

Growth Commission Stocktake Towards Inclusive Growth for Barking and Dagenham

January 2019

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1 Progress since the Growth Commission

In 2015, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham established an independent Growth Commission to examine options for the Borough's economic and social development, in recognition of the area's future growth potential. The Commission was comprised of experts in national and international business, regeneration, economic development, and the London economy.

The Commission came at an early stage in the current Administration's time in office, with a new Chief Executive as well as a new Cabinet. It was a time of change within the Council. The aim of the Commission was to provide an independent challenge and a stimulus for action, framed by the Borough's unique context, and the opportunities and challenges this created.

Like other London Boroughs, but perhaps later than most, Barking and Dagenham was then, as now, seeing major changes in its population, with new communities forming and growing. At the same time, the economic landscape was changing. The eastward growth of the London housing market, which felt for some years as if it had stopped east of the North Circular, looked tentatively to be reaching beyond it. Barking Riverside, long an opportunity more talked about than built out, was on the cusp of new ownership and the promise of a faster rate of development. But levels of new housing starts remained low and commercial development had largely stalled. Business growth was low on the agenda.

The Commission's task was to identify what it would take for the Borough to fulfil its potential as London's Growth Opportunity. Specifically, the Council was keen to learn the positive lessons from development elsewhere while avoiding the pitfalls, and to do so in a way that would ensure no-one was left behind.

The Commission's final report; 'No-one Left Behind'; created a platform upon which LBBD's leadership could take proactive steps in pursuit of a better future for the Borough and its residents. The Commission outlined 109 recommendations focused on realising the Council's vision: 'to create an inclusive, prosperous and resilient place, in which all communities have the opportunity to fulfil their potential'. The recommendations covered all aspects of the Borough's economic growth including housing, business, transport and infrastructure, culture and heritage, urban design, educational attainment, and skills and employment.

This is a large number of recommendations, not least for a Council whose corporate capacity at the time was limited. To ensure that the Council was clear on what the Commission thought the earliest priorities should be, 'No-one Left Behind' also set out an early action plan, comprising ten key next steps:

- Agreement to the Commission's suggested set of long term goals;

- The development of a set of operating principles;
- The development of a new and different approach to community engagement;
- A focus on people issues for the Council;
- The creation of a new organisation to take forward business and regeneration;
- Investment in leadership;
- The development of a Borough Manifesto;
- The delivery of a ‘One Borough’ programme;
- A public commitment to report progress; and,
- An annual public review.

The insights set out below, and the future ideas that follow, are based on a short stocktake of progress since the publication of these recommendations in early 2016. This has involved reviewing a range of Council reports, studying insights from the extensive amount of resident engagement undertaken over the last couple of years, two workshops and a series of conversations with local stakeholders, plus reviewing evidence and experience from other places that have sought to pursue Inclusive Growth. It is important to say that the stocktake has not involved new primary research or analysis.

Our assessment is that the Council has broadly carried through the initial action plan and has done so in most cases with exemplary commitment and focus. The exception is the last point. This review is the first non-internal review of progress, some thirty or so months post publication. Remarkably, the Council has also taken forward most of the 109 individual recommendations. But by no means all. In our analysis:

- Only one recommendation has been formally *rejected by the Council*; that concerning the potential for a large-scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) of Council homes.
- The recommendation for a re-think of Barking Riverside was *not taken forward, but with continuing debate*. There remain some concerns about the need both to improve the absorption rate of the scheme but also to ensure that it can fulfil its potential to create a sustainable new community.
- Elsewhere, in relation to the wealth of people-based recommendations, and specifically those relating to education and other issues outside the direct control of the Borough, there has been *rhetorical commitment not yet fully translated into purposeful and transformational action*.
- Many recommendations have been taken forward if not always in precisely the manner suggested by the Commission, but in a way that reflected the Commission’s intent.

The Borough’s major achievements

The Council’s restructuring following the Ambition 2020 project, a sister project to the Commission, has dramatically changed the way it is set up to serve the local population. In addition, a number of further initiatives have changed the way the Council communicates with its residents. This, in turn, has started to change the perception of local people, who have at times been characterised, not unfairly, as being too passive; more accepting and less demanding than is the norm elsewhere. The process of writing the Borough Manifesto, initiatives such as Every One Every Day, and the ongoing efforts of the wider civil society, mark the beginnings of a more active approach to citizenship in the Borough.

The advent of BeFirst as a Borough wide regeneration company is a major step forward. Barking and Dagenham can now play in a different league, guided by strong executive and non-executive leadership with a mandate for transformation. The decision of the Council to upend the way it takes planning decisions will pay dividends in supporting this agenda. This seemed a difficult recommendation for the Council to accept but it has done so and implemented it in as ambitious a way as ever seemed likely.

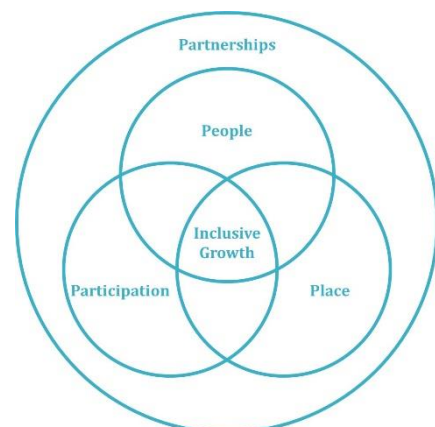
The same is true of the Borough Manifesto. This has been taken forward in a way that has raised ambition and created a new point of focus for the Borough, whilst enabling its local partners and different communities to start to coalesce around a clearer sense of unity on some issues, and of differences on others.

The lack of anchor institutions was as an issue highlighted by the Commission. The arrival of Coventry University’s London Campus, the forthcoming film studios, as well as other initiatives in the pipeline, are testament to a highly focussed approach to building the institutional fabric of the Borough in precisely the way envisaged by the Commission.

The Council is focussed on delivering for the people of the Borough above all. Nonetheless, it is of great importance that the Council was recognised for its transformation by being awarded Council of the Year in 2018.

Lots Done, Lots More Needed: What Barking and Dagenham Still Needs to Crack

Having acknowledged the very significant strides the Council has taken over recent years it is important also to consider where more needs to be done. To structure our reflections, we developed a framework for Inclusive Growth structured around four interlocking areas of potential intervention: People, Place, Participation and Partnerships. This framework is further developed in later sections of the report.



The recommendations from the original commission were concerned with both *people*, i.e. Barking and Dagenham residents and their wellbeing (economic or otherwise), and *place*, i.e. the physical form of the Borough. However, while the momentum created by the commission has been sustained and

accelerated since its conclusion, greater progress has been made on the report's 'place' recommendations, while the impact on 'people' has yet to materialise to the same extent.

This is partly an issue beyond the Council's control: changing planning policies and even building new homes and office buildings is a shorter-term process than tackling intergenerational poverty or changing deeply rooted patterns of health or educational disadvantage. Even more significantly, while there is a strong evidence base for how to pursue effective physical development and regeneration, no such blueprint exists for addressing these and complex, 'wicked' issues.

In considering its next steps, therefore, a renewed focus on ensuring that economic development delivers direct benefits to existing local residents. This, in short, is the essence of inclusive growth. This is new territory not just for Barking and Dagenham but for the UK as a whole. There is no off-the-shelf, or universally applicable, model to draw on. Innovation will be needed. Nonetheless, there are key areas where the particular issues faced by Barking & Dagenham are acute, and where it is vital the Council and its partners are prepared to challenge themselves to break new ground:

- Too many people in the Borough still have long commutes for poor pay. Working poverty is an issue too big for the Council and partners to ignore, even if their levers in relation to local wages are limited. Workforce skill levels are low, which restrict the ability of local residents to benefit from job opportunities or to progress in work.
- For too many people who worked in traditional manufacturing jobs, the flexible world of work has left them behind. Long-term unemployment and worklessness is high. Those who can work need to be encouraged and enabled to do so, with whatever support is needed to enable them to get back on their feet.
- Although education levels are improving in the Borough, it comes from a low base. Improvements in school results have not yet translated into improved progression rates from secondary education into further learning or earning. The Council, schools and local business can do even better in leveraging the support of Government and other institutions as well as national third sector organisations.

