

**Notice of Meeting**

**CABINET**

**Tuesday, 17 January 2023 - 7:00 pm**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Barking**

**Members:** Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair); Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair) and Cllr Dominic Twomey (Deputy Chair); Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Kashif Haroon, Cllr Jane Jones, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe and Cllr Maureen Worby

**Invited:** Cllr John Dulwich (non-voting)

Date of publication: 9 January 2023

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Acting Chief Executive

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Please note that this meeting will be webcast via the Council's website. Members of the public wishing to attend the meeting in person can sit in the public gallery on the second floor of the Town Hall, which is not covered by the webcast cameras. To view the webcast online, click [here](#) and select the relevant meeting (the weblink will be available at least 24-hours before the meeting).

**AGENDA**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Declaration of Members' Interests**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Members are asked to declare any interest they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting. Members are reminded that the provisions of paragraph 9.4 of Part 5, Chapter 1 of the Constitution in relation to Council house rent arrears applies to agenda item 6.

**3. Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 (Pages 3 - 8)**

**4. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (Period 8, November 2022) (Pages 9 - 38)**

5. **Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 and Council Tax Support Fund (Pages 39 - 104)**
6. **Housing Revenue Account: Review of Rents and Other Charges 2023/24 (Pages 105 - 111)**
7. **Dedicated Schools Budget and School Funding Formula 2023/24 (Pages 113 - 125)**
8. **Calculation and Setting of the Council Tax Base 2023/24 (Pages 127 - 134)**
9. **Corporate Plan - Quarters 1 and 2 2022/23 Performance Monitoring (Pages 135 - 194)**
10. **Procurement of a Resilience Contract for Welfare Services (Pages 195 - 202)**
11. **Urgent Action - Approval of Head Lease and Loan for Shared Ownership Properties at Challingsworth House (formerly Crown House), Linton Road, Barking IG11 8TL (Pages 203 - 211)**
12. **Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent**
13. **To consider whether it would be appropriate to pass a resolution to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted.**

#### **Private Business**

The public and press have a legal right to attend/observe Council meetings such as the Cabinet, except where business is confidential or certain other sensitive information is to be discussed. The list below shows why items are in the private part of the agenda, with reference to the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). ***There are no such items at the time of preparing this agenda.***

14. **Any other confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent**

## Our Vision for Barking and Dagenham

# **ONE BOROUGH; ONE COMMUNITY; NO-ONE LEFT BEHIND**

## Our Priorities

### **Participation and Engagement**

- To collaboratively build the foundations, platforms and networks that enable greater participation by:
  - Building capacity in and with the social sector to improve cross-sector collaboration
  - Developing opportunities to meaningfully participate across the Borough to improve individual agency and social networks
  - Facilitating democratic participation to create a more engaged, trusted and responsive democracy
- To design relational practices into the Council's activity and to focus that activity on the root causes of poverty and deprivation by:
  - Embedding our participatory principles across the Council's activity
  - Focusing our participatory activity on some of the root causes of poverty

### **Prevention, Independence and Resilience**

- Working together with partners to deliver improved outcomes for children, families and adults
- Providing safe, innovative, strength-based and sustainable practice in all preventative and statutory services
- Every child gets the best start in life
- All children can attend and achieve in inclusive, good quality local schools
- More young people are supported to achieve success in adulthood through higher, further education and access to employment
- More children and young people in care find permanent, safe and stable homes
- All care leavers can access a good, enhanced local offer that meets their health, education, housing and employment needs
- Young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded in the context of their families, peers, schools and communities

- Our children, young people, and their communities' benefit from a whole systems approach to tackling the impact of knife crime
- Zero tolerance to domestic abuse drives local action that tackles underlying causes, challenges perpetrators and empowers survivors
- All residents with a disability can access from birth, transition to, and in adulthood support that is seamless, personalised and enables them to thrive and contribute to their communities. Families with children who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) can access a good local offer in their communities that enables them independence and to live their lives to the full
- Children, young people and adults can better access social, emotional and mental wellbeing support - including loneliness reduction - in their communities
- All vulnerable adults are supported to access good quality, sustainable care that enables safety, independence, choice and control
- All vulnerable older people can access timely, purposeful integrated care in their communities that helps keep them safe and independent for longer, and in their own homes
- Effective use of public health interventions to reduce health inequalities

## **Inclusive Growth**

- Homes: For local people and other working Londoners
- Jobs: A thriving and inclusive local economy
- Places: Aspirational and resilient places
- Environment: Becoming the green capital of the capital

## **Well Run Organisation**

- Delivers value for money for the taxpayer
- Employs capable and values-driven staff, demonstrating excellent people management
- Enables democratic participation, works relationally and is transparent
- Puts the customer at the heart of what it does
- Is equipped and has the capability to deliver its vision

## MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 13 December 2022  
(4:04 - 5:01 pm)

**Present:** Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair), Cllr Dominic Twomey (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Kashif Haroon, Cllr Jane Jones, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe and Cllr Maureen Worby

**Apologies:** Cllr John Dulwich

### **55. Death of Councillor Olawale Martins**

In tribute to Councillor Olawale Martins who sadly passed away on Sunday 27 November, the Cabinet held a minute's applause in recognition of his service to the Borough.

### **56. Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **57. Minutes (15 November 2022)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2022 were confirmed as correct.

### **58. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (Period 7, October 2022) and Q2 Capital Programme**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services introduced the Council's revenue budget monitoring report for the 2022/23 financial year as at 31 October 2022 (period 7) and the quarter 2 Capital Programme update.

The Council's General Fund revenue budget for 2022/23 was £183.06m and the forecast outturn position at the end of October projected a net overspend of £16.603m once movements to and from reserves and income had been taken into account, which represented a worsening of almost £3m compared to the previous month. The Cabinet Member alluded to the main causes of the overspend which he had explained at previous meetings and he and other Cabinet colleagues continued their criticism of the Government for failing to properly fund the significant increases in demand being experienced by many local authorities. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council's Budget Reserve was sufficient to cover the current level of overspend, adding that he was confident that the position would improve significantly by the year end.

With regard to the Capital Programme for 2022/23, the Cabinet noted a number of proposals that would increase the overall programme from the current level of £417.05m to £452.611m. It was further noted that expenditure at the end of quarter 2 was only at 31.5% and although Investment and Acquisition Strategy (IAS) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budgets were expected to be fully spent by the year end, it was likely that a number of General Fund projects,

especially those relating to the Schools Programme, would slip into future years.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the projected revenue outturn forecast for the 2022/23 financial year as set out in section 2 and Appendix A of the report; and
- (ii) Note the capital expenditure at 30 September 2022 (Quarter 2) and approve the revised Capital Programme for 2022/23, as detailed in section 4 and Appendices B and C of the report.

## **59. Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27**

Further to Minute 15 (12 July 2022), the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services presented a report on the updated position regarding the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the proposed Budget Strategy for 2023/24 and beyond.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was not expected to announce the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 until 21 December, which would be the fifth consecutive one-year settlement. The failure of the Government to provide longer-term settlements and to introduce the Fair Funding and other reforms that had been promised for several years now meant that local authorities continued to struggle to plan ahead with any degree of certainty.

The Government's austerity measures that had been introduced since 2010 meant that the Council continued to face significant financial challenges despite the prudent and innovative approach that it had taken in recent years. Those challenges had been made even worse by the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis which had led to an increase in demand for many Council services. The combined effect of those challenges and pressures meant that, once growth bids and other measures to deal with on-going budget pressures had been taken into account, Barking and Dagenham faced a projected budget gap of £17.767m for 2023/24 and a cumulative budget gap of £64.855m by 2026/27.

The Cabinet Member alluded to the savings exercise that was underway and other issues that would assist the Council in setting a balanced budget at the Assembly meeting on 1 March 2023. One of those issues related to raising the level of Council Tax which had previously been capped by the Government at 2% on General Council Tax and 1% for the Social Care Precept. The Government was raising those caps to 3% on General Council Tax and 2% for the Social Care Precept for the next two years and while the Cabinet Member welcomed the additional flexibility, he stressed that the Government's tactic of pushing the onus on to local authorities and local taxpayers to compensate for the Government's underfunding of public services should not go unnoticed.

In view of the Council's projected budget gap for 2023/24, the Cabinet Member advised on plans to consult with the local community and businesses early in the New Year on savings proposals and a potential increase to the Council Tax in line with the new maximum thresholds. He also referred to the Council's commitment

to exploring new investment and regeneration initiatives that would bring in much needed revenue and improve the lives of local residents, especially the most vulnerable.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the continued commitment to delivering the savings proposed in the MTFS reports approved by Assembly in March 2022;
- (ii) Note the approach to mitigate the funding gap put forward for 2023/24 onwards prior to inclusion in the Budget Report in Spring 2023;
- (iii) Agree the proposed consultation process for the budget, as set out in section 9 of the report; and
- (iv) Agree to consult Borough residents and taxpayers on the levying of a 3% General Council Tax increase and a 2% Social Care Precept to support the Borough's most vulnerable residents, subject to these thresholds being confirmed.

**60. Short Term Contract for the Provision of Supported Accommodation for Older People (Extra Care) - Direct Award**

Further to Minute 9 (21 June 2022), the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration presented a report on the proposal to directly award a short-term contract to the existing provider of 'extra care' housing in the Borough while the re-tendering of a new longer-term contract was conducted.

The Cabinet Member explained that the original procurement of the new longer-term contract had commenced in the Summer. However, it became apparent on the return of tenders that officers could not properly evaluate the price component due to an inconsistent method of pricing amongst bidders. The decision was taken, therefore, to re-tender the service which meant that, in the meantime, interim arrangements needed to be put in place.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree to the waiver of tendering requirements under the provisions of paragraph 6.6 of the Council's Contract Rules and approve the direct award of the Extra Care contract to the current provider, Care Support, for the period 1 February to 31 July 2023, in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration, the Strategic Director of Finance and Investment and the Chief Legal Officer, to enter into the direct award contract and any other necessary agreements on behalf of the Council.

## **61. Contract for the Provision of an Integrated Statutory Advocacy Hub**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration presented a report on proposals relating to the procurement of a new contract for the provision of advocacy services to support a wide range of client groups, including older people, those with mental health, dementia and substance misuse issues and those with a learning or physical disability.

The Cabinet Member advised that the current advocacy services contract was due to expire on 1 April 2023. The intention was to procure a new, maximum four-year contract to provide all statutory advocacy services as well as an Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service, supporting people who are considering making a complaint about treatment funded by the NHS which, until now, had been procured separately.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with an open market competitive tender for the provision of an Integrated Statutory Advocacy Hub in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration and the Chief Legal Officer, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract(s) and all other necessary or ancillary agreements with the successful bidder(s), in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.

## **62. Procurement of Contract for Right To Buy Valuations**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services introduced a report on the procurement of a new contract to undertake Right To Buy and other valuations relating to the Council's housing stock.

The Cabinet Member referred to the outcome of a review which had identified shortcomings in the current service provision and he confirmed that the specification for the new contract would address those issues.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a contract for Right to Buy Valuations for a maximum five-year term, in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, My Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services, the Strategic Director, Finance and Investment and the Chief Legal Officer, to conduct the procurement and enter into the contract and all other necessary or ancillary agreements, including contract extensions, with the successful bidder.



### **63. Debt Management Performance 2022/23 (Quarter 2)**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services introduced the performance report covering the second quarter of the 2022/23 financial year in respect of the Council's debt management functions.

The Cabinet Member commented that the statistical data showed that the cost-of-living crisis continued to impact on the local community, although he did stress that a small proportion of individuals chose not to pay what they owed, rather than being unable to pay. Collection rates were, in the main, below the corresponding rates for 2021/22 and while those individuals who chose not to pay would continue to be targeted by the Council, the Cabinet Member alluded to the range of support and intervention measures that were on offer to those struggling with debt due to the Government's failure to provide a properly funded welfare support system. The Cabinet Member concluded with the warning that the situation was only expected to get worse as we moved further into the financial year due to the cold winter months when households would notice the full effect of the unprecedented energy prices.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the performance of the debt management function carried out by the Council's Revenues service, including the pressure on collection rates as a result of the cost-of-living crisis; and
- (ii) Note the change in debt recovery processes for the collection of Council Tax to assist residents in the current climate, as described in paragraph 2.5 of the report.

### **64. Procurement of Additional IT Cyber Security Software**

(The Chair agreed that this report could be considered at the meeting under the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 as a matter of urgency in order to avoid any delay in the procurement of IT cyber security software.)

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services introduced a report on a proposal to procure additional cyber security software from the Council's current provider in order to further strengthen the Council's resilience to potential attacks on its IT system.

The Cabinet Member advised that the new Darktrace Respond product would complement the Darktrace Detect product that the Council procured in 2021 and would significantly improve the overall threat detection and response time to mere seconds, as opposed to hours or days. The Cabinet Member stressed the importance of the Council taking all possible measures to protect its IT services from cyber attacks, both in terms of maintaining service provision and avoiding the substantial costs that are often associated with such attacks, citing the cyber breach at Hackney Council in 2020 which was estimated to have cost in excess of £10m to remedy.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of Darktrace Detect and Respond products from Softcat Ltd on the Kent Commercial Services Software Products and Associated Services Framework for a term of four years and three months, in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Finance and Investment, in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer, to award and enter into any contract(s) and agreement(s) with the chosen supplier in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.

**CABINET****17 January 2023**

<b>Title:</b> Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (Period 8, November 2022)	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> None	<b>Key Decision:</b> No
<b>Report Author:</b> Katherine Heffernan and Philippa Farrell, Heads of Service Finance	<b>Contact Details:</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:Katherine.heffernan@lbbd.gov.uk">Katherine.heffernan@lbbd.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Philippa.farrell@lbbd.gov.uk">Philippa.farrell@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Director:</b> Philip Gregory, Strategic Director, Finance & Investment	
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This report sets out the Councils revenue budget monitoring position for 2022/23 as at the end of November 2022, highlighting key risks and opportunities and the forecast position.</p> <p>The Council's General Fund budget for 2022/23 is £183.060m – a net increase from the previous year's position of £9.4m. The budget was set in March 2022 against an uncertain economic and funding climate which has progressively worsened during 2022/23. The Council, as with the rest of the country, has experienced significant inflationary pressures, which have impacted not only the Local Government Pay award but also the economic arena of service delivery as well, acutely in Social Services where market forces are inflating the cost and availability of placements. Energy costs have also increased for the Council. The Cost-of-Living Crisis has resulted in increased demand. This is against a backdrop of the fallout of the pandemic and the resource implications of Brexit. These are significant challenges being managed across the Council and the impact of these can be seen in overspends within each area. In addition, there is the impact of a changing balance of costs between the HRA and the General Fund.</p> <p>The Council has received no additional funding from Government to fund the increased costs and demand placing the burden on the Council.</p> <p>The current forecast outturn position, including movements to and from reserves and the income position, is £198.061m which would be an overspend of £15.001m, approximately a 7.5% overspend. This is a significant forecast overspend for the year, however the inflationary pressures are largely outside the control of the Council. It should be noted that this is an improvement since the previous month, largely as a result of management actions resulting in movements in Care and Support.</p> <p>There remains potential for risks and opportunities to materialise and for management action to be taken to reduce overspends in the remainder of the year. Furthermore, the overspend can be managed by use of the budget support reserve. However, the current level of overspend would deplete the reserve, increasing the risk in future years. The</p>	

<p>position will continue to be closely monitored and risks and opportunities recognised as soon as certain.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to note the projected revenue outturn forecast for the 2022/23 financial year as set out in section 2 and Appendix A of the report.</p>
<p><b>Reason(s)</b></p> <p>As a matter of good financial practice, the Cabinet should be informed about the Council's financial risks, spending performance and budgetary position. This will assist in holding officers to account and inform further financial decisions and support the objective of achieving Value for Money as part of the Well Run Organisation.</p>

## 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This is the fifth revenue budget monitoring report to Cabinet for the 2022/23 financial year. There was a net £9.4m of growth added to the budget for 2022/23 as part of the Council's budget setting process in February and March in order to meet the then known pressures, especially those in Care and Support. This was funded from Council Tax increases, commercial returns and Government grants.
- 1.2 Despite the growth, this year has a high level of financial risk including inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, the impact of the Covid pandemic and its aftermath, the potential impacts of Brexit, the long-standing pressures that impact across the Local Government sector and the high levels of deprivation and disadvantage that already existed for residents of the Borough.
- 1.3 As part of our ongoing improvement programme, a new financial system and budget monitoring process was introduced in April 2022. This has resulted in some changes to the format of the budget monitoring report. This report is a high-level summary with key information and action points with more detailed being contained within the appendices.

## 2. Overall Financial Position

- 2.1 The 2022/23 budget was approved by the Assembly in March 2022 and is £183.060m – a net increase of £9.4m from last year. Growth funding was supplied to most services to meet known demand and cost pressures and a central provision was made for the expected Local Government pay award. In addition there were £5.3m of savings included in the budget.
- 2.2 As **Appendix A** shows, the expenditure forecast is £198.061m after planned transfers to and from reserves resulting in a net overspend of £15.001m. There are still risks and opportunities that could be realised, as well as the possibility that this overspend can be managed down further. This level of overspend can be fully met from the budget support reserve without taking the General Fund below the minimum level of £12m. However, this would reduce the Council's ability to absorb further financial risks or support new investment in transformation in future years.

- 2.3 A proportion of the additional pressures are driven by the Covid pandemic. However as time has passed, some of the additional costs have now become the “new normal” and it is becoming increasingly hard to draw a sharp distinction between Covid costs and business as usual. There are now increasing pressures from the impact of inflation including pay inflation and the cost of living crisis. In addition there has been a review of costs recharged to the HRA which has resulted in a reduction of income from the HRA to the General fund.
- 2.4 The position has improved since last month. The largest movement is in Care and Support and is the result of several factors such as additional income and a review of placements data.

### **3. Savings and Commercial Income**

- 3.1 There is a new savings target of £6.219m for 2022/23 including those brought forward from previous years. £3.408m of these savings are either fully achieved or expected to be achieved in year. £2.354m are at high risk of not being achieved at all with the remaining £0.457m being uncertain or only part achieved in year.

### **4. Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 4.1 This report is one of a series of regular updates to Cabinet about the Council's financial position.

### **5. Legal Implications**

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Senior Standards & Governance Lawyer

- 5.1 Local authorities are required by law to set a balanced budget for each financial year. During the year, there is an ongoing responsibility to monitor spending and ensure the finances continue to be sound. This does mean as a legal requirement there must be frequent reviews of spending and obligation trends so that timely intervention can be made ensuring the annual budgeting targets are met.
- 5.2 Nevertheless, the unique situation of the aftermath of Covid 19 combined with the hostilities between the Russian Federation and the Ukraine presents the prospect of the need to purchase supplies and services with heavy competition for the same resources together with logistic challenges which is causing scarcity and inflationary rising costs. Still, value for money and the legal duties to achieve best value still apply. There is also the issue of the Councils existing suppliers and service providers also facing issues of pressure on supply chains and staffing matters of availability. As a result, these pressures will inevitably create extra costs which will have to be paid to ensure statutory services and care standards for the vulnerable are maintained. We must continue careful tracking of these costs and itemise and document the reasoning for procurement choices to facilitate grounds for seeking such additional support funds as the Authority may be able to access.

## **6. Other Implications**

- 6.1 **Risk Management** – Regular monitoring and reporting of the Council’s budget position is a key management action to reduce the financial risks of the organisation.
- 6.2 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** – regular monitoring is part of the Council’s Well Run Organisation strategy and is a key contributor to the achievement of Value for Money.

### **Public Background Papers used in preparation of this report**

- The Council’s MTFS and budget setting report, Assembly 2 March 2022  
<https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/Internet/documents/s152346/BF%202022-23%20Report.pdf>

### **List of appendices:**

- **Appendix A:** Revenue Budget Monitoring Pack (Period 8)

**APPENDIX A**

**Budget Outturn Report 2021/22**

**Primary Focus:** Top level summary of the financial position of the General Fund.

- 1. Operational Summary
- 2. Risks
- 3. Growth

Review the financial position, including the risks, and opportunities. Identify areas for management action or further review.

**Secondary Focus:** Top level summary of HRA, DSG, Companies

- 4.HRA
- 5.DSG
- 6.Companies

Review the financial position, including the risks, and opportunities. Identify areas for management action or further review.

**Tertiary Focus:** Detailed breakdown of service's financial position

- 7. Community Solutions
- 8. Corporate Management
- 9. Inclusive Growth
- 10. Law and Governance
- 11. My Place
- 12. People and Resilience
- 13. Strategy

Financial positions of each directorate and department.

# London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Budget Monitor: Period 8

## Content Links

[Overall Summary](#)

[Savings](#)

[Community Solutions](#)

[Corporate Management](#)

[Inclusive Growth](#)

[Law and Governance](#)

[My Place](#)

[People and Resilience](#)

[Strategy](#)

[HRA](#)



## Revenue Outturn - There is a c£15m overspend forecast as at P8 on Council Services

This period has seen the result of in year mitigations and deep dive on spend resulting in a reduction in the overspend to £15m. An overall positive movement from last month of £1,6m.

### Key Movements

#### People & Resilience:

- The overall position has moved by £1.1m, despite Disabilities increasing by c£0.43m, Commissioning has reduced by £0.574m, Children's has reduced by £0.42m, Adults has reduced by £0.28m, other minor movements add to the £1.1m.

#### Corp Management:

- The overall position has moved by £0.16m, due to a £100k movement in IT position = reductions across Pension, Treasury, and Finance make up the remainder.

#### Community Solutions:

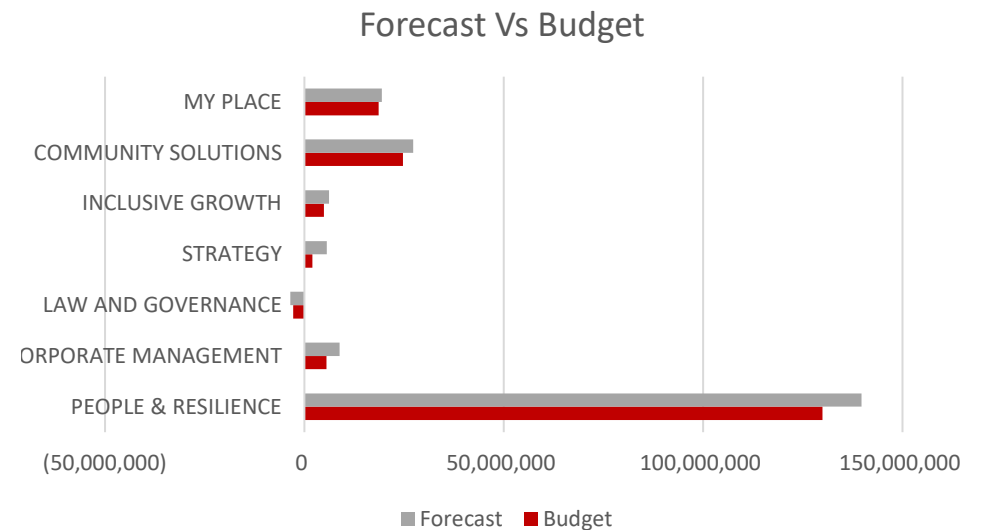
- The overall position has move by £0.28m due to security costs across all Hostels are now back to pre-pandemic levels. This reduction has been inline with National Guidelines.

#### Inclusive Growth:

- A favourable movement of £0.12m. This is driven by a movement in Commercial Services.

#### Strategy:

- This is the only area to increase in overspend. The movement is an increase of spend of £146k . The increase is linked to activity in events and communications.



## London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Revenue Forecast – Period 8

	This Years Budget	Actuals	Forecast	Variances Inc Reserves		Movement	Additional Information		
	Revised	YTD Actuals	Forecast	Variance	Last Period Variance	Between Periods	Variance as a % of budget	Net Reserve Transfer	
PEOPLE & RESILIENCE	129,929,230	74,307,364	138,715,207	8,785,977	9,925,478	-1,139,501	7%	-988,497	
CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	5,543,596	25,467,547	8,870,314	3,326,718	3,490,151	-163,433	60%	0	
LAW AND GOVERNANCE	-2,781,207	575,652	-2,678,579	102,628	101,799	829	-4%	840,170	
STRATEGY	2,026,429	4,535,133	2,716,920	690,490	544,328	146,163	34%	-2,927,305	
INCLUSIVE GROWTH	4,946,050	606,786	5,550,140	604,090	727,129	-123,040	12%	-648,259	
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS	24,758,813	12,036,917	25,461,152	702,339	983,218	-280,879	3%	-1,818,245	
MY PLACE	18,637,220	32,928,179	19,426,198	788,978	830,772	-41,794	4%	-14,438	
GENERAL FUND I&E	183,060,131	150,457,577	198,061,352	15,001,219	16,602,875	-1,601,656	8%	-5,556,574	
CORPORATE FUNDING	-183,060,131	-155,126,947	-183,060,131	0	0	0	-1%	-2,000,000	
GENERAL FUND I&E	183,060,131	-4,669,370	20,557,793	15,001,219	16,602,875	-1,601,656	9%	-7,556,574	

The main drivers of the variance to budget are the change in HRA policy, which is seen across several areas within the Council, most notably Community Solutions, Inclusive Growth and Law and Governance.

Aside from this People and Resilience is the most significant area of overspend of £8.8m, 7% of the overall budget. This is primarily driven by the overspend within Children's and Disabilities. The area has received £5m in growth in 2021/22 to their base budget. This is a key area of risk for the Council as a small % variance can have a significant impact on the overall position. Mitigation action and deep dive work with the service is ongoing and has already resulted in a reduced overspend this period.

Community Solutions is a volatile area that is demand driven and has £2m of pressures driven by the HRA. This is a key area of risk, but in-year mitigations have been developed in direct response to the financial challenge and overspend reducing the forecast overspend £0.7m. A continued reduction as a result of mitigations.

Corporate Management has been reduced to allocate budgets to services. There is less availability of this resource to cover other overspends. The area is forecasting an overspend as a result of the forecasted 6% pay award. In addition, a mid year forecast of bad debt provision has added £1.6m of pressure. This is offset by underspends in IT

BDTP is not expected to make £2m in dividend payment this year, which has reduced funding. The Be First contribution is currently assumed to be secure as a result of the Mueller site profits. It has now been agreed to take the £2m from the IAS smoothing reserve so it will not hit the General Fund or Budget Support Reserve this year.

# London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Budget Monitor: Period 8 Risk and opportunities

## Risk

- There are still some data and reporting issues arising from the implementation of the new ERP and Financial Systems which are making it harder for Finance and budget holders to gain full and up to date financial information. This has been improving over time but remains a significant financial risk with incomplete data available to make financial decisions, or to take remedial action if spend profiles are driving an overspend or under achievement in income. Particular remaining issues are the backlog of payroll/agency miscodings and some issues with income. More detailed is noted in the CP completion slide.
- This month is the fourth time budget holders have used CP. Although good progress is being made we do not yet have full compliance and it may take some time before all managers are confident using the system. This adds an extra degree of risk into the forecast – although Finance carry out reviews and QA to mitigate the risk.
- HRA and General Fund recharge policy change has resulted in an increase of costs of c£2.7m within the General Fund. This will drive an overspend to be managed in year as this was not built into the budget. The services across the board are struggling to mitigate the level of reduced income.
- The income for PRPL is forecasting a shortfall of c£0.9m and will require a drawdown from reserve. This will leave a balance of c£0.9m on the reserve. The scheme is currently in year 3 of 5. A full review of the scheme will be carried out in the current year.
- Recruitment is being reported as increasingly difficult across the Council and with delivery partners. This is driving up the usage of agency staff at a higher wage bill than budgeted permanent staff. There are several issues currently with departments being able to get position numbers when trying to appoint which is resulting in services reporting losing candidates. The market is extremely competitive across the board currently.

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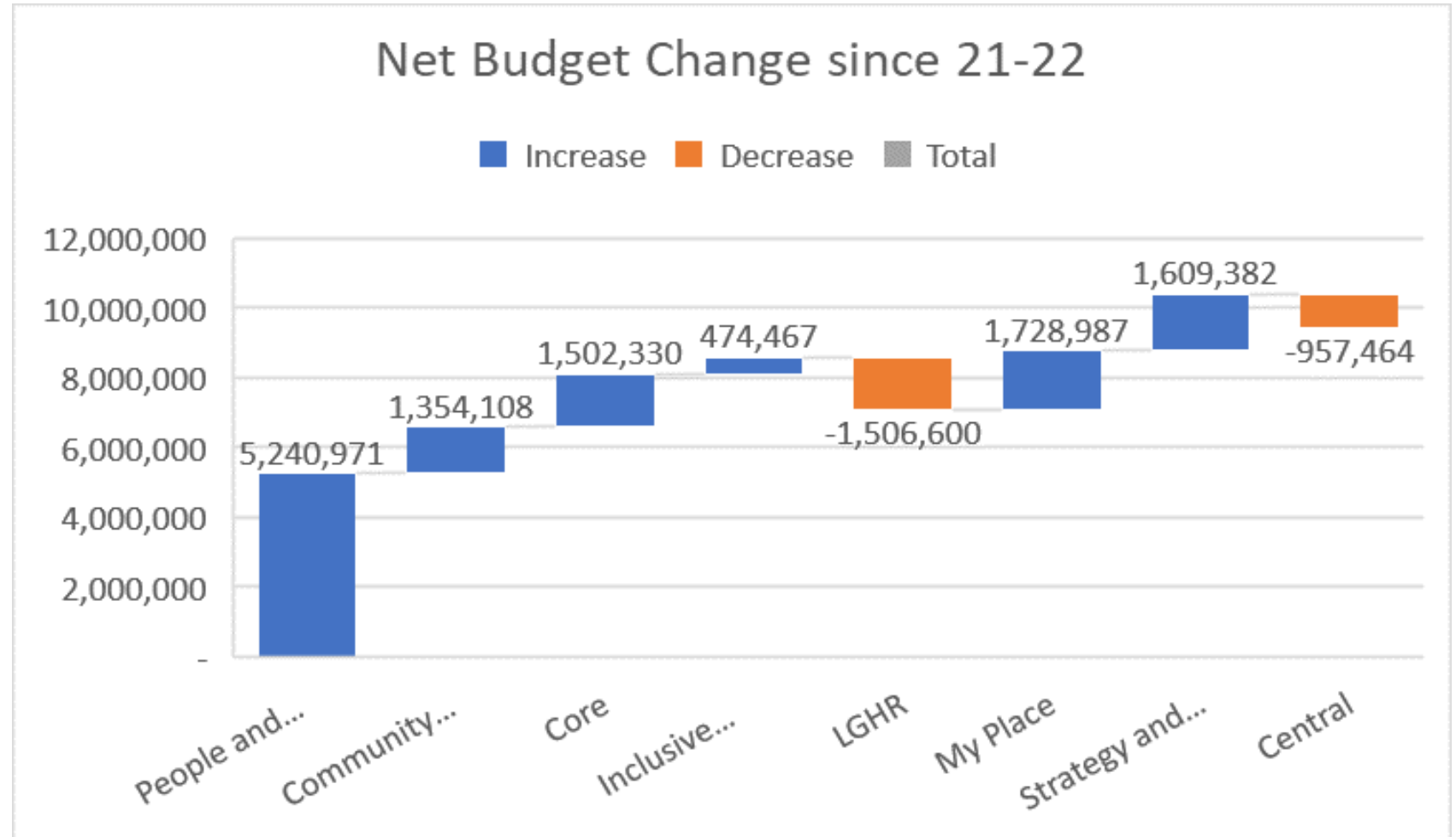
## Opportunities

- We are continuing to implement mitigations and management actions to drive down the forecast overspend for the current year. We would therefore anticipate that this forecast will reduce as the year progresses and mitigations take effect.
- Income for Parking is forecasting a c£2m surplus. This is in-line with prior year income. The income target has been increased by c£3.5m in the current year. There is a likelihood that the income will be higher than forecast. This will be a result of introduction of new CPZ schemes and Safer School Streets, but this is currently difficult to quantify.

## Budget Increase: The Budget has increased by a net £9.4m from £173.6m to £183.1m since 2021-22

### Several areas have received growth since 2021/22.

- **People & Resilience:**
  - Demographic and Inflation growth and investment in Early Help, Coroners
- **Community Solutions**
  - Concessionary Fares (-), debt strategy, NRPF, Core savings written off, loss of Brocklebank income, community hubs
- **Law and Governance:**
  - Increased income
- **Inclusive Growth**
  - Foyer written off; old income written off
- **Core:**
  - Investment in IT and HR
- **My Place**
  - Improving waste and recycling
- **Strategy and Culture**
  - Realignment of Leisure fees post Covid, small increase in Policy/strategy team
- **Central**
  - Distribution of centrally held contingency budgets to support services



Note: this is based on the structure at the time of the MTFS so may differ slightly from current.

## 2022- 23 Savings – including brought forward savings. NO CHANGE THIS MONTH

	2022-23 MTFs Savings	TOTAL SAVING '£000s	RAG RATING	Target for 22-23	Expected Achieved 22-23	Comments
EYC	Fixed Penalty Income	50	Amber	50	25	Finance estimate based on rag rating
ComSol	Working with VCS in community centres	90	Achieved	90	90	albeit by other means
LGHR	Parking Income	250	Achieved	250	250	
LGHR	Other Income - fines and market	70	Green	70	70	Income running slightly under profile but forecast to be achieved
LGHR	Further Parking Income	1,498	Green	1,498	1498	Income very robust
IT	Cyber Security	40	Achieved	40	40	
ComSol	Debt and Affordable Credit	580	Green	580	580	
My Place	Property Management	154	Red	154	0	Won't be achieved in 22/23 as dependent on restructure.
IT	various efficiencies	167	Amber	167	167	MPLS and Mobile Telephony achieved. Digital postroom and IT Procurement in progress
Disabilities	New CHC Monies from Transition clients	240	Amber	240	0	
Disabilities	Brocklebank	1,100	Red	1,100	0	Plans still being decided, timeline not achieved
Childrens	Efficient TOM	1,100	Red	1,100	0	Implementation postponed
		5,339		5,339	2,720	
	Brought Forward from previous years					
Inclusive Gr	Central Parks Landscaping Income	400	Green	400	400	Anticipated total income is £825k across 3 years
Adults	Transformation Income Generation	400	Green	400	400	
Enforcemen	Barking Market Additional Day	80	Green	80	80	
	TOTAL	6,219		6,219	3,600	

## Community Solutions: Period 8

Forecast Position: £27.3m (overspend of £0.7m, 2.8% Variance)

	This Years Budget			Actuals/Forecast		Transfers to/from Reserves		Variances Inc Reserves	
	Revised	Controlled	UnControlled	YTD Actuals	Current Forecast	Transfers to	Transfers from	Variance	Last Period Variance
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS	24,758,813	18,923,773	5,835,040	12,036,917	27,279,397	190,000	(2,008,245)	702,339	983,218
SUPPORT AND COLLECTIONS	8,565,815	3,931,645	4,634,170	5,175,706	10,571,680	0	(889,323)	1,116,542	1,517,593
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS	6,698,956	6,851,506	(152,550)	3,969,789	7,084,878	130,000	(215,000)	300,922	298,702
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & PREV	9,494,042	8,140,622	1,353,420	2,891,422	9,622,839	60,000	(903,922)	(715,125)	(833,077)

### Key Drivers of the Position:

The total overspend pressure for Community Solutions is **£3.4m**.

The HRA recharge has been recalculated and this has resulted in an income shortfall of **£1.9m**. There are historic budget pressures of **£0.8m** and in-year budget pressures of **£0.7m**.

Following on from the MTFS session in September, Community Solutions held a DMT session to identify one-off in-year mitigations to help reduce their impact on the forecast outturn position. Community Solutions have taken a number of difficult decisions and identified one-off mitigations of **£2.4m** to reduce the outturn variance, which are listed in the mitigations table. It is to be noted that these mitigations come with their own level of risk/impact and this will be closely monitored. The forecast has been reduced further by **c£0.25m** as security has now returned to pre pandemic levels for Hostels.

There may be potential to reduce the outturn variance further, and these have been listed in the opportunities below.

## Community Solutions: Period 8

Forecast Position: £27.3m (overspend of £0.7m, 2.8% Variance)

In Year Mitigation	Amount	Comments
Service Development Salary underspend	166,000	There has been a high staff turnover in 2022/23 within Service Development and a decision has been taken to not fill the Transformation Manager Position until the substantive post holder returns from secondment.
Strategic Director Salary underspend	150,000	The Strategic Director position was covered by agency on an interim basis. It is assumed the post will remain vacant from Oct-Mar and there will be no further consultants.
Customer Service Salary underspend	297,000	There have been a number of resignation over the summer and the transfer from Elevate to LBBB contracts has meant there are more than x13 vacancies. Currently we have x5 agency staff and the remain positions will not be filled before April 2023.
Triage Salary underspend	290,000	There are x4 vacancies within the NRPF team which will be held till April 2023.
Participation & Engagement Universal underspend	238,000	Release of reserve
Household Support Fund Admin Fee	400,000	Confirmation of HSF allocation and fee received at the end of September for Oct-Mar
Butler Court (Reserve draw down)	89,000	Drawdown of reserve to offset R&M
TA Modular (No MRP)	440,000	We have received confirmation in September that there will be no MRP payments on the modulars in 2022/23. MRP payments will commence from 2023/24.
Reduce TA Buffer	150,000	A decision has been taken to reduce the buffer in TA from £250k to £100k.
<b>Total Mitigations</b>	<b>2,408,000</b>	

## Community Solutions: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

Forecast Position: £27.3m (overspend of £0.7m, 2.8% Variance)

### **Risks: (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)**

- It is assumed COVID-19 related costs **c£100k** will be funded from COMF and other COVID Grants.
- The Ethical Collection Service Fee Income of **c£650k** is impacted due to delay in data and recruitment.
- The creation of a Parking Contact Centre has caused grading difference with existing staff within the Contact Centre. This creates an equal pay issue and is currently being investigated by HR. Further details will be provided in due course.
- A review of Bad Debt provision for Temporary Accommodation is being carried out. It is very likely that when the information is collated that there will be a budget pressure arising from this as collection rates for rents are being squeezed by cost of living and benefit reform changes.

### **Opportunities: (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)**

- A **£100k** gatekeeping buffer has been set-aside for Temporary accommodation due to Voids and demand, if unused will reduce the forecast outturn.
- Options are being explored around delivering the Homes for Ukraine scheme with existing resources to free up general fund **c£280k** as a one-off mitigation.



# Corporate Management: Period 8

Forecast Position: Overspend of £3.3m

	This Years Budget			Actuals/Forecast		Transfers to/from Reserves		Variances Inc Reserves	
	Revised	Controlled	UnControlled	YTD Actuals	Current Forecast	Transfers to	Transfers from	Variance	Last Period Variance
<b>CORPORATE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>5,543,596</b>	<b>10,213,186</b>	<b>(4,669,590)</b>	<b>25,467,547</b>	<b>8,870,314</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,326,718</b>	<b>3,490,151</b>
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP	(334,261)	412,359	(746,620)	319,879	(383,929)	0	0	(49,668)	(45,309)
FINANCE	5,579,118	12,172,848	(6,593,730)	11,788,831	4,327,255	0	0	(1,251,863)	(1,092,789)
IAS	(4,167,250)	(4,178,970)	11,720	(3,477,311)	(4,258,928)	0	0	(91,678)	(91,678)
CENTRAL EXPENSES	4,465,989	1,806,949	2,659,040	16,836,148	9,185,915	0	0	4,719,926	4,719,926

## Key Drivers of the Position:

There is a forecast overspend of £3.3m on Corporate Management which is a reduction of £163,000 on last month's forecast of £3.49m.

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**Strategic Leadership** is forecast to underspend by (£49,000). This is due to a senior leadership vacancy saving of £138,000 less the HRA recharge shortfall of £71,000 (Procurement Gainshare £103,000 less Managing Director £32,000) plus an £18,000 overspend on non-pay budgets.

**Finance** forecast an underspend of (£1.25m), an improvement of £159,000 from the Period 7 reported variance, due to the following areas underspending.

**IT** is reflecting an underspend of (£1.14m), £100,000 favourable variance from Period 7. The contributing factors to the underspend are:

- (£675,000) projected underspend in IT Third Party Contracts attributable to £540,000 savings from the Oracle to Advanced E5, Itrent and Brent Hosting contract costs and £135,000 projected underspend on BT and Virgin landlines.
- (£757,000) projected underspend on IT Staff and Agency, largely attributable to staff vacancies.
- (£206,000) projected overspend on IT Projects. Most of the project resource is recharged out to services for which the projects are being delivered. The Projects Team are in the process of reviewing the GTT Projects system to ensure all recharges are captured and implemented.
- £60,000 projected overspend on the IT Telephony linked to the 8x8 Telephony system with recharges to services and entities currently being reviewed; and £26,000 overspend reflecting on Azure cloud due to virtual machines.

**Corporate Finance** is reflecting a projected underspend of (£363,000) primarily due to staff vacancies, offset by **Assurance** overspend of £139,000 mainly on internal audit fees and £117,000 overspend in **Service Finance** in respect of agency costs.

- **IAS - Investment Strategy** - is reflecting a surplus on the (£4.1m) budget of £92,000, largely due to projected commercial rental income exceeding budget.
- **Central Expenses** - £4.7m overspend: The Local Government employers offer is an approx. 6% pay increase on average (higher for lower grades, lower for managers/professional grades). This is significantly higher than the roughly 2% provision made in the MTFS. Currently other contingencies and provisions are assumed to be fully used. It should be noted that these are much lower than in previous years as funds have been transferred to services.

## Corporate Management: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

Risks: (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- In addition there are risks from the Senior Leadership review and also a number of services are reporting recruitment/retention issues that mean result in other upwards pressures on pay in addition to the pay award.
- There is a central provision to meet the costs of redundancies required to make savings. Currently there are no significant exercises underway so half this provision has been released.
- Debt management improvement savings have reduced the budget available for providing against bad debt. The forecast currently assumes spend to budget – however the economic situation may mean that debt could rise.
- Finance recruitment and staff retention becoming increasingly difficult
- Insufficient engagement within the Council over risk management & Internal audit practices

Opportunities: (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- Currently the forecast includes estimated spend against several contingency budgets including the central redundancy pot and insurance. If these are not required, then this will contribute further underspends the Council position.

## Inclusive Growth: Period 8

Forecast Position: £6.2m (Overspend of £604,000)

	This Years Budget			Actuals/Forecast		Transfers to/from Reserves		Variances Inc Reserves	
	Revised	Controlled	UnControlled	YTD Actuals	Current Forecast	Transfers to	Transfers from	Variance	Last Period Variance
<b>INCLUSIVE GROWTH</b>	<b>4,946,050</b>	<b>2,006,340</b>	<b>2,939,710</b>	<b>606,786</b>	<b>6,198,399</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(648,259)</b>	<b>604,090</b>	<b>727,129</b>
COMMERCIAL	470,749	(155,211)	625,960	(1,122,208)	1,182,280	0	0	711,531	854,720
<b>INCLUSIVE GROWTH</b>	<b>4,475,301</b>	<b>2,161,551</b>	<b>2,313,750</b>	<b>1,728,994</b>	<b>5,016,119</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(648,259)</b>	<b>(107,441)</b>	<b>(127,591)</b>

### Key Drivers of the Position (Summary):

The Inclusive Growth Directorate is forecast to overspend by £604,000 at the end of Period 8, a favourable decrease of £123,000 from Period 7. Approx. half of the overspend is due to a reduction in the HRA Recharge, resulting in an income shortfall of £312,000.

#### Commercial Services – Forecast an overspend of £712,000, a favourable variance of £86,000 from the Period 7 reported position

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Commercial Services is projecting a £370,000 overspend due to the reduced HRA recharge. The greatest impact is in the Procurement service where there was a historic fixed fee of £331,000 chargeable by Agilisys to the HRA. As this recharge no longer takes place, there is a budget gap of £331,000.

The Film Office is projecting a £201,000 overspend due to a shortfall in income generation. The service is finding it increasingly difficult to meet the income target, as the number of filming locations dwindles as the borough is being regenerated. A growth bid has been submitted to reduce this target and has been approved.

- The CR27 Investment forecast £171,000 shortfall in the budgeted net income due to the increased rent payable by LBBB, whilst tenant is on a rent free period.
- Across Commercial services there is a net pressure of £120,000 on the employee budget costs consisting of £85,000 in salaries and agency costs and £35,000 in Added years pension top ups. This overspend is offset by an (£85,000) reduction on Leisure mainly on Added years Compensatory costs and (£54,000) underspend from the Core Commercial Team linked to supply and services budgets.

#### Inclusive Growth – Forecast an underspend of (£107,000) an adverse variance of £21,000 from the Period 7 reported position

- Parks Commissioning forecast an underspend of (£17,000), comprised of £31,000 projected overspend on energy and services for Eastbrookend Discovery Centre and Park Commissioning core team; part of the £31,000 overspend relates to £12,000 in projected costs for contaminated land water sewage charges. In addition, a £10,000 shortfall on Licence & Permit income is being projected which is partly offset by (£18,000) income over achievement on the Central Park Soil importation and (£39,000) underspend on staffing.
- Culture and Heritage is reflecting a £131,000 overspend due to £44,000 NNDR (Business Rates) budget pressure and a £24,000 increase in internal recharge expenditure compared to budget. The vast majority of the remaining overspend of £63,000 relates to projected Income underachievement, partly due to Eastbury Manor House closure for most of the financial year.
- The Inclusive growth core team is reflecting an underspend of (£251,000). The main contributing factor is (£177,400) projected underspend due to staff vacancies. The remainder is attributable to (£58,000) HRA recharge income increase, (£55,000) anticipated CIL admin fee income and CEV Grant offset by £40,000 overspend on non - pay budgets.
- Development Planning reflects a projected overspend of £36,000 as a result of Added Years Compensatory payments.

The £648,000 transfer from Reserves represents a drawdown from Inclusive Growth reserves, funding the Food Sector development, Made in Dagenham Endowment programme and the Employment team net overspend.

## Inclusive Growth: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

### Risks: (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- Key risk is that the film studios operator MBS/Hackman do not continue to fund the existing post or the programme beyond the initial endowment, which is projected to last 5 years.
- There is a risk that the City of London does not re-locate the wholesale markets to the borough, in which case we will not receive additional funding beyond the s106 funding received to date. This would shorten the impact and length of the programme to 2 years. Longer term, there is a risk that the City of London does not provide funding to support the ongoing nature of the programme beyond the s106 funding.
- Heritage income remains at risk with Eastbury Manor House only open 1 day per week, making it difficult to meet income targets. This is largely due to delays in the restructure implementation being built in Itrent to allow for vacant posts to be advertised and filled.
- There is an inherent risk that external market factors may make it more difficult for tenants of the Council's hotel investments to meet their rent payments.
- There is an unquantified risk to the Parks Commissioning budget overspending due to Capital projects revenue related expenditure not capitalizable being charged to the revenue budget.
- Income targets – the F14450 Parks Commissioning cost centre includes historical commercialisation income targets (Large commercial events £100k and small-scale commercial activities £33k). These targets are unachievable and must either be relocated to the appropriate team or removed.
- Contaminated land adjacent to Eastbrookend Country Park – risks:
  - Remaining risk of prosecution from Thames Water.
  - Lack of clarity about the future management and maintenance of the contaminated land.
  - Vehicular access – the current AXA licence expires on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023. If alternative vehicular access to the site can't be secured this will severely impact on the future management and maintenance of this land parcel.
  - Electricity supply – a permanent electricity supply is essential to avoid future dependency on generator use and diesel deliveries.
  - Land drainage and flood risk assessment issues – still need to be satisfactorily addressed.
- There are inherent risks associated with expected grants for Works & Skills ( Employment Team), as there is the possibility for the bids not being approved.

