

My *Ambitious* Manifesto



LUTFUR
FOR **MAYOR**





Rebuild Tower Hamlets Rebuild our Future



Rebuild Tower Hamlets

Rebuild our Future

I have twice been elected Mayor of Tower Hamlets. Each time I have promised to serve the people, and each time I have delivered.

Sadly, our borough has lost its way. The Labour administration has sat in the Town Hall for the last seven years, punishing the community instead of empowering us. We've had cuts and closures in all the services we hold most dear, and on which the most vulnerable members of our community rely. What a waste. It doesn't have to be like this.

Independent of the main parties, if you elect me on 5 May, I will be beholden to no one but you, the voter, the council taxpayer. I will reverse the botched Liveable Streets road closures while implementing a bold programme to go green. I'll safeguard frontline services from cuts, freeze council tax, and make your council more accessible. And I'll tackle the housing crisis by building at least 1,000 social homes a year. We must have the highest ambitions for our borough.

I am proud to outline here my plans to harness the strength of all of our borough's diverse communities, and put public service back at the heart of your council. I look forward to discussing them with you on your doorstep between now and 5 May.

A portrait of Lutfur Rahman, a man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt and a yellow patterned tie, smiling. The background is blue.

Lutfur Rahman

— First elected Mayor of Tower Hamlets



My 8 Point Plan to **FIX** Tower Hamlets

The background features a dark blue gradient with a stylized city skyline silhouette. A prominent red lightning bolt strikes the word 'FIX' in the title.



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Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis

The cost of living crisis raging nationally is hitting people around here particularly hard. But by working together, we can ensure that no child will go hungry and no pensioner will go cold for the next four years.

I pledge to:

- 1** Freeze Council Tax for four years, to protect the poorest from rising living costs
- 2** Establish a fund to support young people who want to stay in education post-16
- 3** Create a fund to provide bursaries for young people who want to go to university
- 4** Fund the 10% of Council Tax Rebates that Government does not pay
- 5** Set up a Holiday Food programme to feed children entitled to free school meals during the school holidays
- 6** Provide free schools meals in term time to all Primary School pupils, from Reception to Year 6
- 7** Explore extending universal free school meals provision to secondary schools
- 8** Work with local food banks and third sector organisations to provide a safety net for those in need
- 9** Create a Homelessness Fund to prevent evictions and homelessness
- 10** Protect tenants against revenge evictions.



Homes for the Future



There is a social housing crisis in Tower Hamlets. Having a roof over your head is a basic human right, but at the moment we cannot house the people who want to live here and too many live in housing that doesn't meet their needs or struggle with unresponsive landlords.

I pledge to:

- 1** Work with developers and housing associations to build a minimum of 4,000 social homes for rent over the next four years, with a focus on 3–4-bedroom homes
- 2** Review car parking permit transfer scheme, create 1,000 parking spaces over four years and review car-free zones to ensure those who require vehicles for work are not priced out of the local area
- 3** Establish a Housing Emergency Task Force to drive through change. Residents will be at the heart of this work
- 4** Work closely with the Tower Hamlets' Renters Union to achieve all their policy goals
- 5** Consult residents immediately on bringing Tower Hamlets Homes back in-house
- 6** Empower local Tenants and Residents Associations (or set them up where they do not exist) to work with the Council to tackle the housing emergency, while encouraging social and private landlords to work with us to effect change
- 7** Develop strategies to:
 - Tackle overcrowding, including with knock-throughs and extensions
 - Adapt homes for residents with physical disabilities
 - House the homeless (including, as a priority, to house street sleepers)
- 8** Work with social and private landlords to encourage them to improve the condition of the homes they let and the service they provide to their tenants
- 9** Fix the landlord registration scheme to ensure it delivers on its purpose of driving up standards in the private sector, including landlord rent disclosure
- 10** Use new government powers to increase council tax to landlords who leave homes empty
- 11** Seize long term empty properties and convert them into social housing
- 12** Fully fund and resource housing enforcement officers to hold landlords to account
- 13** Ensure social landlords work with us, collectively and individually, to improve housing services, stock condition and governance
- 14** Establish a new emergency fund and information line for leaseholders affected by cladding, and require developers wishing to build in Tower Hamlets to pay for remediation of existing cladding.





Accelerate Education

Education is very close to my heart and supporting lifelong learning in Tower Hamlets will be a priority for my administration.