In relation to **place**, there are many examples of successful urban regeneration from other places in the UK and internationally. We know what works. Some places have fared better than others, both in terms of changing the level of development and in ensuring that the form of development is sustainable (i.e. blending architectural forms and functional uses in ways that work for existing and newly arriving communities). The steps the Council has taken in this area are solid ones which will stand it in good stead and should, over time, create momentum towards successful place development. However, there is still further to go.

- The Borough is yet to articulate an economic development strategy capable of carving out a distinctive place for Barking and Dagenham within the London economy. The Borough also lacks the capacity and partnerships needed to drive such a strategy. Job density is too low and, overall, business sustainability is too weak in the Borough, especially among SMEs and start-ups. The Borough still needs to shake the legacy of its industrial past, and transition away from lower value, dirtier sectors. This is in part an issue of perception, but also one of substance.
- The Borough has the scope to develop real local strengths in key rising sectors that create good jobs and can provide strong training/progression pathways. Key among these are the care, creative and construction sectors. There is also no reason why the Borough could not be the Green Capital of the Capital. Decarbonisation could have a significant impact on jobs and the local economy, as well as on the environment. Opportunities include the potential for extending local district heating systems, decentralised energy generation, large scale energy efficiency, ‘energy from waste’ manufacturing, or indeed the future of the Ford Diesel plant in Dagenham.
- The infrastructure of the Borough holds it back, and this will need to be addressed in a very deliberate and coordinated way given the scale of residential development planned over the next two decades. In a city like London connectivity is key and needs to be integrated into regeneration and place shaping across Barking and Dagenham. Crossrail in the North and the Gospel Oak line extension to Barking Riverside will not be sufficient. Meeting wider infrastructure needs, including new schools, public spaces, leisure facilities and so on, will be crucial if the Borough is to be build healthy and sustainable communities, as well as homes.
- The buildout rate of Barking Riverside remains low while the iconic Becontree Estate is in need of physical upgrading. Starting with these two developments, the newest and one of the oldest, the Borough needs to ensure that it embraces the boldness, quality and new town spirit of the early 20th Century in its model of regeneration.

In our view, the ultimate success of any Inclusive Growth strategy rests on the extent to which it encourages **participation** at every level. With the benefit of hindsight, even since the Commission’s report was written, it is clear that the legacy of a high stock of public housing and a traditionally paternalistic Council in an area dominated by a large employer, leaves a lasting impression. This has been accentuated by a far from wealthy incoming population, deepening the sense of a place that is passive, accepting and insufficiently challenging. While paternalism was an undeniable feature of the Borough’s past, the future will require relationships of reciprocity, both within communities, and between citizens and the Council.

This starts with narrative. The pace of change at present can be challenging for some residents. This is particularly true for those that have lived in Barking and Dagenham for decades. More must be done to help these residents understand and connect with the changes

that are coming, and to ensure they have every opportunity to influence and shape decision making. This must not feel like empty consultation that reinforces an old-fashioned and paternalist view of public service, but like real sharing of power that allows residents to have a stake and a say in the changes taking place around them.

More, much more, will be needed to help the people of Barking and Dagenham to achieve the level of engagement and assertiveness that is still more typical elsewhere. The notion of active and assertive citizenship, driven by high levels of participation, needs to take hold, with the Council playing a leading role in driving this change.

- The Council needs to double down on its efforts to encourage the active participation of local residents in every aspect of its work. A more assertive and demanding citizenry would be a sign of growing confidence and vibrancy in the local community.
- The 100 year anniversary of the Becontree estate being built is an important moment to signal the Borough's commitment to participation and engagement. The Council and its partners should use the opportunity presented by the anniversary to work with residents of the Becontree to kick off a process of physical and social renewal that would see the estate made ready for the next 100 years.
- Change has come quickly, and is often poorly understood. The Borough needs to tell a clear story about growth and regeneration that residents can understand and engage with. Moreover, the Council and BeFirst, must adopt creative and empowering models of participation and engagement in relation to all physical and social regeneration decisions. This will be crucial to maintaining public consent for the scale and ambitions of its growth and regeneration ambitions.

The Council has started to build strong **partnerships**, with other local organisations as well as with local people. But there is a long way to go. Deeper collaboration is needed between the Borough and a range of public sector partners, in which public funds can be better leveraged to meet the needs of local people. In addition, there is not yet a meaningful partnership between the Council and the business community, and there is a real absence of an effective and representative voice of local business in Barking and Dagenham.

These challenges of people, place, participation and partnership are interrelated and mutually interdependent. Making progress on one without the others won't be sustainable. Making progress on all four will deliver what the Council wants: Inclusive Growth.

2 Inclusive Growth

Inclusive Growth is a concept that has gained increasing traction within debates about economic and social policy over the past few years. It is often loosely defined, but at its core it combines concerns about both the *rate* of growth with concerns about its *distribution*. Crucially, it also opens up the question of *how* growth is pursued.

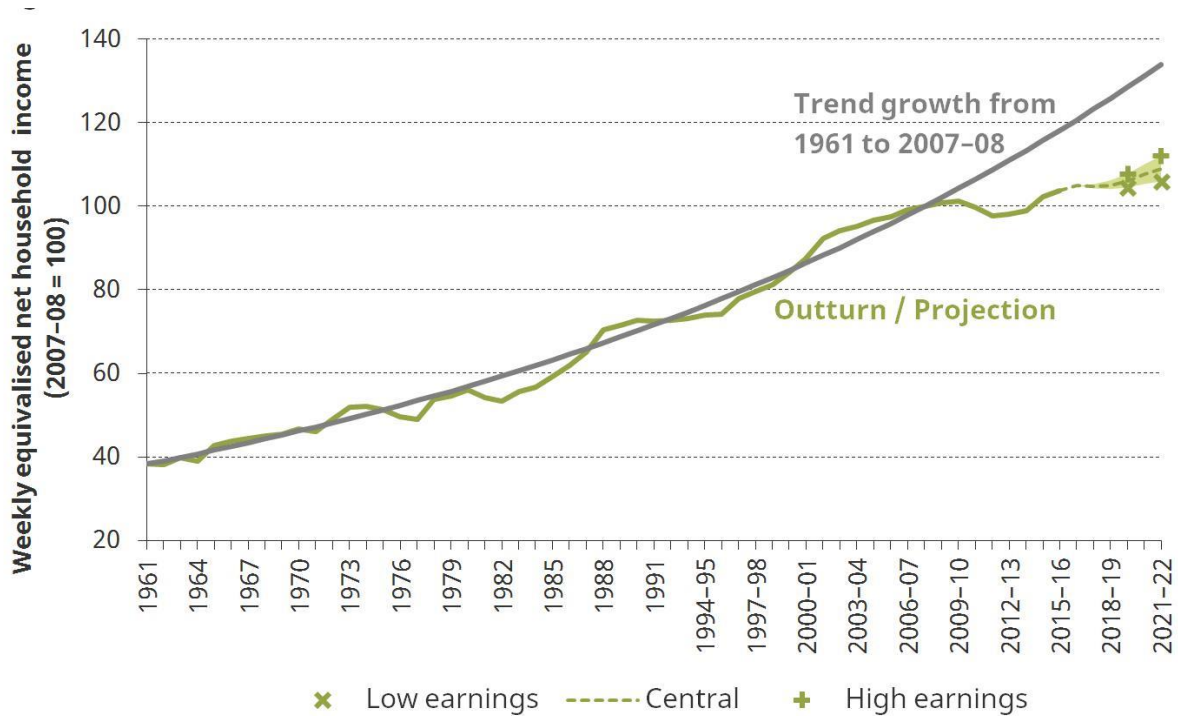
Distributional issues have long been a concern of economic policy, but these have been heightened in the aftermath of the financial crisis which has seen a long period of slow median income growth in the UK and other developed countries, combined with rises in other living costs (especially housing). Before the 2007/8 crisis, while growth rates were relatively strong nationally, the proceeds of this growth were very unequally shared. The consequence is that for many people, living standards have either stagnated or worsened. In Barking and Dagenham, this dynamic is reflected across a range of social indicators.

