hackney has become a vibrant place that has seen economic growth over the last twenty years despite the economic downturn in 2009. Our Inclusive Economy Strategy, published in 2019, recognised that many longer term residents had not benefited from the prosperity and set out how we would focus on aspects of the economy we can influence, with targeted interventions to enable better access and a share of good economic growth.

#### *Maximising and shaping employment opportunities*

The high employment rates we see nationally and locally, mask growing inequality in the labour market, with some groups struggling to find secure and sustained work.

We continue to build on the Council's highly successful employment pathways programme including volunteering. We are proposing delivery of a broader programme of activities and opportunities, with a focus on paid work placements via traineeships, whilst also creating a new work experience programme for school aged residents, and a pool of residents actively supported into apprenticeships, employment and placement opportunities. We will focus activity on priority groups including over 50's, disabled residents, young people and care leavers. We aim to connect residents to emerging green jobs,

**Hackney's diversity, completion and progression outcomes remain some of the highest in London and we continue to expand the employers that are part of the Hackney Apprenticeship Network.** We are seeking to increase representation of disadvantaged groups on the Council Apprenticeship Programme but the main challenge at present is the lower number of apprenticeships being created across the system as a result of the financial pressures employers face.

**We remain committed to the supported internship programme.** We are establishing a SEND employment forum to expand the reach and visibility of the programme and increase the number of placement options in future.

**We provide lifelong learning opportunities to over 2000 residents with higher than average achievement levels.** The aim is to address skills gaps created by Brexit, work with local universities and take advantage of the growth in green jobs, technology and social care sectors and Sector Based Work Academies and bootcamp programmes create a steady pipeline of learners into employment. Last year we held a Festival of Learning to give residents of all ages a chance to try out new learning opportunities.

**Last November we launched our report into diversity in tech.** The findings are informing our own plans for Employment and Skills as well as our asks of employers and partners. To tackle digital inclusion, the delivery of the digital buddies programme is underway, with sessions running weekly from a number of locations predominantly in the north west and central areas of the borough.

Hackney is a London Living Wage (LLW) Accredited employer and works closely with local employers to encourage them to become LLW employers. **Last year, an additional 55 Hackney employers became LLW employers, meaning that 205 local businesses and organisations are now paying a living wage, currently set at £11.95 an hour.**

### *Supporting local businesses*

In most instances our businesses have survived the pandemic, but are now in a weakened state. Any expectation of an economic bounceback has been dashed by

inflation and fuel increases. We are reviewing and expanding Hackney Business Network (HBN) to collaborate with local businesses and support an inclusive economy based on a common set of ethical and sustainable values. We have a 10 year HBN anniversary event planned for 12th July 2023 and work is underway to engage with and survey businesses to steer the future focus of the Hackney Business Network and how the Council can best support our businesses to thrive and prosper in the future.

We have continued to support businesses to recover. **Over the last year, we have supported 112 businesses to deliver new business initiatives and animate town centres.** They have delivered events and transformed spaces through the Hackney High Streets and Town Centres Fund.

In March 2023 we held a networking and celebration event for the businesses that benefited from the Council's **£2.5m business support programme** and heard how businesses use grant funding and other support from the Council to adapt and innovate their business practices to create a more sustainable economy, bring in additional match funding for their businesses, and continue to town centre and community initiatives.

We have secured £1.36m of UK Shared Prosperity Funding of which over £500k is able to be put towards supporting local businesses with the cost crisis and transitioning to net zero. This will be available for businesses to access later in 2023.

**We have been refreshing our Sustainable Procurement Strategy** and are now seeking to incorporate this with our Insourcing Policy so we have a clear hierarchy of objectives from insourcing through to promoting co-operatives and sustainable procurement.

**To further the commitment to double the green economy, Oxford Economics have been commissioned to undertake research on the green economy in Hackney,** which will allow us to baseline and better understand the current scale and specialisms of Hackney's green economy, and identify future opportunities for growth and potential barriers to growth.

## Shaping places

### *Take a single council approach to community regeneration*

A single council approach has been adopted in areas undergoing change and regeneration. This involves building a vision through engagement with the local

community and businesses and identifying delivery programmes needed to realise this vision.

**The Hackney Central conversation has informed a town centre strategy** which has been approved by Cabinet and sets out how we will take forward the ideas and aspirations for the area. This strategy was key to the Council's successful bidding for **£19m of Levelling Up Funding** which will be used to transform Hackney Central into a greener, safer and more vibrant town centre.

**The Dalston Plan will soon be finalised following community conversations and consultation**, along with an associated regeneration delivery plan. We have recently completed improvements to Ridley Road and Bradbury Street resulting in a greener and more attractive town centre and the completion of Bradbury Works delivers over 1,000 sqm of new and refurbished affordable workspace and 10 upgraded retail spaces in Dalston.