## Inclusive Growth: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

### Opportunities: (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- The opportunity is to establish ongoing sponsorship from MBS/Hackman for the film studios, as well as using the endowment to leverage additional funding and
- resources from the sector and visiting productions. There are also opportunities to commercialise/self-fund elements of the programme, to ensure long term
- Sustainability, including by creating a training space that can be leased to different providers to deliver sector-specific training.
- The opportunity for the food sector is to establish ongoing sponsorship from the City of London, and leverage further additional funding from external sponsors.
- The Business Rates bills for Eastbury Manor and Valence House have been appealed and, if successful, may result in a refund of up to £200k.
- There are long term opportunities to generate commercial income from apprenticeships and recruitment support, which could be used to cross-subsidise employment support for the harder-to-reach, if resource can be identified to pursue them.
- Tennis Development Proposal – as per the report presented to ACB on 09.11.22, if adopted this proposal could attract significant external investment from the Lawn Tennis Association (c£395k) if the Council contributes c£132k.
- External funding – Parks commissioning has submitted (or has prepared) bids to the Grow Back Greener Fund (c£50k) and 3 x Rewild London Fund (c£40k, c£44k and c£18k). If successful these projects will deliver significant social, environmental, and economic benefits for the borough and residents.
- Green and Resilient Spaces Fund (Round 2) – funding round opens (i.e. project delivery grants from £250k up to £750k) in December and the application deadline is likely to be the beginning of February for projects which can start in April 2023 and be completed by March 2025 (i.e. over a 2 year period). As in round one GLA is looking for projects which are exemplary in quality with a focus on climate resilience and access to green space. Subject to the completion of the current Development Phase and obtaining Council support, Parks Commissioning is planning on submitting a bid for the Parsloes Park 'Gores Brook Living Landscape Project'.

## Law and Governance: Period 8

Forecast Position: -£2.7m (overspend of £0.1m, 3.5% Variance). Overspend is after transfer of c£2m parking surplus to reserves and drawdown c£0.9m PRPL from reserve

	This Years Budget			Actuals/Forecast		Transfers to/from Reserves		Variances Inc Reserves	
	Revised	Controlled	UnControlled	YTD Actuals	Current Forecast	Transfers to	Transfers from	Variance	Last Period Variance
<b>LAW AND GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>(2,781,207)</b>	<b>(268,467)</b>	<b>(2,512,740)</b>	<b>575,652</b>	<b>(3,518,749)</b>	<b>2,000,433</b>	<b>(1,160,263)</b>	<b>102,628</b>	<b>101,799</b>
WORKFORCE CHANGE / HR	569,217	2,331,737	(1,762,520)	1,761,509	1,303,020	0	0	733,803	732,062
LEGAL	1,749,180	3,225,440	(1,476,260)	4,214,147	2,170,108	0	(233,939)	186,989	186,989
ENFORCEMENT	(5,100,025)	(6,084,515)	984,490	(5,605,933)	(7,038,450)	2,000,433	(926,324)	(864,316)	(863,405)
LEADERS OFFICE	421	258,871	(258,450)	205,929	46,573	0	0	46,152	46,152

### Key Drivers of the Position (Summary):

The HRA recharge has been recalculated and this has resulted in an income shortfall across Law and Governance of £615k.

There are delays in the recruitment process for a number of positions within Law & Governance and a number of vacancies, some of which are covered by agency while others are held vacant resulting in underspends in Enforcement.

Parking income is forecast to be around £2m above the expected level as traffic levels have increased after lockdown and the introduction of new CPZ schemes. This additional income will be taken to the Parking reserve at year end while proposals for its use to improve local transport, highways management, community safety, mobility and environmental concerns are developed. The focus of investment will be to generate future improvements for residents of the Borough. The option to clear current borrowing for the implementation of CPZ of c£1.6m is being explored. The Private Sector Property Licensing (PRPL) scheme income target will not be met and a drawdown of c£0.9m will be required from reserves.

## Law and Governance: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

Forecast Position: -£2.7m (overspend of £0.1m, 3.5% Variance). Overspend is after transfer of c£2m parking surplus to reserves and drawdown c£0.9m PRPL from reserve

Risks: (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- The Private Sector Property Licensing (PRPL) scheme has a challenging income target across five years and so there is a long term risk that it might not generate sufficient net income to meet the income target of £1.924m. This is not currently assessed as high risk but must be monitored.
- Parking income is volatile and depends on driver behaviour and compliance. There is a risk that actual income will be lower than the current forecast. Performance will be closely monitored, and the forecast will be updated over the course of the year based on actuals.

Opportunities: (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- Barking Market Income: The current income level is influenced by post COVID activities. The monthly income can increase or decrease in future. An extra day was added based on a return to pre COVID levels, this is not being achieved yet and it depends on how COVID impact develops.

## My Place: Period 8

Forecast Position: **£19.4m (£789,000 overspend, 4.2% variance)**

		This Years Budget			Actuals/Forecast		Transfers to/from Reserves		Variances Inc Reserves	
		Revised	Controlled	UnControlled	YTD Actuals	Current Forecast	Transfers to	Transfers from	Variance	Last Period Variance
<b>10G</b>	<b>MY PLACE</b>	<b>18,637,220</b>	<b>37,284,783</b>	<b>(18,647,563)</b>	<b>32,928,179</b>	<b>19,440,636</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(14,438)</b>	<b>788,978</b>	<b>830,772</b>
10GA/B	MY PLACE (HOMES & ASSETS)	9,044,549	24,227,292	(15,182,743)	23,180,616	9,749,321	0	0	704,772	668,152
10GC	PUBLIC REALM	9,592,671	13,057,491	(3,464,820)	9,747,563	9,691,315	0	(14,438)	84,206	162,620

### Executive Summary

- **Property Assets** net overspend is driven by the increased energy prices for **Street Lighting** at **£500,000** over budget.
- **Commercial Portfolio** reflects a **£682,000** overspend projection with 91% related to income under recovery. Service review ongoing.
- Overall **HRA Fixed Recharge** impact on the directorate is **(£547,000)** positive, mainly driven by **Caretaking** and **Grounds Maintenance**.
- **Public Realm** overspend of **£355,000** (adjusting out above line impact) is mainly driven by **Waste Ops** and **Street Cleansing**.
- **(£159,000)** across other budgets within **Homes and Assets** connected to the **HRA**.
- Quantifiable **Risks** stand at **£1.7m** versus **Opportunities (£50,000)**.

### My Place – Homes & Assets: Period 8 Forecast Position: **£9.7m (£704,000 overspend, 7.8% variance)**

Key Drivers of the Position (Summary):

**Commercial Portfolio** is reflecting a **£682,000** overspend (excluding the HRA Recharge below). The income budget was profiled on the expectation of increased rental income due to rent reviews, however, this has not occurred due to changes in the team and limited capacity. Furthermore, increased costs from insurance, repairs and maintenance have exacerbated the position. There is also uncertainty over repairs and maintenance charges due as BDMS have only supplied quarter 1 for corporate and commercial buildings incurred in 2022/23 at the end of October.

**Property Assets** is overspending by **£603,000**. **Highways** is projecting a **£759,000** overspend (excluding HRA recharge variance below), much of this relates to energy projections on its street lighting and illuminated signage **£500,000**, plus undeliverable 2022/23 savings of **£150,000**. This is offset in part from underspends in staffing on **Asset Management (£126,000)** and **Major Works (£30,000)**.

**(£354,000)** reflects the variance in the **HRA Fixed Recharges** that were reviewed in April 2022 compared to the current budget. These affect Commercial, Highways, Caretaking and Compliance. **(£263,000)** mainly to do with the **HRA My Place recharge** for Landlord Services, Leasehold, Business Development and Contract Management.



## My Place - Public Realm: Period 8

Forecast Position: **£9.691m**, (**£84,000** overspend, less than 1% variance)

Key Drivers of the Position (Summary):

**Waste Operations** is reflecting an overspend of **£818,000**, which is an increase of **£101,000**. The environment has played a factor in putting pressure on the 2022/23 staffing budgets. Storm Eunice and the pandemic increased carried forward leave, which in turn created a need for overtime and agency cover whilst staff excised their leave. The overspend is due to £268,000 where overtime and agency expenditure exceeds the staffing budget, £404,000 for Fleet recharges related to increased costs on fuel, repairs and maintenance and the hire of two additional refuse vehicles plus £146,000 on other costs such as purchasing new bins.

**Fleet** is reflecting a (**£418,000**) underspend which is the same as reported last period. The positive variance includes (**£168,000**) of increased external income and (**£213,000**) of increased internal recharge income compared to budget. The remainder is linked to underspend on purchasing budgets.

**Parks and Environment** is showing a (**£214,000**) underspend, an adverse movement of **£61,000**. Arboriculture and Cemeteries are online. Parks is reflecting a £156,000 pressure mainly related to increased compliance costs on FRA's. Ground Maintenance is reflecting a (**£360,000**) underspend of which 92% relates to positive changes in the planned HRA Fixed Recharge.

**Compliance** is reflecting a (**£234,000**) underspend, an increase on Period 7 of (**£36,000**) across Green Garden and Trade Waste, PEST Control and Compliance, Projects and Administration (CPA). CPA is underspending due to vacancies held ahead of restructure at (**£277,000**) which is partly offset by £28,000 mainly to do with Trade Waste.

**Street Cleansing** is reflecting a **£251,000** overspend, a reduction on Period 7 of (**200,000**), due to a reduction in agency and overtime expenditure. The overspend mainly relates to £80,000 where overtime and agency spend exceeds the employee budget plus £144,000 for Fleet recharges where fuel, damage and maintenance costs are exceeding budget.

**PR Director Budget** has released its purchasing budget to reduce the impact of Operations above (**£87,000**). **Passenger Transport** is reflecting a forecast underspend of (**£19,000**) due to staffing and **ELWA** is (**£12,000**).

## My Place: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

Forecast Position: **£19.5m** (£830,772 overspend, 4.3% variance)

Risks: **£2.700m** (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- £1.4m: Total of outstanding invoices with BD Management Services relating to Fleet running costs **plus** forecast for 2022/23 built into Public Realm (invoices £1.9m).
- £150,000: Highways is facing inflationary pressures (26% indexation costs in current year) on maintenance contracts.
- £75,000: Ward Budget expenditure should only be capital in nature. However, sometimes schemes are progressed that do not meet the definition and this expenditure must be charged to the general fund revenue budget. The value is based on last years impact.
- £75,000: Cemetery and Crematoria income is at risk despite prudently reducing the income budget for 2022/23. This risk is based on current fees and charges.
- Unquantifiable Risks:
  1. **Corporate Repairs and Maintenance charges from BDMS for 2022/23 are now overdue for Quarter 2.** The company has provided Quarter 1 information to Budget Managers on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022.
  2. Energy Budget uncertainty (other than Street Lighting).
  3. Further HRA Fixed Recharges are expected to be reviewed which could generate further adverse variances until funding is identified from the general fund.
  4. Arboriculture planned works relies on one FTE, therefore it is a recognised point of failure. This could impact forecast income recharges in Parks & Environments. Succession planning and the reduction in overreliance to the post is being factored into the future establishment structure.

Opportunities: **(£50,000)** (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- Commercial: The overspend in Commercial Assets could be reduced if the service is able to initiate some of the budgeted plans around rent reviews and letting voided properties.

# People and Resilience: Period 8

Forecast Position: £139.7m (overspend of £8.8m, 6.3% variance)

	This Years Budget			Actuals/Forecast		Transfers to/from Reserves		Variances Inc Reserves	
	Revised	Controlled	UnControlled	YTD Actuals	Current Forecast	Transfers to	Transfers from	Variance	Last Period Variance
<b>PEOPLE &amp; RESILIENCE</b>	<b>129,929,230</b>	<b>107,532,940</b>	<b>22,396,290</b>	<b>74,307,469</b>	<b>139,703,704</b>	<b>231,303</b>	<b>(1,219,800)</b>	<b>8,785,977</b>	<b>9,925,478</b>
DISABILITIES CARE & SUPPORT	30,345,254	29,552,494	792,760	20,958,819	35,227,819			4,882,565	4,456,126
ADULT'S CARE & SUPPORT	22,254,688	19,563,508	2,691,180	17,582,332	23,638,283		(1,110,000)	273,595	557,298
COMMISSIONING - CARE & SUPPORT	15,135,153	14,169,833	965,320	979,677	13,737,114			(1,398,039)	(824,260)
PUBLIC HEALTH	(318,250)	(381,250)	63,000	(123,301)	(549,553)	231,303			
CHILDREN'S CARE & SUPPORT	40,741,709	39,525,409	1,216,300	27,539,202	45,236,266			4,494,557	4,912,226
EDUCATION, YOUTH & CHILDCARE	20,522,911	3,915,181	16,607,730	7,394,664	20,522,216		(109,800)	(110,495)	(172)
EARLY HELP SERVICE	1,247,765	1,187,765	60,000	(23,923)	1,891,558			643,793	824,260

## Key Drivers of the Position (Summary):

- **Disabilities Service: - £4.882m**
  - **Adults** - Short Term Care £0.155m, Direct Payments (£0.119m), Residential £0.333m, Nursing (£0.167m), Supported Living £1.189m, Day Care £0.178m, Consultancy (£0.249m), DP Refunds (£0.248m), CHC Income £0.139m. = **Total £1.211m**
  - **Children** – Direct Payments £0.103m, Day Care £0.409m, Bed & Breakfast (£0.165m), Legal Fees £0.200m, Residential £2.896m, Internal Fostering (£0.391m), Internal Services (£0.368m), Out of Borough Transport £1.038m = **Total £3.670m**
- **Adults Care and Support - £0.274m**
  - **Adults** – Resi / Nursing £1.510m, Home Care £0.787m, Direct Payments (£1.868m), DP Refunds £0.425m, BCF Projects (£0.483m), BCF Winter Pressures (£0.913m), Growth to be allocated (£0.600m), Others (£0.236m) = **Total (£1.378m)**
  - **Disabilities** – Home Care (£0.096m), Direct Payments £0.351m, Resi / Nursing £0.931m, Supported Living £1.288, Others £0.086m, Internal Care £0.203m = **Total £2.762m**
  - Drawn Down – (£1.110m)
- **Commissioning Care and Support – (£1.398m)**
  - Staffing – (£0.368m), Start for Life Grant & Delay in implementing new structure (£1.814m), Ofsted preparation allowed overspend £0.776m
- **Public Health**
  - PH is grant funded and is expected to remain within its allocation.
- **Children's Care & Support - £4,495m**
  - Agency £3.030m, Staffing (£2.422), Asylum (£1.180m), Leaving Care £0.714m, Secure (£0.614m), Residential £4,869m, Ext agency (£0.244m), Family Ass £0.227m, Int Fostering £1.101m, Adoption (£1.086m), others £0.189m
- **Education, Youth & Childcare**
  - Reporting breakeven
- **Early Help - £0.644m**
  - Agency £0.460m, Consultancy £0.230m

## People and Resilience: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

Forecast Position: £140m (overspend of £7.3m, 5.6% variance)

### **Risks: (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)**

- D2A CCG Funding has now ceased, although there is some short term funding, the lasting impact of the pandemic is expected to increase base costs permanently.
- The outcome of the Norfolk judgement is still a significant risk factor, the cost to the service is currently unknown but it is likely to be very significant if the legal case goes against us.
- Early Help service TOM has yet to be finalised, it is expected that the cost of the service will significantly rise once this is complete as the service is currently significantly understaffed.
- Market stabilisation and Fair Cost of Care impact is currently being worked on, although there is some short term funding to mitigate this, the ongoing impact is currently unfunded and will increase our base care rates.
- Cap on Care Costs legislative change will mean that more costs will fall on the LA rather than the individual within Adults Care and Support.
- The Sexual Health service commissioned by Public Health is a demand led service, although there is no data to support a significant increase in demand, if such a scenario was to occur this could cause the service to overspend.
- Hays Social Worker Review may lead to an increase in salary and incentive offers to social workers across the board.

### **Opportunities: (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)**

- The use of Care Technology is the biggest opportunity care and support has to exploit, service is in now implemented and client reviews starting to take place, we hope to see savings/cost avoidance this year and in the future.
- The HDP reserves are currently not in the forecast, this could potentially improve the forecasted outturn or mitigate some of the fair cost of care risk once it materialises.
- If the interim resources projected in Children's care and support are not brought in immediately this could potentially improve the position with some of the cost falling into the next financial year.
- We are scheduled to receive additional funding from Health to support Winter Pressures and we are in a good place to deliver services within sum being provided.

## Strategy: Period 8

Forecast Position: Overspend of £690,000 or 34%

		This Years Budget			Actuals/Forecast		Transfers to/from Reserves		Variances Inc Reserves	
		Revised	Controlled	UnControlled	YTD Actuals	Current Forecast	Transfers to	Transfers from	Variance	Last Period Variance
10D	STRATEGY	2,026,429	2,832,599	(806,170)	4,535,133	5,644,225	0	(2,927,305)	690,490	544,328
10DC	STRATEGY & TRANSFORMATION	1,147,369	1,459,659	(312,290)	3,105,810	4,210,226	0	(2,927,305)	135,552	159,588
10DD	COMMUNICATIONS	879,060	1,372,940	(493,880)	1,429,324	1,433,999	0	0	554,939	384,740

### Key Drivers of the Position (Summary):

The Strategy directorate is forecast to overspend by £690,000 at the end of Period 8 which is an increase of £146,000 on the Period 7 overspend of £544,000. The increase in the overspend is due to increased expenditure in Community Events, Civic Events, and Communications. This increase is partially offset by a reduction in expenditure on the Insight and Strategy teams. The reduced HRA recharge accounts for £259,000 of the overspend of £690,000. The forecast contribution from the HRA is £107,000 – this is under review to establish if an increased contribution can be justified.

### **Strategy and Transformation – Forecast £135,000 overspend**

- The Insight hub are forecast to overspend by £24,000 due to a £52,000 overspend on subscriptions (Gartner, LG Inform, borough Data Explorer), consultancy fees and IT recharges, offset by a £28,000 underspend on staffing. Advertising is anticipated to exceed the £236,000 income target by £33,000.
- The PMO is forecast to overspend by £93,000 due to the HRA income pressure of £116,000 offset by a £24,000 underspend on salaries.
- Strategy is forecast to overspend by £80,000 on the non-pay budget, mainly due to an overspend of £44,000 on subscriptions, and also a reduction in the HRA recharge of £25,000. There is an underspend of £28,000 on the Director cost centre due to a period of vacancy earlier this year.

### **Communications, Campaigns and Events – Forecast £555,000 overspend**

- Events are forecast to overspend by £342,000, which is an increase of £114,000 since last period. The overspend consists of £126,000 on staffing, £577,000 on non-pay budgets less forecast income of £360,000. The forecast net expenditure for events is just over £1m, which is an increase of £344,000 on 2021/22.
- Civic Events are forecast to overspend by £31,000 which is on salaries and overtime.
- Communications is forecast to overspend by £181,000 which is an increase of £43,000 on last month. The overspend consists of £62,000 on salaries plus £117,000 reduced HRA income.
- The £2.927m transfer from Reserves represents a drawdown of £2.262m to finance the ERP programme from the budget support reserve, £167,000 Transformation funding and £498k of Shielding grant.

## Strategy Period 8 Risk and Opportunities

### **Risks: (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)**

- There is the risks of continued overspend on Strategy on membership and subscription fees. A growth bid has been submitted to bring the budget back in line with these uncontrollable costs.

### **Opportunities: (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)**

- Income from Digital Advertising is an area of opportunity. There is potential for new units to generate additional income (estimated at £40k per year). However, after the service recently tested the market, providers were offering low fees to the Council and required a long contract (15 years). As such the team may decide to wait a year before going to market again. This would delay this income opportunity. The service is currently in discussions with procurement, finance and external advisers to decide the best route.

## HRA: Period 8 – Held at P7 due to Budget Build

Forecast Position: **£3.7m** overspend.

2022/23 FORECAST OUTTURN				
REPORT LEVEL	BUDGET	PERIOD 7	VARIANCE	CHANGE
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT	43,523	45,244	£1,722	
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	24,215	23,549	(£666)	
RENTS, RATES ETC	950	1,055	£105	
INTEREST PAYABLE	10,944	10,944	£0	
DEPRECIATION	17,088	19,210	£2,122	
DISREPAIR PROVISION	0	0	£0	
BAD DEBT PROVISION	3,309	2,000	(£1,309)	
CDC RECHARGE	1,003	1,003	£0	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>101,030</b>	<b>103,005</b>	<b>£1,975</b>	<b>£0</b>
DWELLING RENTS	(£88,255)	(86,953)	£1,302	
NON-DWELLING RENTS	(£770)	(743)	£27	
CHARGES FOR SERVICES & FACILITIES	(£22,186)	(22,024)	£161	
INTEREST & INVESTMENT INCOME	(£299)	(299)	£0	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>(£111,509)</b>	<b>(£110,019)</b>	<b>£1,490</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>TRANSFER TO HRA RESERVE</b>	<b>1,281</b>	<b>1,536</b>	<b>£255</b>	
<b>TRANSFER TO MRR</b>	<b>9,198</b>	<b>9,198</b>	<b>£0</b>	
	<b>£0</b>	<b>£3,720</b>	<b>£3,720</b>	<b>£0</b>

### Key Drivers of the Position (Summary):

- Supervision & Management: **£1.722m**

Recharges from the General Fund mainly driven by My Place HRA Recharge due to increased costs projected for Compliance and Consultancy.

- Repairs and Maintenance: **(£666,000)**

Following restatement of the HRA Budget, the forecast for the HRA BDMS Contract is online at £11m for 2022/23. The main driver for the underspend is where BDMS recruitment of additional DLO Operatives this financial year has not been near to capacity (£480,000). The remaining variance is DLO where vacancies and agency recruitment has fallen behind. The DLO is managed by BDMS.

- Dwelling Rents/Service Charges: **£1.745m**

Rents represent a **£1.328m** overspend on a budget of **(£89.025m)** representing **1.5%** variance. The most notable cause is due to the increased RTB sales which had reached 93% of budgeted sales by end of Qtr 2 alone plus estate regeneration plans beyond budgeted assumptions.

Whilst Service Charges is forecasting a **£417,000** overspend, once Leaseholder Reserve (Transfer to HRA Reserve), is accounted for. The main cause is the factoring in of an expected actualisation adjustment of £300,000 at the coming year end. This recognises that service charges raised on estimates tend to actualise below the estimate in recent years.

- Depreciation and BDP: **£813,000**

Depreciation is expected to increase by **£2.122m** compared to budget. This essentially finances the HRA element of the Capital Programme alongside the Transfer to MRR (Major Repairs Reserve). The BDP has been reviewed in September and the provision required is **(£1.309m)** less than budget.

## HRA: Period 8 Risk and Opportunities - Held at P7 due to Budget Build

Forecast Position: **£3.7m** Overspend

Risks: **£1.6m** (These are risks that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- **£1.6m** Backlog of repairs and maintenance jobs within Housing based on BDMS volumes and My Place costing estimates. The timing of this delivery is uncertain, as the valuation and approach to be undertaken.
- There is uncertainty over energy budgets due to the world market but also the timing delays in receiving charges. Price uplift is further expected in November 2022. Additional resources are required in the Energy team to analyse impact and manage housing energy in the future.
- Further Compliance costs are expected above budget with the plan to complete Compliance of assets over 3 years.
- Uncertainty over what repairs and maintenance activities are in scope of the existing contract and what are not means a lack of assurance. This could be creating additional costs to the HRA.
- Insufficient backing information from BDMS leaves Leasehold Services unable to apply the true cost of R&M to Leaseholders, reducing cost recovery to the HRA.
- Contracts between the water companies and Council's predating 2016 have been challenged through various legal routes (e.g. Southwark). There is a risk that partial compensation maybe required.
- The Disrepair Provision may require additional resources due to the ongoing backlog and future claims coming forward.

Opportunities: **(£2.1m)** (These are opportunities that are NOT in the forecast that we are monitoring)

- **(£500,000)** the Bad Debt Provision budget is set at £3.309m and currently forecast at £2m. The opportunity value allows for some growth in the overall BDP but should be seen as a maximum figure.
- **(£1.6m)** The current year budget for revenue voids is likely to be released following a review of the current BDMS HRA Contract.



**CABINET****17 January 2023**

<b>Title:</b> Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 and Council Tax Support Fund	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Members for Finance, Growth and Core Services and Community Leadership and Engagement</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Report Authors:</b> James Johnston, Welfare Relationship Manager & Donna Radley, Head of Welfare	<b>Contact Details:</b> <a href="mailto:james.johnston@lbbd.gov.uk">james.johnston@lbbd.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:donna.radley@lbbd.gov.uk">donna.radley@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Stephen McGinnes, Director of Support & Collections	
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Director:</b> Fiona Taylor, Acting Chief Executive	
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>The Council has a statutory duty to consider annually whether to revise its Local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for working age recipients, replace it with another scheme or retain the current scheme. This excludes the scheme that exists for pension age recipients which is a nationally prescribed scheme and cannot be varied locally.</p> <p>At its meeting on 12 July 2022 (Minute 16 refers), the Cabinet supported a revised CTS scheme for 2023/24 which would reduce the minimum payment applied within the CTS scheme from 25% to 15% of the individual Council Tax bill, as a way of supporting low-income residents during the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Due to the changes proposed to the CTS scheme, it was necessary for a public consultation to be undertaken in advance, which was carried out between 5 September and 5 October 2022.</p> <p>A detailed analysis of the responses to the CTS consultation is set out at Appendix 1. This reflects support for the proposal to reduce the minimum payment applied within the CTS scheme from 25% to 15%.</p> <p>The Assembly has a legal duty to approve the CTS scheme by 31 January each year.</p> <p>This report also sets out proposals relating to the notification received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 23 December 2022 of a £405,573 grant to provide additional support to low income households in receipt of CTS with their Council Tax payments. The grant, which is to be administered through the Council's discretionary powers, is intended to provide a further rebate of up to £25 per household and is expected to benefit approx. 15,000 low-income households in receipt of Council Tax Support. The additional support will be provided as a reduction on the bill and will not require an application to be made.</p>	

## **Recommendation(s)**

The Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Agree to implement an additional one-off reduction of up to £25.00 for households in receipt of Council Tax Support and delegate authority to the Director of Support and Collections, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services, to determine and implement a scheme for its delivery in line with the guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
- (ii) Recommend the Assembly to:
  - a). Agree, in light of the positive response to the public consultation, to adopt Model 2, as detailed in the report, as the CTS Scheme for 2023/24, which would reduce the minimum payment from 25% to 15% of the individual Council Tax bill, as a way of supporting low-income residents during the cost-of-living crisis; and
  - b). Note that a fundamental review of the CTS scheme shall be undertaken in preparation for the determination of the CTS scheme for 2024/25, with a view to providing a more transparent and simple approach, with predictable levels of support, via a new banded scheme.

## **Reason(s)**

To assist the Council in achieving its vision of 'One Borough; One Community; No-One Left Behind' by supporting low-income residents during the cost-of-living crisis.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1. The Welfare Reform Act in 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from April 2013 and, in its place, support took the form of a local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS).
- 1.2. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 contains provisions for the setting up of local support schemes. The current scheme in Barking & Dagenham has been based around the Default Council Tax Reduction Scheme and has been ratified by Assembly.
- 1.3. Local schemes must take account of and support the following principles:
  - Work incentives and avoid disincentives for those moving into work
  - The Council's duties to protect vulnerable people (under the Equality Act 2010, the Care Act 2014, the Child Poverty Act 2010 and the Housing Act 1996)
  - The Armed Forces Covenant
- 1.4. The current scheme in operation ensures that:

- The support for claimants is based on each individual's ability to pay through a means tested approach.
- Pensioners are protected under the nationally prescribed pension age CTS scheme and must be able to receive up to a 100% reduction under the national scheme rules
- A "minimum payment" of 25% of their Council Tax liability is required for all working age claimants in Barking & Dagenham irrespective of their financial circumstances
- Those who are not pensioners and with capital in excess of £10,000 are not eligible for CTS under this scheme

1.5 Expenditure on the CTS scheme has declined year on year, with the exception being the 2020/21 financial year due to the impact of Covid-19. The CTS caseload has also declined year on year with the value of CTS awards also reducing during this period for working age claimants. This is due to the Universal Credit (UC) Migration, as recipients of UC receive lower levels of Council Tax Support through the means testing process. The recipient also has to undertake a work commitment with UC and increase their hours or wages which reduces entitlement further.

1.6 The Council must consider whether to revise or replace its CTS scheme each financial year, for working age recipients. However, it does not actually have to revise or replace its scheme and can choose to retain the scheme unchanged from the prior financial year.

1.7 The scheme that exists for pension age recipients is a national scheme prescribed by regulations and this cannot be varied at a local level. Prescribed regulation changes to the pension age scheme must be applied.

1.8 In order to change its scheme the Council is required by law to:

- Consult with the major precepting authorities
- Consult with other persons it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme

## **2. Proposal and Issues**

2.1 The current CTS scheme has a minimum payment of 25% for all working age claimants irrespective of financial circumstance. This is the minimum payment and the contribution rate is dependent on income levels.

2.2 The 25% minimum payment was introduced in the 2015/16 CTS scheme to reduce overall CTS expenditure due to ongoing budget pressures through the reduction in Central Government funding for Local Authorities.

2.3 A majority of London Boroughs have minimum payments within their CTS schemes that are less than the 25% currently applied. As the table below shows, only 6 out of 31 Boroughs have comparable or higher minimum contributions, meaning Barking and Dagenham has one of the less supportive minimum payment rates in Greater London. This equates to the 4<sup>th</sup> highest minimum payment in cash terms in Greater London of £446.20 for a Band D property, irrespective of financial circumstances.

London Borough	Scheme Type	Minimum Payment %	Band D payment
<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	<b>Means tested</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>£446.20</b>
<b>Westminster</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Wandsworth</b>	Means Tested	30%	£259.81
<b>Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Kensington &amp; Chelsea</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Newham</b>	Means Tested	10%	£153.22
<b>Tower Hamlets</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Southwark</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Lambeth</b>	Means Tested	20%	£332.04
<b>Hackney</b>	Means Tested	15%	£250.66
<b>Hillingdon</b>	Income Banded	10%	£165.88
<b>Greenwich</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Islington</b>	Means Tested	8.5%	£145.37
<b>Ealing</b>	Income Banded	25%	£433.87
<b>Bromley</b>	Means Tested	25%	£434.18
<b>Barnet</b>	Income Banded	28%	£411.40
<b>Hounslow</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Merton</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Camden</b>	Income Banded	0%	£0.00
<b>Brent</b>	Income banded	0%	£0.00
<b>Lewisham</b>	<b>Means Tested</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>£454.20</b>
<b>Redbridge</b>	Means Tested	15%	£279.51
<b>Enfield</b>	Means Tested	24.5%	£451.21
<b>Haringey</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Bexley</b>	Income Banded	20%	£384.59
<b>Waltham Forest</b>	<b>Means Tested</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>£465.58</b>
<b>Sutton</b>	Income Banded	20%	£386.24
<b>Croydon</b>	Means Tested	15%	£294.84
<b>Havering</b>	Means Tested	20%	£394.19
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>Income Banded</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>£612.62</b>

<b>Richmond upon Thames</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00
<b>Kingston upon Thames</b>	Means Tested	0%	£0.00

2.4 Analysis from the IFS <sup>1</sup> has showed a direct link between higher minimum payments in CTS schemes and lower overall Council Tax collection rates.

Minimum payment level in CTS (liability restriction)	Estimated effect on Council Tax collection rate
Up to 8.5%	-0.09%
8.6 to 20%	-0.24%
Over 20%	-0.49%

- 2.5 Research also undertaken by the New Policy Institute (NPI) indicates a strong relationship between levels of minimum payments and Council Tax arrears and collection rates. This research indicates that there is a marked increase in arrears where the minimum payment is above 20% of liability and Councils with the largest increases in unpaid Council Tax were those with the highest minimum payments. <sup>2</sup>
- 2.6 Consideration should be given to the ability to pay Council Tax. The collection rate for CTS claimants for 2020/21 was 87.6%. against an overall collection rate of 93.18%. In 2021/22, the collection rate for CTS claimants was 87.9% against an overall collection rate of 93.64%. The collection rate for CTS claimants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) is lower at 83.1%.
- 2.7 The ongoing migration of the legacy benefit case load to UC poses a risk to collection rates.
- 2.8 Current poverty trackers confirm Barking & Dagenham to have the lowest (worst average rank) combining the 10 poverty indicators in the Greater London area.
- 2.9 Since 2015/16 Council Tax has risen by a total of 34% in the borough. This results in a real term cut to the value of the CTS award over the period due to the minimum payment applied.
- 2.10 The current CTS scheme does not provide the same level of support to residents of the borough that was provided in 2015/16 and arguably does not provide sufficient support to residents in light of the socio-economic demographics and poverty indicators within the borough.
- 2.11 In light of these issues, the Cabinet considered a report at its meeting on 12 July 2022 on different options and models for the 2023/24 CTS scheme.
- 2.12 The options considered were as follows:
- (i) Maintain the 2022/23 scheme for 2023/24
  - (ii) Maintain the 2022/23 scheme with changes to the % minimum payment

<sup>1</sup> Adam, Joyce & Pope – ‘the impacts of localised CTS schemes – IFS – 2019

<sup>2</sup> NPI analysis of collection rates 2012/13 to 2015/16 & Are Cuts to CTS in England a false economy for Councils – 2017

(iii) Implementation of a completely new 'Banded' CTS scheme

- 2.13 The Cabinet supported option (ii) and, in doing so, assessed three different models:
- Model 1: 5% reduction in the minimum payment amount to 20%
  - Model 2: 10% reduction in the minimum payment amount to 15%
  - Model 3: 15% reduction in the minimum payment amount of 10%
- 2.14 Model 1 was held to provide additional support for low-income residents of the borough but retained a minimum payment amount that could be considered too high against the socio-economic demographics of the borough.
- 2.15 Model 2 was held to balance the need to better support low-income residents of the borough, including the most financially excluded, with their ongoing Council Tax costs. Residents would be supported with their ongoing cost of living through an increase in the value of the CTS award, reducing the payable Council Tax charge, increasing resident income, and this was balanced against the financial cost to the Council.
- 2.16 Although Model 3 provided the highest relief, it was acknowledged that it had significant cost implications and financial impact for the Council for implementation in 2023/24.
- 2.17 The Cabinet supported Model 2 and noted that officers would progress the necessary public consultation in order for the Assembly to consider the revised scheme at this meeting.
- 2.18 The Cabinet also expressed its support for a fundamental review of the CTS scheme to be undertaken in preparation for the determination of the CTS scheme for 2024/25, with a view to providing a more transparent and simple approach, with predictable levels of support, via a new banded scheme. It was acknowledged that such a detailed review would have a lead-in time of approximately 18 months for evaluation, modelling and public consultation.
- 2.19 On 23 December 2022, notification was received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of a £100m Council Tax Support Fund to provide additional support in 2023/24 to low-income households in receipt of CTS with their Council Tax payments. Barking and Dagenham has been allocated £405,573 grant funding.
- 2.20 The guidance issued by DLUHC is very prescriptive as to how the grant funding should be allocated, albeit that the grant is to be administered through the Council's discretionary powers. The guidance states that households in receipt of CTS should receive up to £25, although this sum may be lower depending on the total number of eligible households (or if the household's remaining liability after CTS is below £25). The additional support will be provided as a reduction on the bill and will not require an application to be made.

### **3. Options Appraisal**

- 3.1 As referred to above, the Cabinet considered three main options for a revised or replacement CTS scheme.

- Maintain the current scheme
- Maintain the current scheme with changes to the % minimum payment
- Implementation of a completely new 'Banded' CTS scheme

3.2 The implementation of a completely new 'Banded' CTS scheme requires the following:

- Engagement with members, residents & voluntary sector groups to obtain feedback on future changes
- High level principles of a scheme change to be agreed
- Engagement of an external third party to undertake scheme & financial modelling
- CSG and Cabinet approval
- Public consultation
- ICT engagement for implementation

3.3 Within this options appraisal consideration was given to changes to the % minimum payment and the replacement of the scheme with a new banded scheme.

3.4 A replacement of the current CTS scheme with a new banded scheme is an undertaking that has a significant cost and time implication in the modelling of a replacement scheme and the appointment of an external partner to support the modelling process.

3.5 An 18-month period is required for evaluation and modelling of a revised or new CTS scheme once a full evaluation has been undertaken.

3.6 It is recommended that this process is now commenced with consideration for the implementation of a new CTS scheme for 2024/25.

3.7 A revised scheme for 2023/24 with a change to the minimum payment amount is feasible in the time frame currently available.

3.8 The options appraisal has the following options for a revision of the CTS scheme 2023/24:

- Model 1: 5% reduction in the minimum payment amount to 20%
- Model 2: 10% reduction in the minimum payment amount to 15%
- Model 3: 15% reduction in the minimum payment amount of 10%

3.9 Model 1 is held to provide additional support for low-income residents of the borough but does retain a minimum payment amount that may be considered too high against the socio-economic demographics of the borough.

3.10 Model 2 is held to balance the need to better support low-income residents of the borough, including the most financially excluded, with their ongoing Council Tax costs. Residents will be supported with their ongoing cost of living through an increase in the value of the CTS award, reducing the payable Council Tax charge, increasing resident income, and this is balanced against the financial cost to the Council. For those reasons Model 2 is recommended.

- 3.11 Model 3 has significant cost implications and financial impact for the Council for implementation.
- 3.12 An options appraisal has not been considered in respect of the Council Tax Support Fund due to the prescriptive nature of the DLUHC guidance.

#### **4. Consultation process and feedback**

- 4.1 Prior to the implementation of any change to the CTS scheme the Council is required to consult with the residents of the borough.
- 4.2 A consultation on proposed changes to the CTS scheme was run between 5 September and 5 October 2022.
- 4.3 The survey was available and open to all Barking & Dagenham residents and stakeholders with an interest in the operation of the CTS scheme.
- 4.4 The consultation was promoted on the Citizens Alliance Network website alongside the main Council website. Social media was used to promote and advertise the consultation on Council Facebook and Twitter pages.
- 4.5 The consultation was also widely promoted with internal Council teams and was also directly promoted with key partner voluntary organisations. Outreach services were promoted and available at the Thames View and Marks Gate community HUBS to support residents with the completion of the survey. Notification letters for all current Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims were also inserted with paragraphs promoting the consultation.
- 4.6 A total of 87 residents and other organisations responded to the consultation survey. All responses were received through the online survey. Citizens Advice responded through a separate written response.
- 4.7 Attached at Appendix 1 is the 'Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 Consultation Report' which provides a detailed analysis of the responses to the consultation. As the report shows, a majority of those surveyed (59%) supported the proposed change to reduce the minimum payment within the Council Tax Support scheme to 15% (from 25%) of the Council Tax bill.

#### **5. Financial Implication**

Implications completed by: Phillipa Farrell, Head of Service Finance

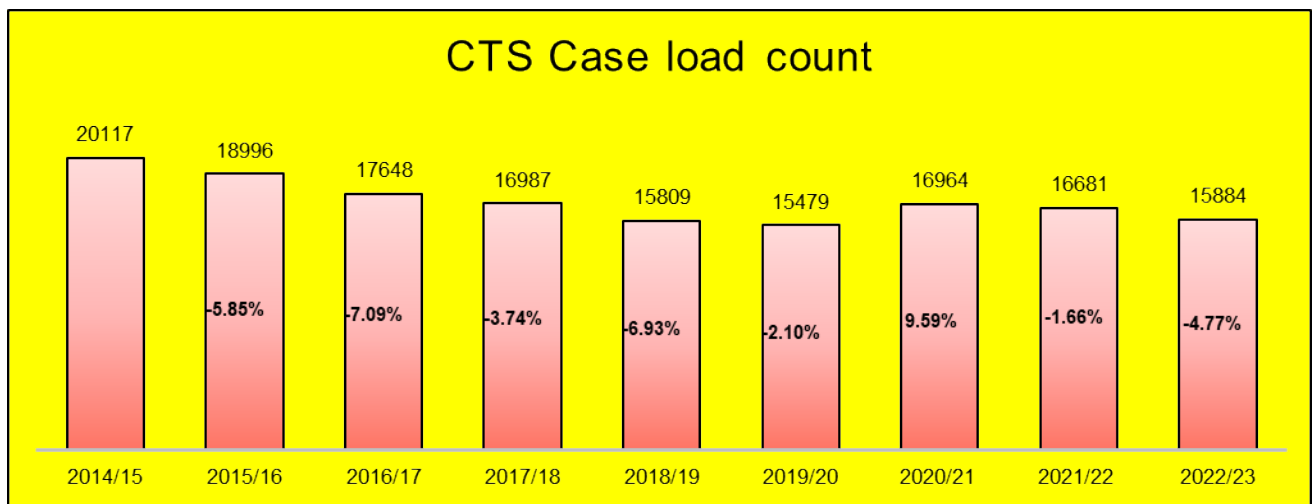
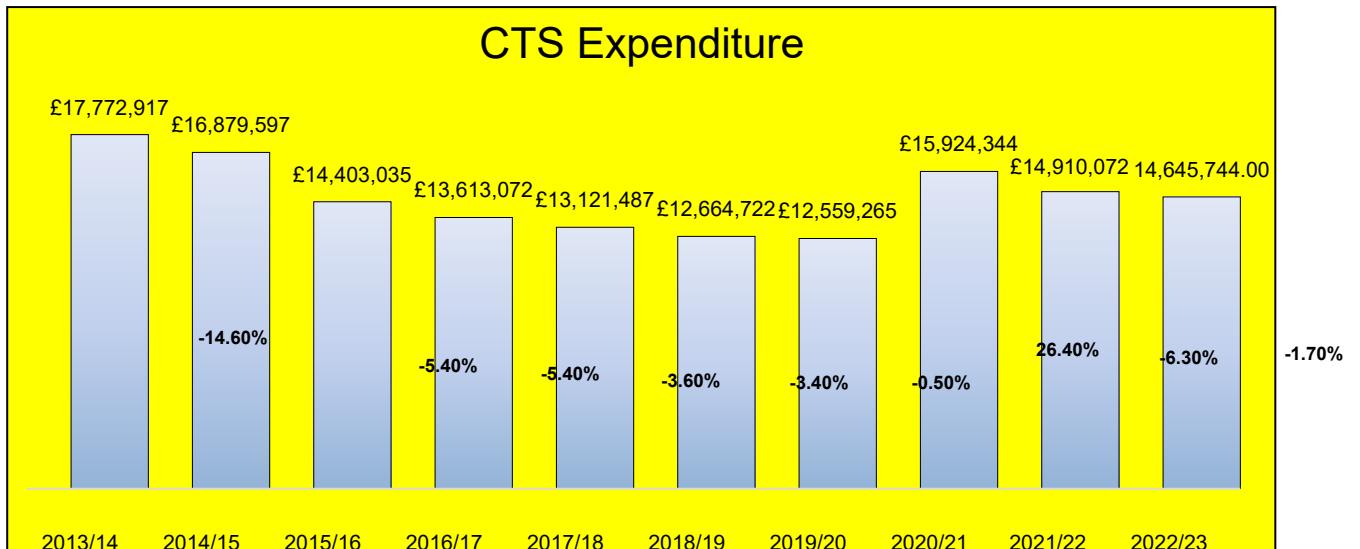
- 5.1 The Council is required to maintain a CTS Scheme. This is now funded as part of the Council's overall funding settlement and so any increases or decreases in take up or cost fall upon the Council's budget (rather than being provided for by a grant) and becomes a cost to the authority's budget in the following financial year.
- 5.2 CTS expenditure has reduced year on year from the commencement of a localised CTS scheme in 2012/13 and will vary based on demand. This would infer that poverty in the Borough is decreasing but this is not the case. The threshold has remained static since around 2014. It has not been updated to reflect the cost of



living. As part of the proposed changes the threshold will be altered to reflect the economic climate.

5.3 The impact of Covid-19 within the 2020/21 financial year saw significantly increased demand for access to the scheme resulting in an increase in expenditure of 26.4% and a CTS case load increase of approximately 10%. This was due to people who were employment but lost that income during the pandemic.

5.4 Expenditure and case load has again reduced in the 2021/22 & 2022/23 financial years.



5.5 The current CTS expenditure for the working age scheme for 2022/23 is currently £9,425,605.09.

5.6 The CTS case load has declined on average by -4.5% over the last 7 years (excluding 2020/21 – Impact of Covid-19). This average reduction in the case load (-4.5%) is costed at £424,152.22

5.7 The option that has been recommended is to initially reduce the minimum % to be applied in the CTS scheme. This will be an immediate response whilst a more fundamental redesign of the CTS scheme is undertaken. The financial implications

has focused on the initial reduction as the redesign work has not commenced at this point.

- 5.8 A reduction in the minimum payment amount will see a corresponding increase in case load as more households become eligible. This can be modelled as follows, based on the 2021/22 case load to determine possible increased expenditure.

	Increase in expenditure
5% reduction in minimum payment	8.34%
10% reduction in minimum payment	16.29%
15% reduction in minimum payment	24.28%

- 5.9 A change to the minimum payment is likely to see the natural reduction in case load partially offset against an increase in case load from a change to the minimum payment amount. This cannot be accurately modelled.

- 5.10 The Council has chosen to reduce the contribution to 15% the cost of this is £1.2m to the Council.

Proposal Reduction:	Reduction to current level	Cost	LBBB Share 77.84%	GLA Share 22.16%	Community Solution Reserve Contribution	Pressure on Central Resource (Wider Organisational Impact)
Reduce to 15%	10%	£1,584k	£1,233k	£351k	£767k	£466k

- 5.11 The projected increase in case load is considered the most accurate financial model for the cost of implementing a scheme change to the minimum payment amount.

- 5.12 It should be noted that the above modelling relates only to the changes proposed for 2023/24. It does not model any impact on the more fundamental changes proposed. This modelling and consideration of the financial impact will be brought through the MTFS this financial year but following consultation outcome an update will be taken to the MTFS as of October 2023. However, it should be noted that should a lower level be approved for 2023/24 it will likely be the minimum level the Council will have to fund ongoing.

- 5.13 The Council has a reserve amount of c£767k within Community Solutions and a contribution from a central reserve (Welfare Reserve) of £466k, will fund the CTS scheme for 2023/24. Please note that the GLA will meet the GLA specific costs. This is a reserve amount and once used cannot be used again. Therefore, the ongoing impact would be a gap in the MTSF of a corresponding amount.

- 5.14 It should be noted that as part of the response to the cost-of-living crisis the Council proposed a ringfenced reserve of £4.5m (Welfare Reserve) be created as part of the 2021/22 outturn cabinet report. This one-off funding is available should the Council wish to consider the alternative models proposed. However, it should be noted that this would then likely form the minimum requirement in future years creating a gap in the MTFS.