This section draws upon the evidence in order to set out what an Inclusive Growth Framework for LBBDD could involve. Specifically, this section:

- Explains why Inclusive Growth is a valuable concept.
- Reviews how other organisations have conceptualised Inclusive Growth.
- Sets out what LBBDD needs to consider in developing its own, distinctive Inclusive Growth framework and how to ground this in the aspirations of the Borough Manifesto.

Why Inclusive Growth? Why Now?

Over the last decade, growth in real median incomes in the UK has significantly underperformed the long-term trend (see graph below). This has been driven by the longest period of wage stagnation in the post-war period, with little prospect of substantial recovery in the immediate future. At the same time, the cost of housing has risen, particularly in London. Employment conditions for many lower-income workers have become more precarious, with a rise in zero-hours contracts and gig economy jobs that have fewer (or no) benefits and less certainty about incomes. Austerity policies have also affected income levels and the provision of crucial services like social care. For communities like Barking and Dagenham, this all follows the legacy of significant structural change in the economy in the 1970s and 1980s – and the attendant social pressures this caused.



Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies (2017) Incomes and inequality: The last decade and the next parliament

The result is a greater concern that growth rates are too slow and that the model and outcomes of that growth are not inclusive enough. Traditional economic models have tended to assume that relatively unimpeded market dynamics generate the highest growth rates and that so-called ‘trickle-down’ processes and supply-side measures are capable of ensuring that the proceeds of growth are shared. In particular this has meant attempts to raise skill and education levels, connect people with opportunities in the labour market, and to reduce barriers to job creation (rather than seeking to affect the model of growth in the first instance).

However, the long period of low growth and slow productivity advances – plus the absence of real incomes increases for much of the population – suggests that this thinking needs to be re-considered. The EU referendum exposed not just a division over our relationship with Europe but a widening gap between those for whom the current economic model is working and the large number for whom it isn’t. Such concerns are not limited to the UK. The OECD launched an Inclusive Growth campaign last year and the concept was incorporated into the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2016.

Importantly, advocates of strategies focused on driving inclusive growth argue that this is crucial not only to seeking a more equal distribution of the benefits of growth, but also to improving economic output overall. The World Economic Forum is explicit in stating that:

“there is no inherent trade-off in economic policy-making between the promotion of social inclusion and that of economic growth and competitiveness; it is possible to be pro-equity and pro-growth at the same time.”¹

This is borne out empirically. A 2014 International Monetary Fund study has found that inequality can reduce the pace and sustainability of growth as it can undermine progress in health and education, cause investment-reducing political and economic instability, and undercut the social consensus required to adjust in the face of economic shocks.²

The risks of a place-first, people-second approach

The question of Inclusive Growth becomes particularly acute at a time when an area is going through a period of transformation, such as is currently happening in Barking & Dagenham. In all cities there is a tendency for different quarters to become ‘in vogue’ for a class of young professionals looking for affordable housing and an alternative cultural offering. As momentum builds behind an area, investment follows, allowing for a refreshing of the housing stock, and the creation of new jobs and opportunities.

The effects of this, however, have not always been positive on existing, settled communities. In particular, there are concerns that rapid improvements in the quality of the physical environment and better transport links can lead to the displacement of long-term residents on lower incomes (a process sometimes referred to as ‘gentrification’)³. This highlights a tension: there are clear benefits to an area from extra investment and spending power, and a better look and feel to a place is advantageous for those who live there, but there is also a worry that the impacts – in particular in relation to affordability of housing and the wider cost of living – might not be shared by current residents.

The data on these effects presents a mixed picture. Research into the impact of rapid urban change in California, where the growth of Silicon Valley has brought about some of these changes *in extremis*, has found that there are positives and negatives: “Locals are likely to benefit from improved mobility, neighbourhood revitalisation, lower transportation costs, and other amenities that spill over from the new development. However, more disadvantaged communities may fail to benefit if the new development does not bring appropriate housing and job opportunities”⁴.

A paper looking into housing-led regeneration in England concludes that: “Regeneration can work with existing residents and benefit them. Careful management can deliver changes

¹ ‘The Inclusive Growth and Development Report 2015’, World Economic Forum Insight Report, *World Economic Forum* (2015) p. viii. The report finds that several of the storngets performers in the Forum’s Competitiveness Index (GCI) also have a relatively strong inclusive growth and development profile.

² ‘Redistribution, Inequality and Growth’, IMF Staff Discussion Note, *International Monetary Fund* (2014)

³ See, for instance Atkinson and Bridge (2005): “At the neighbourhood level itself poor and vulnerable residents often experience gentrification as a process of colonisation by the more privileged classes. Stories of personal housing dislocation and loss, distended social networks, “improved” local services out of sync with local needs and displacement have always been the underbelly of a process, which, for city boosters, has represented something of a saviour for post-industrial cities.”

⁴ Miriam Zuk, ‘Regional Early Warning System for Displacement: Typologies Final Project Report’, *University of California Centre for Community Innovation* (2015), p. 1

which benefit existing residents.”⁵ The authors argue that work needs to be undertaken to ensure the needs of local residents are properly understood, and that any programmes need to be flexible as these needs change over time. This must involve engaging the resident population and inviting them to shape policy and design decisions.

This evidence points to the importance of pursuing an integrated strategy for both place and people, with local residents actively participating in the processes and decisions associated with regeneration and change. Because place issues can seem ‘easier’ to address (once finance and expertise is in place), there has been a tendency to focus narrowly on such physical improvements, assuming that positive impacts for local people will follow automatically. However, this has not been borne out by experience, therefore striking a balance between a focus on place, people and participation is critical.

Achieving Inclusive Growth in local areas requires partnerships that can coordinate the efforts of a range of local actors. The RSA Inclusive Growth Commission called upon local government, local businesses and civic organisations to work together to create the stronger institutional foundations that can ultimately deliver quality jobs for local people⁶. This involves working directly with local business and local anchor institutions (universities, hospitals, colleges and other major employers), particularly in the low-paid sectors that make up the long tail of low productivity businesses in the UK. It also involves forging partnerships between the Council and local people to create a space in which views can be heard.

Definitions of Inclusive Growth

As the table below shows, there is no single accepted definition of Inclusive Growth. The various articulations set out below touch to different degrees the importance of shared economic prosperity and labour market participation, wider conceptions of well-being and cohesion, as well as the process or approach to the pursuit of inclusive growth.

Organisation	Definition
European Commission (2010) ⁷	‘Inclusive growth means empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems so as to help people anticipate and manage change, and build a cohesive society.’
OECD (2014) ⁸	‘A rise in the multidimensional living standards of a target income group in society.’