**Hackney Wick is within the London Legacy Development Corporation's Planning boundary and we are planning for a transition of planning powers back to Hackney** whilst progressing workspace development, the Creative Enterprise Zone and improvements to the public realm.

A similar approach is being taken in Stamford Hill and Shoreditch. We will continue to engage residents and co-design future plans for neighbourhoods, sites and spaces with communities. In February, Cabinet agreed a three year programme for new area plans- this sets out the scope and timetable for producing the Clapton and Homerton Plans.

We have secured £1.36m of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to **invest into our town centres** in Dalston and Hoxton, support the delivery of cultural events and spaces at Woodberry Down and provide business support for local businesses.

### *Using Council land and assets*

The Council is committed to using its land and buildings creatively and strategically, balancing the use of properties to generate income to fund essential services with using them to provide economic support for local businesses and achieve wider social value.

The 'SpaceBank' initiative, a key Hackney Labour manifesto commitment, brings together council owned buildings to ensure the Council is supporting local businesses, social enterprises, voluntary, community and third sector tenants through the properties it owns. Work is now underway to progress this commitment.

We are working with local architects to progress studies of Council owned sites in Dalston and Hackney town centres to consider how they can deliver new homes, town centre uses, and enhance public realm.

We opened a new affordable workspace for local businesses in Shoreditch with Plexal using a Council building secured through a S106 planning agreement to create affordable 'touchdown' space and meeting rooms for local businesses.

80Z Eastway, a new youth facility delivered on Council owned land in Hackney Wick opened and won the New London Architecture Award for Wellbeing. **Last year we launched a new portal to make it easier to [book community halls online](#).** We will learn from this and see if this is transferable to other settings. We will also seek to establish a more effective front door for people needing space.

**Through a partnership between Hackney Council and NHS North East London, two new GP premises in Hackney** are being developed at Belfast Road and the Clapton Portico, in collaboration with the practices, their patients, and Healthwatch Hackney. These are the first new developments in over ten years, and make use of an unused space in Stoke Newington and a heritage building in Clapton.

## 4.2 - FOR A GREENER, HEALTHIER HACKNEY

### **Maximising impact by seeing climate action as an opportunity to improve population health**

By bringing together actions to tackle the climate emergency with actions to improve population health and reduce health inequities, we will maximise our impact. This is why these actions are brought together under the Greener Healthier priority.

### **Responding to the climate emergency**

The Hackney Climate Action Plan (CAP) is the first holistic borough-wide plan to address the climate and ecological crisis, bringing together the various strands into one overall document and as such is a key marker in consolidating the journey to net zero. Later this year, Hackney will adopt the final CAP.

The borough-wide CAP provides a framework for everyone to take action to reduce emissions and adapt to the climate change that is already occurring, driven by an ambitious vision for a fairer and greener Hackney in 2030. This CAP is designed to

set us in the right direction, but it will need to be developed continuously to keep pace with shifts across society, technology and wider policy, including the changing needs of communities, groups and organisations in Hackney. Organised into five themes: Adaptation, Buildings, Transport, Consumption and Environmental Quality, we have identified a set of ambitious 2030 goals.

Across the borough, we must now all work together so residents, community groups and organisations, businesses and institutions can tackle climate change together, and support each other to reduce emissions and become more resilient to the effects of climate change. This will be challenging but the long-term benefits such as better health and more sustainable jobs will help create a fairer and more inclusive borough. The science is clear: we must act now so we can harness these benefits locally and prevent the worst impacts of climate change. This will be supported by a Hackney Net Zero Partnership to convene key partners and businesses to take collective actions.

**Hackney has secured £12.2m from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme** for the decarbonisation of heat in the Council's buildings which will be matched with £4.6m of Council funding. This project will achieve carbon savings, equivalent to the annual emissions over 1000 petrol fuelled cars.

**Hackney has secured £4.5 m from the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund** for energy efficiency improvement works to 556 Council street properties across the borough, which will be matched by £4.5m of Council funding.

### *Adaptation*

We are working with residents to be prepared for the impacts of climate change, protecting our most vulnerable residents, and taking action to tackle overheating, flooding and ensure planting is drought resistant.

**To tackle flooding last year, 4 dedicated sustainable drainage schemes were completed and one was in progress, depaving 480m<sup>2</sup> and four schemes are planned each year for the next three years.** Footway reconstruction, tree pits, traffic schemes have enabled other areas to be depaved.

### *Buildings*

We are working to reduce building emissions, including improving the thermal performance of buildings to reduce the amount of energy required to heat and cool them, and using and generating renewable energy. Actions will also seek to reduce the additional emissions from materials used in new developments. Taking action on all emissions from buildings will greatly improve the quality of life in Hackney, help to reduce fuel poverty and keep our homes well-maintained.

**Across the Schools Estate, a programme of surveys and energy efficiency assessments is underway.** This will give improved and up to date assessment of the estate and actions needed to inform future funding bids.