5.15 CTS is one of the most cost-effective ways for the Council to tackle financial pressures faced by constituents. But it is not the only mechanism and is not going to have an impact until next year, this should be kept in mind when considering the allocation of resource. The Welfare Reserve will be required for other initiatives so consideration of this needs to be taken in account. The cost-of-living crisis impact is already beginning to have impact and therefore this funding should also be considered for more immediate impact.

5.16 As outlined above any commitment here will be difficult to step back from and therefore the long-term impact on the MTFS should be considered and is a considerable risk. Community Solutions has submitted a growth bid to the MTFS to deliver a banded CTS scheme from 2024/25. The growth bid is detailed below. This is approved subject to savings proposals being found to provide a balanced financial position.

Year	Proposal	LBBB Full cost Impact	Incremental Cost	Funding
2024/25	New Scheme	£2,072k	£2,072k	MTFS Growth Bid Approved pending savings proposals
2025/26	New Scheme	£2,575k	£503k	
2026/27	New Scheme	£3,093k	£518k	

5.17 The award of £405k from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has no financial impact on the Council, as we are an intermediary passing the grant on to low-income households on CTS.

## 6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr. Paul Feild, Principal Standards & Governance Lawyer

6.1 As the CTS is being changed it is a statutory requirement for the Council to carry out consultation on the changes as set out by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Schedule 1A paragraph 5 and that paragraph 3 of the said Act.

6.2 This paper sets out the consultation and responses in the final decision-making process on the proposal to change the CTS scheme.

6.3 Since the introduction of CTS schemes there have been a number of legal challenges in relation to the consultation undertaken. Most of these challenges have been relation to the consultation undertaken in the sense of it being meaningful and to due regard to equality impact assessments. As determined by a Supreme Court ruling in 2014 R (Moseley) v London Borough of Haringey, consultation is critical when there is a possibility of an adverse outcome. However, with regard to the recommended proposal the outcome is to establish greater support for those eligible to CTS.

## 7. Other Issues

7.1 **Risk Management** - The risks associated with implementing and operating a revised scheme with a reduced minimum payment are considered to be low with the endorsement of the scheme change by residents and stakeholders to further reduce

any associated risk. It is considered likely that keeping the current scheme unchanged will continue to make it difficult to collect Council Tax from those entitled to a reduction under the scheme.

The current minimum payment of 25% required for all working age claimants will continue to disproportionately affect the lowest socio-economic group and not provide the required level of support to residents of the borough.

With the cost of the scheme determined by demand, there remains a risk that future fluctuations in demand could place an additional financial burden on the Council.

- 7.2 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** - An Equality Impact Assessment of the proposed CTS scheme 2023/24 has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix 2.

#### **Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

- [LBBD -Council Tax Support Scheme 2022-23.pdf](#)
- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-support-fund-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-support-fund-guidance)

#### **List of appendices:**

- **Appendix 1:** Council Tax Support scheme consultation – full report
- **Appendix 2:** Council Tax Support Scheme Review 2023/24 - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



# Community Solutions

## Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24

### Consultation Report

Author

James Johnston

Revenues & Benefits

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## Introduction and background

The Welfare Reform Act in 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from April 2013 and, in its place, support took the form of a local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS).

Council Tax Support is a means tested discounts for Council Tax. The amount of the discount awarded is based on the income and size of the household. A means test is applied, and an award granted for those eligible. This discount is applied directly to the Council Tax account to reduce the amount to be paid.

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 contains provisions for the setting up of local support schemes. The current scheme in Barking & Dagenham has been based around the Default Council Tax Support Scheme

The Council has a statutory duty to consider annually whether to revise its Local Council Tax Support scheme for working age recipients, replace it with another scheme or retain the current scheme. This excludes the scheme that exists for pension age recipients which is a nationally prescribed scheme and cannot be varied locally.

The scheme must be approved by Assembly by the 31 January 2023.

*The current Council Tax Support scheme has a minimum payment of 25% of the Council Tax bill for all working age claimants irrespective of financial circumstance.*

This was introduced in the 2015/16 Council Tax Support scheme.

With the current cost of living increasing the Council wants to better support low-income residents of the borough with their ongoing Council Tax costs.

The Council is proposing to:

- **Reduce the minimum payment applied within the scheme from the current 25% to a reduced minimum payment of 15%**

Where there are significant changes proposed to the Council Tax Support scheme, it is necessary for a public consultation to be undertaken which requires early consideration of any proposed changes.

The Council Tax Support scheme consultation was launched to seek the views of residents and stakeholders on these proposed changes.

The purpose of this report is to set out the Council Tax Support scheme 2023/24 consultation process and key consultation findings.

The results of this consultation will help to determine the final Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 with full details of the new scheme to be published in January 2023 with the changed scheme coming into effect from the 1 April 2023.

## Methodology

Barking & Dagenham Council undertook a consultation on proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme 2023/24 between the 05 September 2022 and 05 October 2022.

The consultation questionnaire and survey along with consultation policy documents was published online and was available through the Citizens Alliance Network website.

Residents were also able to email their views on the consultation to the Benefits department directly.

The survey was available and open to all Barking & Dagenham residents and stakeholders with an interest in the operation of the Council Tax Support scheme.

The consultation was promoted on the Citizens Alliance Network website alongside the main Council website. Social media was used to promote and advertise the consultation on Council Facebook and Twitter pages. Results from social media promotion are available later in the report.

The consultation was widely promoted with internal Council teams and was also directly promoted with key partner voluntary organisations. Outreach services were promoted and available at the Thames View and Marks Gate community HUBS to support residents with the completion of the survey. Notification letters for all current Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims were also inserted with paragraphs promoting the consultation.

Results for the consultation will be made available through the Council website.

## Summary of results

A total of 87 residents responded to the consultation survey.

Although this is a low figure historically Council Tax Support consultations have had low engagement from residents.

Respondents did not have to answer every question so the total number of responses for each question may vary.

Every effort has been made to promote and ensure visibility of the survey for residents to engage with the proposals.

No direct emails were received from residents regarding the consultation.

All responses received were through the online survey.

No residents attended the community HUBS when outreach services were available.

The survey asked the following questions:



**'Increase the maximum CTS award to 85% of the Council Tax bill. This means all residents on CTS must pay a reduced minimum contribution of 15% of their bill'**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Strongly agree</i>	35	42%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	15	18%
<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	7	8%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	4	5%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	23	28%

**'Increase the maximum CTS award to 80% of the Council Tax bill. This means all residents on CTS must pay a reduced minimum contribution of 20% of their bill'**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Strongly agree</i>	12	16%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	17	22%
<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	13	15%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	7	9%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	29	38%

**'Keep the maximum CTS award of 75%, meaning all residents on CTS must pay the same minimum contribution of 25% of their bill'**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Strongly agree</i>	14	17%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	12	15%
<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	19	24%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	6	8%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	30	36%

**'Do you agree with the Council proposing to introduce a replacement Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25'**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Strongly agree</i>	18	22%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	21	25%
<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	20	24%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	6	7%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	18	22%

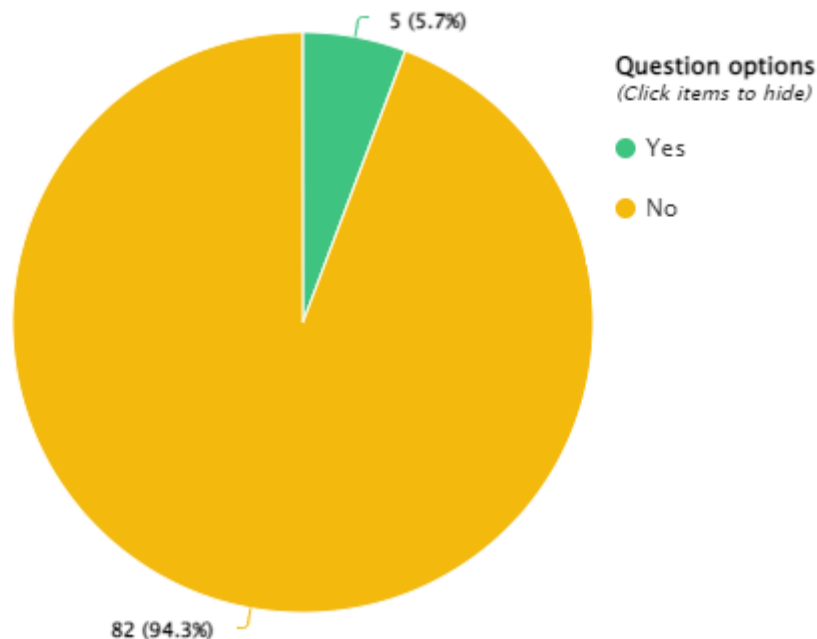
Based on the results of the survey:

- A **majority of those surveyed (59%)** have supported the proposed changes to reduce the minimum payment within the Council Tax Support scheme to 15% of the Council Tax bill.
- A **majority of those surveyed (45%)** disagreed with the proposals to reduce the minimum payment within the Council Tax Support scheme to 20% of the Council Tax bill.
- A **majority of those surveyed (44%)** disagreed with the proposals to leave the Council Tax Support scheme unchanged with a minimum payment of 25% of the Council Tax bill
- A **majority of those surveyed (47%)** also supported the proposal to introduce a replacement Council Tax Support scheme.

## Analysis of results

The following analysis provides a breakdown of the survey results for all those surveyed.

### 'Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?'



	Number of residents	Percentage
<i>Resident of the borough</i>	82	94.3%
<i>Other organisation</i>	5	5.7%

Other organisations
LBBD
LBBD
Barking Muslims Association (AL Madina Mosque)
LBBD
LBBD

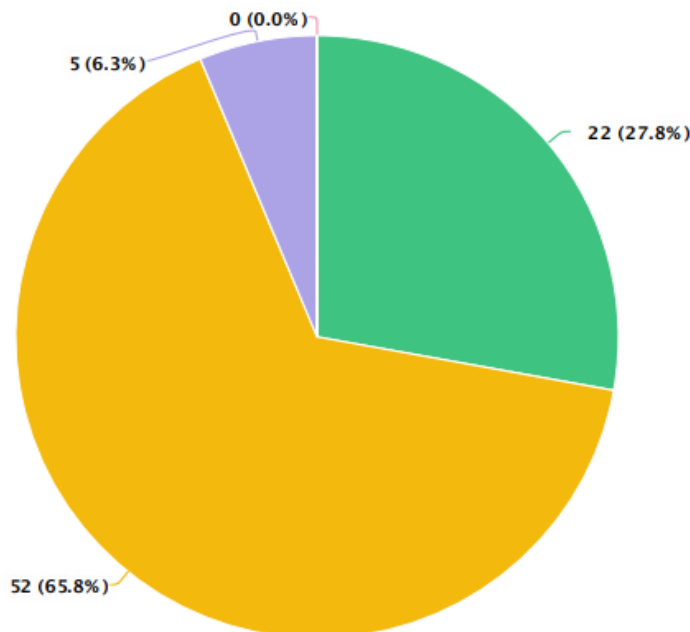
The response rate from other organisations (voluntary and key stakeholders) was low. The majority of responses received were from residents in the borough.

## Demographics

Respondents were asked a range of demographic questions about themselves to help us understand the characteristics of the people who took part in the consultation.

### 'What is your gender?'

What is your gender?



**Question options**

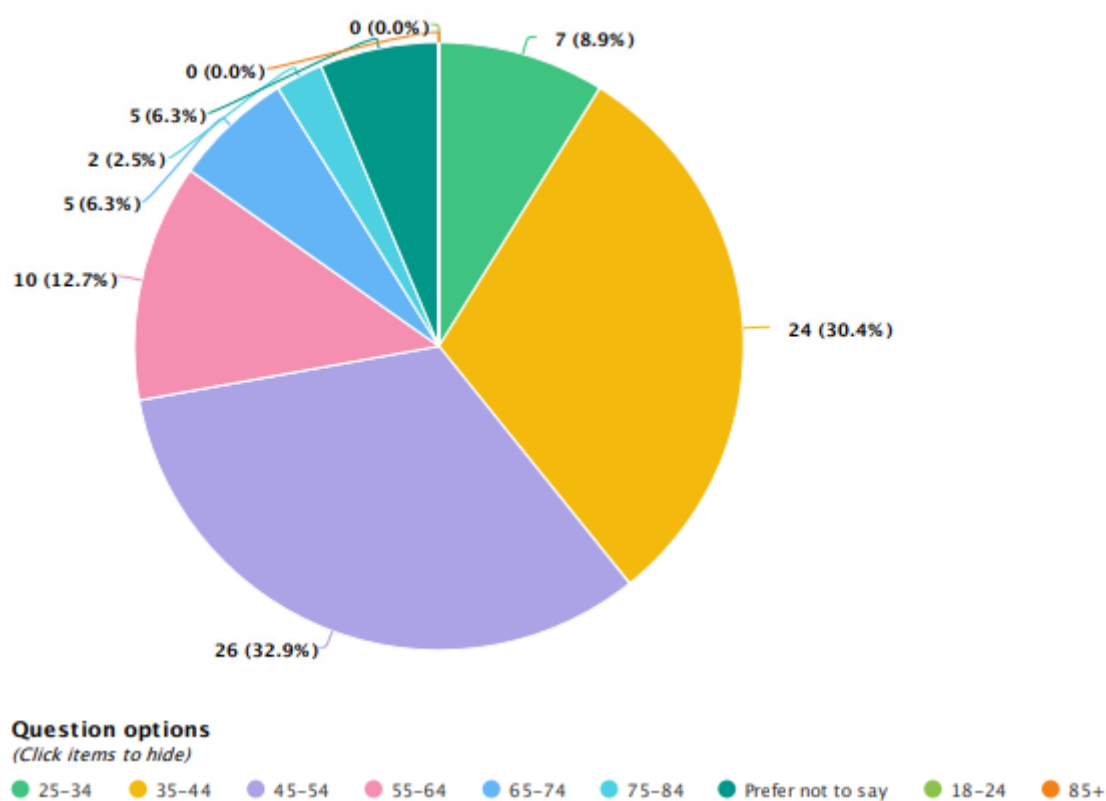
*(Click items to hide)*

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

Gender	Number of residents	Percentage
Male	21	26.9%
Female	52	66.7%
Prefer not to say	5	6.4%

A significant majority of the respondents were from female residents with 66.7% coming from this demographic. This is comparably higher than the borough demographics of 51.5% of residents identifying as female. There were 79 responses and 8 skipped this question.

## 'What is your age?'

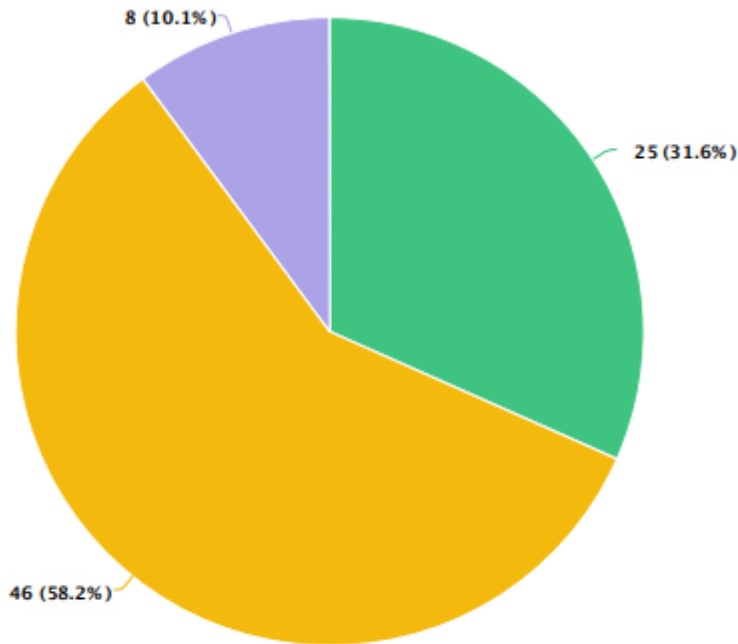


Age	Number of residents	Percentage
18-24	0	0%
25-34	7	8.9%
35-44	24	30.4%
45-54	26	32.9%
55-64	10	12.7%
65-74	5	6.3%
75-84	2	2.5%
85+	0	0%
Prefer not to say	5	6.3%

Most respondents identified themselves as being aged 35-54. Younger and older age groups were under represented in the survey.

There were 79 responses and 8 skipped this question.

### 'Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?'



#### Question options

(Click items to hide)

● Yes ● No ● Prefer not to say

Illness/Disability	Number of residents	Percentage
No	46	58.2%
Yes	25	31.6%
Prefer not to say	8	10.1%

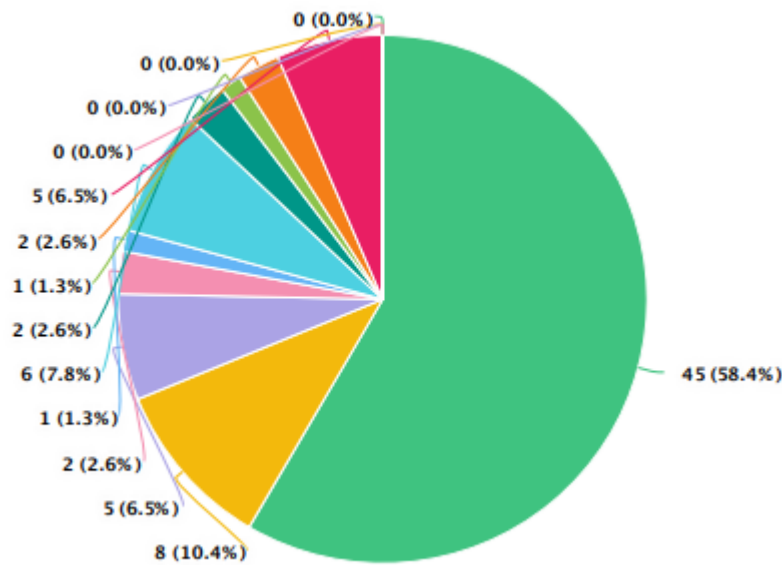
A majority of residents did not identify themselves as having a long-standing illness or disability.

Currently 4% of residents in the borough are claiming disability benefits.

A response from 31% of those surveyed with a long-standing illness or disability is over represented against borough demographics suggesting an interest in the proposals from this cohort of residents.

There were 79 responses and 8 skipped this question.

## 'What is your ethnic group?'



### Question options

(Click items to hide)

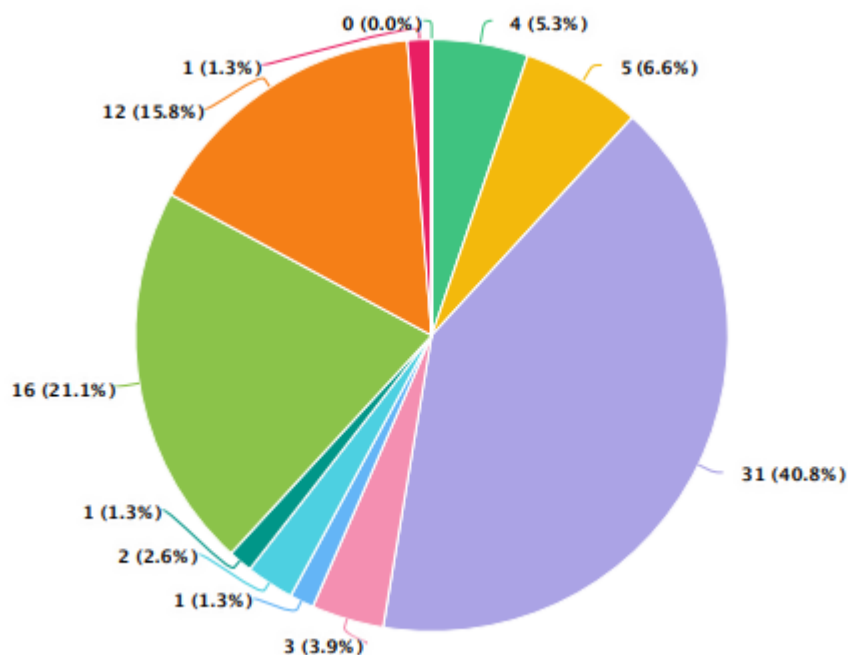
- Other (please specify)
- Other - Arab
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African
- Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
- Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- White - Cypriot or Irish Traveller
- White - Irish
- Prefer not to say
- Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background
- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black British
- Black or Black British - African
- Any other Asian background
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Any other White background
- White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Ethnic group	Number of residents	Percentage
<i>White – English</i>	45	58.4%
<i>Other white background</i>	8	10.4%
<i>Asian, Asian British - Indian</i>	6	7.8%
<i>Asian, Asian British - Bangladeshi</i>	2	2.6%
<i>Any other Asian background</i>	1	1.3%
<i>Black or Black British - African</i>	5	6.5%
<i>Black or Black British- Caribbean</i>	1	1.3%
<i>Black British</i>	2	2.6%
<i>Any other mixed ethnic background</i>	2	2.6%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	5	6.5%

A majority of residents identified themselves as being from a white background. This is significantly higher than the current borough wide demographics confirming 66% of residents identify as coming from black and minority ethnic backgrounds with only 34% identifying as from a white background.

There were 77 responses and 8 skipped this question.

## 'What is your religion or belief?'



### Question options

(Click items to hide)

● Agnostic 
 ● Atheist 
 ● Christian (all denominations e.g. Catholic, C of E, Baptist) 
 ● Hindu 
 ● Jewish 
 ● Muslim 
 ● Sikh 
 ● No religion 
 ● Prefer not to say 
 ● Other (please specify)

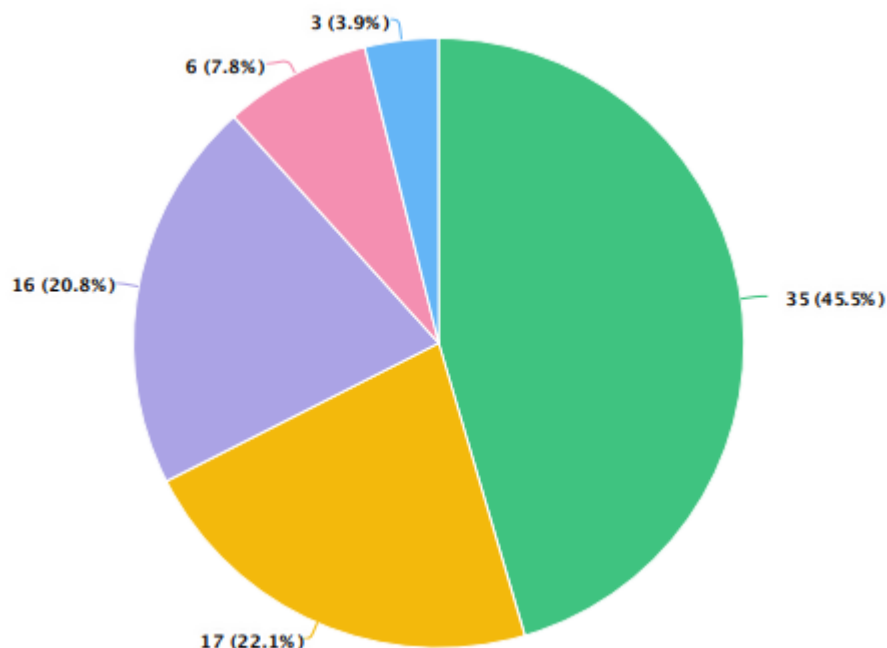
Religion/Belief	Number of residents	Percentage
<i>Agnostic</i>	4	5.3%
<i>Atheist</i>	5	6.6%
<i>Christian</i>	31	40.8%
<i>Hindu</i>	3	3.9%
<i>Jewish</i>	1	1.3%
<i>Muslim</i>	2	2.6%
<i>Sikh</i>	1	1.3%
<i>No religion</i>	16	21.5%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	12	15.8%
<i>Other</i>	1	1.3%
<i>Buddhist</i>	0	0%

A majority of residents identified as Christian. This majority is under represented against borough wide demographics which confirm 56% of residents in the borough identify as Christian.

Currently 13.7% of the borough identify as Muslim with this demographic under represented in the survey.

There were 76 responses and 9 skipped this question.

## 'Do you have children who live with you?'



### Question options (Click items to hide)

● No children in the home
 ● One child in the home
 ● Two children in the home
 ● Three children in the home
 ● More than three children in the home (please specify)

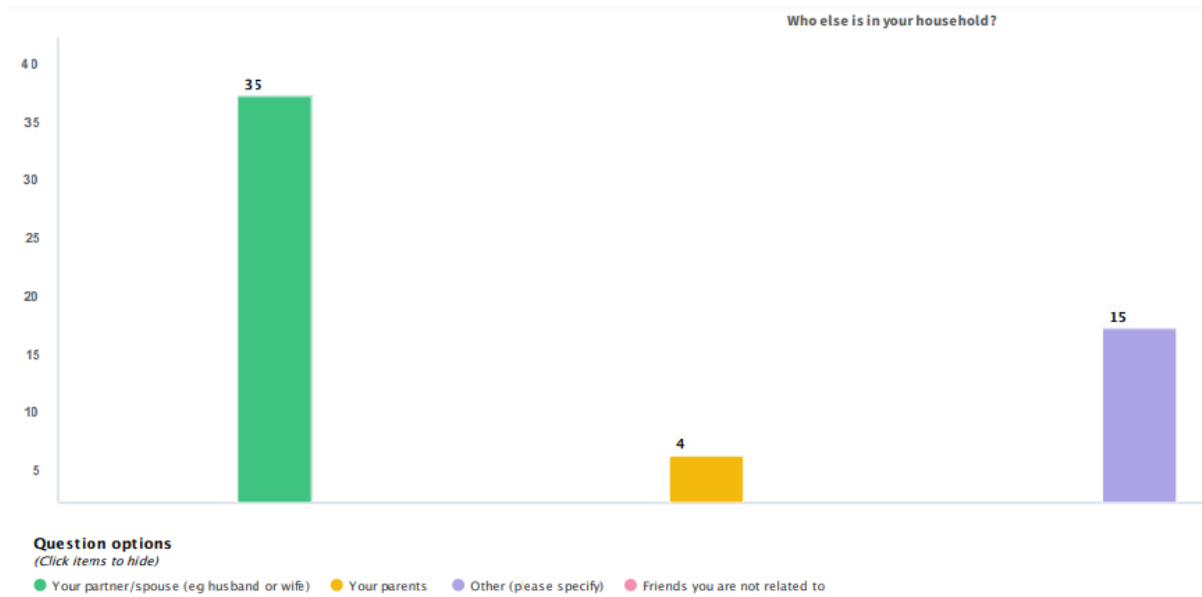
Number of children in the home	Number of residents	Percentage
<i>No children</i>	35	45.5%
<i>One child</i>	17	22.1%
<i>Two children</i>	16	20.8%
<i>Three children</i>	6	7.8%
<i>More than three children</i>	3	3.9%

A majority of residents have identified as households with children.

There were 77 responses and 8 skipped this question.



## 'Who else is in your household?'



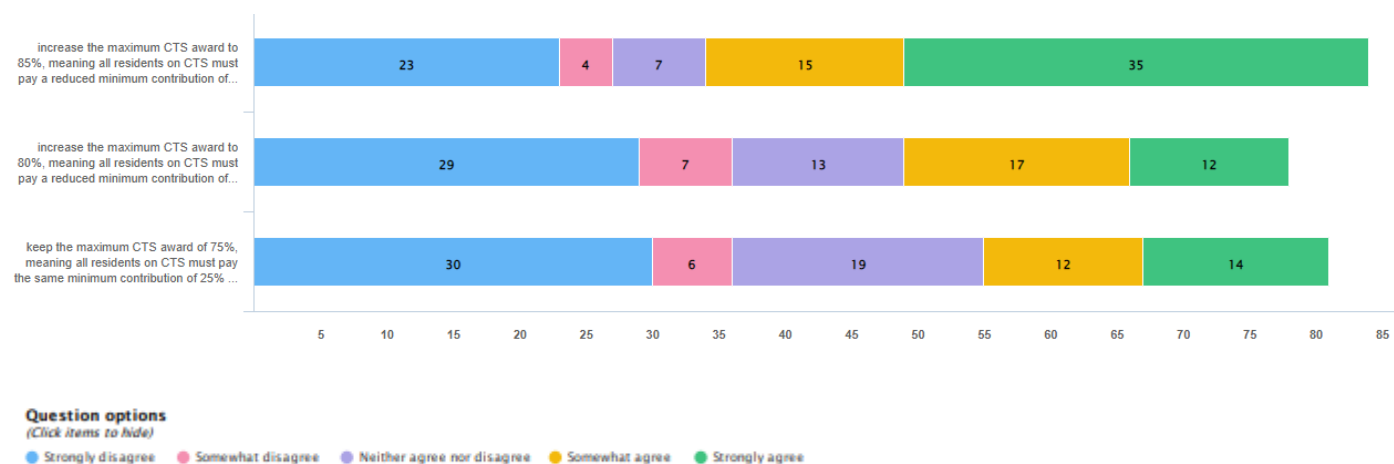
Who else is in your household	Number of residents	Percentage
<i>Your partner/spouse</i>	35	67.3%
<i>Your parents</i>	4	7.7%
<i>Other</i>	15	28.8%
<i>Friends you are not related to</i>	0	0%

A majority of households main residents were partner and spouse only with no other household members.

There were 54 responses and 32 skipped this question.

## Survey results

**‘How much do you support the following options for proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme?’**



Type of change	Question options	Number of residents	Percentage
Increase the maximum award to 85%	Strongly agree	35	42%
Increase the maximum award to 85%	Somewhat agree	15	18%
Increase the maximum award to 85%	Neither agree or disagree	7	8%
Increase the maximum award to 85%	Somewhat disagree	4	5%
Increase the maximum award to 85%	Strongly disagree	23	27%

42% of residents strongly agreed with the proposed change to reduce the minimum payment to 15% and this was the highest % against all the options presented.

A total of 60% of residents agreed with this proposal against 33% who disagreed.

A majority of residents therefore agreed with this proposal.

Type of change	Question options	Number of residents	Percentage
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Strongly agree	12	15%
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Somewhat agree	17	22%
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Neither agree or disagree	13	17%
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Somewhat disagree	7	9%
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Strongly disagree	29	37%

Support for the other proposals was significantly less with only 15% strongly agreeing with this proposal to reduce the minimum payment to 20%.

A total of 37% agreed with this proposal against 46% who disagreed.

A majority of residents therefore disagreed with this proposal.

Type of change	Question options	Number of residents	Percentage
Keep the existing award of 75%	Strongly agree	14	17%
Keep the existing award of 75%	Somewhat agree	12	15%
Keep the existing award of 75%	Neither agree or disagree	19	23%
Keep the existing award of 75%	Somewhat disagree	6	7%
Keep the existing award of 75%	Strongly disagree	30	37%

17% of residents strongly agreed with this proposal to keep the existing minimum payment of 25%.

A total of 32% agreed with this proposal against 40% who disagreed.

A majority of residents therefore disagreed with this proposal.

There were 86 responses and 2 skipped the questions.

## Free text comments

The consultation provided residents with the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed changes.

Comments received both agreed and disagreed with the proposals.

A sample of comments received are below:

### Agree with the proposals:

By reducing the minimum contribution from 25% to 15% for me personally and many others in my financial situation would greatly benefit from reduction in regular payment commitments. The difference would go in some way to bridge the gap with the cost of basics such as food while still feeling like I am contributing to the boroughs services but in true reflection to my circumstances. There are only so many cutbacks one person can make and when there is nowhere else to cut back on a reduction in my CTS contribution would be an essential increase in income which is so vital for many across the Borough right now. Well done to Barking and Dagenham for this consultation and putting the most vulnerable residents at the forefront of providing helpful targeted support.

We need to support the poorest as much as we can due to cost of living

25% is a quarter of their council tax charge and this is too much for people on a low income to afford

People are struggling to get food on table bills etc, any additional discounts given will be a help

### Disagree with the proposals:

This would need to be funded somehow. How would LBBD propose to fund this additional cost? At an additional cost to other residents already paying 100% council tax and higher cost of living? Or by further cuts to already poorly funded services

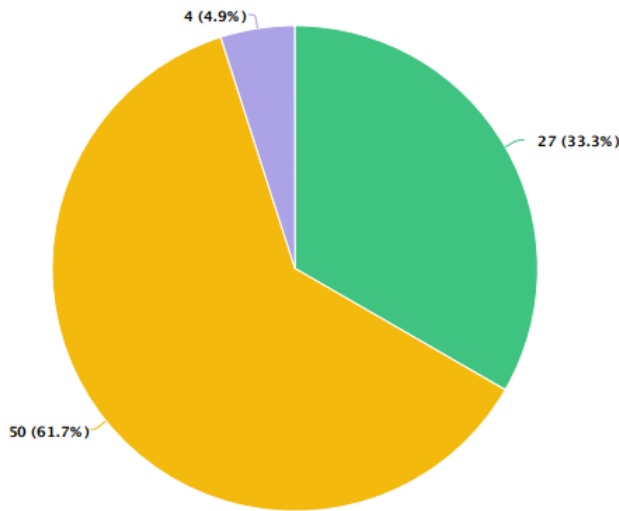
If LAA will increase a support for them, it automatically will increase CT for those who is not eligible for CTS.

This means that low wage residents get more help and those who do get any main stream benefit are not helped but the council tax bills will increase to cover the reduction that is being proposed as the council will need to get the money from somewhere. So single working people will have to pay and get no help. We are all struggling everyone should be helped not just those who get main stream benefits.

This is fine, but what about increasing the income levels at which support can be claimed? If you are working but on a borderline income that only just disqualifies you for c/t support, where is the help there? On benefits a family with 3 or more children can have more disposal income than myself as a working single mother has; and yet the support is targeted towards them and not borderline low income working families such as myself. We are all suffering at the moment due to the cost of living crisis.

## 'Were you aware of the discretionary relief fund?'

Were you aware of the Discretionary Relief fund?



### Question options

(Click items to hide)

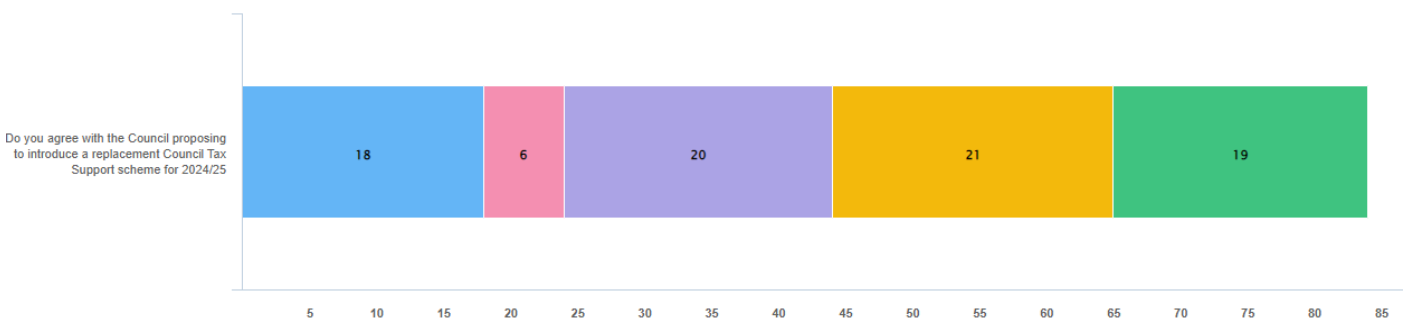
Don't know No Yes

Response	Number of residents	Percentage
Yes	27	33.3%
No	50	61.7%
Don't know	4	4.9%

A significant majority of residents (61.7%) were unaware that there was a [Discretionary relief Fund](#) for Council Tax available.

There were 81 responses to this question and 4 skipped the question.

## 'Do you agree with the Council proposing to introduce a replacement Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25?'



<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Strongly agree</i>	19	23%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	21	25%
<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	20	24%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	6	7%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	18	21%

A significant number of residents were undecided on the proposals for a replacement CTS scheme for 2024/25.

A majority of residents (48%) still supported the proposal for a replacement CTS scheme with 38% disagreeing with this proposal.

There were 84 responses to this question and 4 skipped the question.

## Free text comments

The consultation provided residents with the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed changes for a replacement CTS scheme.

Comments received both agreed and disagreed with the proposals.

A sample of comments received are below:

### Agree with the proposals:

Any new initiative that can help and simplify the system should be considered.
It seems like it would be a fairer system
A scheme that does not need frequent self-reporting and consequent changes will be easier to understand and for tenants to comply with
Makes it easier for residents to understand – simplified

### Disagree with the proposals:

It doesn't take into consideration the level of saving, capital, or investments someone has, meaning they wouldn't actually need any financial support, but would still get it. Similarly, anyone that is self-employed, company director etc could claim with a low income, while reinvesting in their company or being paid dividends. Reducing what needs to be notified could cause abuse of the system.
It is not fair that single people working will have to pay more through Council tax rises which is the only place LBBD will be able to get this money from.
I strongly disagree because you haven't got the money to start with. Make people work for their money. Stop giving unemployed people a council house and then pay their rent and CT while they buy X boxes and have sky TVs. Make them work or they lose their luxuries
No details available on how this will be funded. Just suggestions of support without any reference to funding

## Other comments:

I think those who are unable to work due to health or disabilities are being unfairly punished. We cannot increase our income & what little we have gets eaten away when the council tax is increased each year. It's pushed many in this borough into even further poverty. This borough has some of the highest poverty in the country & charging council tax to those on little to nothing is one of the main reasons. Wealthy pensioners should not be being protected by those who have nothing. It's simply not fair. Also, those who own more than one property should pay a higher rate of council tax. It's an incredibly disproportionate & unfair system to those struggling at the bottom. Nobody should be having to forego food & heating because paying CT has left them with nothing. This 25% I am paying would help towards my heating which I currently cannot afford.

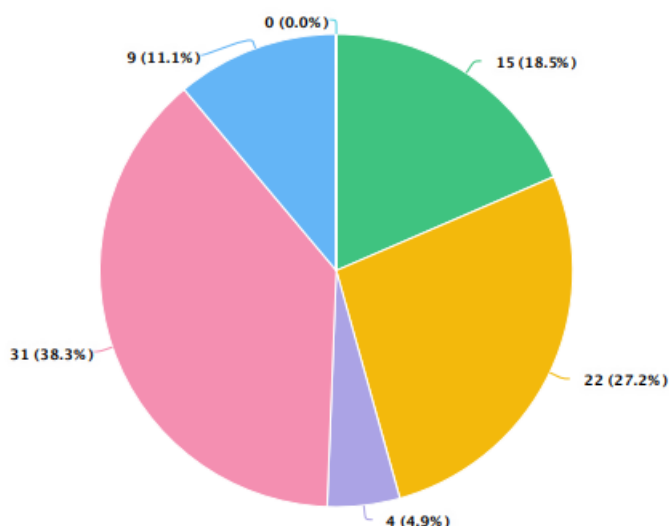
In light of the current economic circumstances increase the income levels at which support is available. If fuel bills increase as projected, my council tax and fuel bill will require half my income to service.

Look at what is representative of a low income household. With the way things are going, all households in the borough will be low income as overall pay has not increased in line with cost of living or inflation for many years.

For households registered disabled in receipt of unable to work benefits they should qualify for full exemption and full support.

## 'How did you find out about this consultation?'

How did you find out about this consultation?



### Question options

(Click items to hide)

● Letter
 ● Other (please specify)
 ● LBB Social Media / Comms
 ● Newsletter
 ● Email
 ● LBB website

Response	Number of residents	Percentage
Letter	0	0%
Other	9	11.1%
Social Media	31	38.3%
Newsletter	4	4.9%
Email	22	27.2%
Website	15	18.5%

A majority of residents found out about the consultation through social media promotion.

## Social media stats (posts on Facebook and Twitter):

- Posts reached 12,000 people
- Had 15,7000 impressions (how many times it was shown on someone’s screen)
- Total link clicks: 298
- Shares and retweets: 18

## One Borough Newsletter:

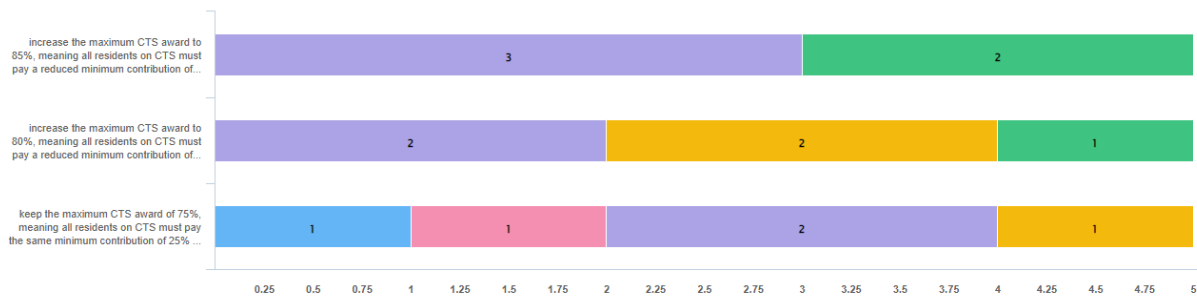
- 18,000 subscribers

There were 81 responses to this question and 4 skipped the question.

## Survey responses from Organisations

The following analysis provides a breakdown of the survey results for all those responding on behalf of an organisation.

### ‘How much do you support the following options for proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme?’



#### Question options

(Click items to hide)

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Type of change	Question options	Number of organisations	Percentage
Increase the maximum award to 85%	Strongly agree	2	40%
Increase the maximum award to 85%	Neither agree or disagree	3	60%



Type of change	Question options	Number of organisations	Percentage
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Strongly agree	1	20%
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Somewhat agree	2	40%
Increase the maximum award to 80%	Neither agree or disagree	2	40%

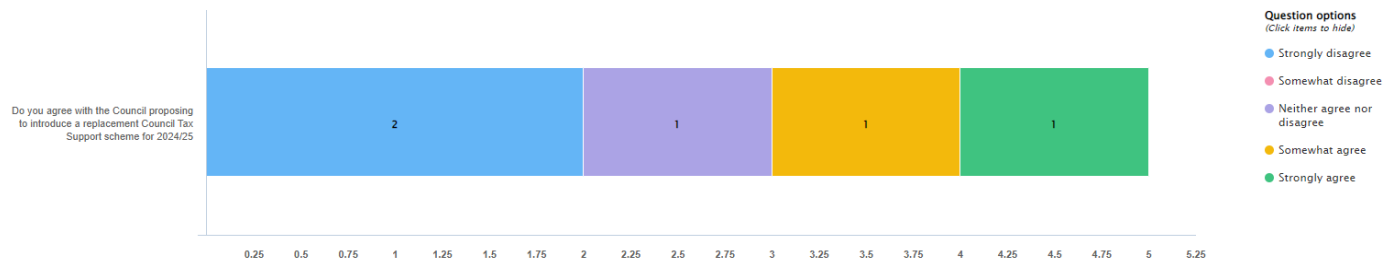
Type of change	Question options	Number of residents	Percentage
Keep the existing award of 75%	Strongly agree	1	20%
Keep the existing award of 75%	Somewhat agree	1	20%
Keep the existing award of 75%	Neither agree or disagree	2	40%
Keep the existing award of 75%	Somewhat disagree	1	20%

The consultation provided organisations with the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed changes.

These proposals received 3 individual text comments.

We need to support the poorest as much as we can due to cost of living
I think the cost-of-living crisis is affecting families across the board. Supporting only those who qualify under the existing rules means placing an extra burden on this who don't qualify but who are also suffering
25% is a quarter of their council tax charge and this is too much for people on a low income to afford

## 'Do you agree with the Council proposing to introduce a replacement Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25?'



Response	Number of organisations	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	20%
Somewhat agree	1	20%
Neither agree or disagree	1	20%
Strongly disagree	2	40%

This question received 2 individual text comments regarding the proposals.

I would need to understand this better
It doesn't take into consideration the level of saving, capital, or investments someone has, meaning they wouldn't actually need any financial support, but would still get it. Similarly, anyone that is self-employed, company director etc could claim with a low income, while reinvesting in their company or being paid dividends. Reducing what needs to be notified could cause abuse of the system

## 'If the Council retains the existing Council Tax Support scheme, what minimum contribution do you think low-income households should make?'

This question received 4 individual text comments regarding the proposals.

Minimum 10%
remain at 25%
10%
15%

## 'Do you have any other suggestions on how we can operate a scheme that best supports low income households?'

This question received 4 individual text comments regarding the proposals.

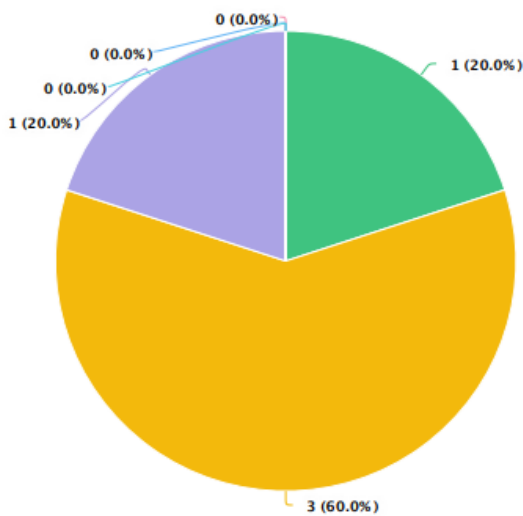
When making UC claim, CTS should be offered as people often think that it is included ( as this is the case for HB )

Research the household income and place a price that is affordable. There may be households that cannot afford and they should be dismissed from paying it.

leave the scheme as it is, but consider reducing the contribution of working age people to 10%

## 'How did you find out about the consultation?'

How did you find out about this consultation?



### Question options

(Click items to hide)

- Other (please specify)
- Newsletter
- Letter
- LBBB Social Media / Comms
- Email
- LBBB website

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of organisations</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Website	1	20%
Email	3	60%
Social Media	1	20%

A majority of organisations found out about the consultation through email promotion.

## Final conclusions

The demographics of those residents surveyed was not reflective of the overall demographics of the borough. Female residents, residents with long-term illness or disability and those with a white ethnic background were all over represented within the survey. Ethnic minorities, male residents and those who identified as Christian were all under represented within the survey.

Engagement from stakeholders was low despite promotion and publication of the survey.

***The consultation has confirmed that a majority of those residents/organisations who completed the survey were supportive of the Council's proposal to reduce the minimum payment within the Council tax Support Scheme from 25% to 15%.***

Residents who commented and supported this proposal recognised the further support being offered to low income residents within the borough and agreed with this approach.

Concerns were raised about how increases in funding for the Council Tax Support scheme would affect the wider Council budget and how this would be paid for, with cuts in other areas and services required in order to fund this increase.

While this is a legitimate concern raised the proposed increased investment in the scheme has been fully costed for the 2023/24 financial year and forms part of the medium term fiscal plans for the Council.

A number of comments were made that these proposals only supported residents in receipt of Council Tax Support and no further support was being offered to residents struggling with Council Tax costs, who were not in receipt of Council Tax Support, against a backdrop of significantly increased cost of living.