I pledge to:

- 1** Introduce a programme of booster classes after school, tailored to maximise our youngsters' performance at GCSE
- 2** Review our sixth forms and colleges' performance to accelerate A level attainment so more of our pupils go to the top universities, including Oxbridge and Russell group of universities
- 3** Increase the number of our youngsters going on to Further and Higher Education, including boosting Oxbridge and Russell Group entrance through intensive learning after school, and support with applications, and a full review of sixth-form and college performance
- 4** Expand Breakfast Club provision in schools and continue to offer a free and healthy school lunch to all primary school pupils, including provision in the school holidays for those most in need
- 5** Establish funds to support young people who want to stay in education post-16 and to provide bursaries for young people who want to go to university
- 6** Protect the space in our Idea Stores where young people can study and work with community groups to protect and increase provision of homework clubs. This is particularly important to help young people recover lost schooling during the Covid lockdowns
- 7** Work with the voluntary sector to increase the provision of devices and internet access to reduce digital exclusion
- 8** Return the Youth Service to its rightful place as a flagship service in our borough. My administration will prioritise the provision of public sector youth centres which can support young people with homework space, careers advice, gang prevention work, developing life skills, and offer a host of leisure activities
- 9** Reinstate our award-winning Community Language Service scrapped by the current mayor. It is proven that children who know their mother tongue and who are multi-lingual excel in education generally. We need to support our children and encourage them to take up language lessons from early on in life
- 10** Reintroduce early entry GCSE studies in languages
- 11** Rebuild the Good Teachers Network to help educators share best practice and promote high quality learning
- 12** Restore specialist support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as a boroughwide service
- 13** Review nursery and day care provision, with a view to bringing back council-run centres as a public service
- 14** Launch a new 'Lifelong Learning' programme, with a particular emphasis on courses which can help our residents return to work and enhance their prospects.





Boost Culture,
Business, Jobs
and Leisure

THE ARTS

The arts help our diverse communities celebrate their culture and learn about their neighbours' culture, too. They enrich our lives and improve our mental health and wellbeing. They also offer a great source of employment.

I pledge to:

- 1** Focus on grassroots arts, created by local people and performed in our well-loved arts venues and in our community centres
- 2** Help our residents, especially our young residents, access 'cultural capital' - top-notch cultural and artistic experiences

SPORT

Indoor and outdoor sports help promote health and wellbeing, and Tower Hamlets has a thriving sports scene for young people and veteran performers.

I pledge to:

- 1** Support current activities and seek to improve them (for example, by adding in more activities targeted at women and girls and more minority sports)
- 2** Establish a 'Mayor's Cup' borough-wide tournament, beginning with football but expanding to other sports such as badminton and cricket, to harness our youngsters' competitive spirit, promote active healthy lifestyles, and celebrate sporting achievement
- 3** Maintain awareness that many groups rely on parks and other Council facilities to play sport, and audit these facilities to ensure they are meeting need
- 4** Convene a sports summit to examine provision and find a way to improve what we do. This may involve setting up a designated sports forum in consultation with grassroots community sports activists
- 5** Promote women's sports and increase availability of women's gym and swimming sessions
- 6** Make sure our sports facilities and facilities of our partners are women-friendly and meet the cultural needs of our diverse communities
- 7** Keep all of our swimming pools open.

BUSINESS

Local business is the lifeblood of our community. Not only does it sustain our local economy and provide jobs and services to our residents, it also tells the story of our borough in the iconic trades and businesses that have flourished here over the years.

I pledge to:

- 1** Work closely with the East End Trades Guild to ensure their priorities are realised. This includes:
 - a)** Protecting small businesses on Brick Lane, including those affected by the development of the Truman Brewery
 - b)** Supporting an EETG member-led event in November to celebrate small businesses across Tower Hamlets, and raise their visibility to mark the 10 year anniversary of the EETG
- 2** Protect and support our markets across the borough including Whitechapel Market, Petticoat lane Market, Bethnal Green markets, Roman Road Market, Columbia Road Market, Watney Market, Chrisp Street Market, and put traders at the heart of their management
- 3** Create thousands of new jobs and training and apprenticeship opportunities for local people. This will be accomplished via a mixture of local government schemes and incentives to business
- 4** 1-hour free parking for customers stopping to shop at our markets
- 5** Building on my previous work, establish one of the first community land trusts in the country
- 6** Appoint a dedicated council officer responsible for Community Wealth Building, and for the development of a Community Land Trust in LBTH to create permanently affordable workspaces
- 7** Build on East London's long entrepreneurial history by supporting and encouraging the growth of start-ups locally
- 8** Support and sustain the growth of our borough's vibrant night-time economy, but do so in a way that is safe, inclusive, and respectful of local resident.