⁵ ‘Regeneration Revival? Making housing-led regeneration work across England’, *Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research* (2016) p. ii

⁶ ‘Making our Economy Work for Everyone’, RSA Inclusive Growth Commission Final Report, *Royal Society of Arts* (2017) p. 10

⁷ ‘Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’, European Commission (2010) p. 17

⁸ ‘Report on the OECD Framework for Inclusive Growth’, *Meeting of the OECD Council* (2014) p. 10

World Economic Forum (2015)⁹	‘Output growth that is sustained over decades, is broad-based across economic sectors, creates productive employment for a great majority of the country’s working age population, and reduces poverty.’
Scottish Government (2015)¹⁰	‘Growth that combines increases in prosperity with greater equity, creates opportunities for all and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity fairly.’
Royal Society of Arts (2017)¹¹	<p>‘Enabling as many people as possible to contribute to and benefit from growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social – benefitting people across the labour market spectrum, including groups that face particularly high barriers to high quality employment; • Place-based – addressing inequalities in opportunities between different parts of the country and within economic geographies.’

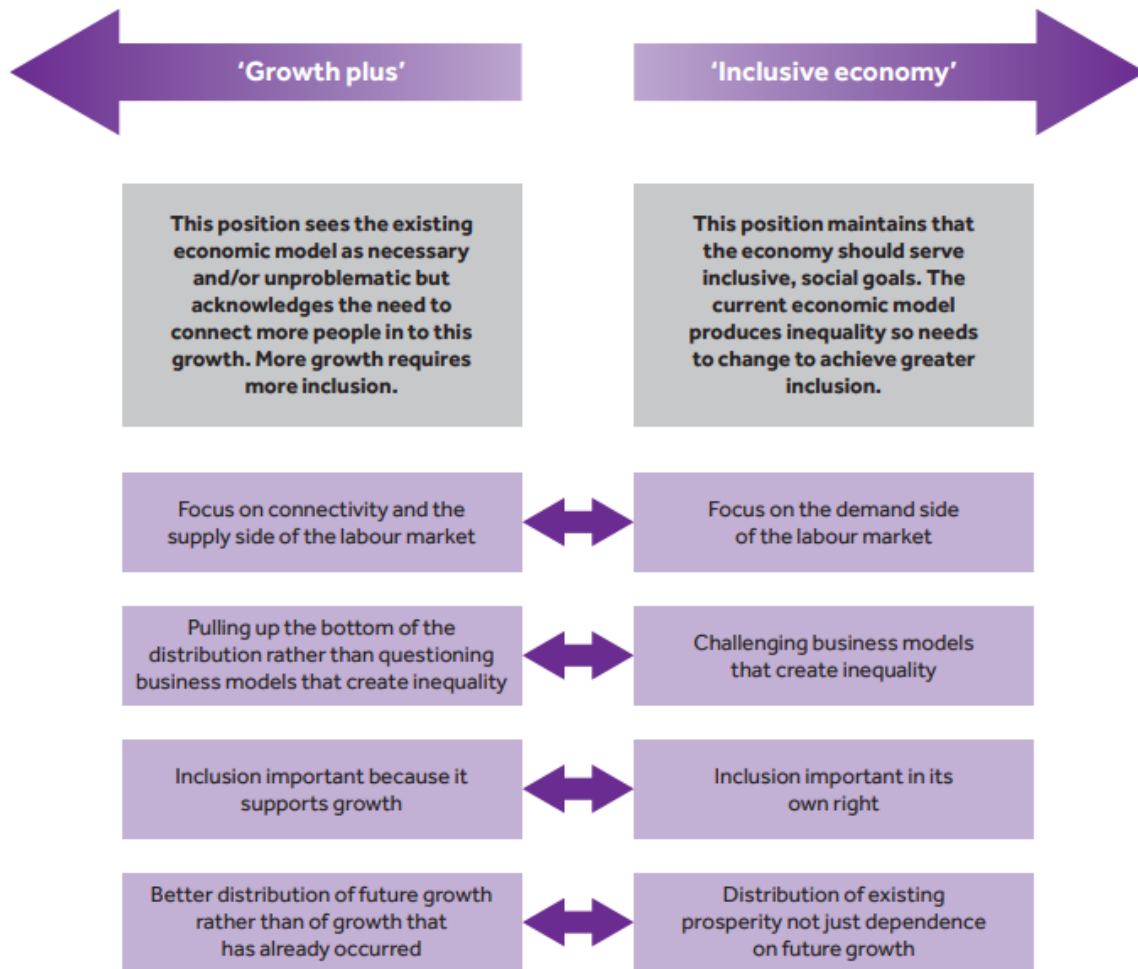
Broadly speaking, of the definitions are located somewhere on a spectrum ranging from what could be described as “growth plus”, which emphasises an orthodox approach to supporting growth but with efforts to connect people to its opportunities, and an “inclusive economy” position, which emphasises the need to hardwire inclusivity into the growth model itself. The basic principles of these positions are expressed below.

⁹ World Economic Forum Insight Report (2015) p. 1

¹⁰ Scottish Government, ‘Scotland’s Economic Strategy’, *Scottish Government* (2015)

¹¹ RSA Inclusive Growth Commission Final Report (2017) p. 6

Figure 1. Different Interpretations of Inclusive Growth



Source: 'Towards Inclusive Growth in Greater Manchester', Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit (October 2016)

Our view is that the challenges faced in Barking & Dagenham – and nationally – indicate that to achieve Inclusive Growth requires rethinking the current growth model. In particular, while the emphasis on improving the supply side of the labour market is critically important (e.g. enhancing workforce skill levels), its impact will always be muted if the demand side of the labour market goes unchanged (e.g. sector mix, business models, occupational pathways, job design and so on). It is also true that a mostly private sector model of housing delivery is very unlikely to be able to deliver the scale of affordable housing needed to keep the cost-of-living manageable. The creation of BeFirst represents a direct response to this challenge.

Inclusive Growth for people in places

Drawing on the evidence and experience set out above, a key next task for the Council, with its partners, is to articulate a vision, definition and framework for Inclusive Growth that is distinctive to Barking and Dagenham – and which can galvanise, coalesce and drive action.

To inform this task, we outline below what an approach to Inclusive Growth that delivers for both people and place might look like. At root, a coherent and effective approach must attend

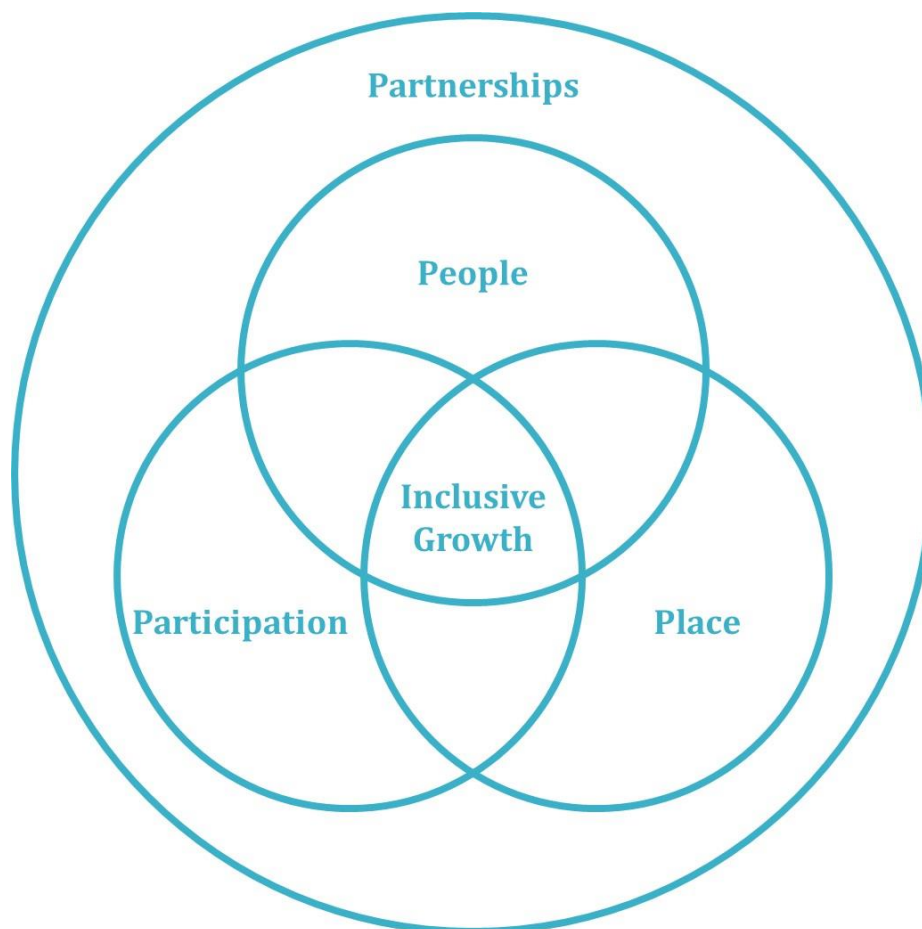
to three key dimensions: the **material**, the **social** and the **democratic**. In other words, it must make people financially better off, in particular those on low to middle incomes; it must improve people's well-being and quality of life, through good public services, social infrastructure and a sense of community; and it must increase people's sense of agency and control over their life, through mechanisms that give people a stake and say in the changes taking place around them.