This is also a legitimate concern and reflects the demographics of the borough with a high proportion of low paid and insecure employment prevalent, and some of the highest poverty indicators within the Greater London area. This issue sits outside of the remit of this consultation and the proposed changes to the 2023/24 Council Tax Support Scheme. These considerations will be looked at through the proposals for a replacement Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25 and how the Council can continue to better support low income residents with increasing Council Tax costs.

The survey identified that a majority of residents were unaware that there was a Discretionary Relief Fund for Council Tax bills. Although the scheme has a limited budget further promotion of the availability of this scheme may be considered as part of support offered by the Council on cost of living challenges.

Comments received concerning a replacement Council Tax Support scheme were mixed with some residents being unclear as to what the proposal for an income banded Council Tax Support scheme actually mean in practice.

Concerns over the funding of the scheme were again raised, alongside how to support residents who may not qualify for Council Tax Support or fall outside of an income band threshold and those with larger families who may not receive additional support based on the illustrative scheme example.

Supportive comments regarding the simplification of the scheme and how it may address issues with Universal Credit awards and monthly changes were received, supporting the principle of simplification, and reducing the number of changes to awards.

The responses regarding a replacement scheme have highlighted the importance of effectively communicating why a new scheme is being proposed and how this will affect residents of the borough directly and will be considered for any future scheme change.

*A majority of residents still supported the proposal to introduce a new income banded Council Tax Support scheme.*

## Appendix 1: Free form text commentary

The consultation provided residents with the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed changes.

This question received 50 individual text comments regarding the proposals.

### **‘How much do you support the following options for proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme?’**

We need to support the poorest as much as we can due to cost of living
cost of living increases so money is needed to eat and put onto increasing energy bills
By reducing the minimum contribution from 25% to 15% for me personally and many others in my financial situation would greatly benefit from reduction in regular payment commitments. The difference would go in some way to bridge the gap with the cost of basics such as food while still feeling like I am contributing to the boroughs services but in true reflection to my circumstances. There are only so many cutbacks one person can make and when there is no where else to cutback on a reduction in my CTS contribution would be an essential increase in income which is so vital for many across the Borough right now. Well done to Barking and Dagenham for this consultation and putting the most vulnerable residents at the forefront of providing helpful targeted support.
This is most likely be reflected in a increased CT for other residents who are struggling and can't apply for the CTS.
This is fine, but what about increasing the income levels at which support can be claimed? If you are working but on a borderline income that only just disqualifies you for c/t support; where is the help there? On benefits a family with 3 or more children can have more disposal income than myself as a working single mother has; and yet the support is targeted towards them and not borderline low income working families such as myself. We are all suffering at the moment due to the cost of living crisis.
Cab barely afford to eat and top up energy at the moment so, any savings will help. I need to eat!
I think the cost of living crisis is affecting families across the board. Supporting only those who qualify under the existing rules means placing an extra burden on this who don't qualify but who are also suffering
I support that because I have lived at my address for 30+ . I feel a lot more money is needed is needed to see improvements where I live . I heavily rely on Adult Social care for my son. any cuts in council tax will hinder social care , emergency funds . Even my local library . activities for young and old . In this case I feel we must solider on . Even keeping things healthy lifestyles adult learning . I am looking at the wider picture . The Borough needs money .
This means that low wage residents get more help and those who do get any main stream benefit are not helped but the council tax bills will increase to cover the reduction that is being proposed as the council will need to get the money from somewhere. So single working people will have to pay and get no help. We are all struggling everyone should be helped not just those who get main stream benefits.
We must help those who are in need, I think an increase to 80% would be more realistic and affordable.
Its not an equal scheme people who have savings above the threshold will have to contribute a huge amount than someone on a lower wage and on benefits
As I’m disabled I am on a fixed income with no possibility to increase it. Council tax has greatly increased the amount of poverty I am in and has caused me huge debt with my rent as I have had to use money meant for that & food/ heating to pay it. It’s also meant I’m now suffering with depression.
25% is a quarter of their council tax charge and this is too much for people on a low income to afford
The Council SHOULD considering proposals to implement a new CTS scheme for the 2024/25 financial year. This will involve bigger changes which will need longer to be implemented
Those on benefit receive discounts and the majority of those on benefit use the majority of services delivered during working hours which are not available to those who work and pay for it.
People are struggling to get food on table bills etc, any additional discounts given will be a help

I am worried because this plan is confusing. I know people would like to pay less CT but I'm worried of the consequences of increasing the CTS to maximum, so the council will need more funds to support more discount to people so the CT bill will be automatically higher than usual so this have nonsense

Those who live alone should get more than the current 25% discount on the total bill anyway! Those that have worked for most of their lives but are now unable to work due to ill health should receive the biggest discounts. Those that have never worked (unless due to severe disability) and keep having children should not be receiving any discount. They have the ability to work and are choosing not too.

Being unemployed and able to work is a choice. There are so many jobs out there, and people need to work and pay their way in society. Since I was 13 I worked. Usually 2 jobs at a time and at one stage 3 jobs. I've been paying my own rent and council tax since I was 22 and I'm 40 now. Stop giving out free handouts. This country is already in trillions of pounds worth of debt.

Council tax should be abolished, it's useless tax

CTS should be lowered to %50 max

Given the high cost of living, it will be very helpful to reduce the financial burden of households.

Barking & Dagenham is poverty ridden throughout everyone needs help not just those the Labour council want to collect votes from. You will reduce this and increase money grab elsewhere such as paying to collect green waste, more CPZ's, car park charges etc etc you'll give with one hand whilst sticking your other hand in another pocket

If LAA will increase a support for them, it automatically will increase CT for those who is not eligible for CTS.

Many families on low income are struggling to even find the 25% required to pay. It is causing hardship and stress trying to balance all the outgoings on reduced incomes

I feel that more support needs to be given to working households on slightly higher wages, with 3 children at home rising bills and no support at all from any benefits.

Why is there no help for working households, we both work hard but after paying our mortgage and bills are still struggling but we don't get any help. It seems if you try and better yourself you get no help.

23 to 24 is too late we need help now

Any and All financial help is needed right now

I earn just over £1200 per month working for the council full time in a school and get help with universal credits but am not entitle to any help with my council tax and pay just under £120 a month that's 10 percent of my wages I find this a burden

I find it hard to pay the 25 percent has it is, also most council tenants of other councils that are on disability payments don't pay anything plus I have to pay bedroom tax and I need the spare room for my son to stay when I have bad days and need help.

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT IN RECEIPT OF BENEFITS, DOES NOT MEAN YOU'RE NOT STRUGGLING. WE ARE A ONE INCOME FAMILY, NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFITS, BUT WE ARE STRUGGLING WITH OUR BILLS, ALL OF THEM

I am a single working mum of one living in a one bedroom flat. Despite working full time ( I am on a low income. My take home pay after tax is around £18k meaning I am just about the threshold for most support. I actually would be better off not working and being in benefits but I wasn't brought up to have that mindset. More support is needed for people who do not meet the requirements for benefits but work hard and on low income. My council tax is £105 a month and that's with the single person discount. I am struggling to pay that and my rent which goes up each year.

It would help if properties were banded correctly in the first place. I am under the firm impression that my apartment has been in the wrong band from day 1, but the valuation officer has upheld the council's belief. When asked how they came to that conclusion, they said that they stood outside the property on the ground floor and looked up. Our apartment is a totally different configuration to the ground floor flat of the same size, and they have a separate kitchen to their living space. There is no way we should be banded into C when we have no separate kitchen. So as it is our council tax is astronomical.

Not of working age so can't work out how it would affect those concerned.

Discount should be available to maximum people who does not covered under CTS scheme. There are families who left with £10 at the end of the month. Saving on council tax help them to maintain basic benefits.
Cost of living is having a real life affect on residents in the Borough. Higher amount of reduction on the council tax would be preferable.
Even at the lowest payable rate it would still not be affordable For some people.
Depends how it would be financed - whether it would involve cuts in other types of expenditure.
I do not support this. I live in a one wage family wife can not get benefits because I work(60hrs+) pay a mortgage the people on benefits are a lot better off than me. The Tories are helping the rich list and now this council want to help the lazy work shy with extra discounts on council tax no wonder this country has gone to pot. Never help the middle man shocking but not unexpected
I support and I am very grateful for the help. But I can't figure out why I'm paying £116 for a one bedroom flat when my friend who lives half a mile away is paying £120 for a three bedroom house? we live on universal credit on a very low income and pay more than bigger houses in the neighbourhood! why?
More benefits for low income when those people can actually work. Why? Only give to residents working full-time. Stop making people lazy and live on benefits. There are enough jobs for people to work.
Any more financial help would be great.
It is a huge struggle to pay these it should definitely be lower I'm terrified how I'm going to be able to pay it with the cost of living rising so disgustingly
Because why should hard working residents who actually end up being financially worse off because they work and pay bills where some of the lower income residents have no intention on working because they get more in benefits and discounts then workers. We're all!!!!!! Feeling the pinch and you want to stiff us more.
I work who going to help me or my family. I don't claim benefits as told earn to much' What about helping working people I am struggling with bills as well. Which I'm sure your going to increase next year
This would need to be funded some how. How would LBBDD propose to fund this additional cost? At an additional cost to other residents already paying 100% council tax and higher cost of living? Or by further cuts to already poorly funded services
90% of the people are on benefit, does not work hard. They just want to enjoy the benefit. Because. It's better off being on benefit than working. Whole benefit system is broken.
I think the council don't provide enough reliable services for the amount they charge.

**'Do you agree with the Council proposing to introduce a replacement Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25?'**

This question received 48 individual text comments regarding the proposals.

Council should introduce a new scheme
to help the most vulnerable in the borough. Also people who are working not entitled to benefits and struggling on there income
Any new initiative that can help and simplify the system should be considered.
This might be reflected in an increased CT for other residents who can't apply for CTS
It seems like it would be a fairer system
Don't entirely understand it.
I would need to understand this better
Because it is un clear and I feel it will be translated to suit the 28hose28l . It is a bit unfair to encourage people to want to achieve as people so not always look at the bigger picture . It takes a long time to get results . especially whilst struggling . The saying if it is not broken why fix it .



As yet again those that 29hose to have large families get more help and those that do not have any family because the cannot afford to get no help. The scheme should remain the same.
I agree with the new scheme providing it remains to be levelled at those in need depending on the size of the household and not an across the board discount same for all.
Cost of living crisis is impacting hugely on people's income being distributed to pay bills.
How is the discount to be covered/funded if council spending is not to be reduced.
Council are punishing working class people who are on a higher wage & people who have savings and don't meet the criteria. They will be contributing a huge amount to help others which is totally unfair. This scheme is very unpopular and will not work
Because it means that despite only getting £128pw ESA you would still be expecting me to pay 25% of the CT bill. This doesn't help those of us who are sick and unable to work. We cannot increase our income so I feel we are being treated incredibly unfairly.
It doesn't take into consideration the level of saving, capital or investments someone has, meaning they wouldn't actually need any financial support, but would still get it. Similarly, anyone that is self employed, company director etc could claim with a low income, while reinvesting in their company or being paid dividends. Reducing what needs to be notified could cause abuse of the system.
The Council SHOULD considering proposals to implement a new CTS scheme for the 2024/25 financial year. This will involve bigger changes which will need longer to be implemented
It is not fair that single people working will have to pay more through Council tax rises which is the only place LBBD will be able to get this money from.
Where do pensioners come into this including those who still have to pay 2rds of the council tax and live on their own (owning house)
I want there to be a solid, useable scheme in place for people who can't afford to keep up with their Council Tax payments. It's the council's responsibility to take care of its most vulnerable people, and now more than ever, people deserve dignified and simple help with unavoidable costs like Council Tax.
I want there to be a solid, useable scheme in place for people who can't afford to keep up with their Council Tax payments. It's the council's responsibility to take care of its most vulnerable people, and now more than ever, people deserve dignified and simple help with unavoidable costs like Council Tax.
Simplified, and more accessible. More people will get to benefit
Still is not clearly explained
Once again, those that choose to breed instead of work are rewarded. If people cannot support themselves then they should not be having children they can't support. There is not enough social housing in the borough for this all to continue.
I strongly disagree because you haven't got the money to start with. Make people work for their money. Stop giving unemployed people a council house and then pay their rent and CT while they buy X boxes and have sky TV. Make them work or they lose their luxuries
Don't entirely understand it.
Council tax replacement it's Ginsberg the same just different name
CTS should be limited only to those that really need it, e.g. disabled people that cannot work., Being on a lower income is not a valid excuse for not paying your fair amount for amenities used
A new scheme is needed to support households in need.
Makes it easier for residents to understand – simplified
The more kids you have the expense you have that end of the scale also needs a massive discount
On universal credit, your income can be up and down . It's stressful enough trying to meet the demands of universal credit and then receiving letters stating your payments have changed etc . Also the payment dates should be tailored to the client in line with their pay days not the council date decision as it's very stressful receiving messages stating you Havant paid on the date when your pay day is two weeks later and all your outgoings eat up you money before it's council due date .
Although I feel that any more support for families is beneficial I feel that support should be extended to hard working families whose wages are not rising with the cost of living.
Need to have more help before that

As Tesco say, "Every Little Helps' , financially . .
I don't know
People need help
Help people who are actually working and contributing but on low wages.
A scheme that does not need frequent self reporting and consequent changes will be easier to understand and for tenants to comply with
Introduce new scheme to help all residents.
As it will cover more people in scheme rather than just low income
Don't know enough about the existing scheme to comment, but it seems obvious that people would want to pay as little out as possible in CT or anything else
Don't really understand what is proposed.
No
I'm fine
Only help people who actually need them, not people misusing the system
Again only supporting the lower earners and Sit on the butt's work shy..what about the middle bands who work But are just above the lower earners But they pay more BUT again because of that they are actually worse off.
I work what help am I going to get. I'm also struggling to pay bills
No details available on how this will be funded. Just suggestions of support without any reference to funding need more details, what happens if I get help towards child care

**'If the Council retains the existing Council Tax Support scheme, what minimum contribution do you think low-income households should make?'**

This question received 62 individual text comments regarding the proposals.

Minimum 10%
5% to 10%
15%
15%
25%
20%
10%
remain at 25%
10-15%
25 or 20
I think it should be 20%
15
20%
10%
25%.
I do not believe those out of work due to sickness/disability should have to contribute. We are already on an incredibly low income. Paying council tax means I struggle to have any money left for food & utilities.
15%
15%
50%
Where do you come in all this if you are in receipt of government pension and live along, will we get some sort of extra
15%
15%

20%
If the 25% total bill discount for single people was better, then I think the 25% for all is actually quite fair.
35%
Low income households should mean those who have a poorly paid job or work zero hours, but you mean those on benefits. They should pay at least 25% which rises unless they get a job. Make people work. Stop giving out handouts
8%
minimum should be set to 50%
minimum of 20%
15%
15-20%
20%
5% for a limited period otherwise there's no incentive to improve your wealth
25%
15%
20%
Like i have already said I think all residents should benefit from assistance
up until a few years ago if you were on a low income/benefit, you paid nothing
15%
Proposed 15per cent
10% to 0%
15
20%
25%
50
None. Spend it on food or heating
90%
15% good
75%, as most of them can work. Because of the benefits they do not work
15%
As little as possible. People need as much help as they can get at the moment.
0 other councils are £1
10% unless disabled then must be 0%
I dont think that low income families should pay
What it is, this maybe should be means tested.
Full amount like I have to pay
25%
25%
25
Any they can afford
15
25%

**‘Do you have any other suggestions on how we can operate a scheme that best supports low-income households?’**

This question received 62 individual text comments regarding the proposals.

When making UC claim, CTS should be offered as people often think that it is included ( as this is the case for HB )
- Reduced garden waste costs when in receipt of a means tested benefit. - Access to easy family meal recipes online (LBBD WEBSITE) which would in turn help local shops. Allow residents to share meal tips and ideas. - promote and encourage reuse and repair ideas. Any reduction in outgoing payments is essential to cover the costs of food and I'm sure would be an initiative warmly welcomed.
In light of the current economic circumstances increase the income levels at which support is available. If fuel bills increase as projected my council tax and fuel bill will require half my income to service.
Freeze council tax and reduce rent payments, especially for the inadequate homes that don't even meet the Defective Premises Act 1972!
I have No Idea
No, the council tax discount is far the easiest and probably most direct system to give uninterrupted help. Good luck!
Research the household income and place a price that is affordable. There may be households that cannot afford and they should be dismissed from paying it.
People who have mental health issues should be given There are people on benefits been awarded a huge amount every month £900 per month & is applying for more benefits & only paying £20 towards his council tax & receives free housing
I think those who are unable to work due to health or disabilities are being unfairly punished. We cannot increase our income & what little we have gets eaten away when the council tax is increased each year. It's pushed many in this borough into even further poverty. This borough has some of the highest poverty in the country & charging council tax to those on little to nothing is one of the main reasons. Wealthy pensioners should not be being protected by those who have nothing. It's simply not fair. Also those who own more than one property should pay a higher rate of council tax. It's an incredibly disproportionate & unfair system to those struggling at the bottom. Nobody should be having to forego food & heating because paying CT has left them with nothing. This 25% I am paying would help towards my heating which I currently cannot afford.
leave the scheme as it is, but consider reducing the contribution of working age people to 10%
CAP OF £2500 ON RENT AND USE OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT
Provide free childcare and get them into work.
Are pensioners included? Some are on their own but still have to pay 2 rds, and are not eligible for any other benefits because we are suffering bad health
Use an independent auditor or public testing scheme to make sure that the process for applying for the scheme is as streamlined as possible, from end to end.
For all benefits, support, MHS, etc., it should depend on the tax and N.I. contributions people have made from working. The more contributions made then the more support they should get when in need. Also more help for some with budgeting that would explain you can't run cars, have children, privately rent, have holidays and everything new, etc, when your income (if any) won't stretch to that!
They should do a better off calculation and see how they are better off. Some families are entitled to no UC or CTS as they earn too much, however just cutting their hours by 5 per week could mean they are then entitled. Or, get a better paid job. The job centre help with flexible support fund and low value provision payments as well as upfront childcare costs and reimbursement of childcare costs. There is so much help to get people into a good job.
Talk more to the people living in said households. Everybody's situation is different. You cannot possibly accommodate all but you CAN get an average consensus of the struggles and needs, etc.
No
The country is in crisis the people are desperate need of support
Free internet usage via the council network, free CPZ and council car park charges like our councillors get, free green garden waste collections ... basically reduce the money grab burden you place on residents whilst ensuring developers who are rinsing profits from our borough contribute to a hardship fund reducing their profits from an impoverished area

Find them job.
Cater for our payment dates
NO
No
REDUCE THE COUNCIL TAX FOR ALL
By only going on the Tenants income not the Tenants working children's income
Look at what is representative of a low income household. With the way things are going, all households in the borough will be low income as overall pay has not increased in line with cost of living or inflation for many years.
Make the scheme less difficult to understand
My LBBDD website is terrible, difficult to access information and submit applications. Disabled people who need to live in certain locations and are in higher tax band because of this should have discount.
Help those that actually work for survival
No
Guide them train them to work full time
For households registered disabled in receipt of unable to work benefits they should qualify for full exemption and full support.
Lower it or scrap it completely, council tax is ridiculously high, even with this discount. Plus rent, and everything else on top
How about means tested help, if they don't want to work or to be seen working then they shouldn't get help. But if they are unable to work, disabled or pensioners then support With advice.

## Appendix 2: Council Tax Support Consultation Policy

London Borough of Barking & Dagenham

### Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme 2023/24 Consultation

#### What is this consultation about?

The purpose of this consultation is to get the comments and opinions of residents in the borough and relevant stakeholders on the proposals to change the Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for working age households for 2023/24.

*Working age households are those under State Pension age (66).*

***The scheme for pension age households is set by government and will continue to operate in the same way as it does currently.***

The new scheme will come into effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

The maximum level of support available to working age residents through the CTS scheme is currently a maximum of 75% of the Council Tax bill.

This means a minimum payment of 25% of the Council Tax bill is required for all residents who receive CTS, regardless of financial circumstances.

Details of the current scheme can be found here:

[Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23](#)

#### Background to the Consultation

##### What is Council Tax Support (CTS)?

CTS is a means tested discounts for Council Tax. The amount of the discount awarded is based on the income and size of the household. A means test is applied, and an award granted for those eligible. This discount is applied directly to the Council Tax account to reduce the amount to be paid.

##### How much does CTS cost?

The CTS scheme currently supports 15,885 residents in the borough at a total cost of £14.6 million per year.

Cost of Current Scheme by age group 2022/23			
Age Group	Number of Households	Support Payable (£/annum)	Average Discount (£/week)
All working age	11,293	£9,425,605.09	£16.05
Pension age	4,591	£5,220,139.16	£21.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,884</b>	<b>£14,645,744.25</b>	<b>£17.73</b>

### Why are changes to the CTS scheme being considered?

With the current cost of living increasing the Council wants to better support low income residents of the borough with their ongoing Council Tax costs.

Residents will be supported with their ongoing cost of living through an increase in the value of the CTS award, reducing the payable Council Tax charge.

### What CTS scheme changes is the Council proposing to introduce?

The current CTS scheme limits the maximum award to 75% of the total Council Tax bill.

This means a minimum payment of 25% of the Council Tax bill is required for all working age residents in receipt of CTS, regardless of financial circumstances.

We are proposing to increase the maximum award to 85% of the total Council Tax bill for all working age residents in receipt of CTS.

***This means a reduced minimum payment of 15% of the Council Tax bill is required for all working age residents in receipt of CTS, regardless of financial circumstances.***

### Who will this affect?

All working age residents in the borough in receipt of CTS from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and any residents who apply for CTS after the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

*Pension age residents will not be affected as Central Government sets this scheme and it cannot be changed.*

### Have we considered any other proposals to change the CTS scheme?

The Council has thought about other options.

We have considered keeping the current CTS scheme unchanged which will keep a current minimum payment of 25% of the Council Tax Bill for all working age residents in receipt of CTS.

A proposal to reduce the minimum payment to 20% of the Council Tax Bill has also been considered.

The legislative requirements and time required to make substantial changes or to implement a replacement CTS scheme are significant and require an 18 month period for implementation.

As an interim proposal to support residents with their current cost of living the Council is reacting by proposing a change to the 2023/24 CTS scheme to reduce the minimum payment required to 15% of their Council Tax bill, for all working age residents in receipt of CTS.

The Council is considering proposals to fully implement a new CTS scheme for the 2024/25 financial year.

## Appendix 3: Survey Questions

### **About you**

We collect this information to help us understand the residents of the borough so that our services and polices can be delivered to meet the needs of everybody.

All of the information collected in this questionnaire is confidential and anonymous.

Your personal information will not be passed on to anyone and your personal details will not be reported alongside your responses.

### **Have you read the background information about the CTS scheme?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

### **Are you a resident of the Borough?**

- Yes
- No (unable to proceed on form?)

### **Do you currently receive Council Tax support?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

### **Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?**

- Yes
- No

### **If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please state which one.**

- Free text

### **What is your Sex? (do we need others??)**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

### **What is your age?**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54



- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+
- Prefer not to say

**Disability: Do you have day to day activities that are limited because of a health problem or disability?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Ethnic origin: What is your ethnic group?**

- Prefer not to say
- White British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black African
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Asian
- Any other multi mixed background
- Asian or Asian British Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British Indian
- Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British Chinese
- Any other Asian background
- Black African
- British Caribbean
- Black British
- Any other Black background

**Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) changes for 2023/24 for Working age households.**

*\* Working age households are those under State Pension age (18-66).*

***Proposal 1:***

**The maximum CTS we can currently award to residents of the borough of working age is 75% of the Council Tax bill. This means all residents on CTS must pay a minimum of 25% of their bill, regardless of financial circumstances.**

**Do you think we should increase the maximum CTS award to 85% of the Council Tax bill. This means all residents on CTS must pay a *reduced minimum contribution of 15%* of their bill, regardless of financial circumstances.**

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Any other comments (free text)

### ***Proposal 2:***

**The maximum CTS we can currently award to residents of the borough of working age is 75% of the Council Tax bill. This means all residents on CTS must pay a minimum of 25% of their bill, regardless of financial circumstances.**

**Do you think we should increase the maximum CTS award to 80% of the Council Tax bill. This means all residents on CTS must pay a *reduced minimum contribution of 20%* of their bill, regardless of financial circumstances.**

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Any other comments (free text)

### ***Proposal 3:***

**Do you think the Council should retain the existing CTS scheme with a maximum award of 75% of the Council Tax bill. This means all residents on CTS must pay a minimum of 25% of their bill, regardless of financial circumstances.**

**Should the Council consider administering the CTS scheme with the same level of support as it does now?**

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Any other comments (free text)

The Council currently has a Discretionary Relief fund for circumstances of exceptional hardship to provide extra help to residents who are unable to pay their Council Tax.

## Discretionary Council Tax Relief

**Were you aware of this scheme?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**The Council is also considering proposing implementing a completely new replacement Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2024/25.**

In deciding which scheme to adopt the Council is looking to:

- Simplifying the scheme making it easy for residents to understand and access
- Provide the maximum level of support for all low income households
- Remove the requirement to continually make changes in awards making support more consistent
- Improve how the scheme works with the Universal Credit system
- Create a scheme that is fair and equitable to all residents
- Build in capacity to better manage an increase in demand for the scheme

The Council is considering whether to implement a simple and straightforward income banded CTS scheme, with set levels of discounts available based on income bands.

This allows varying set levels of discounts on the Council Tax bill based on income and household size.

This type of scheme can help to reduce the burden of residents notifying changes.

An example of a discount banded scheme can be found below.

*This is for illustrative purposes only and is not a proposed scheme.*

## Income Banded Council Tax Support Scheme

Discount		Single Person	Single Person with one child	Single Person with two or more children	Couple	Couple with one child	Couple with two or more children
		(Income)	(Income)	(Income)	(Income)	(Income)	(Income)
100%	Band 1	£0 to £80	£0 To £130	£0 To £180	£0 to £125	£0 To £170	£0 To £220
75%	Band 2	£80.01 To £125	£130.01 To £180	£180.01 To £230	£125.01 to £170	£170.01 To £220	£220.01 To £270
55%	Band 3	£125.01 To £175	£180.01 To £230	£230.01 To £275	£170.01 To £220	£220.01 To £270	£270.01 To £320
40%	Band 4	£175.01 To £225	£230.01 To 280	£275.01 To £325	£220.01 To £270	£270.01 To £320	£320.01 To £370
25%	Band 5	£225.01 To £275	£280.01 To £330	£325.01 To £375	£270.01 To £320	£320.01 To £370	£370.01 To £420
10%	Band 6	£275.01 To £325	£330.01 To £390	£375.01 To £425	£320.01 To £370	£370.01 To £420	£420.01 To £470

*The scheme for pension age households is set by government and will continue to operate in the same way as it does currently.*

**Do you agree with the proposals to introduce an income-based banded discount scheme to replace the current traditional means tested scheme?**

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**If you agree with this proposal, please explain why?**

- Free text

**If you disagree with this proposal, please explain why?**

- Free text

**If you disagree with this proposal, do you think we should keep the existing Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS), please explain why?**

- Free text

**If the Council retains the existing CTS scheme, what minimum contribution do you think low income households should make? (The current contribution is a minimum of 25% and is proposed to reduce to 15%).**

- Free text

**Do you have other suggestions on how we can operate a scheme that best supports low income households?**

- Free text

**How did you find out about this consultation?**

- Website
- Email
- Letter
- Newsletter
- Social media / comms
- Other (free text)

**Next steps....**

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

If you would like to submit any further comments or questions, please email [benefits@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@lbbd.gov.uk) with the heading Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme consultation.

The consultation will close on 05.10.2022.

The Council will review the results from the consultation which will be taken into consideration before a final decision is made on the Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme 2023/24.

The full results from this consultation will be available on the Council's website.

The new CTS scheme will be implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

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## Community and Equality Impact Assessment

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic equalities and diversity screening process to both new policy development or changes to services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have significant positive, negative or adverse impacts on the different groups in our community.

This process has been developed, together with **full guidance** to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010.
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Services (Social Value) 2012 Act

## About the service or policy development

Name of service or policy	Comsol: Welfare Service Council Tax Support scheme review 2023/24
Lead Officer	James Johnston (Senior Housing Benefit Officer) & Donna Radley (Head of Benefits)
Contact Details	<a href="mailto:James.johnston@lbbd.gov.uk">James.johnston@lbbd.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Donna.radley@lbbd.gov.uk">Donna.radley@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

Why is this service or policy development/review needed?
<p>The Welfare Reform Act in 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from April 2013 and, in its place, support took the form of a local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS). The Local Government Finance Act 2012 contains provisions for the setting up of local support schemes. The current scheme in Barking &amp; Dagenham has been based around the Default CTS scheme.</p> <p>The CTS scheme helps residents on low incomes to pay their Council Tax. Under the current scheme, a working-age household liable for Council Tax could get up to 75% of the charge paid through the scheme, dependent upon their circumstances. (Working age is anyone under Pension Credit age).</p> <p>The Pension age scheme is nationally prescribed, with a maximum liability of 100% and cannot be changed at a local level.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Council consults on a revision to its CTS scheme for 2023/24 to reduce the minimum payment required by 10% to a minimum payment of 15%.</p> <p>Currently a minimum payment of 25% towards Council Tax liability is required for all working age claimants in Barking &amp; Dagenham irrespective of their financial circumstances and ability to pay.</p> <p>A majority of London Boroughs have minimum payments within their CTS schemes that are less than the 25% currently applied. Only 6 out of 31 Boroughs have comparable or higher minimum contributions giving the Council one of the highest minimum payment rates in Greater London.</p> <p>Current poverty trackers confirm Barking &amp; Dagenham to have the lowest (worst average rank) combining the 10 poverty indicators in the Greater London area.</p> <p>The current CTS scheme does not provide the same level of support to residents of the borough that was provided in 2015/16 and potentially does not provide sufficient core support to residents in light of the socio-economic demographics and poverty indicators within the borough.</p> <p>This is against the current backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis that is particularly acute within the borough that is significantly affecting residents.</p>



Why is this service or policy development/review needed?

It is proposed that the scheme requires revision to reduce the minimum payment applied within the 2023/24 CTS scheme to provide better core support to low-income residents of the borough, including the most financially excluded, with their ongoing Council Tax costs.

## 1. Community impact (this can be used to assess impact on staff although a cumulative impact should be considered).

What impacts will this service or policy development have on communities?  
Look at what you know. What does your research tell you?

Please state which data sources you have used for your research in your answer below

*Consider:*

- National & local data sets
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with 'protected characteristics'. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.
- It is Council policy to consider the impact services and policy developments could have on residents who are socio-economically disadvantaged. There is space to consider the impact below.

### Demographics

#### ➤ Local communities in general

Barking & Dagenham is a diverse borough as outlined by the following demographic trends below.

#### ➤ Age

Barking & Dagenham currently has a total population of 218,900, this shows a 17.7% increase since the 2011 census. Of this population currently 65.2 % (142,722) are considered of working age (16 – 64) & 8.7 % (19,044) are considered of pension age (over 65).

There are currently 15,779 live CTS cases, of which 11,203 (71%) are working age and 4575 (29%) are of pension age.

The CTS working age caseload is currently 11% of the working age population of the borough.

The CTS pension age caseload is currently 25% of the pension age population of the borough.

CTS expenditure for the financial year 2022/23 is currently £14,523,991.

Of this expenditure £9,325,766.87 (64.20%) is against working age claimants and £5,198,225.63 (35.80%) is against pension age claimants.

Working age claimants currently make up 63.4% of the population and account for 71% of the CTS caseload and 64.20% of the total CTS expenditure.

Pension age claimants currently make up 9.2% of the population and account for 29% of the CTS caseload and 35.80% of the total CTS expenditure.

(CTS case load data extraction 14/06/2022)

(Census 2022)

➤ **Disability**

Barking & Dagenham currently has 4,631 people of working age (16-64) claiming Disability Living Allowance & 8,669 claiming Personal Independence Payment.

(DWP Stat-Xplore extraction 14/06/2022)

➤ **Gender reassignment**

Barking & Dagenham is currently estimated to have approximately 40 people in the borough who have or who will undergo gender reassignment.

There is currently no monitoring data available within the CTS case load data to distinguish claimants by gender reassignment.

(Gender Identity Research and Education Society advice 2016)

➤ **Marriage & civil partnership**

Barking & Dagenham currently has 41.9% of the population aged 16 and above as registered as married, 38.8% are single and not married, and 0.2% are in a same sex civil partnership.

There is currently no monitoring data available within the CTS case load data to distinguish claimants by civil status.

(Census 2011)

➤ **Pregnancy & maternity**

Teenage pregnancy rates are significantly higher than average. The under-18 conception rate in 2018 was 20.3 per 1,000 females aged 15 to 17, which was the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in London.

There are 74.2 births per 1,000 women of childbearing age, which was the highest in London.

(LBBD teenage conception data 2018)

(Office for National Statistics 2020 (Births))

➤ **Race and ethnicity**

The proportion of the borough population identifying as coming from black and minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from 19.1% to 50.5% between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, and is now at 67.1%, compared to 32.9% identifying as White British based on the 2020 census.

This sits above the London average of 62.2%.

There is currently no monitoring data available within the CTS case load data to distinguish claimants by race or ethnicity.

(Census 2020)

➤ **Religion**

56% of the population identify as Christian, 18.9% identify with no religion and 13.7% identify as Muslim.

There is currently no monitoring data available within the CTS case load data to distinguish claimants by religion.

(Census 2011)

➤ **Sex/Gender**

Currently 51.5% of the borough's residents are female, and 49.6% are male.

(Census 2011)

➤ **Sexual orientation**

Between 10,000 – 14,000 people in Barking & Dagenham are lesbian, gay and bisexual.

There is currently no monitoring data available within the CTS case load data to distinguish claimants by sexual orientation.

(Stonewall estimates)

➤ **Socio-economic disadvantage**

Council Tax Support is means tested across low-income socio-economic groups.

All claimants will be in a lower socio-economic category and Barking & Dagenham showed that 62.4% of its households were deprived in the 2022 census.

There are currently 15,779 live CTS cases, of which 11,203 (71%) are working age and 4575 (29%) are of pension age.

The CTS working age caseload is currently 11% of the working age population of the borough.

The CTS pension age caseload is currently 25% of the pension age population of the borough.

Current poverty trackers confirm Barking & Dagenham to have the lowest (worst average rank) combining the 10 poverty indicators in the Greater London area.

The current 'minimum payment' of 25% required for all working age claimants will continue to disproportionately affect the lowest socio-economic group and not provide the required level of core support to residents of the borough.

It is considered likely that keeping the current scheme unchanged will continue to make it difficult to collect Council Tax from those entitled to a reduction under the scheme, and this will have a greater impact on the lowest socio-economic group in the borough.

(CTS case load data extraction 14/06/2022)

(Poverty tracker April 2022)

Potential impacts	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
<b>Local communities in general</b>	X			A reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants will have a positive impact by providing a greater level of core support against Council Tax liability.	There are no negative impacts from the reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants.
<b>Age</b>	X			Pension age claimants remain protected with	Pension age claimants are protected and will continue to receive full support, inclusive of outreach services.

			<p>no minimum payment required.</p> <p>Support remains in place from the Visiting &amp; Welfare outreach service to assist pension age claimants with the application process.</p> <p>A reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants will have a positive impact by providing a greater level of core support against Council Tax liability.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts from the reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	X		<p>A reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants will have a positive impact on any claimant with a disability by providing a greater level of core support against Council Tax liability.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts from the reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants with a disability.</p>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>		X	<p>No impact.</p>	<p>The scheme will not treat people of different genders any differently.</p>

				There is no CTS data held for this specific category.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>		X	No impact.	<p>The scheme will not treat people either married or in a civil partnership any differently.</p> <p>There is no CTS data held for this specific category.</p>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	X		A reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants will have a positive impact on any claimant who is pregnant or on maternity leave/benefit by providing a greater level of core support against Council Tax liability.	<p>The scheme will only treat people who are on maternity leave differently in so far as considering their income &amp; household with regards to the means testing of CTS entitlement.</p> <p>There are no negative impacts from the reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants who are pregnant or on maternity leave/benefit.</p>
<b>Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)</b>		X	No impact.	<p>The scheme will not treat people of different ethnicity or race any differently.</p> <p>There is no CTS data held for this specific category.</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>		X	No impact.	<p>The scheme will not treat people of different religion any differently.</p> <p>There is no CTS data held for this specific category.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	X	X	A reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants will have a positive impact on all claimants regardless of gender by providing a greater level of core support against	<p>The scheme will not treat people of different gender/sex any differently.</p> <p>Pension age claimants are protected and will continue to receive full support.</p> <p>There are no negative impacts from the reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants of all gender/sex as these are treated the same.</p>

				Council Tax liability.	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		X		No impact	The scheme will not treat people of different sexual orientation any differently.  There is no CTS data held for this specific category.
<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	X			A reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants will have a positive impact on residents of the lowest socio-economic demographic by providing a greater level of core support against Council Tax liability.	Pension age claimants are protected and will continue to receive full support.  There are no negative impacts from the reduction in the minimum payment amount for working age claimants with socio-economic disadvantage.
<b>Any community issues identified for this location?</b>		X		No impact	No issues recognised

## 2. Consultation.

Provide details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the service or policy development e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups.

If you have already undertaken some consultation, please include:

- Any potential problems or issues raised by the consultation
- What actions will be taken to mitigate these concerns

Prior to the implementation of any change to the CTS scheme the Council is required to consult with the residents of the borough.

The guiding principles that have been established through case law for fair consultation are as follows:

- The consultation must be carried out at an early stage when the proposals are still at a formative stage

Provide details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the service or policy development e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups.

If you have already undertaken some consultation, please include:

- Any potential problems or issues raised by the consultation
- What actions will be taken to mitigate these concerns

- Sufficient information on the reasons for the decision must be provided to enable the consultees to carry out a reasonable consideration of the issues and to respond
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and responses to be made
- The results of the consultation must be properly taken into account in finalising any decision

The aims of any consultation should be to:

- Inform residents and help them understand the impact of the proposals
- Confirm why the proposals are being made
- Detail any alternative proposals
- Give purposeful consideration to realistic alternative proposals presented
- Obtain feedback on whether residents support the proposals

The consultation is anticipated to be primarily web based with information made available on the website and advertised in the media, with further promotion at the libraries and community hubs, to encourage residents to participate.

To account for digital exclusion paper copies will be made available.

A further public consultation will be held on sites within the borough to enable consultation to take place in person for residents. This will also be promoted to encourage residents to attend and engage.

Consideration will be given to direct contact with current CTS claimants, either by email or with paper copies if email addresses are not held.

Contact and engagement with affected stakeholders such as CAB, DABD and other voluntary groups will also be required to obtain their views on the proposed changes. This may be in person or via online meetings.

The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet to support in a decision being reached on any change to the scheme.



### 3. Monitoring and Review

<p>How will you review community and equality impact once the service or policy has been implemented?  <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in <b>Section 1 and 2</b> and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Impact of change monitoring by reviewing Council Tax collection rates and the number of CTS claims made and ongoing expenditure against the CTS scheme.	Ongoing	James Johnston
Regular monitoring based on performance frameworks	Ongoing	Robert Nellist

### 4. Next steps

It is important the information gathered is used to inform any Council reports that are presented to Cabinet or appropriate committees. This will allow Members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the wider community.

Take some time to summarise your findings below. This can then be added to your report template for sign off by the Strategy Team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
<p>The proposal for the CTS scheme 2023/24 is a reduction of 10% in the minimum payment amount to 15%.</p> <p>Pension Age claimants continue to be protected with no minimum payment and 100% CTS awards as per the nationally prescribed scheme.</p> <p>A revision of the current CTS scheme for 2023/24 to reduce the minimum payment will have a positive impact on all demographic groups within the borough.</p> <p>There are no further negative customer impacts that arise from the reduction in the minimum payment amount.</p> <p>A reduced minimum payment to 15% required for all working age claimants will continue to disproportionately affect the lowest socio-economic group and it is considered likely that this will still make it difficult to collect Council Tax from those entitled to a reduction under the scheme.</p> <p>The means testing of the support for claimants, based on each individual's ability to pay, outside of the minimum payment amount, is fair and equitable and protects the most vulnerable.</p> <p>A revision of the current CTS scheme will see neutral impacts on demographics such as gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, ethnicity, sexual orientation &amp; religion or belief, as these characteristics have no specific data held against them and are not addressed within the make up of the scheme i.e., they have no impact on the administration</p>

or award.

The CTS scheme continues to meet government guidelines for the protection of current levels of support for pensioners, the encouragement of people to work while not acting as a disincentive & considers the equality impact on the most vulnerable residents, meeting the needs and delivering outcomes, both social & economic for residents of the borough.

## 5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Divisional Director who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role (e.g. project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Stephen McGinnes	Director of Support & Collections	
Donna Radley	Head of Welfare	

**CABINET****17 January 2023**

<b>Title:</b> Housing Revenue Account: Review of Rents and Other Charges 2023/24	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Report Authors:</b> Katherine Heffernan Head of Service Finance, Tom Hart, Head of Business Development and Improvement	<b>Contact Details:</b> katherine.heffernan@lbbd.gov.uk
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Joe Joseph, Director of Homes and Assets	
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Directors:</b> Leona Menville, Interim Strategic Director of My Place and Philip Gregory, Strategic Director of Finance and Investment	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>The Council as a stock-owning local authority has an obligation to maintain a Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This is the income and expenditure relating to the management of the Council's housing stock and the Council is obliged to set a balanced budget.</p> <p>The Council's underlying policy on HRA rent is that rents should increase over time by at least the rate of inflation in order to maximise the funding available for investment in maintaining, improving and, if possible, expanding the Council's social housing stock. However, this year in the light of the very high rate of inflation Central Government has imposed a maximum 7% increase to social housing rents. This would mean that the average rate would increase from £100.97 per week to £108.04.</p> <p>This report also proposes increases to other charges in order to ensure that costs are recovered as far as possible. Throughout the Council is seeking to balance the financial sustainability of the HRA and the capital needs of the stock with its wish to protect tenants from economic hardship.</p>	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	
<p>The Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <p>(i) Agree that rents for all general needs secure, affordable and sheltered housing accommodation be increased by the below-inflation rate of 7%, from the current average of £100.97 per week to £108.04 per week;</p> <p>(ii) Agree the following service charges for tenants:</p>	

<b>Service</b>	<b>Proposed Weekly Charge 2023/24</b>	<b>Increase</b>
Grounds Maintenance	£2.93	£0.00
Caretaking	£7.65	£0.00
Cleaning	£3.68	£0.00
Estate Lighting	£4.34	£0.40
Concierge	£11.08	£1.02
CCTV (SAMS)	£6.79	£0.62
Safer Neighbourhood Charge	£0.57	£0.05
TV aerials	£0.62	£0.00

- (iii) Agree that charges for communal heating and hot water increase by 109% based on estimated charges, as follows:

<b>Property size</b>	<b>Weekly Charge 2022/23</b>	<b>Weekly Charge 2023/24</b>	<b>Annual Charge 2023/24</b>
Bedsit	£14.36	£30.01	£1,564.85
1 bedroom	£15.24	£31.85	£1,660.74
2 bedroom	£18.26	£38.16	£1,989.84
3 bedroom	£18.62	£38.92	£2,029.07
4 bedroom	£19.11	£39.94	£2,082.47

- (iv) Note that water and sewage charges shall be increased by the provider, currently estimated at a combined rate of 7.8%; and
- (v) Agree that the above charges take effect from 1 April 2023

### **Reason(s)**

The recommendations in this report align to the Inclusive Growth theme of the Corporate Plan, in particular relating to improving the quality and management of homes. The Housing Revenue Account provides the financial resources for the housing services provided to council tenants as well as investment in council homes and estates.

The Council annually reviews housing rents and other and must give prior notification to tenants of the charges for be applied from the new financial year.

## **1. Introduction and background**

### **Legislative context**

- 1.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to manage its housing stock, and to balance its accounts for the housing stock as a ring-fenced account. This means that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) does not receive any subsidy from the Government, or from Council Tax, and nor is it allowed to subsidise the General Fund. The legislation sets out those items that can be charged to the HRA.

- 1.2 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new method of managing the HRA called self-financing whereby in return for taking on a share of the national housing debt, local authorities could retain any rental surpluses, and manage their HRAs over a 30-year period. It is good practice therefore to maintain a 30-year Business Plan which projects the income that will be received alongside the expenditure required to manage and maintain the properties.

### **Policy context**

- 1.3 There have been a number of changes in the external environment over the last five years which have had an impact on the HRA Business Plan. These included a four-year rent reduction period which caused a loss of approximately £34m of anticipated income over these four years and the revitalisation of the Right to Buy initiative resulting in increased stock sales. The compound impact of these policies on the 30-year Business Plan is much larger, with a significant effect on the level of resources available within the HRA compared to income assumptions made before the policy came into force.
- 1.4 At the same time there has been an increased understanding of the importance of robust maintenance of social housing stock and good practice in fire safety, energy efficiency and the prevention and treatment of damp and mould. However, although the Government has responded to these issues with some legislation and announcements there has been little specific funding for social housing providers. This means that the necessary investment continues to need to come from rent income.

## **2. Rents and Service Charges**

### **Rents**

- 2.1 Rent increases for social housing are largely determined by Government regulation. The Government imposed a four-year rent reduction policy from 2016/17 to 2019/20 and from April 2020 it announced that, for five years, rents would be allowed to rise by CPI + 1% (using September CPI (Consumer Prices Index)). However, in the light of the current unusually high rate of inflation and following a consultation, the Government has set an increase cap at 7% for 2023-24.
- 2.2 The rent paid by tenants is the main source of funding for all costs for social housing including the capital programme so any real-terms reduction in rents will feed through over time to reduced investment in the housing stock. The costs of running the HRA are expected to largely increase by around 7 to 10% so if the income does not increase by the maximum 7% permitted then this will result in a reduced revenue position. Given that rent levels are restricted by Government policy, it is unlikely to be possible to catch up the position by imposing a larger increase in future years.
- 2.3 For this reason, it is recommended that all HRA rents are increased by 7% except where there is a new tenancy in which case the rent should be set to the 2023-24 target rent for that property (which may, in some cases, be higher). An increase of 7% from April 2023 would represent the following average increases:

- Average rent in 2023/24: £108.04 per week – an increase of £7.07 per week (from previous rent of £100.97.)

2.4 The indicative average increase by bed size is shown in the table below:

No of Bedrooms	2022/23 Avg. Rent p.w.	2023/24 Avg. Rent p.w.	Rent increase p.w.
0	£76.80	£82.18	£5.38
1	£84.89	£90.83	£5.94
2	£101.50	£108.61	£7.11
3	£111.21	£118.99	£7.78
4	£120.37	£128.80	£8.43
5	£148.09	£158.46	£10.37

2.5 If there were no changes in stock numbers, this rent increase would bring in just over £6m additional income to offset the increasing costs of providing housing.

2.6 For the majority of tenants who are receipt of Housing benefit or Universal Credit, the rent increase will be covered by an increased benefit payment. In addition, tenants who are at risk of falling into debt can be offered support by Community Solutions and some will be able to access Discretionary Housing Payments or the Household Support Fund.