Invest in
Public
Services

When I was mayor, I safeguarded front-line services from the £125m budget cuts imposed on us by government austerity. The council is currently underspending its ample reserves so much that it is losing millions to inflation. There is money in the council that can be used to bring back public services we can rely on.

I pledge to:

- 1** Reopen the 'One Stop Shop' counters for accessing council services. Residents who struggle with IT have been disempowered by their closure under the current mayor
- 2** Clean up our borough with more bins, litter sweeps and a mission to drive down missed bin collections
- 3** Bring outsourced public services back into public hands and introduce an 'insourcing first' policy

IDEA STORES & LIBRARIES

We believe that Idea Stores and libraries are an important resource. They help our community learn through private study, internet access and adult education courses.

I pledge to:

- 4** Invest in the future of our borough's excellent network of Libarires and Idea Stores, including the Bancroft local history library and archive
- 5** Avoid all closures of Idea Stores or libraries for financial reasons. While some venues may need to close for short periods for maintenance, our intention is that all Idea Stores and libraries should re-open and serve our community

SOCIAL CARE CRISIS

Our parents and grandparents have contributed so much to this borough and it is our duty to protect and support them in their retirement. They should be able to live independently and in dignity. My ambition is to return to universal free home care, which we were the last council in the UK to provide when I was mayor.

I pledge to:

- 6** Invest in our provision of care for vulnerable members of our community, including children and adults
- 7** Look after our care workers to make sure they are adequately rewarded for their work for the most vulnerable members of our community
- 8** Ensure we are providing the best quality of services and satisfactorily passing all the appropriate inspections

HEALTH

The pandemic has shown us all how important public health provision is. As life begins to return to normal, we must not lose sight of this.

I pledge to:

- 9** Introduce a Public Health Service that is COVID-ready
- 10** Ensure that COVID's disproportionate impact on Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) people is considered in all public health provision
- 11** Improve general health education and awareness
- 12** Ensure that mental health and physical health are given parity of attention
- 13** Expand GP practices to ensure that patients can get appointments on time, and end to people having to wait for weeks before they can see a doctor
- 14** Work with healthcare providers to ensure that residents can access GP appointments
- 15** Promote a system where patients can choose whether the appointment is in person or online





Empower
Communities
and Fight
Crime

OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Our borough's strength lies in its diversity and the different communities and cultures living side by side.

I pledge to:

- 1** Work with communities across the borough to bring people together from different backgrounds and promote understanding. Bringing our whole community together will help reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour, violent crime and hate crime
- 2** Support events which celebrate the culture of our different communities and promote better understanding
- 3** Uphold and protect equality and diversity in all circumstances. Nobody of any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class or disability should ever face discrimination of any kind, and I want to return to the days when our authority was the highest ranked in London by Stonewall's Equality Index
- 4** Wage war on child poverty, as well as loneliness, social isolation and poverty among our older residents
- 5** Work with the borough's Inter Faith Forum to identify and meet the needs of our faith-based communities and, most importantly, to tackle crime and discrimination based on religion
- 6** Support and empower women, particularly ethnic minority women, with dedicated programmes and dedicated community facilities. The current mayor closed the Jagonari Project at the Davenant Centre, which provided excellent services, and this was a great loss to many local women. Support a dedicated resources centre for the women of Bangladeshi community
- 7** Support a dedicated resources centre for the Somali community, which is underrepresented in employment and local institutions, run by community members and open to the public
- 8** Ensure, as a first step towards meeting need, that our residents have access to a suitable multi-faith burial ground
- 9** Work closely with, and provide support to, the borough's Council of Mosques, one of the largest of such representative bodies in the country.

CRIME AND SAFETY

Tower Hamlets' residents, workers and visitors should always feel safe and welcome. This is a basic right, and we will work night and day to safeguard it.

