

Message from the outgoing Corporate Director

Dear Colleague

So why should you be considering becoming our next Corporate Director and why now?

If you are looking for a job that stretches you to your absolute limits; expects and demands the best; rewards your success by improving the lives of some of our most vulnerable young people and their families; then this is the job for you.

This is not an easy or safe option, but to be fair few DCS jobs are given the current pressures and policy imperatives.

Tower Hamlets will give you both a national and a local profile – we tend to hit the headlines quite a lot (and not always for the right reasons) but this borough, its community, its passions and its contrasts will, I promise, get under your skin.

I will have completed nearly five years by the time you arrive and what a roller coaster that has been. Highs including achieving a good Ofsted rating in summer 2019, the ongoing success in our schools and the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership as well as the public vindication following the so called Muslim foster care expose of 2017.

The lows include being on the Ofsted 'naughty step' and falling foul of the very inspection framework that I developed and owned in 2017 when we were rated inadequate.

We are now on a trajectory from good to outstanding but the pitfalls are many. You will be taking forward ongoing transformation in every part of this portfolio from SEND, through to Youth Services; Early Years & Culture. All this against considerable financial pressures that will not ease given this government's determination to 'rebalance' resources across the country which is likely to result in penalising London.

Tower Hamlets is a place of vivid contrasts. Extreme wealth and extreme poverty, but in moving from the bottom 10 in the IMD to 50 – we will lose money. Our schools are currently amongst the best funded in the country and it's much tougher to lose what you have always had, then grieve for what was never there. I say that having experienced both scenarios.

Tower Hamlets is also experiencing the demographic shift that has created surplus school places in the west of the borough, necessitating significant work with our schools. You will be tasked with progressing the next phase of our Primary Place Review which entails further school mergers and closures.

You will enjoy the cut and thrust as a mature and challenging political (small p) environment and the benefits of a talented and energetic corporate body still moving from the proverbial directorate silos.

There is so much more as you may find for yourself, but this is intended to be a taster. Leaving Tower Hamlets will be a real wrench for me – but it's time for a change, a new vision – and I am more than ready to hand on the baton.

Thank you for your interest. This is my fifth Director's post and in truth, the most challenging and probably the most rewarding.

Debbie Jones
Corporate Director
Children & Culture