### Service charges

2.7 Tenant service charges are specific charges for services that some tenants receive and others do not. The list of charges which are identified separately are set out below. Landlords may not charge more than the actual cost of the service, plus a reasonable management fee. Not all tenants pay service charges. Around 10,000 do not pay service charges at all, due to the type of property that they occupy. The current and proposed charges are set out below:

Service	Weekly Charge 2022/23	Proposed Charge 2023/24	Increase /	Basis of increase
Grounds Maintenance	£2.93	£2.93	£0.00	Nil
Caretaking	£7.65	£7.65	£0.00	Nil
Cleaning	£3.68	£3.68	£0.00	Nil
Estate Lighting	£3.94	£4.34	£0.40	CPI
Concierge	£10.06	£11.08	£1.02	CPI
CCTV (SAMS)	£6.17	£6.79	£0.62	CPI
Safer Neighbourhood Charge	£0.52	£0.57	£0.05	CPI
TV aerials	£0.62	£0.62	£0.00	Nil

- 2.8 The Council had a programme in place which has been reviewing the effectiveness of our services to tenants including caretaking and estate management in order to improve standards. However, the impact of Covid and the changing environment has meant that this has not yet reached final conclusions. Since under-recovery of charges means a financial loss to the HRA which has to be cross subsidised by other tenants who do not receive services, it is our intention to move towards full cost recovery. However, this will not be done until after the conclusion of the programme. Service charges for Caretaking, Cleaning, Grounds Maintenance will therefore be maintained at current levels in 2023-24.
- 2.9 The Safer Neighbourhoods charge recovers the cost of additional support from the Metropolitan Police to certain HRA estates and neighbourhoods. The charge is being increased by CPI as the costs of CCTV, Concierge (only paid by a small number of tenants who receive this service) and Estate Lighting. The cost of the TV aerials contract is not expected to increase so charges are being kept the same.

### **Communal Heating and Hot Water Charges**

- 2.10 Where properties benefit from a communal heating and hot water system this is paid for through a weekly fixed rate charge alongside the rent. This is set based on the size of the property and does not take into account actual usage. As with all other energy consumers, the HRA has seen a large increase in costs during this financial year. The table below shows the proposed charges to tenants as a result – an increase of 109%. This will be a large increase for many families – however is not out of line with those paid by other borough residents. If the increase is not passed on, effectively these tenants would be subsidised from the overall HRA which would not be equitable.

<b>Property size</b>	<b>Weekly Charge 2022/23</b>	<b>Weekly Charge 2023/24</b>	<b>Annual Charge 2023/24</b>
Bedsit	£14.36	£30.01	£1,564.85
1 bedroom	£15.24	£31.85	£1,660.74
2 bedroom	£18.26	£38.16	£1,989.84
3 bedroom	£18.62	£38.92	£2,029.07
4 bedroom	£19.11	£39.94	£2,082.47

### **Water and Sewage Rates**

- 2.11 The Council collects water and sewage rates on behalf of the water company and receives income for this service. The Water company have indicated that charges will rise by November CPIH (Consumer Prices Index Including Housing) less 1% to 2%. This would suggest an estimate of 7.8% - an increase of £0.71 a week to an average charge of £9.67 (individual properties pay an amount based on rateable value.) This will be passed on to tenants.

### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1 Consultation on the proposals in this report have taken place with relevant Cabinet Members and the proposals were considered and endorsed by the Corporate Performance Group on 22 December 2022.

### **4. Financial Implications**

Implications completed by Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 4.1 The Council is required to maintain a specific ringfenced Housing Revenue Account for the management of its social housing properties. All expenditure on Social Housing must be fully funded from rental income with no call on general Council funds. The Council is also required to have business planning processes in place to ensure that the HRA remains sustainable over the longer term (thirty years.)
- 4.2 In the period immediately following the introduction of Self Financing in 2012, HRA finances were relatively buoyant especially when considered over the thirty years of the business plan. However, the four-year rent reduction and the “revitalisation” of Right to Buy have both reduced the income achievable from the HRA.
- 4.3 The requirement to reduce rents has now ended and this report proposes that Council rents should increase by the maximum amount permitted which is 7%. This brings in £6m additional income to the HRA. However, this increase is lower than inflation and there is a risk that expenditure in the HRA will increase by a higher figure thus restricting the surpluses available for reinvestment. We are working on the details of the HRA budget and how far this can pressure be offset by efficiencies and improvements. The budget will be brought to Cabinet in February along with the General Fund budget setting report.

### **5. Legal Implications**

Implications completed by Dr Paul Feild, Principal Standards & Governance Solicitor

- 5.1 The setting of the rent and other housing charges is a cabinet function. The basis for setting rent is Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985 which provides that a local housing authority may make such reasonable charges as they determine for the tenancy or occupation of their houses.
- 5.2 Section 76 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 places a duty on local housing authorities to: (i) to produce and make available for public inspection, an annual budget for their HRA, which avoids a deficit; (ii) to review and if necessary, revise that budget from time to time and (iii) to take all reasonably practical steps to avoid an end of year deficit.

### **6. Other Implications**

- 6.1 **Equality implications** – the report proposes that rents are increased in line with government regulations. HRA rents remain low compared to market rents even following the proposed increase, and in general are around 35% of the borough’s market rents. Rents for HRA properties can be fully covered by housing



benefit/Universal Credit if needed in most cases. The rental increase proposed this year is below the level of inflation. It is considered to be proportionate because rent is the main source of HRA income, and funds the services to council tenants as well as maintenance/investment in council stock. Community Solutions will be available to offer support to tenants who need assistance with financial management and budgeting and income maximisation. In addition, Discretionary Housing Payments and the Household Support Fund may be available for some eligible households who are struggling with their housing costs.

- 6.2 **Risk Management** – Rental income will be used to manage and maintain the Council's housing stock and any surpluses will be invested in capital works to improve and maintain the stock. It therefore supports the reduction and mitigation of housing related risks such as fire, damp and mould and housing related health impacts.
- 6.3 **Safeguarding Adults and Children** – Rental income will be used to manage and maintain the Council's housing stock and also to provide specific services and support for tenants including families and vulnerable adults.
- 6.4 **Property / Asset Issues** – Rental income will be used to manage and maintain the Council's housing stock and any surpluses will be invested in capital works to improve and maintain the stock.

**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

Rent Standard from April 2020 (Annexe 2 of linked document):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/847359/Decision\\_Statement\\_Consultation\\_on\\_the\\_Rent\\_Standard\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/847359/Decision_Statement_Consultation_on_the_Rent_Standard_FINAL.pdf)

**List of Appendices:** None

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## CABINET

17 January 2023

<b>Title:</b> Dedicated Schools Budget and Schools Funding Formula 2023/24	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Report Author:</b> Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance	<b>Contact Details:</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:Katherine.heffernan@lbbd.gov.uk">Katherine.heffernan@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director – Education, Youth and Childcare	
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Directors:</b> Philip Gregory, Strategic Director, Finance & Investment, and Elaine Allegretti, Strategic Director, Children and Adults	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>This report provides an update on the national and local Education Funding position and the likely impact on schools and other Education services in Barking and Dagenham. It also sets out the Dedicated Schools Budget (DSB) strategy for 2023-4 and the principles to be used for the Local Funding Formula for Schools following discussion with Schools Forum and consultation with schools. The report also considers the implications for the Council of the funding changes and the risks and opportunities that arise as a result.</p>	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	
<p>The Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Note the indicative allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant for 2023/24 as set out in section 2 of the report;</li> <li>(ii) Approve the strategy for the main Schools funding block as set out in section 3 of the report;</li> <li>(iii) Approve the proposed principles for the design of the LBBD Local Schools Funding Formula as set out in section 4 of the report and the consequent funding factors as set out in Appendix 1;</li> <li>(iv) Approve the allocated funding and strategy for the three other funding blocks (High Needs, Central Services and Early Years) as set out in sections 5, 6 and 7 of the report;</li> <li>(v) Approve the increases in the Early Years, with the funding rate for three and four year olds increased to £5.15 per hour and for two year olds increased to £6.09 per hour; and</li> </ul>	

- (vi) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Strategic Director, Finance and Investment, the Schools Forum and the Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement, to approve the final 2023/24 school funding formula for submission to the Education and Schools Funding Agency.

**Reason(s)**

The Dedicated Schools Budget is part of the Council's overall budget and Local Authorities are required to develop and maintain a Local Funding Formula to distribute funding to schools.

**1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Most Education funding is provided by the Department of Education in the form of a specific ringfenced grant to Local Authorities known as the Dedicated Schools Grant. This was first introduced in 2006 and at that time was based on the allocations within Local Authority budgets for Education. However, since that time the direction of travel has been towards replacing this with a national formula-based allocation with funding based on population and indicators of additional needs such as deprivation and poor attainment.
- 1.2 The DSG is made up of four blocks that fund different components of the 3-16 Education system: the Schools Block which makes up most of the allocations to individual schools, the High Needs Block which provides funding for Special Schools, Alternative Provision, and Additional support for students with Special Education Needs in mainstream schools, the Early Years block which provides funding for two, three and four year old education and the Central Block which funds various central services such as Admissions and School Improvement. More information is given on each of the blocks in the report.
- 1.3 The ultimate intention of Department of Education policy is that Schools Block funding will be passported straight to schools based on the National Funding Formula. However, there is a transitional period before this happens during which time the Local Authority is required to set its own formula in consultation with its School Forum and local schools although this must be within the tight framework set out in national guidance. The details of the LBBB formula are also set out in this report.
- 1.4 In general the effect of operation of the National Funding Formula for the Schools Block would be to move funding away from London authorities towards other areas although this effect has been dampened by the use of a funding floor. In practice given that Education funding at the national level has been subject to limited increases for many years what this means is that London schools have tended to see only minimal below inflation increases in funding with greater increases going to schools in other areas. Combined with a demographic dip in the primary population this has created financial pressures for most LBBB schools which will tend to worsen if pay, energy and other costs continue to increase as is likely.

- 1.5 On the other hand the move to a formula-based allocation has improved funding for the High Needs Block which had previously been severely underfunded. However, this remains an area of financial pressure at the local and national level.

## 2. The Dedicated Schools Grant

- 2.1 As described above, the Dedicated Schools Grant is made up of four blocks which fund different aspects of the Education system. The table below shows the current year and the indicative funding for 2023/24 as published by the DfE and the final allocation published in December. Note that the indicative funding was based on the School Census data for October 2021 (ie the same pupil numbers as the current year) so can be compared easily while the final allocation is in line with pupil numbers in Census data from October 2022 and includes an increase of 379 pupils.

<b>Dedicated Schools Grant</b>	<b>2022-23 £m</b>	<b>2023-24 Indicative Allocation £m</b>	<b>2023-24 Final Allocation £m</b>	<b>2023-24 Additional Funding £m</b>
<b>Schools Block</b>	254.515	257.889	262.447	8.485
<b>High Needs Block</b>	48.877	52.177	53.061	2.319
<b>Central Services Block</b>	2.224	2.146	2.162	
<b>Early Years Block</b>	21.877	21.877	22.704	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>327.493</b>	<b>334.089</b>	<b>340.374</b>	<b>10.804</b>

### Notes:

- 1) The Schools Block figure includes the £6.985m supplementary grant which has now been rolled into base.
  - 2) Both schools and high needs block are given before academy recoupment. (£68.3 and £4.4m respectively.)
- 2.2 Excluding the rolling in of the £6.973m Supplementary grant, the Schools Block funding for LBBB has only been increased by 1.64% per pupil. However, the Chancellor announced additional funding for 2023-24 in his Autumn Statement. This has not been incorporated into DSG but will be provided to Schools on a formula basis. For Barking and Dagenham this will be £8.485m which provides another 3%. (It should be noted that this is still substantially below inflation.)
- 2.3 There has been another considerable increase in the High Needs Block. This reflects both the national funding increase in this area and the continued movement towards the formula-based allocation. The additional grant for High Needs has been included in the block funding and amounts to £2.319m. Without this additional funding the total would be £53.061m.
- 2.4 The Central block has been uplifted by inflation for ongoing commitments (admissions and statutory duties) but part of the block that relates to historic spending allocations is being reduced in line with the Government intention to standardise central spending.
- 2.5 The Early Years allocation is based on indicative take up and includes a 1% increase for 3 and 4 year old's education and a 5.5% uplift for 2 year olds.

### **3. Schools Block**

- 3.1 The Schools block is made up of three components. The largest component is the formula led allocation calculated at the individual school level and aggregated to the Local Authority area. Then there are special premises factors such as rates and PFI costs which have not yet been formularised but are set based on last year's actuals. Finally, there is the Growth Fund which is set at Local Authority level based on a formula capturing the change in school age population between census dates.
- 3.2 The national formula for schools funding is intended to provide more consistency and transparency around funding so that, when fully implemented, similar children in similar schools will be funded at the same level (adjusted for local cost variations). It therefore provides a basic age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) of funding for each student in a school with further funding allocated to factors that are indicative of additional needs (deprivation, English as an additional language and low prior attainment) and a small amount of funding for school-led funding (a lump sum and funding for rates and exceptional premises costs.)
- 3.3 The AWPU in the national formula is lower than was previously the case for LBBD schools (this is the case for most London authorities) resulting in a distribution of funding away from London on average. However, the additional needs factors are highly weighted so schools with these kinds of students are partially compensated for this. Finally, a funding floor has been used to contain funding losses at a minimum level (the floor is set on a per pupil basis). For 2023/24 this has been set at 0.5%. This is obviously far below inflation and so will result in financial pressures for all schools who receive only this uplift.
- 3.4 This year the DfE have also added in funding from the Schools Supplementary Grant. From now they will be treated as part of School's Core funding and be distributed as part of the formula.
- 3.5 As in previous years most primary schools (31/43) in Barking and Dagenham are on the funding floor receiving only the minimum increase 0.5% in per pupil funding and the other nine receive an average of 1.14%. 3 out of 11 secondary/all through schools are now also at floor funding level with the others averaging 2.99%
- 3.6 The DfE has used the national formula to calculate individual allocations for all schools in the country. This has then been used to calculate the aggregate Schools Block allocation for each authority and derive the relevant average funding unit (£6,466). The final allocations were published in December for 2023/24.
- 3.7 Since 2018/19 Growth funding has been allocated on a formula based on population changes between one October census and the previous one. In practice for LBBD, this is resulting in a less generous allocation than previously and lower than is needed. Our local growth funding policy has been revised to reduce funding allocated for new classes opening in September to the AWPU level only (the minimum possible.) This effectively requires new classes to be partly cross subsidised from the school's overall budget. However, it does mean that this year the cost of new classes can be largely met from the Growth Fund. If there is an unexpected increase and more growth is required, additional funding will be taken

from the DSG reserve. This means that we do not need to top slice the Schools Block and are passing through as much funding available to schools as possible.

3.8 In addition although there is overall pupil growth in the secondary phase and, in some geographical areas in the primary phase, in other areas there is a temporary dip in primary numbers. Demographic modelling suggests that this is only temporary but for some schools this short-term funding drop is hard to manage so the Schools Forum has agreed that a small fund should be made available to support those schools. This will also be funded from the reserve.

3.9 The provisional NFF allocation for LBBD Schools block is shown in the table below.

	2022-23	2023-24
Pupil Nos*	39,882	40,261
Primary Unit of Funding (PUF)	£5,314	£5,492
Secondary Unit of Funding (SUF)	£7,012	£7,402
LA Allocation excluding growth & premises factors	£238,080,426	£251,417,653
LA supplementary grant (pupils 5-16)	£6,972,638	
<b>Total SB baseline (excluding growth and premises)</b>	<b>£245,053,064</b>	<b>£251,417,653</b>
Baseline per pupil (excluding growth)	£6,144	£6,244
Provisional % change in 2023-24		1.64%
LA Allocation through premises funding	£9,461,893	£9,463,967
LA Growth Allocation	£1,423,064	£1,565,576
<b>TOTAL PUBLISHED SCHOOLS BLOCK</b>	<b>£255,938,021</b>	<b>£262,447,196</b>

#### 4. The Local Funding Formula for Barking and Dagenham for 2023/24

4.1 The Department of Education has started the transition to a fully formula-based methodology for individual schools and has introduced further restrictions on how far Authorities can move away from the national formula in order to set a local formula that meets the needs of schools in their areas.

4.2 Barking and Dagenham has been moving its formula closer to national figures and we use the national rates for all the additional needs factors (ie funding for deprivation, low prior attainment and other needs). However, we have been using the flexibility in order to shift more funding towards the primary phase in line with a policy principle agreed with Schools Forum. Prior to introduction of the national formula, there was a local funding ratio of 1:1.3 between the primary and secondary sectors. However, the national formula comes out with a ratio of 1:1.43. Over recent years the formula has directed more money towards the secondary sector and this appears to be a Government intention.

4.3 The Schools Finance team carried out some modelling and presented three options to Schools Forum and the whole community of schools (both maintained schools and academies). These options were all within the range of values allowed by the transition rules and resulted in three different funding ratios:

- Option A 1:1.43 – a straight application of the formula
- Option B 1:1.40 – an intermediate option
- Option C 1:1.35 – effectively the lowest ratio achievable within the rules

- 4.4 In all models, all other factors were the same. However, the minimum funding guarantee was in place to ensure all schools received the same per pupil funding (ie MFG 0%).
- 4.5 The models were discussed in two meetings and the Schools Forum ultimately approved option C. This was also the overwhelmingly favoured option by those schools which responded to the consultation. There is a further Schools Forum meeting on 17 January to consider the final figures based on the latest allocation from the DfE.
- 4.6 The following principles are therefore proposed, subject to further consultation with Schools Forum to be used for the 2023/24 Local Funding Formula:
- (a) To apply NFF rates for funding factors including area cost adjustment of 12.985% with the exception of AWPU.
  - (b) To adjust the AWPU rates to remain within the cash limit and to achieve a 1:1.35 ratio between primary and secondary phases. This means secondaries would be funded 35% more per pupil than a primary in recognition of their greater cost. The notional funding allocations published by the DfE is showing that most primary schools are having to be supported through the funding floor factor in respect of the minimum 0.5% per pupil uplift. This is because the pupil led factors are not fully effective in driving the funding allocations and minimum increases through the formula.
  - (c) To apply no capping and scaling. This means that schools will retain all of their gains under the formula.
  - (d) To provide Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection of 0%. This measures the percentage increase in per pupil funding between 2022/23 and 2023/24 formula budget after removing lump sum and rates allocations but including schools supplementary grants. The regulations allow MFG to be set between 0.0% and 0.5%. Keeping MFG low makes the formula more affordable and targets funding in line with current pupil characteristics rather than historic patterns.
- 4.7 These principles were approved at the recent Schools Forum meeting on 13 December following a consultation with schools in which 86% of responses favoured option C. This means that the additional needs factors have been established using the National funding formula amounts as a starting point, but the basic age weighted pupil funding has been adjusted in line with the principles above.
- 4.8 The DfE released updated census data and revised funding allocations in the second half of December which required some adjustments from the provisional model which have been carried out in line with the principles consulted on. Schools Forum will consider these on 17 January and any significant changes will be reported back to Cabinet in February.



## 5. High Needs Block

- 5.1 The High Needs Block provides funding for Local Authorities (rather than for delegation to schools) and is made available to meet the additional costs of supporting students with special educational needs aged 0 to 25 years. The funding was previously based on historical allocations with very little linkage to actual levels of need in an area. It is now set on a formula basis but with a transition period during which gains and losses are still restricted. It should be noted that LBBB would receive £1.907m more if the formula were implemented in full with no gains restriction.
- 5.2 The block funds a range of services including Alternative Provision, Special Schools and ARPs and additional support to High Needs students in mainstream schools. The table below shows the budget allocation for 2020/21. The increase in the allocation allowed the creation of a gatekeeping fund to manage in year growth in the number and complexity of needs of children. Despite this, however this is an area of high demand that continues to need strict management and creative strategies. Note that the table differs from the total grant allocation as it has been adjusted for “recoupment” – payments made at source to Special Academies and Free Schools.

	<b>2022/23 Budget £000</b>
Alternative Provision	3,438
ARP Funding	9,168
DSG – Education Inclusion.	1,801
Out of Borough & Non Maintained Funding	7,830
HN Top Ups – Post 16	2,180
SEN Panel Top Ups	1,500
LACHES, Lang. Support	350
Initiatives	689
Special School Funding	13,201
EY Portage & Youth Service	578
Parent Support & Health	580
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,315</b>
<b>Holding Cost &amp; Gatekeep</b>	<b>3,193</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>44,509</b>
<b>Academy Recoupment</b>	<b>4,369</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>48,877</b>

5.3 The allocation for 2023/24 is expected to include another above inflation increase of £4.339m or 8.9% which increases to £6.657m or 13.6% when the additional grant funding is included. This means that there is no requirement to transfer monies from the Schools Block to support expenditure. It is however likely that the High Needs Block will continue to need careful management in order to contain costs within the total funding. The Authority works closely with representatives from local schools through the High Needs Working Party in order to devise strategies to manage and reduce demand and control costs.

## 6. Central Services to Schools Block

6.1 The Central Block was created in 2018/19 by combining the residual Education Services Grant of £0.6m and £1.9m of funding allocations for central services previously agreed by Schools Forum. The latter is made up of specific continuing statutory functions (Admissions and running a Schools Forum) and local arrangements for historically agreed services. The Government's clear intention is to move the ESG and statutory functions elements towards a per head funding regime and to taper off historically agreed services over time.

6.2 CSSB is funding the following services in 2022/23:

<b>Service</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Admission Service	648	671
Schools Forum	60	62
Copy right Licences	180	186
Statutory responsibilities	743	769
<b>Total budget for ongoing resp.</b>	<b>1,631</b>	<b>1,688</b>
School Improvement	55	44
Schools Estates	77	62
School Games Organiser	26	21
Trewern outdoor education	106	85
Community Music Service	158	126
Advisory Teachers	170	136
<b>Total Historic Commitments</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>474</b>
<b>TOTAL CENTRAL SERVICES BLOCK</b>	<b>2,223</b>	<b>2,162</b>

6.3 Funding for ongoing services is now based on population with a small additional weighting for deprivation. The rate has increased by 2.5% in 23/24 – it has been provisionally assumed this will apply to all services. There will be a further reduction of £0.118m to the historic service block in 2023/24.

6.4 The summary below shows how the services funded from the historic element of the CSSG is being remodelled to mitigate the 20% annual reductions:

- **School improvement** – the reductions are being offset by School Improvement contingency and reserves, the reductions will be absorbed by the school improvement service through rationalisation and service redesign.
- **Advisory Teachers** – this is part of BDSIP contract, and the savings have been passported as a reduction to the contract price.
- **Community Music Service** – the service has remodelled the delivery by entering into a service level agreement with schools.
- **Trewern outdoor education** – to mitigate the impact of the reductions, Trewern has been working on various service delivery options including remodelling of staff deployment, providing additional offers to schools to increase income and build-up of financial reserves.
- **School games organiser** – the reduction in DSG funding is being replaced by other grants such as the young Londoners Fund, Inspiring Futures, Sports England etc.
- **Schools' estates** – the reduction is being mitigated by capitalisation of eligible staffing costs that meets the criteria for capital funding, this is assign to the building of school assets.

## 7 Early Years Block

7.1 Funding for Early Years was also announced in December and is shown below based on an estimated take up.

	<b>Total Funding</b>
	<b>2023/24</b>
Universal Entitlement 3&4 Year Olds	14,570,325
Plus 15 PTE 3&4 YO	3,766,215
<b>Total 3&amp;4 YO EY Block</b>	<b>18,336,540</b>
EY Pupil Premium	214,981
Disability Access Fund	114,264
	-
Entitlement 2 Y O	4,038,111
<b>PROVISIONAL EY for 2022/23</b>	<b>22,703,896</b>

7.2 The DfE have increased the hourly rate used in this overall allocation for three and four year olds by 1% or £0.06 (six pence) and the rate for two year olds by 5.5% or £0.33. It is recommended that these increases be passed on in full.

## 8. Financial Implications

Implications completed by Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 8.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant is a ringfenced grant provided by the Department of Education. The funding proposals set out in this report are affordable within the allocations announced in December.

## 9. Legal Implications

Implications completed by Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Senior Governance Lawyer

- 9.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant is payable to local authorities under section 14 of the Education Act 2002. It is as set out in this report a 'ring fenced grant' that is to say it must be solely spent on the grant conditions and guidance as been prepared by the Education and Skills Funding Agency to assist local authorities in the operation of the dedicated schools grant (DSG).
- 9.2 The process is set by the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations made under Chapter 4 of Part 2 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 which concerns the financing of maintained schools. They relate to the Council's 2022-23 financial year and need to be made because the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021 ("the 2021 Regulations") apply only up to the end of the 2021-22 financial year.

## 10. Other Implications

- 10.1 **Risk Management** - There is a risk that for some schools the funding available may not fully meet their expected operating costs and financial pressures. The Minimum Funding guarantee that limits any reduction in funding to 0.5%% per pupil offers some mitigation as it provides a smoothing mechanism preventing sudden funding changes. The Council will continue to work with Schools and others to ensure there are high standards of financial management and control to meet these funding challenges.
- 10.2 **Staffing Issues** – Many schools in Barking and Dagenham will receive only a small uplift in their funding and where schools are also experiencing changes in roll numbers there may be budget pressures which impact on staffing plans. The Authority has taken some steps to support schools through the creation of a falling rolls fund and access to loans via the Financial Difficulties Fund. Schools are encouraged to work with HR in order to mitigate the impact on individual staff members and to avoid compulsory redundancies as far as possible.
- 10.3 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** – The National Funding Formula provides additional funding to meet the educational and safeguarding needs of students with specific characteristics that indicate higher levels of need and vulnerability such as deprivation, lower prior attainment and speaking English as an additional language. This is reflected in the Local Formula
- 10.4 **Safeguarding Adults and Children** - The additional needs factors and the pupil premium provide targeted support for looked after children and those entitled to free

school meals. The High Needs block is available to provide support for students with complex educational needs and disabilities.

**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

- DSG Operational Guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/902183/Schools\\_operational\\_guide\\_2021\\_to\\_2022\\_1.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/902183/Schools_operational_guide_2021_to_2022_1.pdf)

**List of appendices:**

- **Appendix A** – Schools Funding Formula Factors

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**Appendix A\_ National Funding Formula Factor Values & LBBD Local Funding Factor values - 2023-24**

<b>Basic per pupil funding</b>	<b>NFF Unit Values with ACA</b>	<b>LBBD Factor values* 1:1.35</b>	<b>Minimum Allowed by DfE</b>	<b>Maximum Allowed by DfE</b>
<b>Basic entitlement</b>				
Primary (Years R-6)	£3,851.41	£4,014.99	£3,755.12	£4,029.46
Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)	£5,429.87	£5,306.99	£5,294.13	£5,565.62
Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)	£6,119.81	£6,006.99	£5,966.82	£6,272.81
<b>Additional Needs Funding</b>				
<b>Deprivation</b>				
Primary FSM	£544.69	£544.69		
Secondary FSM	£544.69	£544.69		
Primary FSM6	£800.01	£800.01		
Secondary FSM6	£1,168.81	£1,168.81		
Primary IDACI Band A	£760.30	£760.30		
Primary IDACI Band B	£578.73	£578.73		
Primary IDACI Band C	£544.69	£544.69		
Primary IDACI Band D	£499.30	£499.30		
Primary IDACI Band E	£317.74	£317.74		
Primary IDACI Band F	£261.00	£261.00		
Secondary IDACI Band A	£1,055.34	£1,055.34		
Secondary IDACI Band B	£828.38	£828.38		
Secondary IDACI Band C	£771.64	£771.64		
Secondary IDACI Band D	£703.56	£703.56		
Secondary IDACI Band E	£504.97	£504.97		
Secondary IDACI Band F	£380.15	£380.15		
<b>Low Prior Attainment</b>				
Primary LPA	£1,310.66	£1,310.66		
Secondary LPA	£1,985.85	£1,985.85		
<b>English as an Additional Language</b>				
Primary EAL	£658.17	£658.17		
Secondary EAL	£1,775.92	£1,775.92		
<b>Mobility</b>				
Primary Mobility	£1,072.36	£1,072.36		
Secondary Mobility	£1,543.29	£1,543.29		
<b>Lump sum</b>				
Primary lump sum	£145,250.56	£145,250.56		
Secondary lump sum	£145,250.56	£145,250.56		

\*AWPU rates subject to change following the update to schools funding following the October 2022 census

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**CABINET****17 January 2023**

<b>Title:</b> Calculation and Setting of the Council Tax Base 2023/24	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> No
<b>Report Author:</b> Caroline Connolly, Principal Accountant	<b>Contact Details:</b> E-mail: Caroline.Connolly@lbbd.gov.uk
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Philip Gregory, Strategic Director, Finance and Investment	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>The Council has a duty to set a Tax Base for Council Tax purposes by 31 January each year under Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.</p> <p>This report seeks approval of the Authority's Council Tax Base for 2023/24.</p>	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	
<p>The Cabinet is recommended to agree that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham as its Council Tax Base for the year 2023/24 shall be 53,326.90 Band 'D' properties.</p>	
<b>Reason(s)</b>	
<p>To meet the Council's statutory duties under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.</p>	

**1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The Tax Base must be conveyed to the major precepting Authorities by 31 January prior to the start of the financial year.
- 1.2 The Tax Base must be calculated in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.3 The regulations set a prescribed period for the calculation of the tax, which is between 1 December and 31 January in the financial year preceding that for which the calculation of the council tax base is made. The data used in the calculation must be that held by the Council as at 30 November.

## 2. Proposal and Issues

- 2.1 The valuation of properties for Council Tax purposes is carried out by the Valuation Office Agency.
- 2.2 For Council Tax purposes each property is placed in a band based on its open market value as at 1 April 1991. The bands are as follows:

Range of Values Band	Valuation
Values not exceeding £40,000	<b>A</b>
Values exceeding £40,000 but not exceeding £52,000	<b>B</b>
Values exceeding £52,000 but not exceeding £68,000	<b>C</b>
Values exceeding £68,000 but not exceeding £88,000	<b>D</b>
Values exceeding £88,000 but not exceeding £120,000	<b>E</b>
Values exceeding £120,000 but not exceeding £160,000	<b>F</b>
Values exceeding £160,000 but not exceeding £320,000	<b>G</b>
Values exceeding £320,000	<b>H</b>

- 2.3 The Tax Base is calculated in terms of the equivalent number of Band 'D' properties after discounts and exemptions have been taken into account. There are statutory ratios which determine the proportion of the band D charge that will be charged for a property in each band. The ratios are as follows:

A = 6/9ths	E = 11/9ths
B = 7/9ths	F = 13/9ths
C = 8/9ths	G = 15/9ths
D = 1	H = 18/9ths

- 2.4 The standard Council Tax is set in relation to Band 'D' properties, this will mean that somebody living in a Band 'A' property pays 2/3rds of the standard amount whilst somebody in a Band 'H' property pays twice the standard amount.
- 2.5 The full Council Tax charge is based on the assumption that the property is occupied by two or more adults. However, some properties are exempt from any charge, and others qualify for a discount. In determining the Tax Base the relevant discounts and exemptions are taken into account:
- 2.6 The following table shows the number of chargeable properties at 30 November after all discounts and exemptions have been applied.

2022/23			2023/24	
Last Year Totals	Band 'D' Equivalents	Band	Total	Band 'D' Equivalent
0.70	0.40	A*	0.80	0.50
3,702.40	2,468.20	A	3,726.40	2,484.20
8,108.90	6,306.90	B	8,361.10	6,503.10
37,534.60	33,364.10	C	38,560.70	34,276.10
8551.10	8,551.00	D	8670.50	8,670.50
1559.20	1,905.70	E	1567.00	1,915.20
323.20	466.90	F	338.30	488.70
41.90	69.80	G	39.50	65.90
4.50	9.00	H	5.50	11.00
<b>59,826.50</b>	<b>53,142.00</b>		<b>61,269.80</b>	<b>54,415.20</b>

\*Disabled person's reductions

- 2.7 When determining the tax base for the purpose of setting the Council Tax an allowance has been made for non-collection. The losses on collection allowance for 2023/24 has been assessed as 2%. Prior to 2022/23 the losses on collection allowance was assessed at 3%, but due to improved collection procedures the losses on collection allowance was amended for 2022/23 onwards.
- 2.8 The adjustment, expressed as band D equivalents, is shown below.

Band D equivalent at 30 November 2022	54,415.20
In-year losses in collection allowance of 2%	(1,088.30)
<b>Council Tax Base for 2023/24</b>	<b>53,326.90</b>

- 2.9 The losses at a 3% collection rate would have been 1,632.46, giving a Council Tax Base of 52,782.70. It has been decided to keep this reduced debt provision due to improved collection procedures.
- 2.10 A fully detailed calculation of the tax base is contained in Appendix A.
- 3. Consultation**
- 3.1 The calculation of the council tax base follows a prescribed process and, as such, does not require consultation.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 4.1 The Council Tax Base has increased by 1,247.74 band D equivalent properties from 2022/23 (52,079.16). At the current Council Tax charge of £1,389.24, this would represent an increase in Council Tax income of £1.733m compared to the previous year.
- 4.2 The July MTFs had assumed an increase in the Council Tax base of 2.99%. The Council Tax base for 2023/24 has increased by 2.4%, this is an increase of £1.733m in income for the Council in comparison to 2022/23. It is, however, a shortfall against the original MTFs projections of £0.450m.
- 4.3 The Council Tax collection rate is a significant factor in determining the level of income and will affect the actual amount of Council Tax collected in 2023/24. For every 1% change in the collection rate, income would increase/decrease by £0.8m for the Council.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Senior Corporate Governance Solicitor

- 5.1 As observed above there is a legal requirement that the Council as a billing authority must set its Council Tax base before 31 January 2023 for the following financial year starting 1 April 2023. Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as inserted by the Localism Act 2011, imposes a duty on the Council as a billing authority, to calculate its Council Tax by applying a formula which as set out in the Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The formula involves a figure for the Council Tax Base for the year, which must itself be calculated. The basis of liability for Council Tax is the valuation band to which a dwelling has been assigned. Valuation bands range from A to H, and the relative liabilities of each band are expressed in terms of proportions of Band D.
- 5.2 The calculation to establish the relevant basic amount of council tax by is done by dividing the council tax requirement for the financial year by the billing authorities council tax base. In brief, the council tax base is the aggregate of the relevant amounts calculated for each valuation band multiplied by the authority's estimated collection rate for the year. The estimated collection rate is the percentage of council tax payable which the authority actually expects to be paid i.e. the difference between what it ought to be paid in council tax and certain fund transfers and what it is likely to be paid.
- 5.3 The Council is under an obligation to notify major precepting authorities of the calculation.
- 5.4 For this Council the setting of the Council Tax Base is a Cabinet function. This is because Section 67 Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by section 84 of the Local Government Act 2003, (and more recently the Localism Act 2011), enabled the Assembly to delegate the power to set the tax base to the Cabinet. This is reflected in the Constitution at Part 2 Chapter 6 Responsibility for functions at paragraph 2.1(ii).

**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None**

**List of appendices:**

- **Appendix A** – Calculation of the 2023/24 Council Tax Base

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## APPENDIX A

	Description	2023/24
<b>Line 1</b>	Total number of dwellings on the Valuation list	79,113
<b>Line 2</b>	Number of dwellings on valuation list exempt on 2 October 2017 (Class B & D to W exemptions)	1,845
<b>Line 3</b>	Number of demolished dwellings and dwellings outside area of authority on 2 October 2017	54
<b>Line 4</b>	Number of chargeable dwellings on 2 October 2017 (treating demolished dwellings etc as exempt) (lines 1-2-3)	77,214
<b>Line 5</b>	Number of chargeable dwellings in line 4 subject to disabled reduction on 2 October 2017	284
<b>Line 6</b>	Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 5 after reduction)	284
<b>Line 7</b>	Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 5 and 6 (lines 4-5+6 or in the case of column 1, line 6)	77,214
<b>Line 8</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 entitled to a single adult household 25% discount on 2 October 2017	22,875
<b>Calculation 1</b>		17,156.25
<b>Line 9</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 entitled to a 25% discount on 2 October 2017 due to all but one resident being disregarded for council tax purposes	1,324
<b>Calculation 2</b>		993.00
<b>Line 10</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 entitled to a 50% discount on 2 October 2017 due to all residents being disregarded for council tax purposes	51
<b>Calculation 3</b>		6,075.25
<b>Line 11</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as second homes on 2 October 2017 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)	210
<b>Line 12</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty and receiving a zero% discount on 2 October 2017 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)	565
<b>Line 13</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty and receiving a discount on 2 October 2017 and not shown in line 12 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)	0
<b>Line 14</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty and being charged the Empty Homes Premium on 2 October 2017 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)	96
<b>Line 15</b>	Total number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty on 2 October 2017 (lines 12, 13 & 14).	661
<b>Line 16</b>	Number of dwellings that are classed as empty on 2 October 2017 and have been for more than 6 months. NB These properties should have already been included in line 15 above.	394
<b>Line 16a</b>	The number of dwellings included in line 16 above which are empty on 2 October 2017 because of the flooding that occurred between 1 December 2013 and 31 March 2014 and are only empty because of the flooding.	0
<b>Line 16b</b>	The number of dwellings included in line 16 above which are empty on 2 October 2017 because of the flooding that occurred between 1 December 2015 and 31 March 2016 and are only empty because of the flooding.	0
<b>Line 17</b>	Number of dwellings that are classed as empty on 2 October 2017 and have been for more than 6 months and fall to be treated under empty homes discount class D (formerly Class A exemptions). NB These properties should have already been included in line 15 above. Do NOT include any dwellings included in line 16a and 16b above.	0
<b>Line 18</b>	Line 16 - line 16a - line 16b - line 17. This is the equivalent of line 18 on the CTB(October 2016) and will be used in the calculation of the New Homes Bonus.	394
<b>Line 19</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 where there is liability to pay 100% council tax before Family Annexe discount	52,870
<b>Line 20</b>	Number of dwellings in line 7 that are assumed to be subject to a discount or a premium before Family Annexe discount	24,344
<b>Line 21</b>	Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount (b/fwd from Family Annexe tab)	0.00
<b>Line 22</b>	Number of dwellings equivalents after applying discounts and premiums to calculate taxbase	71,252
<b>Line 23</b>	Ratio	0

<b>Line 24</b>	Total number of band D equivalents (to 1 decimal place)(line 22 x line 23)	62920.3
<b>Line 25</b>	Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2017-18 (to 1 decimal place)	0
<b>Line 26</b>	Tax base (to 1 decimal place) (line 24 col 10 + line 25)	62920.3
<b>Line 27</b>	Number of dwellings equivalents after applying discounts amd premiums to calculate tax base (Line 22)	71252.25
<b>Line 28</b>	Reduction in taxbase as a result of local council tax support (b/fwd from CT Support tab)	9982.47
<b>Line 29</b>	Number of dwellings equivalents after applying discounts, premiums and local tax support to calculate taxbase	61269.78
<b>Line 30</b>	Ratio	
<b>Line 31</b>	Total number of band D equivalents after allowance for council tax support (to 1 decimal place) (line 29 x line 30)	54415.2
<b>Line 32</b>	Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2017-18 (to 1 decimal place) (line 25)	0
<b>Line 33</b>	Tax base after allowance for council tax support (to 1 decimal place) (line 31 col 10 + line 32)	54,415.2
<b>Line 34</b>	Projected changes in discounts and growth	0
<b>Line 35</b>	In year losses in collection at 2%	1,088.30
<b>Line 37</b>	Council Tax base	53,326.9



**CABINET****17 January 2023**

<b>Title:</b> Corporate Plan – Quarters 1 and 2 2022/23 Performance Monitoring	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Performance and Data Insight</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> None	<b>Key Decision:</b> No
<b>Report Author:</b> Richard Caton, Head of Performance and Programme Management Office	<b>Contact Details</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:richard.caton@lbbd.gov.uk">richard.caton@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Alex Powell, Director of Strategy	
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Director:</b> Fiona Taylor, Acting Chief Executive	
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Assembly agreed the current Corporate Plan in May 2020 which was further updated and agreed in November 2020. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of performance and delivery of that plan.</p> <p>This is the fifth report under the current performance regime. It summarises performance in quarters one and two of the 2022/23 financial year and gives updates on the delivery of projects and programmes of strategic importance. Though the scope of the report is Q1 and Q2 of 2022/23, the information in this report reflects the position at the time of writing to give Cabinet a contemporary picture of performance and delivery.</p> <p>The performance framework which underpins the Corporate Plan is all encompassing, comprising 300+ metrics and 150+ deliverables to give an effective overview of all this information the document at Appendix 1 takes a thematic and narrative-led approach to reporting. For each sub-theme of the Corporate Plan a position statement has been produced to summarise performance and delivery. This is to give a holistic view of progress to outcomes at a strategic level and to highlight key performance improvements and challenges over that period.</p> <p>Cabinet receives reports of this kind at six-monthly intervals. The next report will be scheduled in July 2023 and will cover performance and delivery progress in quarters three and four of 2022/23.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>The Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <p>(i) Note the performance highlights and areas of improvement relating to quarters 1 and 2 of the 2022/23 financial year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and</p>	

(ii) Agree any actions to address areas of concern.

### Reason(s)

Regular monitoring of performance is a responsibility of Cabinet as set out in Part 2, Chapter 6 of the Council Constitution. This report demonstrates the Council's commitment to good governance and rigorous performance management and shows how we strive for best value and continuous improvement.

## 1. Introduction

1.1. The Corporate Plan is developed to bring urgency, focus and direction to all activities of the Council in pursuit of the long-term ambitions of the Borough Manifesto. It is organised into four strategic themes reflecting the priorities of the Council, these are: Inclusive Growth; Participation and Engagement; Prevention, Independence and Resilience; and Well-Run Organisation.

1.2. A comprehensive performance framework underpins the Corporate Plan. The framework is a tool to drive continuous improvement and appraise progress to outcomes. There are two key elements to the performance framework which are brought together to give a holistic and strategic overview of performance and delivery.

- **Deliverables** are the projects, programmes, and initiatives that will develop and transform local public services and Barking and Dagenham as a place and community of people, enabling the Council, in collaboration with its partners, to achieve the outcomes/priorities of the Corporate Plan.
- **Metrics** are a mix of contextual data, business intelligence, operational performance indicators and outcome measures that give an empirical, quantitative view of performance. This data is key to identifying where performance is behind targets and expectations and gives an objective view as to whether improvement activity and transformation is making a tangible impact. More practically, this data shows that LBBB services are meeting the needs of residents in the 'here and now' and directs attention to where improvement plans are needed for services or to tackle broader issues.

1.3. This approach to performance reporting, which more closely views performance management information alongside the status of programme delivery, paints a rich picture of the Council's operating context, achievements, and areas of risk/improvement.

1.4. Appendix 1 is a collection of position statements which give an overview of performance and delivery, summarising data from metrics and project/programme delivery progress to give a well-rounded view on overall progress to outcomes. The position statements for each sub-theme highlight:

- areas of good performance and achievement
- areas where improvement is needed or where performance and delivery is behind expectations and targets

- areas of focus for the next six months signalling where priorities lie based on the current performance and delivery position and reflecting the delivery milestones and commitments set out in the Corporate Plan.
- key risks

1.5. Although the Corporate Plan performance framework is very comprehensive it does not cover all performance. Several other important performance frameworks exist to review performance in specific areas and across partnership agendas. For example, health and wellbeing outcomes are monitored through the Health and Wellbeing Board, crime and disorder through the Community Safety Partnership, and safeguarding through the Safeguarding Boards for Adults and Children. There are also service specific performance frameworks which are used for performance management at an operational level between commissioners and operational leads, or in some cases external contractors. Importantly the Corporate Plan gives a summary of performance and delivery across all areas and is therefore the primary performance framework the organisation uses for performance management purposes.

1.6. A rigorous performance management process underpins the performance framework and ensures good governance and accountability. Performance information is scrutinised at all levels of the organisation with clear escalation paths to ensure performance and delivery issues are responded to effectively and efficiently. Target-setting and benchmarking is used (where appropriate) to set clear expectations about levels of performance. Monthly exception reporting to the Senior Leadership Team is in place to investigate and intervene in areas that are behind target/expectations. Similarly, programme delivery milestones are monitored closely with the same monthly exception reporting process. Performance and delivery reports are routinely reported to Cabinet portfolio holders in support of them discharging their executive remits. These reporting processes and governance structures ensure that the organisation is focussed on the right things at the right time, has an overview of all areas of performance and delivery, is driving continuous improvement, and is managing risks and issues effectively.

1.7. Cabinet receives this report twice a year. The next report will be scheduled for July 2023 and will cover Q3 and Q4 of the 2022/23 financial year.

## **2. Performance and Delivery Headlines**

Some key points are extracted from Appendix 1 to highlight areas of achievement or good performance, or where improvement is required, or where there are challenges and risks.

### **2.1. Inclusive Growth**

- Due to economic downturn and increases in labour and materials, as well as supply issues, scheme viability across the Be First portfolio has been negatively impacted. In response, tenure mixes at Woodward Road, 12 Thames Road, and the Gascoigne Estate have been revised, and some delivery has slipped into 2023/24.
- The Council's landlord compliance position has significantly improved since the self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing in February 2022. As at the end

of October 2022 only the domestic electrical testing programme remained non-compliant. The electrical testing program is underway with phase 1 already being successfully delivered and phase 2a currently on site. The remaining phase 2b and 3 schemes are expected to be commissioned by end of January 2023.

- The total number of households in Temporary Accommodation was 1,321 at end of Q2 2022/23, down from 1,399 (-78) at the start of 2022/23. This is contrary to the trend across London which on average has seen an increase of 1.4% in households in Temporary Accommodation.
- During the pandemic unemployment rose to the highest in the country – and the Borough remained in the top 10 highest until March 2022. Recent survey data suggests unemployment has fallen since then, meaning the Borough now has the 33rd highest unemployment rate of all local authorities in the country. However, the numbers of long-term unemployed and economically inactive people remain high, and the forthcoming recession could see unemployment rise again.
- In summer 2022, two new affordable workspaces created by the Council opened in Barking Town Centre. The Barking Enterprise Centre 360 provides hot-desking spaces while Roycraft House has been re-launched as Make It Barking, providing units for small businesses and charities.
- In June, the Make It Here: Film Barking and Dagenham programme held a flagship careers event for over 800 young people from diverse communities to understand the wide range of careers opportunities in film. The programme has also brokered marshalling jobs with visiting productions for 20 residents and a six-month job for a local graduate as a runner at the Wharf Studios.
- Delays to the Controlled Parking Zone programme mean there is now a challenging timetable to work through the issues raised during consultation and deliver the remaining schemes, particularly as there are requests for existing schemes to be reviewed too.
- The impact of inflation and the rising cost of borrowing stalled existing retrofit and renewable schemes and prevented others from beginning, particularly the retrofit of the corporate estate. However, a programme which has been reduced in size and the funding for phase 1 works has been agreed and will begin in 2023.
- Good Parks for London 2022 confirmed that LBBB remained in the top 10 for quality parks in the capital, although it fell slightly from fifth place to seventh.
- The BD Money web platform has supported a growing number of residents with money advice and support. It provides an essential focal point and universal source of financial guidance and self-help tools for households struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. The website enables residents to directly access financial support. It is also a resource for council staff and public and voluntary sector partners to use to support residents and will support the Cost of Living Alliance work. Between April to September 2022 there were almost 10,000 page views. Following the launch of the Credit Union Offer, this has grown to over 22,000 views (as of November 2022).