Drawing on these insights, and organised around the key 'lenses' of Inclusive Growth, below we present priority areas for action:

- **People:** action is needed across the supply and demand sides of the labour market to ensure that residents have decent work that supports their material wellbeing and puts pounds in their pockets. A commitment to Inclusive Growth means focusing on steps that spread the benefits of growth to those on lower (or no) incomes. Therefore, improving access to work and to opportunities to progress in work is essential. Helping people to improve their skills in a way which supports better employment prospects is also crucial, as is stimulating the demand side of the labour market to encourage companies to create more and better quality jobs. In addition there are a set of cost of living issues which affect people's prosperity, especially the affordability of housing, childcare and transport.
- **Place:** well-being is not purely about employment, economic or material concerns. Therefore a framework for pursuing Inclusive Growth also requires a focus on what are sometimes referred to as 'quality of life' issues. This encompasses factors associated with the local environment (including the built environment), the quality of housing, provision of public services, crime and safety issues, other public goods like parks and open spaces, as well as a strong, cohesive local community life. In a traditional economic growth model, the assumption is that increased purchasing power and better market provision will address at least some of these other needs over time. However, a comprehensive definition of Inclusive Growth would require explicit attention to be paid to securing outcomes related to these factors.
- **Participation:** in addition to improving material and social outcomes for people, a framework for Inclusive Growth must also be concerned with *how* those outcomes are achieved. In short, it matters whether they are achieved through passive paternalism or secured through the active participation, agency – and effort – of people themselves. The latter is likely to have a far bigger and more enduring impact. Too often, economic and political decisions are taken without proper involvement of the people most affected by them (leading to poor decisions or decisions that have, or are perceived to have, insufficient legitimacy). Therefore, processes and institutions which embed local ownership of political, economic and social decision making should be a crucial element of any Inclusive Growth strategy. This should extend into the economic sphere, via business models and institutional arrangements that encourage local ownership, such as cooperatives and community interest companies.
- **Partnerships:** finally, Inclusive Growth cannot be brought about by any one actor or agency (and certainly not by a local council operating in isolation). To state the obvious,

inclusive growth outcomes in any part of the country depend significantly on the policies of the national government and the wider economy. However, our strong contention is that local systems can make a real difference – especially where public, private, voluntary sectors work together and with the local community around some shared ambitions and concerns. A effective framework must include an active and collaborative community of local stakeholders working towards Inclusive Growth, who share insights and coordinate their efforts to maximise the impact of interventions.

It is crucial to note that these four elements – or lenses – are not mutually exclusive. Indeed the aim should be to develop a strategy, with co-ordinated policies, actions and interventions, which connect across them and mutually reinforce one another.



Defining success

The Borough Manifesto vision commits to ensuring ‘no-one is left behind’ and calls for cross-cutting action across ten core themes – with a ‘wheel’ of targets and metrics to track progress over the next two decades. This provides the backdrop to both the vision and goals for an Inclusive Growth framework in Barking and Dagenham (particularly the themes relating to employment, skills, enterprise, housing and the environment):

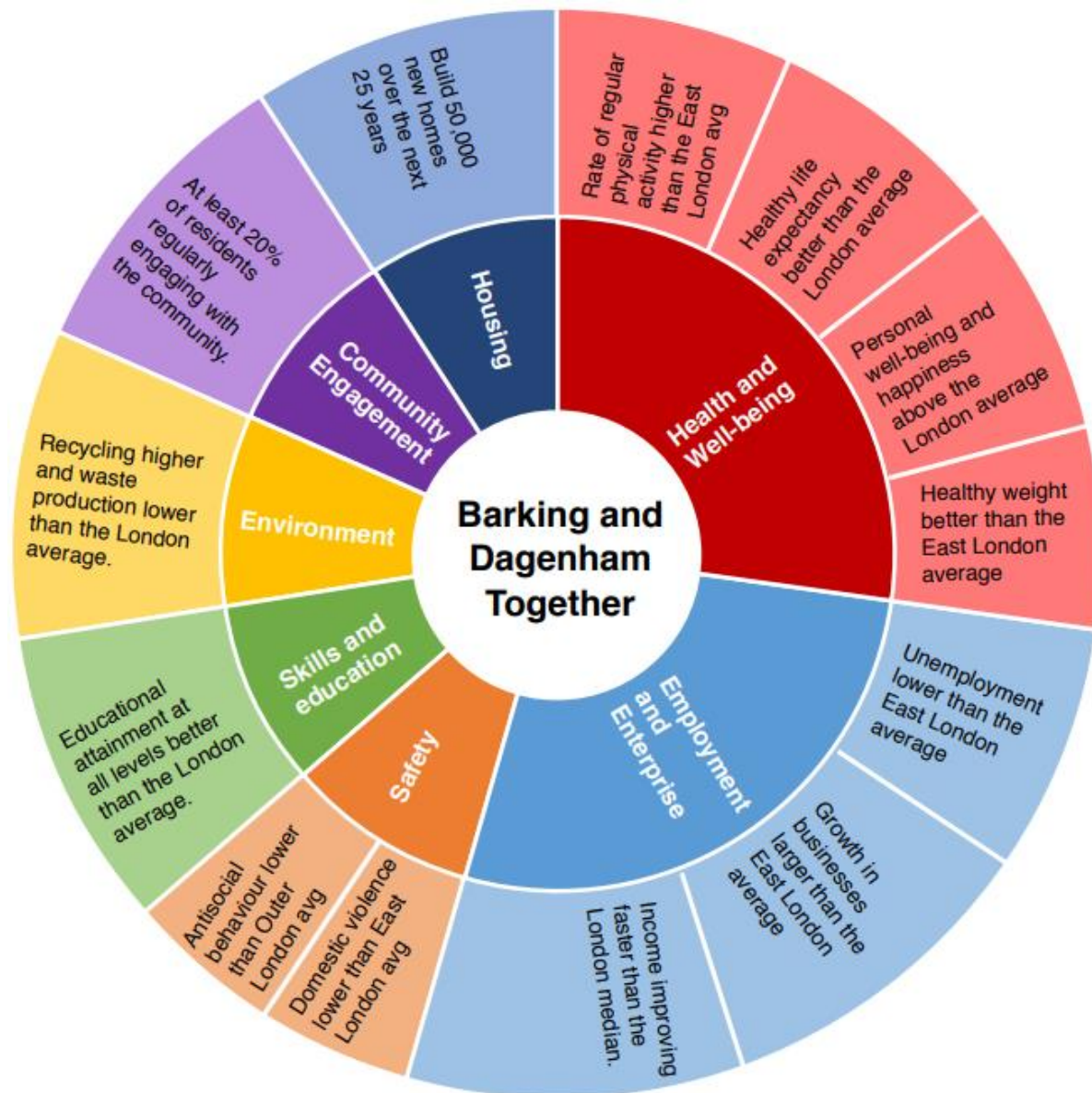
Figure 2. Borough Manifesto: Aspirations



Source: LBBD (2017)

The Borough Manifesto also establishes a number of target areas, as shown below.