**Hackney Light and Power is being set up as a publicly owned municipal energy services company to accelerate our efforts to deliver renewable energy across the borough,** including district heat networks and solar panel installation on residential estates. We are committed to providing 100% community and renewable energy as part of the regeneration of Woodberry Down.

Hackney Community Energy Fund has been established to support community led energy groups to power our schools with renewable energy. We have awarded £250k to five community interest organisations to deliver renewable projects across a number of our schools and faith group buildings in the borough. We are already working on the next phase of this Fund, which will take forward capital projects that will ensue from the feasibility studies funded in the first phase. Some of the £12.2m Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund will be used to install a ground source heat pump at London Fields Lido to provide heat to the main pool and new teaching pool.

We are developing a Housing Retrofit Strategy for all Council housing in line with the Climate Action Plan and plans will go to cabinet later this year.

### *Transport*

The Council is committed to reduce the number of miles travelled by car on Hackney roads. This is a crosscutting commitment with wide ranging actions needed and close collaboration with Transport for London. That ultimately improves air quality and helps residents live active, healthy lives.

**Work has started to develop a Main Roads Strategy** to explore and plan new ways of reducing traffic and improving air quality on these key routes through the borough.

To encourage even more people to cycle, **we are delivering training for adults and providing more secure bike storage spaces** due to the number of people who live in flats without outdoor space. We are seeking to install 675 cycle hangars by April 2026.

**Last summer saw the opening of the second entrance of Hackney Central station,** using Council land to help ease congestion as the overground has become much more popular in recent years. **We also successfully campaigned to protect bus routes through Hackney,** showing the evidence of how vital they are to residents' lives including their commute. We work closely with Transport for London to implement measures that give priority to buses.

In January, plans for the next phase of low traffic neighbourhoods were adopted in a full Local Implementation Plan, outlining transport projects for the next three years, **which will make three quarters of roads low traffic**, extending plans into Chatsworth Road, Dalston, Hoxton, Cazenove and Stamford Hill. **In the same month, we heard that our £19m bid to the Government's Levelling Up Fund was successful.** This will bring a much needed redesign of the Pembury Circus junction, along with the transformation of five acres of public space in Hackney Central. This will make it easier to get around on foot, by bike or by public transport.

We have **two zero emissions networks, in Stoke Newington and Shoreditch**, and are identifying funding to scale this up across the borough. The focus so far has been on changing behaviour of businesses around transport, but the engagement has potential to be wider.

### *Consumption*

The actions will encourage residents to change what and how we buy, use and sell, creating a new green economy in Hackney.

**Two circular economy zones have been set up in Hackney Central and Hackney Wick** and we will work with businesses and residents to increase sharing, little libraries, refill points and other community swap events / schemes. **The Library of Things is set up in Dalston Library so everyone can easily borrow household items** for tasks at home instead of buying and throwing them away after one use. In the past 15 months, it has prevented 15 tonnes of waste, saved nearly 30 tonnes of CO2e, reduced raw material pressure, and created extra living space, while the Council saved £2,000 through waste diversion. The project attracted over 3,400 additional library visitors.

We will continue to deliver #zerowastehackney campaign, which has recently won the Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards. To continue to reduce plastic use, we will deliver two new bottle filling stations in Shoreditch Park and Clissold Park and, this year, we will begin working with residents of Albion Square to refurbish the historic drinking fountain.

The council is **co-leading work to encourage households to eat more plant based meals**, based on recent customer insight work. Launched in March, this will be an 18 month campaign. We are also co-leading work to encourage all London boroughs to sign up to three food commitments (reduce food emissions and food waste, and increase organic food) in council procured services and encourage schools to do the same. These actions will also maximise the potential for biodiversity in our green spaces, reducing pollution and helping local ecosystems thrive.

Our commitment to **food growing focuses on estates and on supporting groups, developing new groups**, bringing in investment and new partnerships and formalising arrangements. Last year we saw six new growing groups established bringing the total number of groups supported to 51.

### *Environmental Quality*

**Environmental Services has reduced its glyphosate use by removing weeds in town centres** by hand instead of chemically, we have stopped spraying in more than 100km of high streets and have reduced the number of sprays per season from four to three. Further, the council has a glyphosate-free area in Homerton, with two further glyphosate-free areas planned.

In February, Cabinet agreed that a refreshed Sustainability policy would be developed as part of wider plans setting out all planning policies needed over the next three years. This will include a focus on biodiversity and green infrastructure, underpinned by additional capacity and skills needed.

### **Improving health and wellbeing and tackling health inequality**

The pandemic, and now the cost of living crisis and entrenched poverty, have negatively affected people's wellbeing. Health inequalities are even greater. We need to work across the whole system to achieve equitable access, experience and outcomes. This means addressing all four "pillars" of the population health system that are outlined below, co-producing solutions with residents and amplifying the voice of service users through [inclusive approaches](#).