## 2.2. Participation and Engagement

- The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy participative funding process distributed £263,764 in April and November 2022. Over 170 residents trained and completed the Neighbourhood Fund, Dragons' Den style, participative funding process. 91 community projects have been funded by Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy to the value of £806,000, enabling residents to make decisions on funding in their neighbourhoods.
- 13 warm spaces are in operation, offering warmth, shelter and places of advice. A small grants scheme of up to £1k has been launched to provide further support to enable organisations providing spaces to keep their doors open.
- The Estate Improvement Fund launched its pilot stage in August. £100,000 of funding was allocated to improve three estates across the Borough, enabling estate residents to make suggestions on how to use the spending and vote on the most feasible options. Over 100 project suggestions were received with 400 tenant votes and 8 priority projects agreed.
- The Culture service continues to work on the development of cultural infrastructure on the ground for and with residents and local arts organisations through community-focused schemes which prioritise digital access, resilience and sustainability. A successful capital grant application for c.£240,000 from Arts Council England has allowed for the development of the Woodward Library site into a digital arts hub for the Becontree Estate, allowing for the building of a community-led legacy to the Becontree Forever centenary cultural programme.

## 2.3. Prevention, Independence and Resilience

- The provisional combined grades 9-5 in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 was 50.4%, an increase of 7.8% on 2019 (42.6%), this is Barking and Dagenham's best ever performance on this indicator and 0.6% above the national average (49.8%) for 2022.
- 58% of children in Barking and Dagenham who received a health and development review at age 2-2½ were at or above the expected level in all five areas of development. This is the second lowest of the 26 boroughs who publish data.
- The Council met and exceeded its commitment to deliver 73 work experience placements, hosting 99 placements from April to November 2022.
- The proportion of Year 12s and 13s in Barking and Dagenham who were not in education, employment or training or whose post 16 destination was 'unknown' decreased significantly from 3.7% to 2.9% (the December-February average). This is the Borough's best ever position.
- The Vulnerable Housing Programme has accommodated 145 Care Leavers in paid for accommodation.

- In partnership with Habitat for Humanity, approximately 16 beds of high specification shared flats have been developed in empty spaces above shops, providing new affordable accommodation for Care Leavers.
- Nearly 2,500 young people have been reached through the Young Londoners Fund 'From Roads to Communities' programme. 200 young people were reached in Q3 quarter alone.
- After a successful recruitment campaign by North East London NHS Foundation Trust, the two Mental Health in Schools Teams are fully operational in two primary schools and two secondary schools. A phased roll out across all schools will start in January 2023.
- An inspection report published by the Care Quality Commission on 16 November rated Chaseview care home, run by HC-One, as inadequate. The care home is the largest in the Borough and currently has 89 residents, 61 of which are Barking and Dagenham residents. The home supports older people and people living with dementia. New council placements were suspended to the home in September this year following concerns that were echoed by the Care Quality Commission. Commissioners have been working closely with the home to follow an improvement plan to make significant changes to services.
- As at 5 December 2022, 28% from all priority groups combined had received a seasonal flu vaccination compared to 30% regionally for North East London. For COVID-19 seasonal booster vaccination, uptake in Barking and Dagenham for all priority groups was 31%, behind the North East London average of 37%.

#### **2.4. Well Run Organisation**

- Completion of the 2019/20 external audit of the Council financial statements remains a priority. The 2021/22 subsidiary external audits are being completed in line with the Companies House deadline of 31 December 2022. The continued delays to external audits of the Council's Statement of Accounts 2019-20 persist causing additional work and a reputational risk to the Council with respect to assurance on its governance. An alternative audit firm has been contracted to audit grant claims to mitigate the risk to the Council financial statements audit.
- Good progress continues to be made against the current apprenticeship action plan, with pipeline apprenticeships at all levels. Most Scale 5 and below job vacancies are now converted to apprentices. The new process has been successfully implemented and services continue to support the apprenticeship offer for new and existing staff at all levels.
- The Cost-of-Living communications campaign launched in December 2022 working with our community, faith and voluntary sector partners as part of the Cost-of-Living Alliance to provide information to residents on the range of support available in the Borough. A cost-of-living themed booklet was sent to all homes in the Borough and is being made available in libraries and GP surgeries. A further booklet was distributed to homes before Christmas, emphasising cost of living messages.

- Freedom of Information requests which have been completed within timescale of (20 working days) is now sitting at an average of 82% this remains under the stated Information Commissioners Office target of 95%. The Feedback Team have implemented strategies to improve the performance, and this is having a positive impact with September's performance at 95%.

### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1. Delivery of the Corporate Plan is closely monitored by Cabinet Members as part of the discharge of their executive functions, roles and responsibilities. Peer challenge and oversight is provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services, and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Performance and Data Insight, both of whom provide added rigour and accountability to performance management.
- 3.2. The Cabinet collectively, and as individual portfolio holders, receive regular performance information in support of their executive remits; the purpose of this report is to bring transparency to the Council's performance and highlight areas where performance needs to improve based on latest data and the status of important projects and programmes. The report is therefore of interest to the local community for whom we must provide effective and efficient local services, and to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which has a remit to scrutinise performance, as delegated by the Assembly.
- 3.3. In accordance with the Officer Scheme of Delegation<sup>1</sup>, the Chief Executive has responsibility for the overall management of the authority, including performance monitoring. As part of the performance management framework and the robust governance which surrounds it, this report and the performance narratives therein have been consulted on with relevant officers in the Council with day-to-day operational and commissioning responsibilities to deliver the outcomes within the Corporate Plan.

### **4. Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 4.1. The Council's Corporate Plan works alongside the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as two key elements of the Council's planning process. The Council's financial context is increasingly challenging as a result of the legacy of austerity, the impact of the pandemic and the wider economic environment. The MTFS was mostly recently approved as part of the budget setting process for 2022-23 in February/March 2022. It is regularly reviewed and an update was presented to Cabinet in December. There will be another update to Cabinet and Assembly in February that will include the budget for 2023/24 along with savings and growth proposals for approval.
- 4.2. In any current financial year the Corporate Plan is to be delivered through approved budgets and where new initiatives or remedial actions are proposed in response to delivery issues funding will need to be found from within existing resources.

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<sup>1</sup> [Council Constitution](#), Part 3, Chapter 1

- 4.3. Regular budget monitoring reports to Cabinet detail the financial risks, spending performance and budgetary position. The Council faces a large number of financial risks including increasing demand for services, cost increases and inflation and reduced income in some areas following the Covid pandemic. In year forecasts suggest there could be a significant overspend – the latest reported position was £14.7m overspent although there are some potential mitigations. However the Council does have sufficient reserves to cover these pressures and there are processes in place to manage and mitigate the overspends.
- 4.4. A specific theme of the Corporate Plan is concerned with ensuring value for money and good financial management and controls (see page 43 of Appendix 1). This year the Council has replaced its financial, HR and procurement systems which will allow it to bring in further improvements.

## 5. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Principal Governance & Standards Lawyer

- 5.1. As a report on performance updating the Cabinet on performance in quarters one and two of the 2022/2023, there are no specific legal implications. The Local Government Act 1999 as amended by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 together with supporting legislation, requires the Council to work to achieve continuous improvement and best value. This report reflects good practice in terms of corporate governance as it articulates progress to outcomes and assists in highlighting areas where improvements are needed. A corporate plan, its objectives and in time how the delivery measures up in terms of outcomes, are therefore one of the signifiers of a well-run local authority.
- 5.2. Furthermore, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 Regulations oblige the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement for each accounting year evidencing how the Council has performed. This is to be done in accordance with proper public sector accounting practices. The CIPFA / Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 guidance sets out the required practice and that includes a clear statement of the Councils purpose and intended outcomes. The Corporate Plan monitoring process thus plays a vital role in the legal duty to ensure sound governance of the Council.

## 6. Other Implications

- 6.1. **Risk Management** - The Council maintains a Corporate Risk Register that highlights the key strategic risks that may prevent the Council from achieving its stated objectives. These risks and mitigating actions are reviewed periodically by the Audit & Standards Committee. Risks relating to the delivery of projects and programmes within the Corporate Plan are monitored and managed through internal governance arrangements using recognised project/programme management practices and methodologies. There is proportionate reporting and escalation of issues and risks to the Senior Management Team, and to relevant Cabinet Members where appropriate. Project/programme governance and reporting is designed to identify risk at the earliest opportunity and to put in place effective risk management strategies.

Regular monitoring and analysis of performance data in the Single Performance Framework is in place to detect emerging performance issues and then put in place



improvement plans. Metrics in the framework have targets which set benchmarks and standards for performance. Metrics which are behind target are reported by exception to relevant stakeholders ensuring rigour and focus on continuous improvement.

- 6.2. **Staffing issues** - The Corporate Plan is the keystone of the Council's strategic framework. As such it guides all of what we do and sets the direction and goals for all services and staff. It is a key resource which drives strategic and business planning at all levels of the organisation. The objectives and priorities of the Corporate Plan inform individual employee appraisals ensuring day-to-day operations are working towards the long-term vision and goals for the borough. We call this the 'golden thread' as it brings alignment and connects strategic planning with operational delivery. Having a robust 'golden thread' is an important requirement as an accredited Investor in People organisation. More specifically, page 45 of Appendix 1 sets out progress and performance against goals to achieve excellence in people management, to ensure good workforce wellbeing, compliance with policy and procedure, and organisation development goals are being delivered.
- 6.3. **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** - The Corporate Plan is the Council's medium-term plan to realise the vision of the Borough Manifesto. It sits at the heart of the organisation's strategic framework. This report seeks to give Cabinet an appraisal of delivery of that plan by bringing together recent performance information (up to end of quarter 2, 2022/23) from the metrics in the Single Performance Framework and latest positions on delivering key projects and programmes relevant to the sub-themes of the Corporate Plan.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed as part of the development of the Corporate Plan. That EIA was submitted as part of the documentation when it was agreed by Assembly in May 2020, and further updated and agreed in November 2020. The EIA identifies examples of priorities and objectives within the Corporate Plan which improve outcomes for residents with protected characteristics and ways in which the Council aims to tackle structural inequalities.

The Corporate Plan Performance Framework does not directly provide performance information in relation to equalities, but other strategic resources such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Social Progress Index, and Borough Data Explorer contain important and up-to-date data sets relating to the profile and characteristics of the local population.

- 6.4. **Safeguarding Adults and Children** - A sub-theme of the Corporate Plan focuses on safeguarding residents. The Safeguarding Adults Board receives in-depth performance reporting, including data held by safeguarding partners, each quarter. The next Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021/22 will be presented to Assembly in January 2023. The report includes key performance headlines showing LBBD's safeguarding procedures and risk management are robust. A similar performance framework is in place for the Safeguarding Children Partnership which receives quarterly performance reports to its Performance and Intelligence Sub-group. The most recent Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual report was presented to Assembly in March 2022.
- 6.5. **Health Issues** - The Corporate Plan is aligned to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019/2023. Several sub-themes across Prevention, Resilience and

Independence appraise progress to improving health and wellbeing outcomes and addressing health inequalities. Focus is on several priorities which include looking at services with an equity lens, ensuring every child has the best start in life during their early years, early diagnosis and intervention on common conditions (e.g. through NHS Health Checks and Healthy Lifestyle services) and building individual and community strength.

This year's Annual Director of Public Health Report was published on 08 November 2022. It is a call for action for a more integrated and collaborative approach with partners and residents to deliver impactful population health management and finding innovative ways to close health inequality gaps.

Responsibility and accountability for improving the health of the population is shared across several partners at a local and sub-regional level. Performance and progress on outcomes are therefore monitored through the Health and Wellbeing Board and emerging Place structures.

- 6.6. **Crime and Disorder Issues** - Crime, perceptions of crime, and community safety are key concerns for residents, and these are reflected in the priorities of the Corporate Plan which aims to stop domestic abuse, challenge hate crime, enforce against and deter enviro-crimes, and to keep young people safe from knife crime and serious youth violence.

Strategic planning and performance monitoring of crime and community safety is managed through a multi-agency partnership, in this case the Community Safety Partnership. The Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021/2023 was agreed in December 2021, it is underpinned by the most recent Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment (October 2022) which provides a framework through which intelligence and performance data and information is monitored.

- 6.7. **Property / Asset Issues** - There are no direct impacts or issues in relation to the Council's properties and assets. A sub-theme within the Corporate Plan is concerned with good management of LBB assets and the services / functions / responsibilities provided by My Place, with particular focus on the quality and stewardship of LBB housing stock. Cabinet will find an overview of performance relating to that sub-theme on page 5 of Appendix 1.

#### **Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

- [Corporate Plan 2020-22 \(Assembly, May 2020\)](#)
- [Reviewed Corporate Plan 2020-22 \(Cabinet, November 2020\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2020-22 - Quarter 1 and 2 2020/21 Performance Reporting \(Cabinet, January 2021\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2020-22 - Quarter 3 and 4 2020/21 Performance Reporting \(Cabinet, July 2021\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2020-22 - Quarter 1 and 2 2021/22 Performance Reporting \(Cabinet, January 2022\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2020-22 – Quarter 3 and 4 2021/22 Performance Reporting \(Cabinet, July 2022\)](#)

#### **List of appendices:**

- Appendix 1: Corporate Plan 2020/2022 Performance and Delivery Update

# Barking & Dagenham

## **Corporate Plan 2020/2022 Performance and Delivery Update**

01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022

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# Inclusive Growth

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## Building new homes

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Housing and homelessness within the Borough remain key issues and whilst we have made positive progress in relation to house building and reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation, there is still much more to be done. We need to improve the condition of the private rented sector as well as ensure that residents (including the most vulnerable) have a portfolio of good quality affordable housing options available to them.
- 292 homes were completed by Be First so far this year<sup>1</sup>, by end of Q4 it is forecast 486 homes will be completed; this would be 56 homes short of Be First's 2022/23 Business Plan target to complete 542 homes in the financial year.
- Due to economic downturn and increases in labour and materials, as well as supply issues, scheme viability across the Be First portfolio has been negatively impacted. In response, tenure mixes at Woodward Road, 12 Thames Road, and the Gascoigne Estate have been revised, and some delivery has slipped into 2023/24. More positively, tenure related to London living rent, market rent and shared ownership are all on track. However, Affordable Rent tenure is 40 homes behind target and London Affordable Rent is 16 homes behind target.
- More grant is being sought from the Greater London Authority to support viability of schemes and we are exploring how Community Infrastructure Levy can be used to fund infrastructure projects.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- To ensure there is a range of housing options available across tenure types we must take the necessary steps to gather empirical data and evidence about the housing needs of all residents (including vulnerable residents) to inform our house building programme as well as ensure that we are making the most of council owned assets for the benefit of residents.
- Recruit a new Strategic Head of Place and Environment to drive housing delivery programmes, regeneration projects and work in close partnership with Be First, Reside and My Place.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- The annual inflation rate in the UK rose to 11.1% in November, from 10.1% in October. This is the highest UK inflation has risen to in 40 years. This acute rise has directly affected affordability of rent in the private sector and the local house build programme. Construction and labour costs have gone up by as much as 15% to 30% which is making viability for new house building schemes difficult.

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<sup>1</sup> As at 14 December 2022.

## Improving the quality and management of homes

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Council's landlord compliance position has significantly improved since the self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing in February 2022. As at the end of October 2022 only the domestic electrical testing programme remained non-compliant.
- The electrical testing programme is underway with phase 1 already being successfully delivered and phase 2a currently on site. The remaining phase 2b and 3 schemes are currently being procured and are expected to be commissioned by end of January 2023. These consist of the testing of communal blocks not covered within phase 1 and 2b of the program and the internal domestic testing programme not covered within phase 1 and 2b of the programme respectively.
- At the end of October 2022, 16,858 homes lacked a valid electrical inspection certificate. The work to rectify this will be spread over a three-year programme and three to four specialist contractors. Work is expected to commence during Q4 2022.
- The block Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) inspections program is compliant. Savills completed their independent inspections at the end of November 2022. As expected with this activity, there are always remedial actions of varying degrees, and a planned program of execution is being developed to deliver these rectifications within the allocated timeframes. The actions that sit outside of the program (151) are currently being targeted with the aim to remedy these during Q4, 2022
- There are 38 properties without a valid gas certificate. This is due to tenants not allowing access. The Landlord Services team are taking corrective action and have applied for warrants to gain access, where appropriate. To further improve performance, this process is under review and will see changes to how contact is attempted to make appointments. As well as sending appointments by mail, all tenants will also receive a text message and email. It should also be noted that the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter in the process will be sent by recorded mail. Current performance stands at 97.75%
- Responsive repair performance remains low and has been the case since April 2022. Current satisfaction stands at 47% which is up from last month's figure of 38%.
- 131 properties were classed as void at the end of October 2022. The total rent loss this financial year equates to c£0.5m. The time taken to bring a property back to rent is on average greater than 100 days. However, the trend since July is an improving one. Last month saw the achievement of the best performance for the year, 85 days.
- 253 properties have been let between 01 April 2022 to 31 October. To ensure that residents start the tenancy well, they are expected to be visited by their Landlord Services Officer within six weeks of the start of the tenancy. To date 81% of the settling-in visits were completed within the timescale. The remaining 19% were seen within 8 weeks.
- There are currently 132 cases of disrepairs. The current process is not effective and places LBBD in danger of significant costs being paid to affected tenants. How we manage cases is under review with a greater emphasis in dealing with cases quickly once a notification is received.
- The decent homes position of 93% remains positive (target is 90%). It is expected that performance will further improve with the commencement of the planned and cyclical programme during Q4.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- The introduction of the DocuSign software will enable the virtual sign-up of new tenants. Once in place, this process will be rolled out to leases and commercial lettings
- A reduction in the overdue Fire Risk Assessment actions and the commencement of the planned Fire Risk Assessment programme.
- Commencement of the planned and cyclical programme will see LBBD upgrading even more homes to reach the decent homes standard.
- Completion of the void and disrepair process reviews will lead to improved performance in both activities.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- BDMS failing to deliver the expected promptness and quality of services across a range of services which could lead to the decrease in the satisfaction of the repairs service, an increase in complaints, rent loss and disrepair costs.

## Tackling Homelessness

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The total number of households in Temporary Accommodation was 1,321 at end of Q2 2022/23, down from 1,399 (-78) at the start of 2022/23. This is contrary to the trend across London which on average has seen an increase of 1.4% in households in Temporary Accommodation.
- The number of households in Private Sector Leased accommodation at the end of Q2 2022/23 was 890, down from 947 (-57) at the start of 2022/23. This has generated a net saving of £94,000 in the cost of accommodation
- Numbers of households approaching the Council threatened with homelessness remain much higher than 2021/22 with an average of 193 new approaches a month in Q2 2022/23 compared to 155 a month in Q2 of 21/22 (+38). This trend suggests that around 360 more households will approach this year.
- There have been issues recruiting an outreach worker for the Rough Sleeping Team, which is a risk for this area of work.
- The annual rough sleeper count in 2021 recorded 3 individuals as street homeless. The number was suppressed due to the 'everyone in' initiative and wider impacts of covid. The annual rough sleeping count for 2022 will be announced in February 2023.<sup>2</sup>

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Finalise the procurement of the Private Sector Leased contract for 2023/26.
- Recruit the remaining grant funded posts in the Rough Sleeper Team, most importantly the outreach worker.

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<sup>2</sup> The count result is embargoed until February 2023.



- Commence the pilot with Beam to use employment support and crowdfunding to exit residents from temporary accommodation who would be subject to the benefit cap if not in employment. Exiting residents from existing Private Sector Leased accommodation releases pressure on emergency accommodation.
- Working with Reside to ensure that households who are in Temporary Accommodation or facing homelessness are supported to access Reside where they meet the eligibility criteria. There were successes in Q2 with homeless residents obtaining Reside tenancies, providing a more affordable, high quality housing option.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- Additional pressures from increased approaches creating pressure on emergency accommodation provision. Emergency accommodation capacity may become an issue if numbers increase further or availability of affordable accommodation in the private sector reduces which will limit prevention opportunities. This is being mitigated by looking at all move-on and prevention options such as using OneView to match Temporary Accommodation households with supply and using Beam to increase options for households who are benefit capped and/or have reduced options.
- There is uncertainty around how many providers will bid during the re-tender of the Private Sector Leased contract due to inflationary increases in the private rented sector market on the costs proposed.
- Increasing cost-of-living issues will drive up numbers into homelessness further. This is being mitigated by the proactive contact work identifying those in debt through the Homes and Money Hub and financial stability work with these residents. There are also pressures being caused by evictions which are being mitigated by improved ethical collection and enforcement processes and the use of grants and awards to those in hardship.
- The Homes for Ukraine arrangements are coming to an end, causing additional pressures into homelessness services. These risks are being mitigated through on-going support to sponsors and access to the homeless prevention offer if relationships breakdown.

### **Providing homes for vulnerable residents**

#### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- Inclusive Growth will be carrying out a comprehensive, strategic review of all vulnerable housing needs across LBBD. This is to enable a more evidence-based commissioning approach to identify the current and future housing demands among vulnerable residents.
- The intelligence, evidence and data that is gathered will inform the future commissioning and investment, focus on specialist/sheltered/adapted housing and new build programmes and Section 106 requirements from third party developers in the Borough.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Identifying the current and future housing demand among key groups of vulnerable residents using intelligence/data to shape future commissioning and investment.
- Understand the projected trends (growth or decline) over the next 10, 15 and 20 years.
- Define all current pathways into vulnerable housing (via LBBD) and understanding of allocations / inconsistencies and anomalies in the delivery chain.

- The current stock levels/tenure we must accommodate against demand / stock conditions.
- Review of sheltered housing/ageing population and tenures that convert in extra care.
- Undertake an extensive asset review of potential builds, empty spaces, and the pipeline through to 2030.
- Understand the cost of building / converting / bring back to use and assessing all available build options (Including maintenance).
- Develop a finance plan including existing funds / gaps in funding. A complete financial picture (mapped against potential locations including land where we can invest to save) that depicts the current climate / picture in LBBB against demand and what we need to leverage to meet demand.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- The housing offer for older people is likely to propose that the Council owned 'Sheltered Plus' sites (Millicent Preston House, The George Crouch Centre and Ted Hennem House) provide the same service offer as other sheltered housing, which would mean a reduction in the hours staff are on-site. This risk will be mitigated through the review of resident's needs being undertaken now and comprehensive consultation with residents, families, and advocates.
- There is no dedicated project support to drive forward the vulnerable housing programme. Proposals are being developed to ensure this work is sufficiently resourced over the next 12 months.
- To achieve the priorities in the next six months, there will need to be a dedicated resource or project team to look across all sections of those who require vulnerable housing (young people, care leavers, mental illness, old age, learning disability, physical disability, or other special reason programme). This resource will enable the update of assessments and delve deeper to understand how LBBB better supports and provides the right housing to vulnerable residents.

## **Improving the quantity and quality of jobs in Barking and Dagenham**

#### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- In summer 2022, two new affordable workspaces created by the Council opened in Barking Town Centre. The Barking Enterprise Centre 360 provides hot-desking space while Roycraft House has been re-launched as Make It Barking, providing units for small businesses and charities. It is at 60% occupancy, most of them local. Make It Barking has also opened a bar/events space and recruited three local people to manage the building, events and community engagement programme.
- In June, the Make It Here: Film Barking and Dagenham programme held a flagship careers event for over 800 young people from diverse communities to understand the wide range of careers opportunities in film. The programme has also brokered marshalling jobs with visiting productions for 20 residents and a six-month job for a local graduate as a runner at the Wharf Studios. All these jobs were paid the London Living Wage. Working with the Business Forum, it enabled Richie's Café, a local business, to secure the contract to run a café at the Wharf Studios.

- In July 2022 we launched a pilot sustainability programme with the Barking Enterprise Centre which offers access to a free carbon reduction planning tool and workshops to help businesses to reduce costs by becoming more sustainable. We have commissioned reports by CAG Consulting and Sustainable X (funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Local Government Association respectively) to help us understand best practice in this area and opportunities to grow green jobs in the Borough.
- In August 2022 a Social Care Sector Coordinator was recruited to implement a Care Sector Action Plan to improve pay, progression and standards in the sector.
- In September 2022 a plan was submitted to the Greater London Authority to allocate the money from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This seeks to build the capacity of existing projects including the Barking Town Centre strategy, improvements to the Borough's parks and heritage institutions, support for the 'locality' support model, a campaign fund for the Young Mayor, and business support programmes including sector-specific support in care and food.
- In October 2022, consultation took place on the new Section 106 employment, skills and supplier policy which was developed with Be First. The policy seeks to strengthen our ability to secure and enforce commitments from major developers to buy locally and provide jobs and apprenticeships for residents in construction, and to secure financial compensation for shortfalls on targets. It is already being used as a basis for negotiations.
- In November 2022, the City of London submitted the bill to Parliament to move Billingsgate and Smithfield wholesale markets to Dagenham Dock, with plans to submit the bill for New Spitalfields next year. In the last six months, we commissioned Company Drinks and Sustain to lead research on the priorities for a Good Food Plan linked to the new markets. The research used citizen researchers to engage with hundreds of residents, the voluntary and community sector, and local food businesses, revealing a desire for improved access to healthy, sustainable and affordable food that is representative of the cultural diversity of the Borough.
- Be First also submitted a Levelling Up Fund bid to develop the Meanwhile Food Hall, which seeks to provide retail space for the wholesale market traders as well as local food entrepreneurs and improve the offer in Barking Town Centre.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Develop a Good Food Plan and Partnership to improve access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food in the Borough, taking forward the recommendations and priorities identified through the community-led research. The research will also inform a Cook, Grow, Eat programme we are delivering as part of the response to the cost-of-living crisis and a programme to improve existing food businesses. We will also aim to start to develop food industry partnerships for the planned World Food School.
- Pilot a business support package to help local care providers improve staff recruitment and retention and support them and LBBB to meet skills gaps through new recruitment pathways. Through this we will also explore how to embed workforce development expectations and digital innovation in commissioning frameworks to enable providers to pay more.
- Delivery of the new business support programmes in care and food will begin once the Government and the Greater London Authority have signed off our UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation plan. The funding will also support a programme of events, information and support to increase the number of local businesses applying for, and securing,

procurement contracts with the Council. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is also funding the Greater London Authority's roll out of its Wayfinder business signposting service to Barking and Dagenham.

- The film sector programme will continue to roll out new opportunities for residents, including a second careers event in February 2023 to raise awareness of the programme and opportunities with local schools, young people and their parents and a film-making project with Greatfields School for pupils at risk of exclusion. In addition, we will seek to identify the long-term business model for the programme and film service including scope for commercialisation of new training/studio space and ongoing funding from the MBS Group.
- Barking Riverside Innovation Centre, the specialist construction training centre launched in early 2022. It is now ready to start delivering the Construction Skills Certification Scheme training/cards and will also be accredited for this and other courses to support residents to access jobs in the construction and logistics sectors in the coming months.
- Explore funding opportunities to allow us to take some of the ideas forward from the reviews into supporting businesses to decarbonise and grow the number of green jobs in the Borough.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- The Government's (and so the Greater London Authority's) timeline and process to approve and allocate UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding is unclear, and we are still waiting on the outcome of the Levelling Up bids, both of which are critical to the delivery of the Meanwhile Food Hall in Barking Town Centre.
- Funding to take forward proposals to support small and medium enterprises to reduce carbon and grow the green economy may not materialise or be successful, limiting capacity in this area.

### **Supporting residents to access new opportunities in the Borough**

#### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- During the pandemic unemployment rose to the highest in the country – and the Borough remained in the top 10 highest until March 2022. Recent survey data suggests unemployment has fallen since then, meaning the Borough now has the 33rd highest unemployment rate of all local authorities in the country. However, the numbers of long term unemployed and economically inactive people remain high, and the forthcoming recession could see unemployment rise again.
- Having dropped during COVID-19, Job Shop registrations are now increasing rapidly. In the first six months of 2022/23, 658 people had registered with the Job Shop, up from 433 over the same period in 2021 and 299 in 2020. Of these, the service had (at the end of September) supported 447 (66%) into work and 28 (4%) into apprenticeships.
- Enrolments at the Adult College have also increased significantly – up 35% in 2021/22 when compared to 2020/21, driven mostly by community and family learning programmes. Some hybrid provision has been maintained, particularly for evening classes, but most courses are back to being delivered in person.
- Analysis suggests there has been an increase in the numbers of people registered with the Job Shops that face barriers to work, particularly health and childcare needs, as well as an

increase in the numbers who are in work seeking alternative employment. Nearly a third (31.5%) of those registering between April and September 2022 had been unemployed for over six months, with nearly a quarter (23%) unemployed for over a year. 11% of unemployed people say health seriously affects their ability, up from 7% last year.

- To improve the Council's ability to address these issues, an integrated Inclusive Economy, Employment and Skills Team was established in September 2022, bringing together the Council's Economic Development Team, Adult College and three Job Shops under a new strategic post in Inclusive Growth. As part of the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis, there has also been a temporary increase in resources to improve access and awareness of employment support and better respond to candidates' needs.
- We have been working to strengthen specialist support for people with more complex barriers to work. Between March and August 2022 research was conducted with the Learning and Work Institute, frontline staff and service users to identify how to improve employment outcomes among Care and Support service users. The recommendations informed a successful Department for Work and Pensions funding bid for a new two-year Supported Employment programme for people with learning disabilities.
- The Local London Work and Health Programme (funded by the European Social Fund) continues until the end of 2023. This is enabling support to a wider range of residents into employment. Funding for the next three-years has been secured from the Construction Industry Training Board to support unemployed people into construction and three-years funding has been secured from the Government's national Multiply scheme to enable the Adult College to embed numeracy in vocational courses and support residents with money management and budgeting skills in light of the cost-of-living crisis.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- New construction and numeracy programmes will be rolled out, along with work with the Vocational Support Service and Care and Support to implement the Supported Employment programme for people with learning disabilities. We will also work with Community Solutions on a two-year pilot with the social enterprise Beam to provide integrated support to move 50 households in Temporary Accommodation into sustainable employment and housing solutions.
- As part of the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis, the Job Shops and Adult College will temporarily increase the number of outreach posts to ensure harder-to-reach groups and those struggling with the cost-of-living are aware of, and able to access, employment support. Digital skills and training will be extended to help residents into jobs in the green economy. Also, innovative approaches to support employers to attract and retain more candidates by understanding and adapting jobs to meet the needs of people with flexible working needs (working in partnership with the social enterprise and flexible working experts Timewise) will be developed.
- An in-depth piece of research will be conducted to better understand the underlying factors behind unemployment and inactivity among target groups not currently engaging with the service. With this there will be evaluation of the new approaches to training, outreach and engagement being trialled, and a review of innovative and effective practice elsewhere.
- There is likely to be an Ofsted inspection of the Adult College in the next 6-12 months, making ongoing preparation a priority. The College was rated 'Good' when last rated in 2016 and it is expecting to achieve this again. It achieves high satisfaction scores and 95% retention on average.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- Capacity issues and recruitment timelines could impact delivery of some new programmes. Job brokers are working at capacity with caseloads of over 170 each, and difficulty recruiting tutors at the Adult College could affect delivery timescales for the Multiply programme and plans to expand other functional skills provision. The College is considering how to mitigate the impact of the national shortage of maths/numeracy specialists by training non-teaching staff and non/part qualified tutors, but these options come with risks to the quality of delivery.
- The reliance on external funding is an ongoing risk for the Job Shops, particularly given that the level and nature of funding due to replace European funding is still uncertain.
- Economic commentators are predicting that the UK economy is heading for a recession, and this has the potential to lead to a rise in unemployment. As occurred during COVID-19, these risks can lead to further increases in long term unemployment, inactivity and associated health issues, and make it harder for those with more complex needs to find work in a more competitive labour market.

### Safe and liveable neighbourhoods

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Cleaner, Greener Barking and Dagenham campaign: a recycling pilot is being prepared in two schools to educate children on the importance of recycling through a reward scheme, lesson plans and assemblies delivered by the Waste and Recycling Team and a video to celebrate the children's achievements.
- The new in-house street cleanliness monitoring system has been in place since April 2022 and is now showing further data signifying an overall decrease in levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting. The cumulative figure up to September 2022 for litter is 10.2%, however the average monthly figure over the last three months is down to 5.59%. This is due to the teams using data regularly to target and monitor performance.
- Current unreconciled data regarding 2022/23 recycling performance (up to September 2022) is showing an indicative cumulative performance of 33.94%. This is the highest performance LBBB has ever seen. This is partly due to the increase in materials accepted as part of the dry recycling service introduced in 2021, but also due to the introduction of separating out the recycling materials by our disposal partner from the delivered bulky waste.
- Recruitment into the 18 frontline posts within the Waste Collection Service has been undertaken which will serve to deliver resilience within the service and allow for greater development of staff and improved customer service.
- The Waste Collection Service has seen significant improved performance over the last six months with an average of 94% of roads being completed on the scheduled day.
- The in-cab waste management system for the Waste Collection Service has begun its implementation with the first phase expected to be completed towards the end of Q3. The new system will improve operational delivery as well as drive significant developments in customer service and customer self-service. It will also contribute to the development of the Trade Waste Service including commercial opportunities.

- The Barking Library of Things at Barking Learning Centre was launched in September 2022. This initiative allows residents to share and hire objects rather than purchasing from new, contributing to the circular economy by focusing on re-use.
- The new Community Safety Enforcement Team is in place and is undertaking high visibility patrols and joint work with the police dealing with street-based anti-social behaviour such as begging and street drinking.
- The new Anti-Social Behaviour Team has launched and is providing a more co-ordinated response to manage cases, support victims and hold perpetrators to account.
- Nine Controlled Parking Zones are being consulted on. Decisions to implement these schemes will be made in Q3 2022.
- There has been a focus on women's safety including preparation for the launch of Safe Havens across the Borough, joint work with the police to identify and patrol areas that women have said they feel unsafe, assessing environmental improvements such as CCTV and lighting, and the development of a communications campaign that launched in December.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- The Street Cleansing Service will be rolling out its new one-pass operating model that reduces repeat visits to a site as one vehicle is cleansing, emptying litter bins and clearing fly tips as 'one pass'. The pilot area that this has been undertaken in has seen a decrease in reported fly tips as efficiency around clearance has improved reducing the need for residents to report themselves.
- The Cleaner Communities Strategy will continue to progress which is about creating a multi-faceted and multi-agency approach to delivering a cleaner community and creating a positive space to live, work and play.
- Work will continue with the implementation of the in-cab waste management system.
- Dependent on the outcome of the Resource Waste Strategy consultations, progress will begin on understanding the impact of any legislative change on the structure of waste collection within the Borough.
- Continue the focus on tackling anti-social behaviour ensuring that good partnership working is in place and that there is an evidenced-based approach to problem solving.
- Continue to rollout the Controlled Parking Zone programme, engaging with Ward Members to make decisions on the nine zones that have recently been consulted upon.
- Rollout Safe Havens across the Borough and deliver the women's safety communications campaign.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- Delays around the outcome of the Resource Waste Strategy consultations, as well as the detail within the outcome in terms of legislative decisions, could have significant impact on service design moving forwards.
- Recruitment into the motor technician resources within the workshop is a current challenge. There is a national shortage for this skill set and the impact of this is being felt within LBBD as two posts remain vacant despite having advertised on five occasions. Work is being undertaken with HR and an action plan being undertaken to address this.

However, there is a risk that the roles continue to be unfilled putting significant pressure on the workshop, and therefore pressure on ensuring the Council's fleet is operational and fit-for-purpose.

- Delays to the Controlled Parking Zone programme mean there is now a challenging timetable to work through the issues raised during consultation and deliver the remaining schemes, particularly as there are requests for existing schemes to be reviewed too.
- Recruitment within Enforcement is a challenge. The service has been carrying vacancies and is working under capacity in certain teams. A workforce development plan is in place to address this.

## Investing in physical and social infrastructure

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- We continue to manage the collection, receipt and monitoring of developer contributions, to ensure that the Council is receiving the money that should be paid to it. New technology has been installed in Be First to go back through historic legal agreements to chase unpaid monies, and this needs to conform with the Council's finance systems to ensure that it is monitored once received.
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities launched round two of the Levelling Up Fund in February. Two bids were submitted (one allowed per Parliamentary Constituency) by the revised 2 August 2022 deadline. One was 'Nourishing the transformation of Barking Town Centre' which consists of a Food Hub in the former Peacocks unit, improvements to the station and area in front of the station, a 'Box Park' style facility for food and drink and maker space units in the Roycraft House car park, and various infrastructure projects improving connections to the Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclists. The second bid was focussed on Dagenham Heathway with improvements for the public realm and helping facilitate the strategic development of the site.
- To date, there has been no confirmation of when (or indeed if) the Government will announce successful Levelling Up Fund bidders. Press reports have suggested 525 bids have been submitted so it will be highly competitive.
- The Council, Barking Riverside Ltd and NHS continue to work on the delivery of a Health and Leisure Hub at Barking Riverside. The centre will bring together primary health services and community spaces, with a leisure centre and pool together under one roof. There had been delays in the appointment of the main contractor, but design work will commence in the New Year. The centre is expected to be open in 2025.
- A Government funding infrastructure project at Dagenham East has facilitated alternative access to the Datacentre enabling the roadway in the centre of the Film Studio site to form part of the secure site. Substantial power supply work is underway to provide the power supplies needed for the studios.
- Following the submission of the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate in December 2021, preliminary hearing sessions were held in July 2022. These hearing sessions focused on the key matters, issues and questions raised by the Planning Inspectorate, primarily their concerns regarding procedural and legal soundness of the Plan. Through these hearing sessions the Planning Inspectorate was persuaded that the plan is legally compliant and procedurally sound. The plan will continue towards examination. In-public hearing sessions are expected to be held towards the end of 2023. Work continues key



outstanding issues, primarily regarding the Green Belt and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Further in-public hearing sessions are expected to be held toward the end of 2023. Regular monthly updates mapping the route to these hearing sessions will be published on the Local Plan website.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- The new Infrastructure Delivery Board will begin to meet regularly, to discuss what physical infrastructure is needed to support the growth in the Borough. This will align with the timing of when developments will come to occupation and completion, and what money / funding is available. Spending developer contributions like Section 106 and Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy will form a major part of this work. Specialist staff will be brought in to monitor this process.

**Key risks in the next six months:**

- Developer contributions depend on development taking place. If growth slows down, then less money is received from Section 106 and Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy.

## **Shaping aspirational places**

**Key performance and delivery messages:**

- Be First has commenced work on delivery plans for each of the Transformation Areas/Aspiration Zones set out in the Local Plan. There is already a clear plan in place for Barking Town Centre and Dagenham East and others will follow.
- Work has commenced at Barking Station to both improve its function and its appearance as the key gateway into the Borough.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- Complete delivery plans for Transformation Areas/Aspiration zones.
- Completion of the Barking Heritage project with completion of public realm works including bronze model of Barking Abbey, further mosaics and final event and evaluation report.
- Completion of existing phase of Barking Station improvements including a second row of ticket barriers.
- Commence delivery of Levelling Up fund projects, if funding is secured, taking the forward the Food Hub project with City of London.
- Completion of Industria showing a new model of aspirational workspace and transforming a dated, unattractive industrial site.

**Key risks in the next six months:**

- Funding is not secured from Levelling Up Fund.

## A decarbonised, local energy system

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The impact of inflation and the rising cost of borrowing stalled existing retrofit and renewable schemes and prevented others from beginning, particularly the retrofit of the corporate estate. However, a programme which has been reduced in size and the funding for phase 1 works has been agreed, beginning in 2023.
- Further connections to the low-carbon district heat network have stalled due to the slow-down in construction pipeline for new builds as well as lengthy discussions regarding the terms and conditions of connection and supply agreements relating to completed developments, such as the Gascoigne Estate and the Town Hall.
- Pressures on resourcing has meant discussions with UK Power Networks regarding a local area energy plan have not materialised.
- Progress has been made on determining the infrastructure and capacity needs of the Council's three depots to support an ongoing transition of fleet to electric vehicles. The Energy Saving Trust's Fleet Management Team are providing ongoing support.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Contracts are to be exchanged between LBBD and its corporate retrofit partner, Ameresco in December 2022 with energy efficiency measures and installs being deployed in some of the Council's largest buildings from January 2023 onwards.
- Continued support to B&D Energy in relation to firming up its decarbonisation plan and work with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy on its London study which is testing whether LBBD is a good case study in 'district heat network zoning' as the Government seeks to roll-out lowest cost, lowest carbon heat zones for consumers.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- Prices are being locked into the corporate retrofit contracts so inflationary pressures do not push budgets up any further, but further planned phases may stall due to cost.
- Potential decarbonisation options for the network prove undeliverable in the short-term due to difficulty finding adequate local renewable sources.

## Energy efficient homes and buildings

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- ECO3 funding for the Cosy Homes scheme ended in July 2022 and a new ECO4 programme for energy efficiency measures began in August 2022. Following a procurement exercise the Council re-appointed EON as its delivery partner for the next iteration of the scheme which lasts until 2026.
- Green Homes Grant 3 installs continue to be rolled out but take-up among vulnerable owner-occupiers remains low, despite the high costs of energy.

### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Deep retrofit pilot installs are expected in January 2023 with orders placed with the offsite manufacturers.
- Wrap-up of Green Homes Grant 3 by end of March 2023 and ramp-up in ECO4 and ECO+ installs supporting vulnerable households with making their homes warmer and offsetting higher energy bills.
- Conclusion of the pilot phase for deep retrofit pilot on the Becontree Estate.
- Development of a stock decarbonisation plan, which has stalled, begins in December.

### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- Take up of free and grant-aided retrofit schemes is not met. There has been modest interest from qualifying households in Green Homes Grant scheme opportunities, although the Council has just sent out mailshots to 8,000 homes considered to be potentially eligible.
- Tenants involved in the deep retrofit pilots choose not to progress or remediation issues relating to the selected properties mean substitute dwellings cannot be found or surveyed in time to maximise grant take-up by the June 2023 completion date.

## **A green local environment**

### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- The Chase Nature Reserve wetlands improvement scheme and Goresbrook Living Landscape projects continue at pace and should be completed in early 2023.
- Good Parks for London 2022 confirmed that LBBD remained in the top 10 for quality parks in the capital, although it fell slightly from fifth place to seventh.
- A growth bid of £50,000 a year was approved to tackle lake and pond maintenance issues following on from repeated issues of fly-tipping, algal blooms and invasive species. The new funding allows the Council to take measures to improve water quality.
- The Council received £85,000 to improve the resident offer in Old Dagenham Park and upgrade facilities and landscaping.
- The Tree Planting Action Plan has yet to be completed and is awaiting input on the desired locations for planting trees on streets and highways.
- The first 28 sites are agreed for the deployment of 116 new electric vehicle charging sockets. Office for Zero Emission Vehicle funding is now being applied for.

### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Complete the Tree Planting Action Plan and aim to refresh the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.
- Work with Barking Riverside Ltd and its new stakeholder group to progress the action plan to enhance the Ripple Nature Reserve site.
- Continue to maximise grant opportunities to invest in green assets.

- Tender for a consultant to draw up guidance for developer contributions towards Biodiversity Net Gain quotas
- Develop the next stage of the Old Dagenham Park improvement scheme and consult with the public.

#### Key risks in the next six months:

- Successful recruitment to a green spaces and nature recovery post which is due in November.
- Insufficient capacity to deliver grant funded projects on time
- Public expectations of what can be delivered at the Ripple Nature Reserve exceed what there is funding for.

## Money and Debt

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- BD Money, the Credit Union partnership, was launched formally in October 2022, following the soft launch in September. As of November 2022, there are 308 members, including 35 council officers, and 36 affordable loans have been disbursed (totalling approximately £65,000).
- The BD Money web platform has supported a growing number of residents with money advice and support. It provides an essential focal point and universal source of financial guidance and self-help tools for households struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. The website enables residents to directly access financial support. It is also a resource for council staff and public and voluntary sector partners to use to support residents and will support the Cost of Living Alliance work. Between April to September 2022 there were almost 10,000 page views. Following the launch of the Credit Union Offer, this has grown to over 22,000 views (as of November 2022).
- Council Tax collection in 2021/22 increased to 93.64% (from 93.18% in 2020/21). The target for 2022/23 is 95.7% and as at end of September 2022, the collection rate stands at 54.05%, 0.5% points down on the same period last year (55.45%). Prior to the impact of COVID-19, collection rates ranged from 95.5% to 95.8% (2016/17-2019/20).
- Business Rates collection for 2021/22 increased to 94.82% (from 86.9% in 2020/21). The target for 2022/23 is 98% and, as at end of September 2022, the collection rate stands at 57.5%, 5.66% points up on the same period last year (51.84%). Prior to the impact of COVID-19, collection rates ranged from 97.95% to 98.3% (2016/17-2019/20).
- Rent collection for 2021/22 dropped to 92.16% (from 92.6% in 2020/21). The target for 2022/23 is 95% and, as at end of September 2022, the collection rate stands at 45.77%, 0.47% points down on the same period last year (46.24%). Prior to the impact of COVID-19, collection rates ranged from 96.36% to 97.01% (2016/17-2019/20).
- Income maximisation generated by the Home and Money Hub for 2021/22 was £1.759m, an increase of 69% on 2020/21. So far in 2022/23, £626,934 has been generated, less than £10,000 below the same point last year (£636,652). The target for 2022/23 is £1.1m.
- 160 Discretionary Housing Payment awards have been made in 2022/23 so far, with 28.27% (£290,550) of available funds allocated. This is below the same period last year where 269 awards had been made with 48.2% (£515,830) of funds allocated. This

reduced spend is due to the Council ensuring other available funding streams<sup>3</sup> are fully utilised to support residents with bills and the cost-of-living. Discretionary Housing Payment awards will be stepped up in the second half of the year with the full allocation to be spent.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- Continued growth of the Credit Union Offer, including the rollout of the payroll deductions scheme for staff to support workplace savings. Further resident and partner engagement will raise the profile of the partnership within the Borough.
- Continued evolution of BD Money to support the cost-of-living response and provide a tool for partner and community organisations to use to support residents with money issues.
- Currently, £123 is added to Council Tax accounts where a summons is issued for non-payment. From 2023/24 this will change to £63 with an additional £60 only added if court action occurs. This will allow taxpayers up to three weeks to make payment or contact for support before the hearing takes place.
- As of April 2022 reminder letters are now being issued at the end of the month, rather than shortly after a missed instalment. This allows more time for the payer of Council Tax to make payment or contact for support. This is preventing unnecessary court action and reducing the cost burden on taxpayers.

**Key risks in the next six months:**

- The cost-of-living crisis is placing additional demands on low-income households with the expected impact being additional pressure on in-year collection and available discretionary support.
- The continued natural migration to Universal Credit and planned full migration from 2024 will create additional support needs and increase the risk for rent and Council Tax collection.
- A key element of the Credit Union programme is encouraging increased savings for residents and employees in the Borough. This builds resilience and lessens the probability of them needing to borrow in the future. The cost-of-living crisis is making it more difficult for these savings habits to be built which can threaten financial resilience building.