Figure 3. Borough Manifesto: Themes and Targets



Source: LBBD (2017)

The Borough Manifesto sets out clearly the Borough’s aspirations and objectives. The task of an Inclusive Growth framework is to support the achievement of these aspirations, by setting out how best to achieve these in light of the failure of the existing growth model.

Towards an Inclusive Growth Framework for London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

To summarise, the above analysis makes clear the following:

- Inclusive Growth is important both to ensuring that all residents benefit from growth, and to supporting stronger growth rates in the first place.

- Given the extensive physical regeneration planned across Barking and Dagenham, ensuring that ‘people’ issues are given as much focus as ‘place’ development is essential to ensuring that local residents benefit from growth.
- There is no single or fixed definition of Inclusive Growth. The Council will need to develop one which fits the needs and circumstances of the Borough. This needs to recognise that Inclusive Growth has three key dimensions. It is about improving people’s material prosperity, enhancing their well-being and quality of life, and deepening their sense of agency and control over their life and the world around them.
- The Borough Manifesto provides a strong basis for developing an Inclusive Growth framework for the borough. A coherent and comprehensive framework would develop and connect activity across people, place, participation and partnership issues.

Drawing on these insights, the next section sets out how we suggest LBBDD best build on the real progress made over the last couple of years in pursuit of its ambition for Inclusive Growth. Specifically, we suggest a series of ‘grand challenges’ and the areas the Borough should focus on next in seeking to address them. These recognise the limitations of the traditional growth model and aim to help Barking and Dagenham to deliver on the Borough Manifesto.

3 Inclusive Growth in Barking and Dagenham

We have been asked to consider what an ambitious but achievable Inclusive Growth approach for Barking & Dagenham might look like.

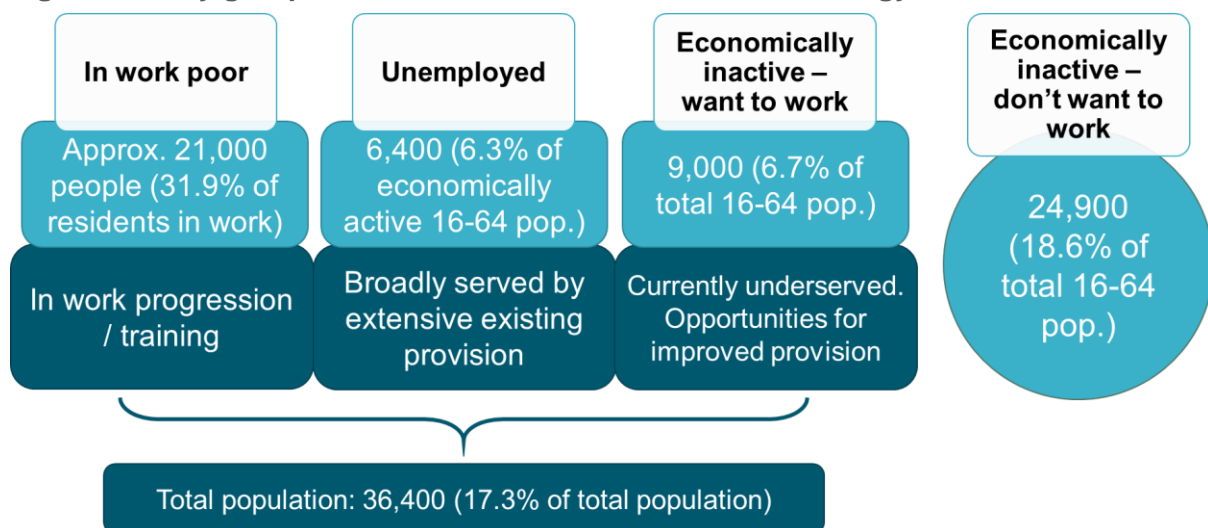
Our response is a series of five Grand Challenges stretching across the dimensions of people, place and participation – and in recognition that progress will depend on a partnership of public, private and voluntary sector, working with residents. These challenges build on the recommendations of the original Growth Commission, but identify the areas we believe are currently getting in the way of the Borough realising its Inclusive Growth ambitions. In relation to each, we make a number of practical suggestions for where to get started in addressing these challenges, consolidating the phenomenal progress made in recent times.

Inclusive Growth for whom?

The five Grand Challenges are framed by an analytical understanding about who an effective approach to pursuing Inclusive Growth is aiming to benefit.

The diagram below shows that there are approximately 36,400 people of working age living in Barking and Dagenham (19% of the total Borough population) who are either unemployed and actively seeking, economically inactive, but wanting a job, or who are working but whose low income means they are still classified below the poverty line. Achieving inclusive growth aims to benefit the whole population (and these population groups are dynamic and change over time). However, Barking and Dagenham will not be able to claim success unless there are demonstrable and beneficial impacts from its efforts for these groups of residents.

Figure 4. Key groups of residents for Inclusive Growth strategy



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (2018), ONS Population Estimates (2017), ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2017). The specific figures relate to numbers at these particular points in time.

These groups of residents will have different needs. Broadly speaking, those who are already in work will need support to sustain employment and progress in their careers. They may also be seeking more hours of work and / or a more secure contract of employment, as associated benefits (like a pension or statutory entitlements). This will require a focus on workforce skill levels, ladders of advancement within firms or across sectors, or the sectoral and occupational mix in the local economy (plus attention to wider issues of job quality and employment rights). It will also mean addressing the barriers that residents in this position can face in accessing a wider range of job opportunities, like transport and childcare.

The majority of those who are classified as unemployed will not require significant additional support to find work relatively quickly, especially while the London labour market remains as tight as it is today (though of course a recession would change that). This so-called 'job ready' group is where mainstream employment support – whether provided by the state, private or voluntary sectors – tends to focus most heavily. However, in a significant number of cases, the unemployed will enter work that is poorly paid, insecure, and without the reasonable prospect of progression. Hence the growing numbers facing in-work poverty.

In contrast, many of those who are longer-term unemployed, or classified as economically inactive but wanting to work, will require more significant support to get back to work. For many in this group, caring responsibilities, or long-term health conditions and/or disabilities create real and significant barriers to employment. For others, issues relating to housing, debt, or a lack of confidence or motivation are most likely to get in the way. Similarly, employers may be more reluctant to hire those with less recent labour market experience or to create jobs which work for those needing particular forms of flexibility (e.g. related to working patterns, job design, training requirements etc).

These are complex issues and more work will be needed to understand how they overlap and intersect given the particular circumstances in Barking and Dagenham. This must also explore how residents, employers and wider support agencies understand and interpret the challenges, drawing on insight from real lived experience. This would also shed greater light on the aspirations of residents who are economically inactive but do not currently state a desire to for paid work (and what a strategy for inclusive growth might mean for them).

Grand Challenges

One: Building Sustainable Communities

Rediscovering the New Town spirit. Building communities not just houses. Renewing the fabric of old estates and grasping the opportunity of new developments to shape great places to live. Making both truly green and sustainable for the 21st century.

The Becontree estate provides a pioneering example of the contribution that urban development can make to shaping places and improving the lives of working Londoners.

Almost a century since construction began on the Becontree, the scale of development planned in Barking and Dagenham creates the opportunity to re-imagine urban development for the 21st Century. This means building the homes Londoners need, at a range of sizes, tenures and price points; ensuring high quality design and the provision of essential physical and social infrastructure; and hard-wiring sustainability via transport, not least walking and cycling, to energy efficiency and decentralised renewable energy generation. It also means maximising levels of participation, with residents having a real stake and voice in the changes taking place around them.