The biggest drivers of health are linked to social, economic and environmental conditions (income, employment, education, housing, transport, climate etc). This means that the wider activities in this strategic plan have the potential to make the most significant contribution to health inequalities. The council has therefore adopted a 'Health in All Policies' approach. The Health and Wellbeing Board regularly hears from officers and partners across those wider determinants about how they are working to improve population health.

An integrated care system (ICS) is one that joins up community based, preventative and clinical support. Hackney is one of 8 Local Authority members of the North East London Integrated Care System (ICS). Local place based partnerships have been formed as part of the ICS. The City and Hackney Place Based Partnership has set local priorities and outcomes and below this networks of GP practices have joined with residents and partners to create eight Primary Care Networks and "Neighbourhood" areas.

### *Health and Wellbeing Strategy*

**We are progressing the three priority areas of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy:**

- Supporting greater financial security - this links to the poverty reduction work which has been outlined above;
- Improving mental health - a mental health needs assessment is currently being scoped which will help us draw together the priorities identified in existing system strategies, integrate current data and insights (including from resident peer research), and formulate a set of actions to address the needs of our community and reduce mental health inequalities;
- Increasing social connections - we are developing a social connections action plan, working closely with colleagues across the system on this cross cutting agenda.

*Supporting Independent living and carers*

**Adult Social Care and Private Sector Housing will start work together from Summer to develop a Council-run Handyperson service** to help residents stay safely in their own homes for longer, as well as ending the means testing process for the Disabled Facilities Grant.

**Work to co-produce a Carers' Strategy** will also begin this autumn, with dedicated capacity to work closely with carers and stakeholders across the health, care and voluntary sector

**Healthier ways to live**

We need to support individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviours. We will take action to encourage people to live healthier lives, recognising that smoking, obesity and alcohol consumption are the main reasons that people die early.

The Council's Walking Together programme continues to be delivered with up to ten weekly walks, including specific themed and history walks. Attendance on the walks varies throughout the year and is very much weather dependent, but some recent walks have had nearly thirty people attending with high satisfaction levels. Feedback shows that the top reasons people attend the walks is to help increase exercise levels and improve mood/stress levels. People also attend to socialise, meet new people and learn something about their local area.

King's Park Moving Together (KPMT) is Hackney's Local Delivery Pilot funded by Sport England, with the aim of helping people to improve their health and wellbeing by being physically active and connected in their local community and beyond. With an initial focus in the Kings Park ward of Hackney, the work has been progressed by

taking a community development approach and has included working with the community to co-design walking routes, create local partnerships, increase cycle parking on Kingsmead Estate, establish a cycle hub offering learn to ride and confidence building sessions, improve local spaces that enable people to be active and access to grant funding to deliver projects that include physical activity for those least likely to be active.

The work is funded until 2025, and we are starting to identify the longer term changes needed across the borough and the system to encourage and enable residents to be more physically active. To support this, we have appointed an external consultancy partner to work across Council services that are seeking to address physical inactivity and/or enable physical activity through their work. This work is designed to look at how council services are currently working and whether there is scope to consider different ways of working. We have also levered in some additional funding from the Department of Levelling Up investment into place based approaches to support ageing well. This is helping us identify viable ways we can improve community buildings in the area to provide the much needed space for community activity to take place.

### *Smokefree 2030*

Work towards our local smokefree 2030 ambition is led by Hackney's Tobacco Control Alliance, which is a broad partnership including representatives from public health, trading standards, housing, Young Hackney, Homerton Hospital, ELFT, pharmacies, primary care networks, commissioners and providers; Hackney CVS are associate members of the Alliance. Our shared local commitment to a smokefree Hackney was previously cemented by the Council's signing of the Local Government Tobacco Control Declaration (in 2014), and NHS partners' signing of the NHS Smokefree Declaration in 2018.

**Our current local priorities include funding an evidence-based stop smoking service** (which supports 2000+ smokers each year to quit), training frontline staff and volunteers in 'very brief advice' to encourage smokers to quit and signpost them to local support, regular communication campaigns (including Stoptober), prevention work in schools, targeted enforcement activity to raise awareness of and reduce supply of cheap/illegal tobacco and e-cigarettes (around £90,0000 of illicit goods have been removed from local retail businesses since 2019), and more recently supporting Homerton and ELFT to implement new NHS tobacco dependency treatment services.

A new national tobacco control plan is eagerly awaited to complement our local actions, and we are joining with our London colleagues in lobbying for this to be published as soon as possible.

### *Alcohol harms*

We have refreshed our strategic priorities for reducing alcohol-related harms to focus on: improving treatment outcomes; support to new parents/reducing harms to babies; increased screening to identify harmful drinking among older adults; integrated alcohol and mental health services; increase support to young people in educational settings; enhanced work with licensees to create safer drinking environments. Action planning on each of these focus areas is underway with key partners.

