

# Press release: Return of full democratic accountability to Tower Hamlets confirmed

This follows a 2-year intervention by central government after an independent inspection found the accountability issues at the council.

While the team of commissioners will leave, new directions will be put in place for 18 months that require the council to report progress to Mr Javid every quarter.

This will allow him to keep a close eye on the borough to ensure taxpayers' money is put to best use and improvements continue.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I'm confident that Tower Hamlets council is on the right track to provide the services their residents deserve and rightly expect. That's why I have decided to return all powers to the council.

I want to make sure that taxpayers' money is put to the best use, in an open and transparent way. So I will want to hear from Tower Hamlets every three months on the progress they're making.

## **Communities Secretary to continue 'close eye'**

Since 2014, government-appointed commissioners have been overseeing key functions at Tower Hamlets.

This followed an independent inspection by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, which warned of a breakdown in democratic accountability and a significant misuse of public funds.

Since the commissioners were appointed, a new Mayor has been elected, a top officer team has been put in place, and an improvement plan is being implemented.

Following continued improvement by the council, particularly over the past year, Mr Javid has confirmed that commissioners will leave the council from the end of March 2017.

However, directions will remain in place so that the Mayor and the council report progress directly to him every 3 months. A Best Value Improvement Board, including councillors and independent representatives, will oversee this work.

## **Further information**

Three commissioners have been working with Tower Hamlets council. They are:

- Sir Ken Knight (lead commissioner)
- Max Caller CBE
- Chris Allison CBE

A fourth, Alan Wood, stepped down in January 2017.