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<sup>3</sup> Household Support Grant Scheme, Energy Rebate Scheme, Discretionary Energy Rebate Awards.

# Participation and Engagement

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## Building capacity in and with the social sector

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Launched a Cost-of-Living Alliance, working together with community, voluntary and faith organisations to ensure support is available when people need it most. This follows two cost-of-living summit events held in June and October. A cost-of-living locality model has been developed with community partners, through the BD\_Collective and training support from the Citizen Advice Bureau.
- 13 warm spaces are in operation, offering warmth, shelter and places of advice. A small grants scheme of up to £1k has been launched to provide further support to enable organisations providing spaces to keep their doors open.
- Over £1.38m has been secured by the social sector, enabled through strong partnership and joint working across the BD\_Collective networks. This is supporting a range of activities led by multiple consortia and organisations including around cost-of-living, health inequalities, community mental well-being.
- The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy participative funding process distributed £263,764 in April and November 2022. Over 170 residents trained and completed the Neighbourhood Fund, Dragons' Den style, participative funding process. 91 community projects have been funded by Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy to the value of £806,000, enabling residents to make decisions on funding in their neighbourhoods.
- Community groups have worked alongside the Council and other partners to support integration of over 100 Ukraine refugees into the Borough and continue to provide vital capacity across asylum and migration.
- Several community spaces are in the process of or have been successfully leased in testing a more collaborative and participative approach to community assets. These spaces include Heath Park, 200 Becontree, Woodward Library, and John Smith House.
- The BD Giving Community Steering Group, a panel of residents, launched the organisation's Investment Policy at Parliament in June for the Council initiated endowment. This document outlines an approach for how to invest the endowment fund and use any financial returns to achieve financial, social, and environmental impact for the Borough. The launch was attended by Labour MP for Dagenham and Rainham and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement, who also announced an additional £450,000 to continue to build the endowment.
- A faith cost-of-living event held in November in partnership with Faith Action with further engagement and action to follow. Al Madina Community Hub partnership launched in November.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Continue to work alongside BD\_Collective and the wider voluntary and community sector to support our residents through the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
- Review and further strengthen means of enhancing faith and inter-faith engagement.

- Continue to grow the Endowment Fund through BD Giving.
- Renewed focus on building awareness and involvement in BD Lottery.
- Support BD Giving in the establishment of a business development programme for the Borough, to allow business development grants to be deployed from the Community-led Endowment Fund. The focus of the grants will be food, film, care, and the green economy, in line with the Borough's key sectors.
- Work with Faith Action to develop a road map that coordinates further engagements with Faith Leaders and leads into the formation of a participatory grant making model. This will explore how we can respond to the cost-of-living crisis, using existing funding.

#### Key risks in the next six months:

- There are several interdependencies across the development of the community assets piece, including the approval of the Growth Bid with Inclusive Growth. How the next phases of work are delivered in partnership between internal stakeholders and the wider community is key to success and progress.
- The cost-of-living crisis may mean that BD Lottery ticket sales stagnate or fall as local people struggle to afford the additional cost.

### **Developing opportunities to meaningfully participate and facilitating democratic participation**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Estate Improvement Fund launched its pilot stage in August. £100,000 of funding was allocated to improve three estates across the Borough, enabling estate residents to make suggestions on how to use the spending and vote on the most feasible options. Over 100 project suggestions were received with 400 tenant votes and eight priority projects agreed. This marks a substantial strengthening of engagement with tenants, led in collaboration across the Participation and Engagement Team and Landlord Services.
- Since March, over 1,800 residents have discovered the project for the first time. The project has just concluded its largest-ever summer programme over 10 weeks creating over 400 free to access activities, sessions, and learning opportunities with residents. Year Five concluded with over 30,000 hours of participation registered: the highest ever recorded since the project began.
- *Every One Every Day* is a key partner in the Cost-of-Living Alliance. Through offering a huge variety of free to access inclusive opportunities, the project provides residents with new skills to save money, support their mental health, and gain employment.
- An updated *Every One Every Day* project agreement has been signed and sealed to allow for the next phase of funding to be released from the Council, alongside over £2m of external funding.
- The collaborative business programmes remain a crucial support system through the Cost-of-Living Crisis to increase resident employment skills and to develop new livelihoods.
- The cost-of-living residents' survey was launched on the Citizens' Alliance Network (CAN), receiving over 500 submissions from local people. An analysis of the results has been shared with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and has fed into the formation of the Locality Model of support and training offer for those providing support.

- Over 39 projects have been published on the Citizens' Alliance Network. Topics have included Black History Month, Council Tax support, National Hate Crime Awareness Week, and Library of Things.
- 44 newsletters were published over the last year, with almost 3,000 people signed up to the newsletter a 555 increase on previous year.
- Strong partnership working with BD\_Collective and other voluntary and community sector organisations to support the co-development of emerging strategies including Early Help, Best Chance and Ageing Well.
- The Heritage Service has now been amalgamated into Culture, and key areas of focus for the service include the initiation of the new Masterplans for Valence House Museum, Collections, Visitor's Centre and Archives and Eastbury Manor House (with surrounding area/assets such as medieval moat, lake and heritage gardens across both sites). Masterplans will focus on a community-engaged, resident-led approach to running of both major heritage site of the Borough with initiatives such as community-run café provisions, and increased programming for families, young people and elderly constituents being planned across all heritage provision.
- A new partnership relationship with the National Trust has been initiated to leverage in support for both Eastbury Manor House and broader heritage green spaces in the Borough.
- Major fundraising initiatives for heritage sites have been undertaken, in particular a funding application to the Museum Estate Development Fund for c.£950,000 has been submitted to Arts Council England for urgent improvements across the Valence House Museum site and neighbouring park area.
- Funding agreed and contracts signed to deliver £13m new sports pavilion, gym, community café and 3G artificial pitches at Parsloes Park as part of the Parklife scheme. Pitches have been completed and an old pavilion has been demolished.
- Chase Nature Reserve River, wetland and meadow restoration project at Eastbrookend Country Park is complete, with a new outdoor gym and children's play area.
- The Summer of Festivals Programme returned with a four-day event celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which was attended by over 20,000, including community led street parties, supported by the Council.
- In July the Summer of Festivals Weekender took place at Parsloes Park including the One Borough Festival hosted in partnership with Love Music Hate Racism. The Roundhouse Music Festival returned including the Pride and Joy Tent organised in partnership with Studio 3 Arts, which was a popular new area at the event. Over 16,000 visitors attended the event across the weekend with good take up from community organisations having a stalls or performing.
- The Steam and Cider Fair had to be cancelled due to the passing of the Queen necessitated the Accession Proclamation and Civic Service which was a fitting tribute to the late monarch.
- Work is taking place to develop an events programme for 2023 that will be deliverable within budget, to avoid a similar overspend in 2023/24.



## Priorities for the next six months:

- Re-focus and set a clear future role and vision for CAN that further increases awareness, membership and voice for residents
- Establishing networks and action groups. The main focuses of the groups will be parks and open spaces, greening and the environment, and the cost-of-living.
- Further strengthening organisational skills and guidance in 'good engagement' through Engagement Champions Network and an engagement toolkit.
- To increase integration between Every One Every Day and Universal Services, adopting collaborative processes for working with residents through place-based initiatives.
- To work with Participatory City to embed their work across the Borough, including diversification of equipment and materials, as part of agreeing new leases for the duration of the project.
- Proper accessibility at the Borough's heritage sites for the community through the development of a comprehensive plan to redesign of main access routes to Valence House Museum, archives and collections, including for neighbouring Valence Primary School and Valence Library; prioritisation will be given to safer and better access for school children, elderly visitors, and visitors with disabilities.
- New operational and business plans at both Eastbury Manor House and Valence House Museum focusing on resident participation, site resilience and building inclusion of both community partners and local residents.
- Ensure the new Parklife scheme develops to timetable and that local stakeholders in the Essex football leagues are kept informed on a regular basis about progress.
- Approve the 2023 events programme to enable early preparations and the ability to secure sponsorship.
- A review of the Events Team's fees and charges for hiring out parks needs to be undertaken to ensure the Team are recovering all costs. This is likely to include religious events in parks.
- Plan for the delivery of two large scale external events, Cogo and elrow in the summer 2023, to generate much needed income to the Council and help to secure Barking and Dagenham as an events destination.

## Key risks in the next six months:

- Addressing clarity over role and remit of Citizens Alliance Network.
- Timeline delivery on the leases for further embedding Every One Every Day in other spaces.
- An increase in COVID-19 cases over the winter could see more restrictions on face-to-face engagement.
- Funding shortfall at Valence House Museum for urgent repairs and meeting statutory requirements to the heritage site should the Museum Estate and Development Fund application to Arts Council England not be successful.
- A lack of agreement and sign off on the events programme for 2023 will prolong planning, which will drive up event infrastructure costs. Lack of clarity could also lead to overspend if a clear programme is not agreed and costed up in advance.

## Designing relational practices into the Council's activity

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Engagement Champion Network completed its first phase. Work over the last six months has focused on planning the Network's next phase, including a survey which was sent to Heads of Services to understand the organisation's needs for engagement practice and what they would like to see from the next phase of the programme.
- An online engagement toolkit has been developed, which will be shared on the staff intranet. The toolkit includes information on the engagement process, spectrum of participation, guidance on who to speak to and where to find other useful resources.
- A review of the Better Impact volunteering platform has taken place. 23 council service areas contributed to a Volunteering Capacity Survey discussing the use of volunteers in their areas. The staff volunteering policy was re-launched in August, including a manual for staff use. A volunteer handbook has also been co-produced with volunteers. Focus is on creating as many new volunteering opportunities as possible by working with different service areas and community partners to increase the overall positive impact of volunteering in the Borough.
- The New Town Culture initiative continues to tie directly into key political priorities in placing the resident experience at the heart of the work we do, particularly as the programme embodies collective strategic aims across Inclusive Growth, Social Care and Public Health. New Town Culture has over the past months redesigned its business plan to feed more directly into LBBD's new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy to build resilience and improve multi-agency support for those with adverse childhood experiences, as well as improve physical and mental wellbeing. New Town Culture also supports delivery of aspirations for the upcoming new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which embodies a vision of "working together to give the best chance in life to babies, children, young people and their families".
- As of December 2022, New Town Culture has engaged 600+ young people and continues to work with 140 foster care families.
- The Culture service continues to work on the development of cultural infrastructure on the ground for and with residents and local arts organisations through community-focused schemes which prioritise digital access, resilience and sustainability. A successful capital grant application for c. £240,000 from Arts Council England has allowed for the development of the Woodward Library site into a digital arts hub for the Becontree Estate, allowing for the building of a community-led legacy to the Becontree Forever centenary cultural programme.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Participation and engagement to be embedded in policy, strategy, decision making and place-shaping across the Council – it becomes the heart of how we do business.
- To publish the engagement hub on the staff intranet. This hub will act as an interactive toolkit that supports 'good engagement' shares good practice and builds capacity.
- To continue working with Landlord Services, looking at a potential new approach to tenant engagement, working with TPAS to do so. Linked to this will be the publishing of the Tenants and Leaseholders' Annual Report in January 2022.
- Increase staff volunteering further.

- Through New Town Culture develop ongoing relation practice based Continuing Professional Development programme for social care staff in LBBB Children's Care and support including access to a bespoke accredited MA course in partnership with Goldsmith's University, team training, group reflective supervision and development of bespoke tools.
- Develop new framework for rolling out of New Town Culture income generating model of CPD to offer to other Local Authorities.
- Support New Town Culture programming which allows for retention and recruitment of high calibre staff to LBBB Children's Care and Support.
- Initiate formal Steering Group to inform ongoing development of Woodward Library Digital Arts and Culture Hub, expanding scope of discussions to include input from local businesses, and identify key cultural partners imbedded directly on site; initiate development of 5-year work/business plan for the site to ensure resilience.

**Key risks in the next six months:**

- Staff capacity to undertake thorough and well-planned engagement projects, to learn, and contribute to the Engagement Champion Network.
- Ongoing senior management buy-in is important for the Engagement Champion Network to progress, building upon what has already happened, and to encourage staff at lower levels to participate in the programme.
- Funding shortfall for future New Town Culture programmes (2024 and beyond) should grant/fundraising initiatives over the next six months be unsuccessful.
- Possible delays to handover of Woodward Library site from Be First to Culture Team/cultural partners due to delay in construction and redevelopment of broader site.

## Prevention, Independence and Resilience

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### Every child gets the best start in life and all children can attend and achieve in inclusive, good quality early years settings and local schools

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Take up of early education places continues to rise. It is now above pre-pandemic levels for all ages. The take up of two-year-old places is at 90%, which is the highest ever, and the highest in London, with Barking and Dagenham ranking 17th in the country. Take up of places for three-and-four-year-olds has improved to 87%, which is above outer London averages.
- 97% of children are accessing a place in Early Years settings rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted. The Borough is in the top 10 local authorities for primary inspection performance<sup>4</sup>.
- Provisional Early Years Foundation Profile results were significantly down compared to 2019, which reflected the picture nationally. At Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths and working at Greater Depth has declined in all subjects<sup>5</sup>, again showing the impact on our youngest children. At Key Stage 1, Maths at Greater Depth remains above national. However, the gap to London has widened in all areas.
- The combined Key Stage 2 Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths (60%) has declined but at a slower rate than both London and national and is now 1.3% above national. Both Maths and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling remain areas of strength and which are above national at the Expected and Higher Standards. However, working at the Higher Standard for Reading, Writing and Maths fell at a faster rate and is now below national.
- Despite the significant challenges of COVID-19 for this cohort, there are increases in all published headline indicators at Key Stage 4. The provisional combined grades 9-5 in English and Maths at 50.4%, an increase of 7.8% on 2019 (42.6%), is Barking and Dagenham's best ever performance on this indicator. This is 0.6% above the national average (49.8%) for 2022.
- At Key Stage 5 overall, the results are very positive. For A levels, on all key performance measures, results have improved since 2019 and in many cases by a significant margin. While most measures remain below national, in most cases, the rate of improvement between 2019 to 2022 for Barking and Dagenham has been faster than national, except for the very highest grades, where the gap to national has widened by 1.9%. On the key indicator A\* - B, crucial for Higher Education destinations, the gap to national has reduced from 2019.
- The Arts Award Programme increased from 8 to 10 secondary schools taking part, with over 2,000 Year 7 students achieving certification from Trinity College London this Summer – the single largest cohort submitted in the country for this year.

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<sup>4</sup> Watchsted data

<sup>5</sup> Reading, Writing and Maths performance in 2019 was 64.2%. It has since dropped to 51.9% in 2022.

- The number of Electively Home Educated children in the Borough is 352. Whilst figures are stable, this represents a rise of 75% on pre-COVID-19 levels. 6.8% of the cohort are open to Social Care and 3.5% have an Education, Health and Care Plan. This is line with national data.
- Pressure on specialist Special Educational Needs and Disability places remains acute and demand outstrips capacity despite the increases in places at Riverside Bridge and in Additional Resourced Provision. The new Special Educational Needs school to be built by the Department for Education has been delayed further and is likely to start construction in early 2023. To alleviate some of the current pressure, the Department for Education approved the expansion of Riverside Bridge by 90 places, with 30 having opened in September 2022. The construction of Pathways Special School has a target completion date October of 2023. Once complete, the school will move to its permanent home from the City Farm school site.
- 58% of children in Barking and Dagenham who received a health and development review at age 2-2½ were at or above the expected level in all five areas of development. This is the second lowest of the 26 boroughs who publish data.
- 27.6% of children are not achieving a Good Level of Development by the end of reception meaning children are going into year 1 behind where they should be (which sets them on a likely trajectory to poorer GCSE grades and then lower employability and associated poorer health outcomes).

#### Priorities for the next six months

- Work with schools to prioritise speech, language and communication to steadily improve outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Further developing the Local Authority's attendance monitoring and support in line with recent government reforms around our duties around attendance.
- Working with schools, BDSIP<sup>6</sup> and partners to reduce fixed-term suspensions in schools, with a focus on the primary phase.
- Work continues to identify a new site for Mayesbrook Alternative Provision school to expand pupil intake and improve facilities.
- Formal set up of the Best Chance 0-25 partnership, and development of the Best Chance 0-25 partnership delivery plan and outcomes framework to guide delivery under the four themes (best start to life; thriving in inclusive schools and communities; being safe and secure; and being successful young adults), as part of the Place Based Partnership governance.
- Finalise the delivery plan for Start 4 Life and Family Hubs. Securing the first tranche of funding and commissioning Start 4 Life interventions from providers, including NHS and the voluntary sector, and mobilising ready for delivery post-April 2023.
- Open two family hubs in the North and East locality, achieving a level 2 delivery model and the following 'go further' requirements.

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<sup>6</sup> The Barking and Dagenham School improvement Partnership is a not-for-profit social enterprise providing school improvement and related services to schools and other education providers.

**Key risks in the next six months:**

- The demand for specialist provision and places for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability remains high, requiring an ongoing, determined, and consistent focus to meet need in a challenging financial climate.
- Requests for Education, Health and Care assessments doubled in 2021/22. The increasing numbers of children and young people with complex needs is placing pressure on the Council's Education, Health and Care Team, whose role is to administer the assessment process and identify appropriate placements, and on Education Psychologists, who contribute to the process. Despite recent increases in staffing, there remains a backlog of applications and reviews which is being addressed.
- A growing need for greater mental health support in schools, with increased support required in some areas, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. This is due to a rise in post-pandemic mental health issues in children and young people.
- Delivering the Start 4 Life and Family Hubs agendas will be a significant challenge both in terms of speed that the Department of Education want things mobilised and in terms of resource needed to make it work. There is a need for the whole system to move to this model to make it viable and sustainable. The Department of Education will protect funding for the programme but central government spending cuts across local authorities will reduce the capacity to implement change and result in insufficient infrastructure or resource to develop and deliver a sustainable service and model unless there is commitment internally.

## More young people are supported to achieve success in adulthood through higher, further education and access to employment

**Key performance and delivery messages:**

- The pandemic had a significant impact on work experience opportunities and the brokering of these placements by BDSIP was paused for over a year. From early 2022, the work experience offer restarted and now includes placing groups of pupils from seven secondary school pre-16 cohorts, two post-16 cohorts and placing a small number of pupils from special schools.
- The Council met and exceeded its commitment to deliver 73 work experience placements, hosting 99 placements from April to November 2022. As part of the end of year review and evaluation a more structured work experience arrangement is being scoped for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- The work experience offer to T Levels<sup>7</sup> has been extended and will be hosting three T Level work experience placements for students undertaking a T Level qualification in Management and Administration – Business Support. As part of the package of support for students each will be supported with a travel and subsistence allowance in line with the Council policy for employees.

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<sup>7</sup> T Levels are new 2-year courses which are taken after GCSEs and are broadly equivalent in size to 3 A Levels. T Levels offer students practical and knowledge-based learning at a school or college and on-the-job experience through an industry placement of at least 315 hours – approximately 45 days.

- A renewed post-16 partnership has been established which comprises representatives from schools, Barking and Dagenham College, the Council and BDSIP.
- The Colin Pond Trust awarded 62 scholarships students in November 2022.
- A new Key Stage 4/5 Transition Worker has been appointed to support outcomes in the Virtual School.
- The proportion of Year 12s and 13s in Barking and Dagenham who were not in education, employment or training or whose post 16 destination was 'unknown' decreased significantly from 3.7% to 2.9% (the December-February average). This is the Borough's best ever position.
- For Care Leavers who are in education, employment or training, the Borough's performance at the end of September 2022 was 68%, better than the national average of 50%, the London average of 54%, and higher than the Borough's 2021/22 performance (62%).
- Care Leavers progressing to Higher Education has improved. Six students achieved GCSE level 4 and above in five subjects or more, enabling them to go on to study at the Advanced or National Diploma Level. Eight students progressed to university, achieving required A Level grades, which is a 100% increase from four young people who progressed to university in 2021.
- The number of young people progressing to Higher Education from Barking and Dagenham schools has risen by 8% and the number of young people progressing to Higher Education from schools and Barking and Dagenham College has risen from 1,044 in 2021 to 1,105 in 2022.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Increase engagement with the Post-16 Partnership with an initial focus on A Level teaching.
- A Young People's Employability Covenant is being developed to ensure local young people benefit from new education, training and employment opportunities which accompany major regeneration and economic development.
- Put in place better support so that more young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability move into employment before the age of 25.
- Support the development and opening of the Barking & Dagenham Further Education Food College, with a dedicated officer to support strong local uptake.
- Deliver a Cultural, Creative and Digital Careers month in partnership with schools.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- Sourcing sufficient work experience placement opportunities is gradually improving, however there have been challenges with rebuilding the pool of work experience placements.
- Looking at how the Colin Pond Scholarships Awards can be sustained against reducing funds.
- While numbers progressing to Higher Education have risen, the proportion of Year 13s progressing to Higher Education from schools this year has declined from 83% in 2021 to 81% in 2022. We need to investigate and monitor this and act if necessary.

## More children and young people in care find permanent, safe and stable homes

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- A Permanence Task Force is now in place which oversees all permanence activity.
- The Looked After Children Management Panel continues to review the Looked After Children cohort aged 0-18, exploring all options for residential placement exit, fostering opportunities and improved scrutiny of decisions by management.
- A multi-disciplinary panel has reviewed residential placements relating to the quality, safety and outcomes as well as opportunities for step-down.
- The Specialist Intervention Service has greatly improved the edge of care offer through increased family contact, family support work, volunteer offer and play therapy. The service has seen a 74% increase in referrals since September 2021.
- The Pause Project has continued to support women to develop the skills to manage their lives more successfully; of the 32 Pause graduates, there has been zero live births.
- There has been an increase in foster care rates and a rise in the number of foster carers recruited over the last two years – from 141 in March 2020 to 154 in March 2022. Foster carers are providing homes for 176 Looked After Children (compared to 164 at the end of previous year).
- We are the lead and advisory partner in developing The London Accommodation Pathfinder which will improve the sufficiency of quality secure remand accommodation across London.
- Xantura has been commissioned to develop the One View<sup>8</sup> platform to quantify the cost of growth across the range of Looked After Children and Care Leaver services and make plans for both improvement and financial mitigation. We are also signed up partners to developing the pan-London dynamic sufficiency tool which will give benchmarking data and highlight cross-London pressures as areas for joint work.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Agree sign-off and publish the new Sufficiency Strategy for Children's Social Care which will inform the approach and workplan followed by commissioning until 2026.
- Deliver the Permanence Improvement Plan alongside the development and establishment of programme governance processes and groups to share roles, responsibilities, and risks.
- Further refine and develop the Sufficiency Insights Tool for Children's Social Care with Xantura.
- Look at collaborative commissioning models with other local authorities to achieve better value for money arrangements and alleviate strain on budgets through joint commissioning of high cost, low quantity placements.

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<sup>8</sup> OneView is a data platform which brings together data from five key service areas to provide a single view of the individual/household to help inform decision-making.



- Develop stronger market support and engagement to improve placement commissioning. The intention to commission and procure placements that offer bespoke and highly skilled practitioners that can meet the needs of our children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders or complex disabilities to prevent placement breakdown and instability.
- Increase the overall foster care provision and develop more specialist foster care for children with complex needs.
- Work more closely with health commissioning partners to develop integrated sufficiency planning and support; for example, placement support for children with complex medical needs, and fast-track Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services support for specialist Foster Carers.

#### Key risks in the next six months:

- Key risks are those faced by all local authorities in London and across the country. These include: rising numbers of children in care; higher demand for specialist provision; limited secure provision; difficulty recruiting and retaining foster carers; and, dynamics in the private market. These risks and pressures have been set out by Ofsted in new research on placement sufficiency for children in care and care leavers published in November 2022.
- Ofsted is set to introduce new legislation for semi-independent accommodation providers, which are currently unregulated. This new legislation is welcomed as it will likely improve the quality of semi-independent providers for those who provide accommodation for 16-18-year-olds. However, the financial burden this will place on providers during the cost-of-living crisis, and the time taken to register for inspection, could force a number of providers out of the market space as they chose to provide more high-cost disability provision or lower cost unregulated 18+ accommodation. Reduction of providers in the 16-18-year-old market will likely cause significant budgetary strain.

### **All care leavers can access a good, enhanced local offer that meets their health, education, housing, and employment needs**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Vulnerable Housing Programme has accommodated 145 Care Leavers in paid for accommodation.
- Making Housing a Home, an information leaflet on housing and accommodation options for Care Leavers or Homeless 16–17-year-olds, has been developed outlining the process, support offered and different accommodation types.
- A pilot a scheme was launched in October 2022 to assist Care Leavers to find suitable, long-term Private Rented accommodation by offering a Rent Guarantor Scheme.
- The Local Authority will now pay travel costs to attend work or university until the first pay cheque/student loan is available.
- Dedicated substance misuse support from Subwise, who work with young people until the age of 25 years old, is now co-located with the Care Leaver service at the Vibe.
- Consultations have been carried out with young people who were Looked After and have a range of actions and outcomes which are being developed and implemented.

- A full-time mental health practitioner has been recruited to sit within the Leaving Care Team.
- In partnership with Habitat for Humanity, approximately 16 beds of high specification shared flats have been developed in empty spaces above shops, providing new affordable accommodation for Care Leavers. Habitat for Humanity are to set up and establish a workshop for upcycling furniture with, and for, vulnerable young adults to go into future properties.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- The intention within the next 12 months is to establish a group of young inspectors comprised of Looked After Children and Care Leavers who will be supported and trained in undertaking mystery shopping visits to providers.
- By the end of April 2023, we will have established a portal on One Borough Voice to capture the Children in Care and Care Leaver views as to their placements. They will also be able to feedback anonymously and complete a simple online placement survey.
- We plan to commence health workshops to include sexual health including contraception, dental health, and emotional wellbeing.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- There is an on-going need to address identified gaps in Looked After Children, Children in Need, and mental health provision, while taking a holistic view on the prevention of escalation to statutory services regarding children and young people's mental health service provision.
- There is a gap in wellbeing and emotional support provision for Looked After Children and Care Leavers who do not meet the secondary mental health threshold once they turn 18.
- The cost-of-living crisis is likely to disproportionately impact Care Leavers and those with No Recourse to Public Funds.

### **Young people and adults at risk are safeguarded in the context of their families, peers, schools, and communities and safeguarded from exploitation**

#### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- Nearly 2,500 young people have been reached through the Young Londoners Fund 'From Roads to Communities' programme. 200 young people were reached in Q3 quarter alone.
- Three Youth Independent Advisory Group meetings have been held this year. The group sees young people engage with the Police on key topics.
- Following the completion of the School Health Survey by a record number of schools and students, 30 schools were provided with a small grant to action issues raised through the survey.
- An Expression of Interest has been submitted to the Youth Investment Fund for the extensive refurbishment of Padnall Hall in Marks Gate into a youth centre.
- 88 young people from eight secondary schools attended the third annual Young People's Safety Summit. Outcomes of the summit have been fed into the Community Safety

## Partnership, Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Contextual Safeguarding Steering Group.

- The latest phase of the Lost Hours campaign was launched in October 2022 with focus on primary school age and parents of younger secondary school children. The launch was followed by a four-week integrated advertising campaign which included outdoor advertising, paid digital advertising, and social media content. A toolkit of materials was also produced for secondary schools to push out to parents. There is an appetite to run further similar events as a series of roadshows with secondary schools.
- A Year 6/7 Transition group, including LBBD, schools, and BDSIP, worked together to focus on identifying vulnerable children who were due to transfer to secondary school.
- Over 6,000 children and young people completed the comprehensive School Health Survey which provides detailed and rich data around health priorities, including sexual health and attitudes towards violence in teenage relationships.
- The Young Londoner's Programme has returned and outcomes are at pre-pandemic levels and is in line with project targets. Project partners are BoxUp Crime, Spark2Life and Studio 3 Arts.
- The Violence Reduction Unit has extended funding for after-school activities in Mayesbrook Park, the Borough's Alternative Provision. The Council has also been selected to participate in the Violence Reduction Unit's inclusion programme.
- In support of young people's health and wellbeing, trauma informed training was offered to all schools.
- 100 parents engaged in the training on the risks of online safety. The training was delivered by LifeLine Projects.
- School inclusion work with partners to prevent exclusions from schools was shortlisted to be a finalist in the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2022 Public/Public Partnerships category.
- Barking and Dagenham was the highest scoring bidder to receive Home Office funding from the Young Women and Girls Fund. Funding will be used to recruit a dedicated worker who will provide gender specific support to young girls at risk of exploitation.
- Funding was awarded for a Turnaround programme which will fund two posts to work with those on the edge of custody through an approach to early intervention for children and their siblings.

### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Review the pilot called 'Inclusion Matters', which is a live risk register for vulnerable pupils, and rolling this out to all schools in the Summer term 2023.
- Further embed a Mental Health and Trauma approach with schools including the Inclusive and Nurturing Schools programme, funded by the Violence Reduction Unit, for 10 schools to aim to reduce youth violence and peer-on-peer sexual abuse through staff training.
- Develop a bid for the Youth Investment Fund to develop new youth centres focused on two sites in the Borough, Marks Gate and Thames View.
- Continue to work in partnership with secondary schools around the 'Lost Hours' campaign, running roadshows, promoting key campaign messages and the digital toolkit, and working

in partnership with social care staff so they can use the resources as a safeguarding tool as part of their work with parents and families.

- Review the Step Up, Stay Safe Strategy to align with Children's social care strategies and to review future funding plans.
- Continue to support all providers who are delivering the Greater London Authority's Young Londoners Funded project to meet their quarterly participation targets as they were pre-COVID-19.
- Deliver an inclusive and comprehensive Young People's Safety Summit to all schools to capture young people's views and priorities around safe and unsafe spaces, and for the outcomes to be acted upon by the Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- The new Early Help Target Operating Model will enable the Youth At Risk Matrix (YARM) workers to continue to deliver work at the highest level, supported by early intervention work to support adolescents.
- Continue to promote the Ben Kinsella Trust Exhibition and encourage schools and other professionals working with children and young people to book onto the workshops. The workshops aim to challenge attitudes to knife crime and show young people they are the architects of their lives and should make positive choices.
- Review delivery of the Local Violence and Vulnerability Action Plan that is focused on safeguarding and educating children and young people and positive diversion from violence.
- Develop a new three-year Community Safety Strategy based on the recently completed Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Host a multi-agency launch event for the new Exploitation Strategy and develop an action plan with multi-agency commitments which will inform the Adolescent and Extra-familial Harm Improvement Plan.
- Increasing the number of places available to secondary-aged pupils as part of the Holiday Activities and Food programme and developing a comprehensive programme for the 2023 Summer Holidays.

#### Key risks in the next six months:

- The Young Londoner's Fund programme ended in December 2022, with no further funding available. Risks have been identified around ongoing funding for youth crime prevention activity as this relies heavily on grants. This includes funding for the Ben Kinsella Trust Exhibition, YARM workers and other prevention, diversionary and targeted work.

### **Zero tolerance to domestic abuse drives local action that tackles underlying causes, challenges perpetrators, and empowers survivors**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- A needs analysis has been specified and work has started to identify need and ensure services are tailored to users with intelligently designed pathways.
- Early conversations have started to agree a joint assessment tool across the partnership. This will enable joined up processes and better joint commissioning to meet need.

- Three additional Independent Domestic Violence Advocates posts have been agreed through the Early Help Improvement Programme.
- The Violence Reduction Unit Local Violence and Vulnerability Action Plan sets out key priority areas for reducing serious violence, including a focus on improving women's safety and the delivery of the ReMove Abuse Perpetrator programme. Funding for this has been secured to sustain the programme until 31 March 2023.
- Building on the work of the Domestic Abuse Commission, from March to May 2022 an end-to-end review of domestic abuse systems was carried out. Following this, the Domestic Abuse Improvement Programme was agreed.
- We have established clear strategic oversight of domestic abuse including re-establishing key structures within the Community Safety Partnership (the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group).
- A Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership practice week on domestic abuse was delivered. As part of this, leadership reviewed frontline practice and how domestic abuse incidents are responded to across all services.
- Information, advice and guidance for staff has been reviewed and improved. Domestic abuse toolkits have been developed. Toolkits on the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference<sup>9</sup> (MARAC) and parental conflict are also being developed so staff can differentiate between the two.
- Intranet pages now include information for all council staff and focused practitioners on how to address domestic abuse, as well as full information on how to make referrals to appropriate interventions. These pages are being replicated on the multi-agency partnership website.
- Internet pages have also been updated to improve community understanding of domestic abuse, the services available and how to access them. There is also information for residents on how they can help family or friends affected by domestic abuse.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Produce a new Violence Against Women and Girls strategy.
- Effective mobilisation and embedding of the new domestic abuse services and related contract management and monitoring to ensure outputs and outcomes required are delivered.
- Commission additional interventions agreed by the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership, including a children and young people's therapeutic/advice service.
- Design new multi-disciplinary teams seeking to ensure a whole family approach to domestic abuse with the right service delivered at the right time.
- Develop and implement a domestic abuse and violence against women and girls communications and campaigns plan until March 2023.

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<sup>9</sup> A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

- Implement a new risk assessment tool across the multi-agency workforce, ensuring a shared language and shared understanding of risk.
- Deliver the MARAC Improvement Plan including the implementation of a predatory offender approach, the agreement of a new operating protocol, and the development of a data tool.
- Development of a housing standard of excellence in our responses to victims of domestic abuse and their families.
- Work with schools to link healthy relationships learning in schools to our services, and ensure effective links built – this includes revitalising the work of Operation Encompass<sup>10</sup>.
- Establish a clear governance route for domestic abuse including roles and responsibilities, as well as clarify where risk is held across all services.
- Secure funding to deliver the Safe Haven scheme that aims to provide safe spaces in community settings through local businesses to support residents (in particular women and girls) if they feel unsafe or vulnerable in the community.
- Workforce development to equip staff with the skills to support families impacted by domestic abuse. Safe and Together training is an example of the learning and development that will be provided.

#### Key risks in the next six months:

- Securing ongoing funding past March 2023 for the delivery of the ReMove Abuse Perpetrator Programme. The intervention element is being incorporated into different parts of the programme as far as is possible, but resourcing decisions will be required.
- The longer-term resourcing of the commissioned services and interventions forming the domestic abuse service offer also needs consideration across the Council and partners.
- There is a national shortage of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and it is possible that Refuge may struggle to recruit to the agreed posts in a timely way.

**All residents with a disability can access from birth, transition to, and in adulthood that is seamless, personalised and enables them to thrive and contribute to their communities<sup>11</sup>**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Becontree Children's Centre ran an extensive summer programme for families with disabled children including trips to Southend, Chessington, Arts and Crafts, and parenting support.

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<sup>10</sup> Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

<sup>11</sup> This is intrinsically linked to the "Every child gets the best start in life and all children can attend and achieve in inclusive, good quality early years settings and local schools" theme, and the developments in Early Help (as summarised above).

- The Baby and Us parenting programme at Heathway Resource Centre which supports maternal mental health had completed its first cohort of parents and has recruited parents to deliver the programme going forward.
- Identification and actioning of safeguarding concerns are proportional and robust, focusing on outcomes for service users. Cases are routinely dip sampled by the Principal Social Worker and Head of Service to ensure quality of intervention and assessment.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- Short Breaks tender will be completed, which will provide vital support services for families with disabled children. The Council has a statutory duty to provide short breaks within their area; this will include both 'crisis' breaks and breaks designed to ensure family life can be maintained to reduce family breakdown.
- Re-model the Portage Service which will mean that we are better able to forecast and meet the needs of children and families.
- Develop a joint strategy with Health, Education, and the voluntary sector to support young people who meet Care Act eligibility when they transition to adult services.
- Work on the Autistic Spectrum Disorders diagnostic and pre/post diagnostic pathways is developing. Co-designing the behaviour pathways with parents continues to be a joint priority in partnership with NELFT.
- Work alongside the Early Help Hubs to develop an integrated offer for families with children who have profound disability.
- Recruitment of an additional two social workers to bring the Life Planning Team to full capacity.

**Key risks in the next six months:**

- The pressure within the children's Life Planning Team shows no sign of abating. Caseloads are still above recommended safe caseload thresholds. Additional capacity has been recruited; however high staff turnover is hampering reduction and stability in case load numbers.
- As Care Quality Commission and Ofsted inspections restart post-COVID-19, several residential settings have been rated as 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate'. This necessitates reassessment of service users and potentially moving them to new settings, which is another factor putting pressure on caseloads.
- The number of children with profound Autistic Spectrum Disorders requiring residential placements due to behaviours that challenge remains a concern for commissioners.
- Following a business case, additional funding for the Autistic Spectrum Disorders diagnostic pathway has been given, but only in part, meaning there remains a capacity gap between demand and delivery.

## **Children, young people, and adults can better access social, emotional, and mental wellbeing support - including loneliness reduction - in their communities**

### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- After a successful recruitment campaign by North East London NHS Foundation Trust, the two Mental Health in Schools Teams are fully operational in two primary schools and two secondary schools. A phased roll out across all schools will start in January 2023.
- MIND have rolled out a Mental Health Peer Support Service across primary care which will create an 'expert by experience' team to support people with emerging or fluctuating mental health needs.
- Children and Young people are continuing to report emotional and mental wellbeing issues following the pandemic, and the need for support has increased significantly over the past two years; nationally 50% of young people report suffering from anxiety.
- The NHS Core20PLUS5 for children and young people lists emotional and mental health as key priorities for action to reduce inequalities. Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to support the reduction of health inequalities at both national and system level focusing on the most deprived 20% of the population (Core20) and specific inequalities populations.
- Adult Mental Health continues to see sustained pressure on the mental health and dementia pathways. Barking and Dagenham continues to have the highest number of women requiring inpatient care in North East London.
- There continues to be sustained pressure on the dementia pathway with significant chronicity of presentations due to delayed diagnosis. Families are also more inclined to ask for residential and nursing home placements, in part due to the vaccination programme and the perception that care homes are now safe for their loved ones.
- The continued work with North East London NHS Foundation Trust has ensured appropriate move on accommodation for people in hospital or supported living who are well enough to manage in the community with a package of care which maximises independence. This has significantly reduced the number of delayed discharges.

### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Ensure the Start 4 Life perinatal mental health offer is commissioned and implemented (including a training offer for the wider children and families workforce), and clear identification and referral pathways are in place across the system.
- Local authorities still await the final Liberty Protection Safeguarding legislation and time scales for implementation. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards operational team continues to roll out training across Care and Support in anticipation of the final guidance.
- North East London NHS Foundation Trust have continued to develop pathway mitigations for the increasing number of women that require inpatient care due to mental health crisis. This has included specialist intervention for women who are at risk of having their children taken away due to substance misuse or enduring mental ill health.
- Delivery of the Drugs and Alcohol Needs Assessment and Strategy, which will sit within the newly formed Combatting Drugs Partnership.



### Key risks in the next six months:

- Given the number of residents experiencing unemployment, zero-hour contracts, and who are experiencing financial struggle we would expect to see a rise in demand across all mental health services.
- At points during the pandemic demand for inpatient acute care rose by 36%, all of whom required assessment and packages of care on discharge. The core numbers in Mental Health services have risen and numbers are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023/24.
- As the dementia diagnostic pathways have now resumed, Adult Mental Health are expecting to see significant rise in the number of older adults with a formal diagnosis of dementia.
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities funding for the MIND programmes comes to an end in April 2023, commissioners are seeking external funding to continue the programmes.

**All vulnerable adults and older people are supported to access safe, timely, good quality, sustainable care that enables independence, choice and control integrated and accessed in their communities, and keeps them in their own homes or close to home for longer**

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Work with health partners, Barking, Havering and Redbridge colleagues, and local care providers to ensure the health and social care system responded effectively to the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic, particularly around hospital discharge, infection control, market resilience, vaccine take-up and cost-of-living.
- A Fair Cost of Care exercise to ascertain the cost of providing care in Barking and Dagenham sustainably has been carried out with the local care provider market. This was in preparation for the now delayed Adult Social Care Charging Reforms. The Council has submitted these rates to the Government, including a plan to reach these rates by the 2024/25 financial year.
- A new Adult Social Care Discharge Fund has been announced, with £760,000 given to Barking and Dagenham to free up hospital beds and support discharge into social care. The fund can be used flexibly to support discharge including workforce capacity, recruitment initiatives, homecare packages and residential care. The Discharge Fund is pooled within the Better Care Fund and will require agreement from the Integrated Care Board. Funding must be spent by 31 March 2023.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- The Care Quality Commission have a new responsibility to independently review and assess local authorities and Integrated Care Systems in delivering their duties. The focus will be on four key areas: working with people, providing support, ensuring safety and leadership. Each of the areas have a list of evidence, measures, outcomes, and best practice which will be used to determine the Council's ability to meet duties. Assurance inspections of local authorities will begin in April 2023 and therefore operational social care, Community Solutions and partners will be developing a self-assessment and undertaking inspection preparation over the next six months.

- The Council will continue to undertake preparation with partners for the Adult Social Care Charging Reforms (Cap on Care Costs), despite the Autumn Statement delaying the legislation for two years to October 2025. This delay is welcomed to work through the multitude of changes required to enact the legislation, although there are concerns regarding the funding that will be provided to support local authorities to prepare and adequately resource the system, plus workforce changes required.
- Award the tender for the provision of extra care services at Harp House, Darcy House, Fred Tibble Court and Colin Pond Court.

#### Key risk in the next six months:

- An inspection report published by the Care Quality Commission on 16 November rated Chaseview care home, run by HC-One, as inadequate. The care home is the largest in the Borough and currently has 89 residents, 61 of which are Barking and Dagenham residents. The home supports older people and people living with dementia. New council placements were suspended to the home in September this year following concerns that were echoed by the Care Quality Commission. Commissioners have been working closely with the home to follow an improvement plan to make significant changes to services.
- Meeting the Fair Cost of Care could cost the local authority up to £7m, including inflationary increases. The local authority has been given just over £600,000 so far to support these changes. There is a current lack of clarity on what funding will be given to the local authority, particularly given the pressures in the market and the delay in Charging Reform legislation. This will be an ongoing risk until a viable level of funding is provided by the Government.
- Recruitment and retention remain an issue across health and social care providers due to ongoing COVID-19 and Brexit issues, as well as the impact of inflation, the rise in living costs and the increase in National Living Wage. The situation is being closely monitored to ensure this does not affect placements and packages across the market and there is close dialogue with providers about workforce support.

### **Tackling inequality in all aspects of our service delivery and within our communities jointly with partners and Public Health**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Heading into Winter it is important to increase immunisation uptake for priority groups. As at 05 December 2022, 28% from all priority groups combined had received a seasonal flu vaccination compared to 30% regionally for North East London. For COVID-19 seasonal booster vaccination, uptake in Barking and Dagenham for all priority groups was 31%, behind the North East London average of 37%.
- Measles Mumps Rubella at age five and Polio vaccine for one- to nine-year-olds are areas for improvement. As at end of September, the uptake of MMR vaccine first dose was 83.7%, and for second dose 73.6%. Polio vaccination uptake was 30.5%, as at 05 December 2022. This is behind the North East London average which is 36.6%.
- The Place-based Partnership Board and Integrated Care Board sub-committee have been established. The Babies Children and Young Peoples and Adults Delivery Groups are established, as is the Executive Committee, chaired by LBBD's Chief Executive as the place-based lead for the Partnership.

- The refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment have been published.
- Engagement on priorities for Joint Local Health and Wellbeing strategy 2023/2028 has started.
- £1.1m funding secured from the North East London Integrated Care Board to implement a health inequalities programme.
- An unmet needs analysis was undertaken to understand the number of residents with manageable conditions which are undiagnosed and therefore not in treatment.
- Implementation of Office of Health Improvement and Disparities funded community delivered weight management services for children and families and adults; children and families pilot was completed in September; the adults pilot continues.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Publication of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and joint outcomes framework
- Finalisation of the Place-based Partnership governance structure and recruitment to leadership posts therein.
- Work across the Council to prepare for the new ways of working needed within the new Place-based Partnership for April 2023, using a health in all policies approach.
- Deliver the COVID-19 boosters, seasonal flu and childhood immunisations, in particular targeting high risk groups and maximising uptake.
- Deliver five service impact reviews (Healthy Lifestyles, Domestic Violence, Personalised care, Cost of Living support for Families and Employment) to identify how services can be most effective to reduce demand for high-cost services and improve health and wellbeing.
- Delivery of 11 workstreams of the Barking and Dagenham Health Inequalities Programme across the Place-based Partnership and undertake a process to co-produce a bid for 2023/24 funding from the NHS North East London Integrated Care Board.
- Complete Office for Health Improvement and Disparities funded community-led weight management service pilot for adults and undertake Phase 2 of the community services for children and families.
- Monitor the ongoing 'mini-Health Checks' pilot for 30- to 39-year-old adults of Black and South Asian heritage who are at greater risk of cardiovascular disease at an earlier age. These health checks are a valuable opportunity to promote other health messages to this cohort; for example, immunisations and vaccinations.
- Present the unmet needs analysis for manageable health conditions analysis to key partners (e.g. BHR Long Term Conditions Transformation Board, Adults Delivery Board, GP Federation) and work with co-produce an approach to address this need and work.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- Coronavirus remains a serious health risk.
- Low uptake of Measles Mumps Rubella and Polio vaccinations increases the risk of outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses in children.
- Capacity and capability of community and health sector partners to deliver health inequalities commitments given increasing demands.