### *Sexual health*

**A five year strategy for sexual and reproductive health is being developed** which will set outcomes to address gaps in provision, inequalities in access and outcomes, and determine priority areas, with a focus on enhancing collaboration between commissioned services and other stakeholders. Access to services is a key issue. By offering services such as STI testing via multiple pathways, (e.g. online via Sexual Health London (SHL), in pharmacies, at GPs and at sexual health clinics as well as via voluntary sector partners), the aim is to allow a choice of services which suits different preferences among different population groups. The strategy will also support our manifesto commitment to reach the goal of no new HIV infections by 2030.

Young people aged 16 to 24 have greater sexual health needs than other age groups, accounting for almost 27% of STI diagnoses made outside of sexual health clinics. **Last June, an all-round service to help residents aged 16 to 24 was launched to make healthy and informed choices about their sexual and reproductive lives.**

To promote the uptake of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), which is relatively well accepted and high among white middle-aged gay and bisexual men having sex with men (GBMSM), **work is done via the voluntary sector partner, Positive East, to increase awareness around PrEP in younger and more diverse communities where risk of HIV may be higher.**

### *Shaping Places*

By making places healthier we can support wellbeing and take action on climate change. Making places healthier means shaping the retail offer so that there is affordable, healthy food and creating clean, safe, green spaces, with good air quality. It is also about encouraging community support and connections, by creating good community networks.

**Hackney has 49 school streets, which cover 86% of our maintained primaries.** We are committed to establishing school streets with independent schools, but it does require school leadership to achieve this. We are celebrating ten years of supporting residents to arrange play streets and now have 60 play streets that have reached over 1600 children.

**To take forward options for the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Kings Hall Leisure Centre,** in October 2022, we began on the first stage of this journey - by appointing a design team to develop designs to refurbish and improve the Centre, ensure it meets the needs of local residents and protect its heritage. Once the design team has developed initial plans we will consult with the local community to get their views.

We are also developing proposals for a new teaching pool at London Fields Lido and improvements to the facilities at West Reservoir and opening the site up as a publically accessible green space for the first time.

Work has been completed **to install a new outdoor gym in Shoreditch Park and work is underway to install one in Daubeney Fields as well.** Delivering new outdoor gym facilities in other parks will require us to secure additional funding.

**We will maintain the 28 Green Flags in our Parks** and commit to improvements that will enable us to achieve Green Flag status for four more parks and open spaces. **The new splash pad in Clissold Park** opened last summer and we have completed the £2m improvements to Shoreditch Park. **We have refurbished seven play areas across six locations:** Butterfield Green (x2), Clapton Pond, Clapton Square, Haggerston Park, Shoreditch Park and Stoke Newington Common, with Clapton Common, Hackney Downs, Stonebridge Gardens and Well Street Common to follow over the next twelve months.

We are also in the process of **reviewing how accessible our benches are in our parks and green spaces, and across the public realm,** and have introduced new more accessible benches in Shoreditch Park. The commitment to develop a design guide to ensure that our streets, parks, estates, public buildings, high streets and public spaces are inclusive and accessible for all will begin later this year.

### *Ageing Well*

In December 2020, Hackney adopted its first Ageing Well Strategy. This strategy focuses on developing a more age friendly Council and borough, building a community that values and includes older people, benefits from their contributions and supports them in their later years. **Since then we have been progressing implementation, working closely with a 40 strong Hackney Older Citizens**

**Committee.** Being able to identify the dedicated capacity to proactively drive this work has been a challenge, but the staffing is now in place.

Health and wellbeing: Hackney secured £250,000 through the Department of Levelling Up to help us develop the principles of the Ageing Well strategy in a specific locality. This is facilitating closer partnerships across Council services, Health partnerships, community organisations and central government, with a focus on the Hackney Marshes Neighbourhood.

Financial security: through Money Hub, pension credit take up campaigns and the distribution of the Household Support Fund, we have recently identified new ways to reach pensioners and older people in financial need. We have started to identify actions needed to better meet the employment needs of over 50s working closely with the Employment Support Team, health partners, DWP and residents.

Last year, the Older Citizens Committee participated in the consultation on the Libraries Strategy and are now influencing the future of the Museum. They shared insights at a Council Scrutiny meeting with Transport for London on bus changes raising the importance of a good bus network in age friendly cities. They gave feedback on low traffic neighbourhoods and the Climate Action Plan.

### **4.3 - FOR EVERY CHILD IN HACKNEY**

Even before the pandemic, 48% of children in Hackney were living in poverty, after housing costs are taken into account, and this is likely to increase because of the cost of living crisis and poverty entrenching. Experiencing childhood poverty can impact outcomes throughout someone's life and can lead to complex needs. We were also already seeing increasing demand and complexity of need across every frontline service. An inclusive focus on the early years helps us to tackle poverty in the long-term by giving children the best start in life. In response to this increasing level of demand, complexity and vulnerability, at a time that is even more financially challenging than austerity, the Council is seeking to transform the way we work across the Children and Education system. We are developing a shared "practice model" that equips all staff across the system supporting children and families to focus on these shared, crosscutting outcomes, with anti-racism at its core.