I pledge to:

- 1** Work with the Metropolitan Police to put more uniformed police officers on the streets, as part of our Community Constabulary which previously boosted policing numbers locally. These officers will be supported by Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers
- 2** Reopen a full-time police station on the Isle of Dogs to reverse Labour's closure of the previous one last year
- 3** Support ward-based police forums where our residents can have a regular dialogue with the police, because our BAME communities and women must be able to trust the Metropolitan Police
- 4** Maintain our award-winning boroughwide CCTV service, which has been vital in detecting crime and identifying offenders. Work with local landlords and businesses to widen its scope
- 5** Identify crime hotspots and tackle them – for example by improving lighting and street design and using CCTV
- 6** Tackle violence against women and girls. We will support initiatives to end domestic violence and make our streets safer for all women. We will work with the Women's Forum to organise a public event each year to highlight the importance of women's safety. We will also ensure that there are sufficient refuges in the borough to meet women's needs
- 7** Address anti-social behaviour. Prevention is better than cure, and we will invest in youth services to provide young people with the resources they need to spend their time constructively
- 8** Work with the police and other bodies to tackle drug-related crime. Aim to arrest at least one drug dealer every day. This work will be supported by drug rehabilitation services to stop these problems from recurring
- 9** Invest in drug treatment, rehabilitation and recovery programmes, including culturally sensitive projects targeting hard-to-reach addicts.



A Clean and Green Future

My administration will tackle climate change — the biggest threat to the world we know — as a matter of urgency. We shall deliver actions, not just words.

I pledge to:

- 1** Establish a mayor's advisory board on climate change to guide our work with a view to making our council carbon neutral
- 2** Increase the number of charging points for electric vehicles in the borough
- 3** Work with private and social landlords to improve insulation standards in our homes
- 4** Install green heating systems on our estates, including the use of solar panels, wind turbines and heat and power schemes
- 5** Expand tree-planting throughout the borough and line our streets & estates with newly planted trees
- 6** Look after our parks and other open spaces, ensuring that they are accessible for the whole community
- 7** Keep waste and recycling services in-house, a process which began under my second term as Mayor
- 8** Work with the service to deliver further improvements, including education on recycling
- 9** Encourage our community to become involved in community walkabouts to check standards are being maintained across the borough
- 10** Wage war on fly tipping, using our boroughwide CCTV and a policy of prosecuting offenders
- 11** Encourage the community to report eyesores and problem areas (such as places where informal car parking hinders access by the emergency services)
- 12** Establish a dedicated noise control team to work with residents on reducing noise nuisance, including a rapid response team
- 13** Work with the Mayor of London to tackle air pollution in Tower Hamlets



- 14 Research the causes of poor local air quality
- 15 Work with Transport for London to improve public transport and local car clubs
- 16 Avoid penalising those in our community who drive, who in many cases are not responsible for the bulk of air pollution
- 17 Restore the right of those who hold one-zone borough parking permits to park in zones other than their home zones for five hours, free of charge
- 18 Support schemes to teach cycling and bike proficiency and safety
- 19 Monitor the effectiveness and safety of cycle lanes, such as those on Bow Road.



A Council
that Listens
to You

When you vote for me on 5th May, I am asking you to support my administration for the next four years. I want you to tell me when the Council has done something well, and I want you to tell me when it needs to do better. And I promise I will listen.

I pledge to:

- 1** Hold regular surgeries around the borough so that you can come to me for help on individual issues
- 2** Reopen our roads, and abolish the failed Liveable Streets scheme, which has seen emergency services and vulnerable residents' access blocked
- 3** Recognise that jamming up main roads reduces the speed of traffic, so queueing vehicles emit more fumes, not less
- 4** Only introduce traffic reduction measures through consultation with, and by the consent of the people of this borough
- 5** End the practice of 'consultation' being nothing more than you being asked to rubber-stamp a decision which has already been made
- 6** Work with residents, community groups and other interested parties to develop plans and ideas together
- 7** Carry out consultation which is fair and worthwhile, on the basis of the 'Gunning Principles' devised by Stephen Sedley QC. The principles are:
Consultation must begin when proposals are being developed (not after decisions have already been taken)
 - a)** Proposals out for consultation must include enough information and explanations so that those being consulted can properly respond
 - b)** There must be adequate time for those being consulted to consider the proposals and respond
 - c)** Consultation responses will be considered before a decision is taken and how the responses were taken into account will be made clear
- 8** Ensure that everyone affected by any proposals will be notified and can have their say. This pledge is at the start of my manifesto because it is so important to me that the community is at the heart of my administration



- 9 Hold regular Q&A sessions around the borough so that we can have a discussion, together, about how my administration is doing on the important issues
- 10 Publicise my email address and telephone number for you to contact me. I promise you that all emails and phone calls will be answered
- 11 Reinstate and enforce a 'Workforce to Reflect Our Community' policy: it is disgraceful that black and minority staff appear to have been treated worse by the current administration. My administration will reflect the diversity of our borough at all levels.

Vote **5 MAY**
2022
Aspire
Vote
LUTFUR
FOR MAYOR

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Rebuild our Future

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