These principles should run through planning policy and drive all physical development and regeneration taking place across the Borough, especially in those areas that will see large scale residential expansion over the next 10 to 20 years (such as Barking Town Centre, Castle Green, Beam Park and the Ford Stamping Plant). The borough has a unique opportunity to bring these ideas to life in the old and the new of Barking and Dagenham: the Becontree estate and Barking Riverside. The former was London's largest housing estate when it was built nearly 100 years ago; the latter is London's largest housing development today. Each bring distinctive challenges and opportunities, but both are fundamental to the task of building sustainable communities in the Borough today.

Barking Riverside, the Becontree estate, and all other residential development planned in the Borough must achieve the highest possible standards of both design and sustainability; in relation to buildings and places. This is about quality of life, the cost of living, and the future of the planet. The borough has great foundations to build upon, including an energy services company (B&D Energy) that is supplying heat and power on new developments, and Beam Energy, a white label provider offering cleaner, cheaper energy for householders compared to the Big Six. But there is much more to do to improve the local environment, tackle fuel poverty and shift to carbon-free sources of energy.

Your challenge is to renew and restore old estates, helping existing communities in ways that bring them together, while developing new communities in new estates that are sustainable for the future. We suggest you start on the most iconic old and new areas of the Borough by:

- Working with local residents to co-produce a ten year plan to renew and restore the Becontree estate to coincide with its 100th anniversary in 2021. This should be shaped around an ambition for the Becontree to become an exemplar of a zero carbon, smart, healthy 21st century garden city. Combined with celebrations to mark the history of the estate and the people who have lived there, this plan should look at improvements to public realm, street scape, walking and cycling routes, housing conditions, parks and open spaces, as well as opportunities to reduce the estate's carbon footprint and to generate renewable sources of energy. In order to avoid mistakes made through piecemeal changes in the past, this plan should be developed as a coherent whole. A masterplan and design guide is needed to ensure that new development really complements the existing urban form. It should also be designed and delivered with local residents, so that development and behaviour seek to recapture some of the bonds of responsibility, civic pride and neighbourliness on which the social fabric of the estate was originally built.

- Taking stock of progress on Barking Riverside, including interrogating the current masterplan to ensure it sets the framework for the development of a truly healthy, vibrant and sustainable ‘new town’ on the Thames. The original Commission was concerned that the plans were heavily housing-led and that adding other uses, including business, plus greater social infrastructure, would add value to the area. We believe these remain pertinent points, notwithstanding the efforts made to get this very large project moving after so many previous false starts. Now there is a solid foundation in place, the focus of the council, BeFirst and the developer should be on the housing mix and build out rate, transport links within Riverside itself and out to other key destinations, and the provision of physical and social infrastructure to promote well-being and community spirit. There should also be a strong focus on the integration of new and existing communities south of the A13, and links to existing and planned employment opportunities across this vast area of ex-industrial land to ensure Riverside is an economically vibrant place.
- Grasping a set of opportunities for Barking and Dagenham to be the ‘green capital of the capital’. Specific next steps should include working out how to turbo-charge B&D Energy to expand its district heating network across significant new developments in the Borough, and rapidly growing Beam Energy’s customer base. Beyond this, the council should undertake a feasibility and business development study on other potential green investments and initiatives. Taking account of technological advances and market trends, this should explore opportunities associated with: energy efficiency; decentralised energy generation (including through solar PV with battery storage); infrastructure to support the expansion of electric vehicles; and opportunities to develop ‘energy from waste’ (in particular options that will generate local jobs and income for the Council). To pioneer a truly green agenda, these business development opportunities should be combined with efforts to increase recycling rates from their very low current levels and to improve the local environment (e.g. through enabling more walking and cycling, and making the most of the Borough’s fantastic parks and open spaces).

Two: Creating a New Enterprise Agenda

Expanding the local business base, improving job density, backing SME’s and start-ups, developing local strengths in key growth sectors, and getting business to play its vital civic leadership role.

The Borough has the fourth lowest rate of job density in London, and population growth has outstripped jobs growth since 2014. There simply aren’t enough jobs in the Borough to satisfy the existing population, let alone those residents who might arrive in the years to come. Too many of the jobs that *are* in the Borough are concentrated in lower value, lower paying sectors and occupations. More than nine in ten (93%) of the businesses in the Borough employ nine people or fewer, while the Borough has not yet carved itself out a distinctive place in the wider London economy that evolves from its proud industrial past. That said, there many thousands of jobs within a 30 minute commute of the borough, in key regional employment centres (e.g. Stratford, Canary Wharf and Tilbury etc) – requiring steps to connect residents with wider opportunities to work (see challenge three below).

The Council has set out an ambition to generate 20,000 jobs over the next 20 years. However, it has not yet given this goal anything like the same attention, focus, resourcing or institutional weight as the accompanying target to build 50,000 homes over the same period. Specifically, the Borough lacks a clear sense of its place in the economic future of East London, a dedicated economic development function, a co-ordinated business support offer and an effective employer-led organisation representing the interests of local business.

Nevertheless, new employment opportunities in 21st century industries are on their way to Barking and Dagenham. For example the film studios and a data centre are coming to Dagenham East, and there are the beginnings of a creative enterprise cluster in Barking Town Centre and down the River Roding. Regeneration plans will see the creation of significant new commercial space, including affordable workspace. Rates of new business start up in the Borough are high and Barking and Dagenham benefits from a number of organisations committed to supporting enterprise, start-ups and small business across a range of sectors: the Barking Enterprise Centre (BEC), Care City, Participatory City and Digilab, as well as the wider voluntary sector.

The Borough also benefits from strong educational institutions committed to raising workforce skill levels and building stronger connections between research, learning, innovation and the economy: Barking and Dagenham College, Coventry University London and the University of East London (as well as the council's own Adult College). These are precious resources – and partners – to work with in building a stronger and more vibrant economic base for the borough and its residents.

Your challenge is to develop an enterprise agenda that matches the ambition to create 20,000 jobs over the next 20 years, focused on shifting the local economy up the productivity and value chain; expanding the local business base; developing local strengths in growing, higher value sectors; and supporting your community of start-ups and small businesses to flourish, creating new and better jobs for local people.

To approach this challenge we suggest you focus on the following areas:

- Radically improving your engagement with local businesses, at every level, drawing on effective models from elsewhere and business leaders from across London to help provide early momentum. Barking and Dagenham lacks a strong local employer voice, with the Chamber of Commerce seeming to lack visibility and impact. This is a major gap as it hampers strategic dialogue between the Council and the business community about issues of local concern. It also makes it hard for other local institutions (including the college and universities) to engage with business on more than an ad hoc basis. The solution to this must be employer led, but as a first step, the Council should establish a business forum, inviting all local firms, large and small, to be part of conversation. More focused engagement with employers should also take place around key sectors (see below). Finally, the Council, via Community Solutions, should improve its 'street level' links with local employers to understand local recruitment patterns and connect residents looking for work to local job opportunities (and to support employers to meet recruitment needs).