The following ways of working will be embedded across the Children and Education system:

- Embedding a systemic, anti-racist and trauma informed approach;
- Working in collaboration;

- Co-producing the approach with children, young people and families.

### Every child is safe

#### *Social care*

In 2019, Hackney Children's Services was inspected under the OFSTED framework for inspecting local authority services for children (ILACS) and was judged as 'requires improvement' for overall effectiveness. Since then, we have been progressing a comprehensive children's action plan. **Last September, OFSTED visited again and found that there had been key improvements to the front door services.** We will continue to progress the improvements identified in our plans and identified in the last OFSTED letter. A Joint Inspection of Youth Justice Services was recently carried out and we will receive the formal outcome in May this year.

To further **our commitment for foster carers to develop vocational pathways**, foster carers receive an additional skills payment that increases as carers progress through the levels, in line with the level of knowledge, skills and experience of the fostering role.

#### *Youth justice and community safety*

We are committed **to maintaining the success of the Out of Court Diversion work and will work across the Youth Justice and Community Safety Partnership to reduce the disproportionate numbers of Black and mixed heritage boys appearing in the youth courts.** The Young Hackney Prevention and Diversion team manages all contacts with police regarding Community Resolutions, Youth Cautions and Youth conditional Cautions. The team provides a youth work informed response and ensures we are focused on the child's diversity, their safety and wellbeing and the risk of harm they may present to others. We are collaborating with Middlesex University on research to consider whether there was disproportionality in decision-making for all Out of Court Disposals (OoCD) looking back over 6 years of data. The quality of practice has been evidenced through peer reviews and through the recent HMiP Inspection, the outcome of which will be published in May. Our revised assessment form has been highlighted as an example of good practice in the guide published following the Thematic Inspection 'How youth offending services understand and meet the needs of Black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system'.

**The Youth Justice Improvement Plan includes a clear focus on addressing disproportionality** and is led by a sub group of the Safer Young Hackney Partnership Board. The Board continues to seek agreement with MPS to progress a 'deferred prosecutions' pathway as a second chance to divert children from the criminal justice system. Safer Young Hackney Board has also continued to undertake

development days related to developing humble and compassionate leadership and developing leadership on Anti-Racist Practice and strategies.

### **Every child is healthy, every child develops positive and caring relationships and feels seen and heard**

#### *Best start in life*

The City and Hackney Place Based Partnership has a strong focus on giving children the best start in life with ambitions to reduce infant and neonatal mortality, increase immunisation, improve early childhood development, improve healthy weight, reduce mental health crisis and reduce unplanned pregnancy. Supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing is key to early help and prevention and since the pandemic, we have seen an increased demand for support.

#### *Wellbeing*

As a system, we are working collaboratively to address the pressures on services designed to support young people with their emotional wellbeing and mental health. As part of the delivery of the City and Hackney Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the following projects/programmes are underway:

A Single Point of Access (SPA) to all NHS CAMHS Services, launched in November 2022. This offers a simplified referral process; all referrals are sent to one service (SPA) using one referral form, one email address and one phone number (a centralised point of contact). This has led to improved response time between referral and allocation to services, reducing delays and referrals bouncing between services.

Recognising that 25% of children and young people presenting at A&E in crisis are experiencing difficulties of a social nature rather than around mental health, the Surge Team was developed by CFS Clinical Team to respond at the point of presentation. The team liaises with CSC teams to support these young people in a timely and co-ordinated way, relieving pressure on both A&E and MH Crisis teams.

The Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) service takes a whole school approach to improving mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people in schools, colleges, specialist and alternative provision education settings in City and Hackney. It focuses on building and developing knowledge and skills in education staff so that they are more confident and feel more able to support students, and their families, who may be experiencing emerging or identified mental health difficulties. A mental health professional (CAMHS worker) is deployed to work in around 70% of school settings, supporting the action plan for up to four days a month. WAMHS also has a range of universal offers available to all schools. Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) support this work by offering early intervention

groups to individuals, groups of children and parents in approximately 55% of schools.

The Super Youth Hub project aims to improve young peoples' autonomous and independent access to a range of services including wellbeing and mental health, physical and sexual health, substance misuse support and primary care. The vision is to deliver these services in the right place, at the right time and by the right person. The project is led and underpinned by the voice of young people, launching with a participatory action research approach by 16 Young Researchers, and supported by a Young Advisor employed in the project management office.

The CAMHS Alliance continues to develop its data gathering and review/analysis cycle in order to better understand demand and capacity issues, as well as improving service pathways for children and families. A number of projects have been developed in order to respond systemically to the challenges e.g. Quick Steps, an early intervention for self-harm delivered by First Steps.

We are looking at how we can develop a Healthy Schools Charter setting out how schools will promote health and wellbeing during the school day. If resources can be finalised we aim to start a full programme of support in the new academic year.