## Well Run Organisation

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### Delivers value for money for the taxpayer

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The new iTrent and Advanced E5 systems for HR/Payroll and Finance/Procurement went live in April 2022 replacing the Oracle ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) System. The new systems will be more cost effective to manage, and they are adapted for local authorities to use. LBBD will be able to work with our ERP supplier to identify areas where we can make business processes more effective. As these systems are based in the cloud, they will continue to evolve and develop throughout the life of the contract with a focus on improving employee experience and digital processing. Examples of improvements already achieved include better employee and manager access to information about staff, budget forecasting, supporting entities and managing income.
- The Council's General Fund budget for 2022/23 is £183.060m – a net increase from the previous year's position of £9.4m. The current forecast outturn position including movements to and from reserves and the income position is £196.698m which would be an overspend of £13.637m (7.45%). This is a significant overspend in the period and is driven by significant cost pressures such as the Local Government pay award and the increasing costs of social care. In addition, there is the impact of a changing balance of costs between the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund.
- There is a savings target of £6.219m for 2022/23 including those brought forward from previous years. £3.600m of these savings are either fully achieved or expected to be achieved in year. £2.354m are at high risk of not being achieved at all with the remaining £0.265m being uncertain or only part achieved in year.
- At the end of Q2, 13% of the plan of risk and compliance audits were at least at draft report stage. This falls short of the target for the end of Q2 which is for 25% of audits to be at draft stage but the plan remains on track for 100% delivery by the yearend deadline. An exercise has been completed to risk assess the schools in the Borough to inform a risk-based schools' audit plan and work is now underway against this plan. Seven draft reports have been issued since the start of the year, six from the risk and compliance plan and one school plan. Six of these have progressed to the final report stage with all of those being awarded either reasonable or substantial assurance opinions.
- By the end of Q2 the Counter Fraud Team had accepted 37 corporate fraud and 136 housing cases for investigation and completed 128 cases. This has resulted in the recovery of 8 properties and savings of £190,000. (This compares to the last period which recovered four Housing Revenue Account properties and detected fraud in excess of £225,000.)
- There were 16 data breaches reported during Q2 which is a significant improvement over the same period last year (25 breaches). Most data breaches relate to human error, e.g. sending email to incorrect recipients. Mandatory cyber security and data protection training was completed by all staff during Q2.
- Completion of the 2019/20 external audit of the Council financial statements remains a priority. The 2021/22 subsidiary external audits are being completed in line with the Companies House deadline of 31 December 2022.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Complete the 2019/20 external audit of the Council financial statements. The external audits of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Council and Group financial statements and grant claims will begin during 2023/24.
- Complete the 2021/22 subsidiary external audits in line with the Companies House deadline of 31 December 2022.
- Deliver a balanced budget for 2023/24, a medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) and a Treasury Management Strategy to Cabinet and Assembly in February/March 2023.
- There is potential for risks and opportunities to materialise and for management action to be taken to reduce overspends. The overspend can be managed by use of the budget support reserve, however, the current level of overspend would deplete the reserve, increasing the risk in future years. The position will continue to be closely monitored and risks and opportunities recognised as soon as certain.
- The iTrent and Advanced E5 systems went live with a minimum viable product (MVP) and phase 2 of the project is being planned during Q3/Q4 to deliver further improvements and functionality to the core products. The focus for phase 2 is better management information, making business processes more effective, driving further automation where possible, and further rationalisation of the HR business applications to take advantage of the iTrent capabilities.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- The external trading environment for the Council and its commercial companies continues to be challenged by the impact of rising inflation, COVID-19 and Brexit, all of which are factors driving increased operational and construction costs. The impact of increasing cost inflation will also affect residents and is likely to lead to increased demand for public services.
- There are significant risks to funding that will become clearer when the Local Government Finance Settlement is published in late December. The Government's approach to fair funding, business rates and sustainable social care continue to be developed and the detailed proposals are yet to be announced. This forms a significant risk to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- The continued delays to external audits of the Council's Statement of Accounts 2019-20 persist causing additional work and a reputational risk to the Council with respect to assurance on its governance. An alternative audit firm has been contracted to audit grant claims to mitigate the risk to the Council financial statements audit.

## **Employs capable and values-driven staff, demonstrating excellent people management**

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The transition to the new ERP systems has meant that corporate reporting on sickness absence and equality, diversity and inclusion information has been impacted due to changes in how the new systems produce management information. These are now priority areas for the ERP project to get in place.

- The current phase of dispersed working has reviewed office accommodation and working arrangements enabling flexible plus staff to return to working in the Borough on average twice a week from December 2022. The temperature check in December 2022 aims to provide feedback from staff on new arrangements to continue to test the model.
- Good progress continues to be made against the current apprenticeship action plan, with pipeline apprenticeships at all levels. Most scale 5 and below job vacancies are now converted to apprentices. The new process has been successfully implemented and services continue to support the apprenticeship offer for new and existing staff at all levels.
- The Inclusive Employer Programme continues to be implemented and includes the launch of a new policy on Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation designed in conjunction with the staff networks. The policy includes a process for flagging concerns informally and confidentially. The programme is focussed on a range of workforce initiatives including inclusive leadership and inclusive recruitment.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has been reviewed and relaunched. Information has been provided to staff at staff roadshows on the range of wellbeing support that's in place. The EAP continues to help employees deal with personal problems that might negatively impact their work performance, health and wellbeing.
- Talent management and succession planning frameworks are in development, with a focus on succession planning first with pilots on expectations for the new year.
- Good progress has been made against the Mayor of London's Good Work Charter, with the outcome expected to be announced in December 2022.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- Investors in People (IIP) Platinum level review work will continue, including gathering evidence against the standard with a big focus on staff engagement, participation and reward/recognition. The IIP survey results from July 2022 have been used to assess progress, working closely with the IIP Assessor to gather evidence against the standard.
- The Apprenticeship Action Plan will be reviewed in April 2023 with new targets for apprenticeships for the council to meet.
- Roll out of self-sufficient manager tools and a review of IT systems which support these such as recruitment, Performance Feedback and Development reviews.
- Review the Inclusive Employer action plan and implement actions.
- Review and implement Performance, Feedback and Development reviews ready for April 2023 and onwards.
- Continue to promote the newly launched dispersed working training programme, which focuses on wellbeing and fostering a productive working environment. This is part of the wider Leadership and Management Programme.
- Review of staff benefits to support cost of living crisis and to ensure that current benefits are promoted and utilised.
- Implementation of talent and succession planning to support grow our own, and retention strategies.

## Key Risks over next six months

- Recruitment and retention challenges are more evident since Brexit and the pandemic. Succession planning and talent management will identify the key principles that determine a hard to fill role and critical roles.
- Working in the context of significant change and external pressures, such as the cost-of-living crisis presents challenges in terms of wellbeing, ill health, staff engagement, absence and business continuity. But good processes and management oversight are in place with continued development in this area.

## Enables democratic participation, works relationally and is transparent

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- All Cabinet Key Decisions and agendas were published in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The annual canvass in 2022 achieved the highest ever return at 95.3% (94% in 2021; 91.8% in 2020; 89.7% in 2019).
- The Safer Barking and Dagenham campaign Phase 2 focuses on women's safety using insights from the women's safety survey. The campaign strategy development sets out to use integrated borough-wide activities alongside more targeted activity in the hotspot areas identified by the women's safety survey. The campaign launches in December 2022 and links in with the 16 Days of Activism towards violence against women and the launch of the Safe Havens scheme. The campaign aims to improve perceptions of safety, through communicating the increased enforcement and police activity across the Borough and the support available to help women feel safer.
- Fostering campaign: a further burst of activity launched in December 2022 which follows the success of the 2021 campaign, which focused on giving a child a better Christmas through becoming a foster carer.
- The Cost-of-Living campaign launched in December 2022 working with our community, faith and voluntary sector partners as part of the Cost-of-Living Alliance to provide information to residents on the range of support available in the Borough. A cost of living themed booklet was sent to all homes in the Borough and is being made available in libraries and GP surgeries. A further booklet was distributed to homes before Christmas, emphasising cost of living messages. The campaign strategy and creative approach is currently being finalised and has been co-created with our Cost-of-Living Alliance community partners. The campaign will employ both targeted and borough-wide advertising channels and use a suite of personas based on real life case studies to tell the human story of some of the support available. A toolkit of materials to share with partners to push out to their community contacts and channels will also be produced.
- A recruitment campaign is due to launch in December 2022. It will form part of Children's Care and Support's workforce strategy to recruit more permanent social workers across various levels. The campaign consists of digital and trade press advertising, both targeted and broad brush to extend the reach of the campaign to a national audience of social care professionals. A designated website/webpage for social care recruitment will be built and will include information about current jobs and a sign-up function, so potential candidates can be contacted when jobs become available.

- The Council received £450,000 funding, in March 2022, from the Government's Levelling up department to deliver a COVID-19 Vaccine Champions programme to increase vaccine uptake amongst residents. £50,000 of funding was allocated to deliver behavioural change communications activity to support the programme via borough-wide and targeted advertising alongside community engagement activities and interventions via our community sector partners. A behavioural change specialist agency, Claremont Communications, were commissioned to deliver the campaign. Following extensive audience research and insight gathered via local community partners, a campaign was delivered in August and ran through to early September. Claremont's evaluation showed that 26.83% of the people they surveyed recognised the campaign.
- The Grime and Punishment video series has been re-launched following the pandemic, informing residents about all the work our Enforcement Teams do to make Barking and Dagenham a better place. The first episode gave a look back on a case involving an illegal puppy farm in Dagenham and the process through the criminal justice system. Six editions of the Grime and Punishment series will be going out each year.
- One Borough Newsletter sign-up continues to grow significantly following the implementation of a sign-up box which has been added to all pages of the Council's website, and when residents register for a My B&D Account. As of 23 November 2022, there are 21,184 newsletter subscribers – a 29.9% increase since April 2022. An automated sign-up option will also be added to the Green Garden Waste collection service sign up form which should continue to increase sign-ups in early 2023.
- Follower numbers on the Council's social media channels also continue to grow; as of 1 November 2022, there were 18,510 Twitter followers (up from 17,601 on 1 April 2022); 16,775 Facebook followers (up from 15,866 on 1 April 2022); 3,301 Instagram followers (up from 3,032 on 1 April 2022); and 9,608 LinkedIn followers (up from 8,909 on 1 April 2022).

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Implementation of Elections Act 2022 which, amongst other new requirements, introduces Voter ID for elections from May 2023. LBBDD does not have an election scheduled until 2024 so has offered to support other non-London local authorities at their elections, to gain first-hand experience of Voter ID processes and procedures.
- An independent review of the Council's social media accounts is currently being carried out to inform future direction. The aim is to increase engagement and use influencers to amplify council messages. A new strategy will be finalised at the end of 2022, with training for staff taking place in early 2023.
- A campaign plan is being developed and will determine funding for future campaigns. This plan should make allowance for continuation of already established campaigns: Lost Hours, Cleaner B&D, Safer B&D, Cost of Living, and align with new target areas the Council wants to focus on having reviewed progress against the Borough Manifesto targets at year 5 in our 20 year journey.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- The calling of a snap General Election between now and late 2023 would present risks due to the new Voter ID requirements, as Electoral Administrators continue to be very concerned at the lack of progress by the Government in establishing the infrastructure to



support Voter ID and the lack of a national publicity campaign highlighting what will be expected of voters in the future.

- The Boundary Commission for England rejected the comments submitted by LBBD's Local Returning Officer (the Acting Chief Executive) during the first stage of consultation on the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies, which were aimed at reflecting the Borough's new ward arrangements in the new Parliamentary constituencies. The Local Returning Officer has resubmitted a strengthened argument for the new Parliamentary constituencies to reflect the Borough's new ward arrangements during the final consultation on the Commission's revised proposals, the outcome of which will be known in June 2023.
- A lack of funding for campaigns will limit the effectiveness of campaign activity. Further funding for a number of established campaigns has not yet been identified.

## **Puts the customer at the heart of what it does**

### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- Contact centre performance has dropped from an average of 70% of calls answered to 66% year to date as of September 2022. Performance has been impacted staffing issues such as the change of ex-Elevate contracts to align to the Council's core hours from 40 to 35 hours. Staffing issues are being resolved with an assessment centre being established to close the staffing gap by January 2023. It should be noted that excluding Revenues and Benefits calls the contact centre is performing at 81% of calls answered.
- Rents and Council Tax lines have seen an increase in calls by roughly 10% from the previous six months. The demand in this area centres around more requests for payment arrangements to be set up. 27% of all Revenues and Benefits Calls are Council Tax payment related. Digital self-serve improvements continue to increase adoption for making payments online via My B&D.
- Average handling times have increased to 10 minutes and 11 seconds indicating more complexity in calls across Housing and Repairs and Revenues and Benefits.
- Despite some performance challenges, satisfaction with the Contact Centre is good. Overall satisfaction is at 87%, and at 91% for call handling satisfaction versus a target of 85%.
- Following the local elections which took place in May 2022 we have seen a return to normal for our members casework and the numbers which are being received. Within Q1 and Q2 there has been 2,134 pieces of casework submitted via our members. The percentage performance has dropped to 77%.
- Freedom of Information requests which have been completed within timescale of (20 working days) is now sitting at an average of 82% this remains under the stated Information Commissioners Office target of 95%. The Feedback Team have implemented strategies to improve the performance, and this is having a positive impact with September's performance at 95%.
- The Feedback Team are working with Information Governance and Customer Experience Teams to build an internal webpage. This will assist services in understanding how and when exemptions can be applied. We are asking services to highlight repeated request

types and if the information can be published which will enable the use of exemptions to be applied and lessen the time spent working on individual requests.

- The performance for upheld complaints has risen slightly to 39% from 32%. This continues to remain in line with the performance of other local authorities. A large portion of the upheld complaints (32%) relate to missed collections.
- We launched the new Barking and Dagenham website in August and resident feedback has been positive.
- The ChatBot, which automates simple interactions and acts as a virtual assistant has seen a total of 17,686 conversations +35% vs. the previous six months. 93% of ChatBot uses were rated as 'successful conversations' which is +7% on the last six months. The next phase in development is to integrate full processes so that residents can complete payments for services.
- The Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Group has continued to bridge the digital divide with a range of supporting services; access to data for residents who lack access via the National Databank, 50 digital champions (+5 from the last report) and device lending will go live in January, where we have 25 Chromebooks to use as part of this service.

#### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Integrate top 10 service journeys into the Chatbot, where residents can complete a full request without having to call us or go into one of our buildings.
- Website iteration to move away from the website being used as an information tool to an interactive digital product for residents to connect and complete most end-to-end transactions (this includes live webchat which is launching in December).
- Focus on offline user research to complement the Voice of the Customer Programme. This will focus on Community Hubs and other Universal locations.
- Implementation of live web chat will enable Customer Service Advisors to handle more than one interaction at a time and create a seamless handover from webchat to telephony to reduce call waiting times.
- Continued learning and sharing of insight from a resident's perspective which arise through complaints and Member Enquiries will be applied to drive continuous improvement across all council services.
- Focus on longer term customer access with an ambition to integrate the customer access model (in person and telephony, with a digital offer) to create a simple, single version of the truth in supporting residents.

#### **Key risks in the next six months:**

- Scaling up digital access will reduce human interaction.
- Lack of shared responsibility for channel shift and cultural resistance to change.
- Shared Service Model, staff morale across customer teams both contact centre and Universal may drop as we look to new ways to address service demand.
- Customers view the online experiences as one whole. However, the Council's online experience is made up of several moving parts owned by different directorates, services, and teams. This presents challenges when trying to build a better managed and

consistent user experience with a single intuitive design system. This is why the omni-channel digital strategy is important as well as ensuring the interfaces of customer facing platforms are as good as they can be and integrate well with other systems to give a feeling of a singular digital experience.

## **Equipped with the tools, information and capability to deliver its vision**

### **Key performance and delivery messages:**

- A follow-up Enterprise Resource Planning delivery phase was completed in October 2022. This has included several reporting enhancements, implementation of the budget monitoring tool and supporting staff through any initial issues immediately post going live.
- We are in the process of renewing our OneView platform with Xantura, the current provider. We need to ensure we maintain the functionality we have built as well create room in the contract for scaling up of the product to increasing numbers of staff.
- The systems supporting homes and asset management is a key focus, with several systems (including Capita Open Housing) being used to manage different parts of the operation. The current contract with Capita for the housing management system has a breakpoint in late 2023. Having reviewed the system with My Place through the summer, the contract will be extended in 2023 up to the end point in 2025.
- The Wide Area and Local Area Network service at LBBD sites were at the end of their support lives and contract periods. New network connectivity including wide area connectivity, Local Area Network and WiFi at all sites has now been implemented. This has delivered a higher performing, simpler and easier to support network for a lower cost to the Council.
- Cybersecurity capability and resilience continues to be reviewed to enable the Council to protect itself against ever evolving cyber risks that could affect the delivery of services. The focus is incident response and vulnerability management. New cyber security tools and processes have been added over the past few months. The threat level is continually reviewed to consider any additional capability or work required to maintain a robust security stance.

### **Priorities for the next six months:**

- Ensuring the next OneView contract is fit for purpose and enables the organisation to meet its ambition for the platform to support service delivery across significant parts of the frontline.
- Additional hybrid meeting room equipment is being installed in the town hall through December. Additional equipment for specialist settings will be trialled in the new year.
- The Council has secured grant funding from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to help with some cyber security remediation work. This work around testing of backups, disaster recovery testing and some work on our mover, joiner, leaver process will be carried out over the next six months
- IT are implementing the new infrastructure required to support the roll out of new laptops in 2023. Devices are expected to start rolling out with new security features and Windows 11 in Q1 2023/24.

- The current recruitment system is being reviewed with a view to contract renewal or system replacement before the contract end in April 2023.
- IT will commence recruitment of geospatial specialists to support the use of Geospatial Information System and other geospatial tools across the Borough in support of other council services.
- Improve cyber security tools to bring new response capabilities to the Council's services and reduce the risk of interruption to services.
- Work will continue with the services requirements for business systems which involves developing technology roadmaps for services. The roadmaps focus on business functionality and how to make best use of the internet, web services, business automation, and mobile working technologies. This work is to ensure IT applications fully support smarter service design and enable better services for residents to access their information or needing to request services.

**Key risks in the next six months:**

- Cyber security continues to be a major risk with attackers continually increasing the sophistication of their attacks. IT are working to improve resilience in this area including a growth bid for additional cyber security tools.

**CABINET****17 January 2023**

<b>Title:</b> Procurement of a Resilience Contract for Welfare Services	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> No
<b>Report Author:</b> Donna Radley, Head of Welfare	<b>Contact Details:</b> Tel: 0208 227 2408 E-mail: <a href="mailto:donna.radley@lbbd.gov.uk">donna.radley@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Stephen McGinnes, Director of Support & Collections	
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Director:</b> Fiona Taylor, Acting Chief Executive	
<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>There is significant demand for skilled Welfare Service staff across the country which means that the recruitment of permanent skilled officers has become increasingly difficult, with a premium now required for ad-hoc agency staff.</p> <p>The Welfare Service holds a resilience contract that provides support with staffing to maintain the statutory duties of processing benefits claims and welfare administration. It provides for a fully trained addition to the Council's permanent workforce, allowing the service the flexibility needed to match resource to service demand.</p> <p>The current contract is due to expire on 31 March 2023 and a new, direct award contract is proposed to allow for the uninterrupted continuation of the service and its duties. It is intended for the contract to be reprocured via a Direct Award from the YPO framework.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a resilience contract for the Welfare Service via a Direct Award to Consultancy+ (part of the Reed Group) via the YPO Framework 940 (Managing Consultancy &amp; Professional Services), in accordance with the strategy set out in the report;</li> <li>(ii) Authorise the Director of Support and Collections, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services and the Chief Legal Officer, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract(s) and all other necessary or ancillary agreements with the contractor, in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.</li> </ul>	

**Reason(s)**

To assist the Council to achieve its priority of a 'Well Run Organisation'.

**1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 As part of the transfer of Elevate Services back to the Council, there were several supply contracts that were held by Elevate. This included a resilience contract undertaken by Elevate East London, appointed following funding provision from LBBB to recruit additional resources to support the workloads associated to Welfare Reform.
- 1.2 The current contract allowed for the provision of up to 11,500 processing hours per annum (equal to 7 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff) and included the management of the resources.
- 1.3 By using an external contractor for resilience the service was able to gain flexibility to adjust to peaks in demand, whilst maintain value for money with the average cost per FTE calculated at £35,600 per annum versus ad hoc agency appointments at £69,000 per annum (2020/21 costs). It also allowed for one of the FTE to be a hybrid manager and processor and, as such, all HR related matters were undertaken by the incumbent supplier reducing the cost to the LA associated to staff management.
- 1.4 The current contract has been extended to 31 March 2023, at which point the Welfare service will be vulnerable in terms of delivery and additional cost pressures if reliant on ad-hoc agency appointments.
- 1.5 The current welfare demands and Government grant administration are such that these resources are required to allow for the service continuation and its statutory duties to be undertaken in a timely manner. With the planned migration of Universal Credit in 2024, this requirement is expected to be short term, with the longer-term expectation being a reducing workforce.

**2. Proposed Procurement Strategy****2.1 Outline specification of the works, goods or services being procured**

- 2.1.1 The appointment of a supplier to provide a remotely managed benefit assessment service.

**2.2 Estimated Contract Value, including the value of any uplift or extension period**

- 2.2.1 £350,000 per annum, which includes the costs to any intermediary third parties through the procurement process.
- 2.2.2 £700,000 total cost (1year plus 1 year)

### 2.3 Duration of the contract, including any options for extension

2.3.1 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025 – This would be an initial one-year term plus an option to extend a further year.

2.4 **Is the contract subject to (a) the (EU) Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or (b) Concession Contracts Regulations 2016? If Yes to (a) and contract is for services, are the services for social, health, education or other services subject to the Light Touch Regime?**

2.4.1 Yes

### 2.5 Recommended procurement procedure and reasons for the recommendation

2.5.1 YPO Framework 940 – Managing Consultancy & Professional Services Framework. This framework is a single supplier framework (provider is Consultancy +, Reed, part of the Reed group) and allows appointment of a single provider to deliver a managed service provision.

2.5.2 Benchmarking of the costs of procuring through alternative third party resilience contracts who are not on YPO has been undertaken with the outcome as below.

2.5.3 This exercise has highlighted that alternative suppliers are generally transactionally based which means they charge per transaction they complete rather than per hourly rate and overall hours of contract. The sample charge rates are:

Process	Min Transaction Fee	Max Transaction Fee
New Claim	£14.00	£19.00
Change	£7.50	£12.00
Universal Credit File	£7.50	£10.00
DHP	£10.00	£15.00
Reconsiderations	£8.75	£15.00

2.5.4 It is not possible to do an exact comparison of costs given the different charging models used by different frameworks however for comparison the cost of an officer of the YPO framework supplier is £37,495 for 1,643 annual hours which equates to £22.82 per hour, 47 weeks per year covering all existing work streams whereas an alternative supplier would cost £37,600 if you calculate the day rate against 47 weeks and 35 hours and is dependent on the alternative provider officer covering all work streams within that day rate which is not clear.

2.5.5 As such, the YPO framework continues to offer value for money against benchmark levels of other similar non framework suppliers, with the added benefit that they operate contractual terms and pricing which is consistent with our current operating model. Given the relatively short-term intention with this contract, moving to an alternative contract pricing model will not offer any additional value for money.

### 2.6 The contract delivery methodology and documentation to be adopted

2.6.1 This contract would be delivered under the relevant terms and conditions as specified by the YPO framework, with the cost met within the exiting Welfare Budget. The only additional contractual clauses that would be required are clauses

associated to the flexibility of resources in year two if Universal Credit managed Migration does proceed.

2.6.2 The processor would provide the services off site using LBBD equipment and infrastructure which is already being utilised by the existing provider.

2.6.3 The third parties eligible for this procurement will be companies that already have the infrastructure required to support the contract, set up and staffing requirement. The staff would be subject to the relevant Best Practise Security Standards for specific system access and this would be managed by the LA if the checks had not already been completed.

## 2.7 **Outcomes, savings and efficiencies expected as a consequence of awarding the proposed contract**

2.7.1 This procurement is for the purpose of gaining flexibility, quality of service and value for money. By using a third party the authority receives the same standards of work, performance and quality but at a reduced cost to that of ad hoc agency staff. The contract can also allow for one of the staff to be a hybrid manager and processor and as such all HR related matters were undertaken by the third party reducing the cost to the LA associated to staff management as well as a lengthy recruitment process.

2.7.2 The continuation of Government Grants such as the Household Support Fund and Energy Rebate Scheme have driven competition within the London authorities. Most agencies now have waiting lists of London authorities awaiting recruitment of temporary staff, this demand has seen the price of agency staff increase from £24.50 an hour to £32 per hour.

2.7.3 With Universal Credit Managed Migration proposed to start in 2024 the service will be reviewing its resources due to a potentially reduced administrative burden. By releasing the resources within the third party contract the Authority can recognise an in-year cost reduction with no associated redundancy costs.

2.7.4 The third-party processor is an offsite processor incurring no facility costs and comes with pre skilled officers that are required to undertake the role. Most third parties processors also provide all staff training required and adhere to all internal processes, procedure and quality assurance. If staff assigned to the contract leave, then the third party covers all recruitment costs associated to that vacancy.

2.7.5 A third party processor gives the service the flexibility to meet the current demands as well as an option to reduce its resources if the demand changes

## 2.8 **Criteria against which the tenderers are to be selected and contract is to be awarded**

2.8.1 Not applicable as direct award



## **2.9 How the procurement will address and implement the Council's Social Value policies**

2.9.1 Given that this contract will be awarded to a specific supplier through a framework, we are unable to evaluate and score any Social Value commitments. However Social Value will be discussed with the supplier during the contract and any suitable commitments offered will be monitored and reported.

## **2.10 Contract Management methodology to be adopted**

2.10.1 The contract will be managed by the Welfare Service, specifically Service managers with day-to-day operational responsibility. Performance and quality parameters are defined at the start and an agreement on regular checks and assurance.

2.10.2 The contract used to govern this service will be the call of terms of the framework

## **3. Options Appraisal**

### **3.1 Option 1 – Do nothing**

3.1.1 The current contract has been extended to 31st March 2023 at which point the Welfare service will be vulnerable in terms of delivery and additional cost pressures if reliant on ad hoc agency appointments.

3.1.2 For these reasons, this is not the preferred option.

### **3.2 Option 2 – Recruit Interim Agency Staff**

3.2.1 A recruitment drive can be undertaken through agencies however due to the existing market demands the authority would need to offer a minimum of £32 per hour per contractor and homeworking to incentivise staff to leave existing contracts they are in or increase the rate to over £32 per hour for site working. This would incur additional costs within the service through interviews and testing for the initial recruitment, time for inductions, processes and procedure and 100% quality assurance on all contractors to ensure that the authority is receiving the required standards of quality and performance. Due to demands within the market this would be a lengthy process and the required levels of staff would not be secure in a timely manner.

3.2.2 For these reasons, this is not the preferred option.

### **3.3 Option 3 – Recruit permanent assessment officers**

3.3.1 Recruitment within the authority can take between 3 and 6 months from inception to a starting date on an assumption that you obtain the required number of applicants. For the levels of staff being recruited for this purpose, costs would be incurred through advertisement, potential open day recruitment, internal service costs for the vetting, interviewing and testing process, associated on costs for permanent staff, inductions, service onboarding and quality assurance. For the number of staff required it is expected that this process could take up to 12 months to complete as the market demands are such that permanent staff are leaving placements to undertake contracting because of the associated financial gains.

- 3.3.2 An alternate is a full training programme to recruit unskilled applicants and train them into assessment officers. This process has been undertaken before, it was a one-year process that cost approx. £9k per person recruited in training and support costs on top of the base costs associated to recruitment, salary and on costs. As managed migration is proposed for 2024, potentially the staff will not have completed training or be in infancy of assessments when this occurs.
- 3.3.3 An advantage of recruiting and upskilling new officers is the retention rates. The former training initiatives that have been undertaken within the service have seen staff retention rates of over 70%, 10 years after the training period. This can also provide jobs for local residents however the longevity in assessment roles due to migration is limited.
- 3.3.4 For these reasons, this is not the preferred option.

#### **3.4 Option 4 – Third Party remote processor**

- 3.4.1 A third party resilience contract provides trained skilled staff, cost avoidance & reduction versus ad hoc agency placements, the ability to decrease your work force in accordance with service needs, without financial implications as well as obtaining the required skill set. Due to the welfare needs across the country, the ability to directly recruit skilled officers has become virtually impossible, either through Adecco, external agencies or permanent recruitment.
- 3.4.2 Due to the length of time the other options present, their associated costs and limited guarantee of success, this is the preferred option.

#### **4. Waiver**

- 4.1 Not Applicable

#### **5. Consultation**

- 5.2 The proposals in this report were considered and endorsed by the Procurement Sub-Group on 5 December and the Procurement Board on 19 December 2022.

#### **6. Corporate Procurement**

Implications completed by: Euan Beales, Head of Procurement

- 6.1 The Councils Contract Rules require all spend over £50,000 to be procured in an open market, however this rule can also be complied with by using a pre-procured and accessible framework.
- 6.2 The YPO Framework 940 – Managing Consultancy & Professional Services Framework is a compliant route to market and YPO as a framework operator has good understanding of Local Authority requirements.
- 6.3 The framework has a sole supplier awarded and the service is underpinned by a professional supply chain.

- 6.4 As detailed in the report the service requirements cannot be fulfilled by the Temporary Labour contract as this is more than 'body shopping' staff and the additional requirements and flexibility would not be able to be provided due to the peaks and troughs of demand.
- 6.5 In summary, the proposals represent a compliant route to market and will mitigate the risk of service reduction due to its flexibility.

## **7. Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: Shaheen Khan, Finance Business Partner

- 7.1 The appointment of a third-party off-site processor to provide a remotely managed benefit assessment service. Value up to a maximum of £350,000 per annum for 2 years. This includes the costs to any intermediary third parties through the procurement process.
- 7.2 Duration of the contract, including any options for extension - 2nd April 2023 to 31st March 2025. This would be an initial one-year term plus an option to extend a further year.
- 7.3 Cost will be met within the exiting Welfare Budget. From a financial point of view, this procurement ensures flexibility (option to adjust resources required in line with the demand) and value for money (no facility, training, or recruitment costs) as well as being more cost effective compared to recruiting agency staff). As such I support the recommendations made in this report

## **8. Legal Implications**

Implications completed by: Kayleigh Eaton, Principal Solicitor – Contracts and Procurement

- 8.1 This report is seeking approval to call off from the YPO framework to provide a Resilience Contract for Welfare Services for a term of one year plus the option to extend for one further year.
- 8.2 It is noted that Consultancy + is the sole supplier on the YPO framework. This framework has been procured under the Public Contract Regulation 2015 which means it is a compliant route to market. The requirements for competitive tendering, as contained within the Council's Contracts Rules are met as Rule 5.1 (a) advises that it is not necessary for officers to embark upon a separate procurement exercise when using a Framework Agreement providing the Framework being used has been properly procured in accordance with the law and the procurement is made in line with the Framework terms and conditions.
- 8.3 The framework commenced on 1 October 2019 and expires on 30 September 2023 so the anticipated call off is within the terms of the framework,
- 8.4 The Law and Governance team will be available to advise and assist throughout the process.

## **9. Other Implications**

- 9.1 **Risk and Risk Management** – If a contract is not procured then the Welfare service will be vulnerable in terms of delivery and additional cost pressures if reliant on ad hoc agency appointments.
- 9.2 **TUPE, other staffing and trade union implications** - None
- 9.3 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** – There are no perceived negative impacts on these protected characteristics. There are provisions in place within the service to escalate urgent cases that would negatively impact residents, those with protected characteristic or those with socio-economic disadvantage. Such cases include those who are risk of eviction or repossession, cases where delays in processing would have severe detrimental effects on mental health, the health and wellbeing of a child or whose condition would be worsened by delays. There is no requirement to complete a full Equalities Impact assessment.

**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:** None

**List of appendices:** None

## CABINET

17 January 2023

<b>Title:</b> Urgent Action - Approval of Head Lease and Loan for Shared Ownership Properties at Challingsworth House (formerly Crown House), Linton Road, Barking	
<b>Report of the Acting Chief Executive</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> Northbury	<b>Key Decision:</b> No
<b>Report Author:</b> Alan Dawson, Head of Governance and Electoral Services	<b>Contact Details:</b> Tel: 020 8227 2348 Email: alan.dawson@lbbd.gov.uk
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Alison Stuart, Chief Legal Officer	
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Director:</b> Fiona Taylor, Acting Chief Executive	
<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>By Minutes 26 (21 July 2015) and 25 (19 July 2016), the Cabinet approved proposals relating to the comprehensive redevelopment of the Crown House site, Linton Road, Barking.</p> <p>Since that time, various reports on the project had been considered at the Investment Panel (IP), the officer group set up to oversee and advise on the implementation of projects within the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy and Be First Business Plans. IP approved the awarding of the construction contract and the development finance required in January 2020. The development, now known as Challingsworth House, consists of two separate blocks - Block A which comprises of 113 submarket rented homes and Block B of 56 Shared Ownership homes. Both blocks completed during the latter part of 2022. A site plan is attached at Appendix 1a and Challingsworth House is shown edged in red in that plan.</p> <p>It became apparent that whilst the original Cabinet approvals covered all aspects relating to the development of the project, an issue remained outstanding regarding the disposal of the Shared Ownership properties to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd (part of the Reside structure) that would allow B&amp;D Homes to enter into the necessary Shared Ownership agreements with tenants.</p> <p>In order for the first set of sales of Shared Ownership properties to be progressed without further delay and for agreements to begin being signed during 2022, the Acting Chief Executive agreed that it would be in the Council's best interests to dispose of Block B, Challingsworth House via a Head Lease and provide a loan to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd to enable the acquisition, in accordance with the Urgent Action procedure set out in Part 2, Chapter 16, paragraph 4 of the Constitution. The proposed terms of the disposal of the Head Lease to B&amp;D Homes were entirely consistent with the Council's approved arrangements for Shared Ownership properties and were endorsed by the IP.</p>	

It was also necessary to apply the Special Urgency arrangements as set out in Part 2, Chapter 17, paragraph 15 of the Constitution as the matter qualified as a 'key decision' and had not been publicised in advance on the Council's Forward Plan in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Accordingly, the Chair of the Cabinet and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were consulted and gave their approval to the proposals prior to the Acting Chief Executive taking the action on 16 December 2022.

The detailed report which formed the basis of the Acting Chief Executive's decision is set out at Appendix 1 to this report. The matter is being reported to this meeting for information in accordance with the Urgent Action procedure.

### **Recommendation(s)**

The Cabinet is asked to note the action taken by the Acting Chief Executive, in accordance with the Urgent Action procedure under Part 2, Chapter 16, paragraph 4 and the Special Urgency provision under Part 2, Chapter 17, paragraph 15 of the Council Constitution, in relation to:

- (i) Approving the disposal by way of long lease of Block B, Challingsworth House, comprising 56 Shared Ownership homes, to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd (part of the Reside structure) on the terms set out in the report;
- (ii) Approving a loan of £18,582,399 to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd to enable the acquisition on the terms set out in the report;
- (iii) Authorising the Chief Legal Officer to execute all the legal agreements, contracts, and other documents on behalf of the Council in order to implement the arrangements; and
- (iv) Authorising the Strategic Director, Finance and Investment, in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer, to finalise the terms of the loan and any other associated financial documents.

### **Reasons**

To accord with the requirements of the urgency procedures contained within the Council Constitution.

### **Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

- Acting Chief Executive's signed letter of 16 December 2022 entitled "Urgent Action under Part 2, Chapter 16, paragraph 4 of the Constitution – Approval of Head Lease and Loan for Shared Ownership Properties at Challingsworth House (formerly Crown House), Linton Road, Barking"  
(<https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/Internet/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=14765&path=0>)

### **List of appendices:**

- **Appendix 1** - Report entitled "Approval of Head Lease and Loan for Shared Ownership Properties at Challingsworth House (formerly Crown House), Linton Road, Barking"
- **Appendix 1a** – Site Plan

<b>Title:</b> Approval of Head Lease and Loan for Shared Ownership Properties at Challingsworth House (formerly Crown House), Linton Road, Barking	
<b>Report of the Strategic Director, Finance and Investment</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> Northbury	<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Report Author:</b> Marlon Bruce, interim Strategic Head of Place and Development	<b>Contact Details:</b> <a href="mailto:Marlon.bruce@lbbd.gov.uk">Marlon.bruce@lbbd.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Director:</b> Philip Gregory, Strategic Director, Finance and Investment	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>By Minutes 26 (21 July 2015) and 25 (19 July 2016), the Cabinet approved proposals relating to the comprehensive redevelopment of the Crown House site, Linton Road, Barking. The approvals under Minute 25 (19 July 2016) included:</p>	
<p>25(iv) Agree to the principle of loan funding being used for the capital costs of construction of the development on Council land with repayment through rental income.</p>	
<p>25(v) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Finance and Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment, to determine the amount of borrowing required to support the project and to enter into the necessary arrangements to acquire the funding.</p>	
<p>Since that time, various reports on the project have been considered at the Investment Panel, the officer group set up to oversee and advise on the implementation of projects within the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy and Be First Business Plans. Investment Panel approved the awarding of the construction contract and the development finance required in January 2020. The development is now known as Challingsworth House and comprises two separate blocks - Block A which comprises of 113 submarket rented homes and Block B of 56 Shared Ownership homes. Both blocks completed earlier this year and are now ready for occupation. A site plan is attached at Appendix 1a and Challingsworth House is shown edged in red in that plan.</p>	
<p>This report seeks approval to dispose Block B, Challingsworth House to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd, by way of a long lease and also provide a loan to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd to enable that disposal.</p>	
<p>There has been strong interest in the Shared Ownership homes in Challingsworth House and the first set of sales can be progressed as soon as the block has been disposed to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd.</p>	

## **Recommendation(s)**

The Chief Executive, acting on behalf of the Cabinet in accordance with the Urgent Action provisions of Part 2, Chapter 16, paragraph 4 of the Council Constitution, is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the disposal by way of long lease of Block B, Challingsworth House, comprising 56 Shared Ownership homes, to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd (part of the Reside Structure) on the terms set out in the report;
- (ii) Approve a loan of £18,582,399 to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd to enable the acquisition on the terms set out in the report;
- (iii) Authorise the Chief Legal Officer to execute all the legal agreements, contracts, and other documents on behalf of the Council in order to implement the arrangements; and
- (iv) Authorise the Strategic Director, Finance and Investment, in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer, to finalise the terms of the loan and any other associated financial documents.

## **Reason(s)**

The decisions are required to enable the disposal of Block B, Challingsworth House to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd. Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd will then sell individual homes in the block as Shared Ownership properties, helping to meet the Council's aim to increase the supply of affordable housing options for residents.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Challingsworth House is a new build comprising 169 affordable homes. It has been built on the former Linton Road car park and is the first phase of the wider Crown House redevelopment. The Crown House scheme is included within the Be First Business Plan approved by Cabinet, most recently in March 2022.
- 1.2 Challingsworth House comprises two blocks – one block of 113 submarket rented homes (Block A) and one block of 56 Shared Ownership homes (Block B). This report seeks specific approvals relating to Block B.

## **2. Proposal and Issues**

- 2.1 This report seeks approval for disposal of Block B to Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Council. The disposal would be by way of a 255-year headlease and a £18,582,399 loan facility Agreement between the Council and Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd. The Council will retain ownership of the freehold of the site.
- 2.2 The loan terms will reflect the Investment Panel agreed terms for loans relating to Shared Ownership properties, unless a variation to these terms is agreed by the Strategic Director, Finance and Investment on the advice of the Investment Panel.



The proposed loan terms are set out in more detail in the Financial Implications section of this report.

2.3 Other legal agreements will also be put in place for the management of the homes, including a Property Management Agreement between Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd and the Council.

2.4 The marketing of the Shared Ownership homes started earlier this year, and a first set of units have been reserved by interested buyers. The first sales can be progressed as soon as the head lease is approved and executed.

### **3. Options Appraisal**

3.1 The proposals in the report relate to the implementation of elements of the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy, which was most recently presented to Cabinet in November 2022. In particular, the November 2022 report set out that new homes at London Affordable Rents (for households on the Council's housing register) are cross subsidised by Shared Ownership within the Investment and Acquisition Strategy financial model. Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd is the wholly-owned company which will hold both LAR homes and Shared Ownership homes in order to achieve this. As a consequence, an options appraisal is not relevant to the decisions required.

### **4. Consultation**

4.1 Investment Panel has considered a number of papers relating to Crown House since the development was initially approved. The proposals in this paper follow Investment Panel decisions relating to the financial arrangements for Shared Ownership properties.

### **5. Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: David Dickinson, Investment Fund Manager

5.1 This report seeks approval to enter into an agreement between the Council and its wholly owned subsidiary Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd, including:

- a Head Lease of Crown House (Challingsworth House Linton Road), for a term of 255 years at a £18,582,399 premium;
- a Property Management Agreement relating to these properties; and
- a £18,582,399 loan facility Agreement between the Council and Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd relating to the 56 shared ownership homes and associated communal areas at Challingsworth House.

5.2 Currently the loan details agreed by Investment Panel are for a loan of 52 years based on the loan value at completion of the sale, i.e. this is net of grant and of the first tranche sales. Of the £18,582,399, £2,128,000 is at 0%, repayable as a bullet repayment when the conditions are met (that is the GLA grant can be transfer from the Council to BDHL).

5.3 The Balance of £16,454,399 will be allocated to individual properties as set out in a schedule to be included in the loan agreement. Per property, interest will be at 0% interest until the sale of the first shared ownership tranche completes, after which a

rate of 3.0% will need to be paid on the remaining balance. As any further payments are made, the outstanding balance will reduce when the payment is transferred to the Council and the interest rate will be at 3.0% on the remaining balance. The movements will be totalled each quarter and the interest due to be paid will be agreed and paid at the end of each quarter.

- 5.4 A subsidy control clause will be included to enable the interest rate to be varied by the Council every three years noting that any variation of interest rates must enable Barking and Dagenham Homes to remain viable.
- 5.5 If a reduced interest rate is required then this will need to be endorsed by Investment Panel and justification for this change will need to be included. Currently the rate being forecast for Shared Ownership is 3.0%.

### **Headlease**

- 5.6 The proposed term of the head lease is 255 years. This is longer than the head leases typically used for leases related to rented units to Reside vehicles. This is because the longer head lease term will allow Barking and Dagenham Homes Ltd to grant longer subleases (of 250 years) to shared owners buying the properties. This increases both the value and the attractiveness of the shared ownership properties to potential buyers.

## **6. Legal Implications**

Implications completed by: Jonathan Boyle, Legal Services

- 6.1 The former site of Crown House and the Linton Road car park site on which Challingsworth House now stands was appropriated for planning purposes under s122 of the Local Government Act 1972 at the cabinet meeting of 17 February 2020. This allows the Council to use s203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to override private third-party rights so as to enable development to proceed without being delayed. Holders of such private rights are still entitled to compensation on a CPO basis rather than by obtaining injunctive relief.
- 6.2 Section 233 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that the Council needs the Secretary of State's consent to dispose of land which has been appropriated for planning purposes unless the best consideration reasonably obtainable has been achieved. The financial model which has been used on this site to set the loan and premium at £18,582,399 was determined by using the advice of previous external advisors K & L Gates specifically to ensure that the best consideration requirement was met.
- 6.3 Any decision on this proposed disposal will be subject to the Council's overarching best value and fiduciary duties concerning the proper and prudent stewardship of Council assets.
- 6.4 The Council's Constitution (August 2022), Part 4, Chapter 4 sets out the Land Acquisition and Disposal Rules. In accordance with paragraphs 2.1 to 2.2, all strategic decisions about the use, acquisition and disposal of land and property assets are within the remit of the Cabinet and must be approved by it.

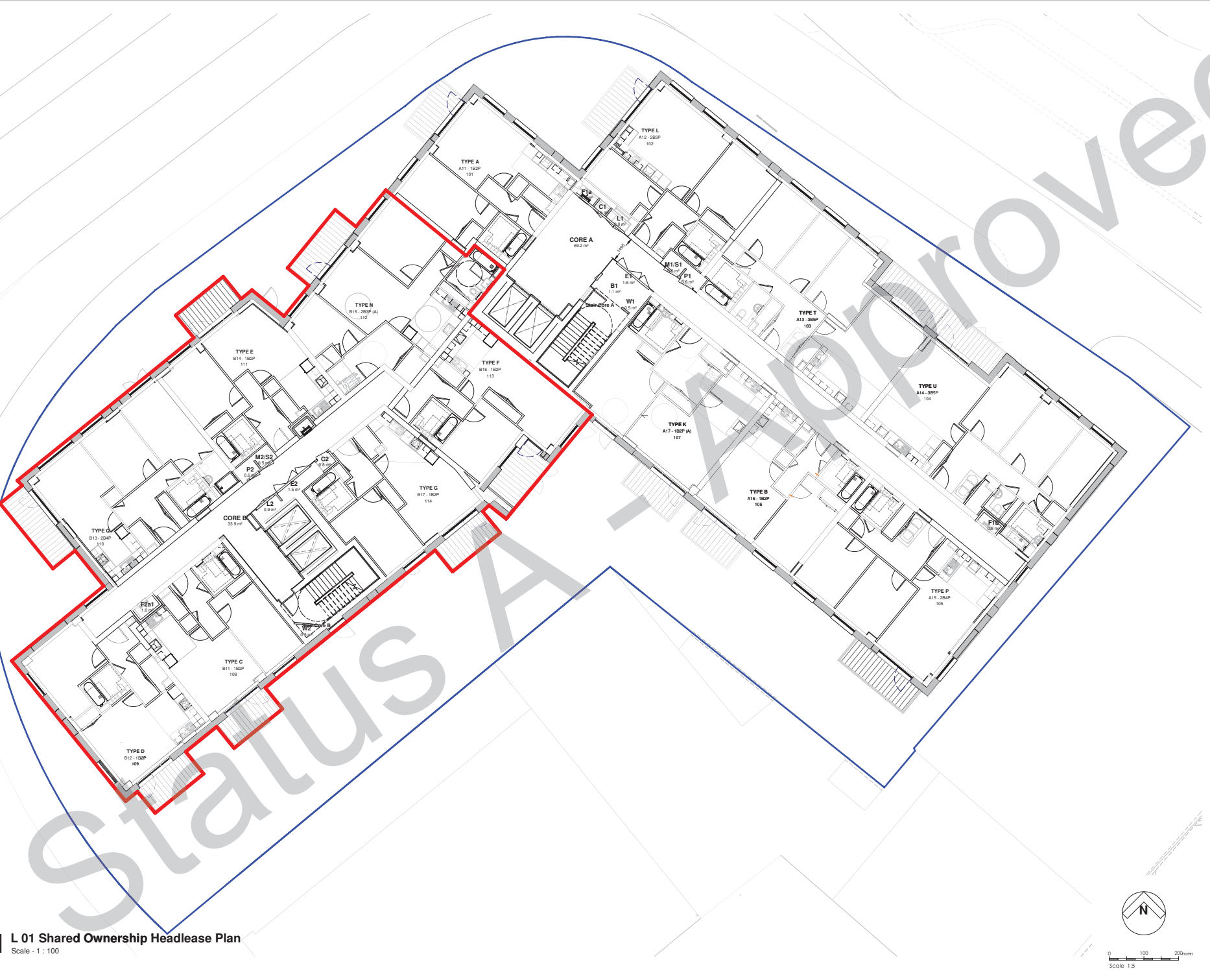
**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

Treasury Management 2022/23 Mid-Year Review, November 2022 Cabinet report  
(<https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/Internet/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=180&MId=12608&Ver=4>)

**List of appendices:**

**Appendix 1a:** Site Plan

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Notes:  
 Contractor must verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work or shop drawings. If this drawing exceeds the quantities taken in any way the Architects are to be informed before the work is installed.  
 Only figured dimensions to be taken from this drawing. Do not scale off this drawing. Drawings based on Ordnance Survey and / or existing record drawings - design and drawing content subject to Site Survey, Structural Survey, Site Investigation, Planning and Statutory Requirements and Approvals. Authorised reproduction from Ordnance Survey Map with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright reserved.

Location Plan:  
 (Blank area for location plan)

NOTES:  
 — Site Boundary  
 — Building Boundary

C.01	Issued For Information	L1	16/03/21	SM
Rev:	Des:	by:	Date:	Ch:

Client:  
 Be First / McLaren

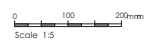
Project Name: Crown House A  
 CJCT Project Number: 33013

Title:  
 Level 01 Shared Ownership Headlease Plan

Scale: 1:100  
 Drawn by: A1  
 Checked by: A3  
 Author: Author  
 Checker: Checker  
 Date: 03/16/22

Job No: BF0048-CJCT-ZA-01-DR-A-7001  
 Drawing No:  
 Rev No: C.01

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**01 L 01 Shared Ownership Headlease Plan**  
 Scale - 1 : 100

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