### *Engagement and participation*

The Hackney Youth Parliament (HYP) is supported to deliver Local Democracy Week (LDW) to foster a greater knowledge of local democracy and to promote the idea of democratic participation at a local level. Last October, Hackney Youth Parliament produced a resource for schools to use in PSHE lessons for both Primary and Secondary school age children. A debate and question time event for schools was held in the Council Chamber on 25th October on Policing and Young People. Several new members were recruited to HYP during this event, which was attended by over 60 young people from the borough.

HYP continues to meet every week and has a regular membership of 15 young people. Over the last year they have attended Young People Scrutiny Panels regularly and contributed to discussions concerning school exclusions, mental health services and safer schools. They have also taken part in the Hackney Central ten year strategy plan resulting in a billboard campaign featuring members' views. They have also delivered two debates in the council chambers on issues affecting young people with senior LBH staff and elected members forming a "Q and A panel". HYP have also attended several consultations concerning Child Q and have recently met with the Borough Commander to discuss improving trust with young people and the Metropolitan Police. HYP have also led on promoting Black History Month for Young Hackney with a launch event organised entirely by themselves and attracting over 75 guests. Two members have attended British Youth Council meetings and attended the national debate at the House of Commons representing Hackney's young

people. Three of the young people elected have now taken up roles within the Young Futures Commission.

### *Young Futures*

The Young Futures Commission was born out of a pledge in the Mayor of Hackney's Manifesto in 2018, aimed at maximising the voice of young people in the decisions that shape their lives and ensure they can actively shape the opportunities available to them. The [Valuing the Future Through Young Voices](#) report was published in November 2020. Progress is being made against delivery of the 72 recommendations and the legacy. To support progress and the embedding of the legacy, we created a Young Futures Legacy programme, which employs young people for 5 hours a week to help progress work. Fifty of the recommendations have now been embedded into the Council's business as usual commitments.

### **Every child's needs are identified and responded to early**

Our approach starts with a focus on early years, but we also need to identify and respond to key points in a child's life when they might experience disadvantage and offer early help. Early help is not a service, it is an approach that relies on changes to practice, but also to the culture, systems, collaboration and leadership, as many of the resources will be in communities. We are very concerned how the rising costs of childcare will affect families of all incomes and also that nurseries will no longer be viable and will close.

### *Universal services that are responsive to need*

#### *Commissioning a new Enhanced Health Visiting Service*

The new Enhanced Health Visiting Service (EHVS) will be mobilised from September 2023 and will provide both universal and personalised support to all new families in City and Hackney. The new service model includes an intensive fifth level (replacing the Family Nurse Partnership Service), over and above the four levels of service currently provided (community, universal, targeted, specialist), to support the most vulnerable, complex families. As families are able to transition between levels of service, the support provided will be more responsive to individual needs. In addition to the five mandated visits currently provided, the EHVS model includes three additional, targeted visits (two additional speech, language and communication reviews and one to act as a safety net for school readiness) and an 18-month desktop review of child health records.

#### *Establishing Children and Family Hubs*

The Council is developing plans for 'Children and Family Hubs' which bring together support for families, children and young people in a more joined-up way. These hubs will offer help and support to families from conception up until age 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities). Professionals and services from across the Council - and from health, community and the voluntary sectors - will work together to provide high-quality, cohesive support for families. This will make it easier for families to get the help they need at the right time. We have secured funding from the Department for Education and have engaged extensively with parents and carer engagement. These thematic findings will inform the set up of the hubs.

### *Supporting children with special educational needs (SEND)*

In 2022 we launched an ambitious SEND Strategy 2022-25. Hackney has a vision to provide an excellent, inclusive and equitable local experience for all Hackney children and young people with SEND.

We want all our children and young people to have access to the right support at the right time from local services and to be able to travel easily to a great, inclusive, local school which engages with their neighbourhood parent/carer community.

We want all our children and young people to be in schools and to access services which fairly reflect the diversity of the Hackney community.

The four key priorities of the SEND Strategy are:

- To provide outstanding provision and services;
- An earlier response to need;
- Joining up key services across education;
- Health and care and preparing young people for adulthood.

Last June, work was completed to refurbish the Pavillion Special School and work began to develop 300 additional places for children with SEND in schools by 2030, supported by a £13m plan, delivering on key political commitments. We are reshaping our SEND services to wrap support around the settings and schools, to ensure earlier identification of need and a more compassionate and effective response. The principles that will be embedded recognise the importance of communication, co-production, access to information, accountability and excellent provision.

Last September, the Inclusion and Specialist Support Team and the Educational Psychology Service were restructured to provide integrated packages to schools. This is closely linked to the introduction to the Team Around the School model and termly Multi-Agency Planning (MAP) meetings. This work is helping us see where

the gaps in skills and understanding occur in mainstream schools. This has led to us commissioning the Autism Education Trust (AET) training with 16 staff members trained to deliver the Early Years modules and 35 members of staff, including 14 school based staff, to deliver the Schools modules.

Another area of need highlighted by the analysis, has been the needs of pupils who are experiencing complex difficulties which lead to them not attending school. We have set up a multi stakeholder group made up of parents/carers and professionals from a range of backgrounds. The group has developed guidance for schools and support agencies based on the current evidence base of the factors which are associated with positive outcomes.

Work is also in development to address challenges related to neurodevelopmental support. City and Hackney have a number of services across two different trusts who are commissioned to offer assessments and intervention for neurodevelopmental conditions. Since COVID-19 there have been a number of issues affecting the pathway, including backlogs created by COVID, increase in demand, vacancies and recruitment difficulties. A need has been identified to review the neurodevelopmental pathways across services in order to determine the demand and capacity balance in the system and put in place remedial actions to ensure the pathway model can meet the demand in the most effective way. The review was planned to begin in April 2023.

### **Every child fulfils their potential**

We aim to give every child in Hackney the best start in life. Hackney's [Early Years Strategy](#), adopted in 2021 continues to be progressed.

We cannot achieve this without childcare being seen as key social infrastructure and some bold rethinking from government. The UK has consistently been more expensive than most other OECD countries. In London, the cost of childcare has risen 7.4 times more quickly than pay over the last fifteen years according to the TUC. While there is government support for childcare for children aged two and older, most working parents with one-year-olds do not get any state help with childcare costs. Recent changes announced in the Spring Budget this year are welcome, but the full changes will not be in place for another two years, and simply extending a free childcare offer to more parents will not address the child care crisis we are in now. This crisis is only likely to deepen, with childcare providers struggling to run viable businesses as they face staff shortages and rising costs.

The Affordable Childcare Commission was launched in March this year. Led by an independent chair, June O'Sullivan and a board of parents and childcare providers. The Commission will look at local childcare offers, challenges, risks, and costs, as well as ways to maximise the support available for families in the borough and is due to report back early next year. The Commission will identify what we can achieve locally with partners, but also make recommendations for wider policy changes.

Work to support schools falling into difficulty has had measurable success. Overall Hackney schools provision is in the top 20% of local authorities in the country, with 92% (35,529) of pupils attending Ofsted rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools. In line with the Council's work to tackle racial inequality, outlined earlier, we have developed and distributed guidance and tools for schools to develop a diverse and anti-racist curriculum and all Hackney schools have stated that they are reviewing/or have reviewed curriculum content to ensure it is reflective of all pupils.

The Hackney Schools Group Board (HSGB) has continued to explore themes of belonging with Hackney Schools. The board carried out parental engagement work in many schools in Hackney during its first term. This work was highly successful in gaining parental insight into how racism still affects a parent and pupil's journey through the education system, and what schools are already doing to ensure children feel a sense of belonging in their schools. This work was also successful in showing how schools can effectively engage with their parent community on a difficult topic. Currently, the board is planning to engage with Secondary school pupils. The purpose of the engagement is to explore the emotional school journey of our Black and Global Majority children across our Hackney Secondary schools; hear about the lived experiences of the education system in Hackney; and understand how the systems can support, enhance and equip schools with the tools to better pupils' experience within the education system.

Engaging well with parents is recognised as key to student's doing well and providing early help when any concerns are identified. The work of the Parent Carer Engagement System Leader continues.

Reducing exclusions and developing and deepening equitable inclusion with our schools continues to be a focus. The transformation work outlined above will provide the multi-agency approach that is needed to work with schools, as well as an "Exclusions Summit" and a singular consistent focus on anti-racism.

We continue to raise our concerns with the Department for Education (DfE) about the need for legislation in relation to unregistered schools, which mean children are outside of the line of sight of safeguarding professionals. This follows the scrapping of the Schools Bill in 2022 which was to bring in tighter rules. The DfE have said that they remain committed to taking forward the safeguarding measures that were proposed when a suitable legislative opportunity arises. This includes the measures

related to a 'children not in schools register', school attendance, extending the independent school registration requirement, and enhancing powers to investigate and take action in relation to unregistered schools.

### **Every child is equipped for adulthood and has choice over their future**

Hackney's Promise to Children in Care was updated last year and all Cabinet Members and key officers will be asked to sign up to it and make their own personal pledge. We have also been refreshing support for care leavers including: the opening of a Care Leavers Hub as a space their care leavers can call their own, to access the support of their peers and a network of multi-agency professionals, development of ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers, improved responses to Subject Access Requests for care leavers and improvements to the housing offer to care leavers.

Young Hackney services, our four Hackney Youth Hubs and network of seven adventure playgrounds provide a variety of activities and opportunities, recognising the value of play for creativity, health and wellbeing. In line with political commitments, we are creating a 10 by 10 Programme to ensure by the time they are 10 years old, every child in Hackney has access to at least 10 different activities that help expand their horizons and equip them for the future.