- Shaping a high quality business support offer, focused in particular on start-ups and SMEs, building on the work of existing local organisations (like the Barking Enterprise Centre, Care City, Digilab and Participatory City). The offer should be led by the needs of business and entrepreneurs, and be adaptable to changing circumstances. But it should address specific issues that we know often get in the way of sustainability and/or expansion, such as workspace, finance, advice and support, and access to contracts and customers. Within this, there is potential for a significant expansion of affordable workspace via new mixed use developments. Consideration should be given to how this should be marketed, managed and maintained to best effect. This should include ensuring the supply of commercial space to meet the needs of newly establishing and incoming companies, with a particular focus on flexible easy-in, easy-out space for smaller and professional services companies, including modern day makers, creatives and small scale manufacturers. The business support offer should also encourage the development of co-operatives and social enterprises which provide local employment and meet vital social needs. Finally, Barking & Dagenham has no Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). The Council should engage employers in major centres and industrial estates to determine whether BID models would be appropriate for these areas.
- Developing local strengths in particular key sectors that can provide good quality job opportunities and progression pathways for local people. The aim should be to bring a degree of co-ordination in those sectors between the plans and priorities of firms, training providers, trade unions, other partners, as well as the current and potential future workforce. This will be crucial to addressing workforce skill gaps facing employers. It will also facilitate the development of training pathways that enable workers to progress in their careers. It makes sense to focus these efforts in sectors where Barking and Dagenham has existing strengths and growth potential, where there are clear workforce challenges, and where the basis for such coordination is in place. There are three that stand out: Creative industries (given the film studios and plans for a Creative Enterprise Zone, alongside the challenge of connecting local people to these opportunities); construction (given the scale of development in the pipeline, alongside the challenge of Brexit and a traditionally fragmented industry); and care (given the public sector's role and the presence locally of Care City, alongside the challenge of recruitment and low pay).
- Engaging with Ford about the next generation of automotive technology. The Ford plant in Dagenham is currently the company's largest centre of diesel engine manufacture globally. As the demand for diesel technology declines, and given the challenges of Brexit, working with Ford to refit the factory to produce the sustainable automotive components of the future presents an opportunity, if the company are willing to engage in that dialogue locally. While many Ford Dagenham workers today do not live in the Borough, the firm remains a major source of employment in Barking & Dagenham, providing 3,500 jobs, so it is vital that the Council continues to seek an engagement with the company about the future of the plant and the local economy.

Three: A New Deal With Decent Jobs for Everyone who Can Work

Campaigning to make work pay, connecting people to job opportunities, driving up workforce skill levels, maximising public sector levers, and testing out innovative approaches to ensuring those who have been left behind have the opportunity to contribute and find their place in the world of work.

As noted above, some 15,400 people are unemployed or economically inactive but looking for work. There is also a larger cohort of 24,900 people who are economically inactive and not seeking a job. Some of this is due to caring responsibilities and long-term health conditions or disabilities. But some of it, in our view, is a result of discouraged jobseekers having fallen into long term worklessness: people who want to work but struggle to secure and retain work in the modern labour market.

These barriers grow the longer individuals are out of work, and they are compounded by living in communities where such experiences are commonplace and may have become normalised. However, while we recognise there are significant challenges to changing this situation, it is reasonable to think that there are thousands of people in the Borough who would welcome a helping hand to re-connect to the labour market. It will need a long-term commitment to supporting people into work and through the ups and downs of working life. And it will require testing out more active and interventionist steps to make the prospect of work real and meaningful. People need to see results so that they don't become disheartened.

For those people who are in employment, work needs to pay better. The Living Wage is helping many lower paid workers but in-work poverty remains a big challenge, one which evidence suggests will be placing significant strain on the health and wellbeing of residents and their families. Increasing pay, in the private sector as well as the public sector, and in jobs outside as well as inside the Borough, is a major priority. Equally, addressing issues such as childcare, transport and workforce skills will be essential to enabling local residents to access the labour market in the first place, and then to ensuring that lower paid starter jobs aren't jobs for life, but instead support broader progression. **Your challenge is to create and make stick the notion of a New Deal with decent jobs for everyone who wants to work; bearing down on long-term unemployment and worklessness.** It follows that you should focus on:

- Campaigning relentlessly, locally and nationally, for higher wages and better conditions as well as for greater investment in the improved transport, skills, childcare and elder care services that are crucial to enabling people to take advantage of job opportunities within the Borough and across the East London labour market.
- Maximising the Council's leverage in creating good quality job opportunities for local people, and encouraging other public sector partners to do the same. The Council already pays its apprentices the London Living Wage and is taking steps to maximise the number of apprentices it employs. It should build on these steps with a strong policy on social value, so that it uses its considerable procurement spend to drive local hiring, Living Wage

pay and apprenticeships. Other local public sector partners should do the same. For example BeFirst should extract commitments to the use of local labour and local supply chains in its construction contracts. Similarly, the scale of development planned in the Borough creates huge opportunities to secure local employment and training opportunities for residents via s106 agreements, as part of a sectoral focus on construction. The Council, the NHS and wider care providers, should embed employment as a key outcome for ‘people’ services, including health and social care. This should be linked to exploring approaches such as job carving for residents with a Learning Disability, and the Individual Placement and Support model which has proven effective in enabling employment for people with significant mental health conditions.

- Testing out innovative models of back to work support for those who have been out of employment for a long time as part of, or alongside, the Community Solutions model. This could include: making available small flexible grants to pay for one off items; providing support to turn someone’s passion or talent into a money-making venture (potentially linked to the work of Participatory City); and/or the direct creation of paid work placements either with local employers or as part of locally organised projects to undertake work of social value (such as tied to the regeneration of the physical and social infrastructure of the Borough), learning from similar effective programmes like the Future Jobs Fund. Moreover, the Council, via Community Solutions, should build collaborative partnerships with other providers, including in the voluntary sector to create an strong borough wide employment support offer. Finally the Council should work with these partners to access opportunities emerging from the devolution of the Adult Education Budget and post-ESF arrangements (as part of Local London).
- Developing a more in-depth understanding of how issues related to skills, transport and childcare act as barriers to work, and exploring what action could be taken locally to address them. Workforce skill levels are very low by London standards, which makes the case for a large scale effort to re-engage the working age population with life-long learning and ‘second chance’ education (especially aimed at Level 3, where the labour market returns to education are clear, including through maximising the impact of the Apprenticeship levy). Anecdotal evidence from stakeholders, and similar evidence from other London Boroughs, suggests that the costs of childcare may force many people out of the labour market. It is likely that this is true in Barking and Dagenham as well, particularly given the Borough’s young demographic. The Council should undertake an audit of the state of childcare and informal caring in the Borough, with a view to understanding how it affects people’s ability to work.

Four: Preparing our young people for the future

The best teachers in London, more Teach First graduates, more fair tutoring, leveraging City institutions, and improved pathways from school to further learning, higher education and employment, with positive health and wellbeing of pupils at the heart.

At the heart of the issue of Inclusive Growth is the fact that the Barking & Dagenham schools system has not until relatively recently seen strong academic results. That there has been such progress is remarkable.

But the London Challenge effect was more muted here than elsewhere, reflecting the limited role that education has traditionally played in the lives of residents. We are at the foot of the mountain given the entrenched attitudes to education of large parts of the indigenous community and the depth of transformation needed in the school system. The fact remains that Barking and Dagenham is ranked joint 28th of 32 London Boroughs for KS2 attainment (based on provisional 2018 results), and ranked joint 27th in terms of the proportion of outstanding/good schools as at the end of March 2018. One consequence of this is that the Borough has the highest rate of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) of any London Borough, affecting 3.5% of 16 and 17 year olds.

Strong progress is being made. There is no lack of ambition for Schools in the Council's draft strategy. But, as it acknowledges, there is much left to be done. The strategy sets out a programme for continued detailed application of sound management, alongside interventions to help the schools of the Borough evolve and grow to accommodate the burgeoning school population. So why is education one of the big challenges? Because it is so central to life opportunities, and in our view, more could and must be done. The strategy the Council has presented is appropriately education and school-led in most respects, but it leaves a range of the recommendations made in the original Commission, which we believe are still valid, unaddressed.

Your challenge is to explore the potential of every partner organisation, every scheme and every funding source to bolster the institutional, financial and human capacity of providers of pre-school, school and post school education. We think that means focussing on:

- Working together with partners, parents and pupils to identify opportunities for tackling root causes and reducing inequality of outcomes at all life stages from early years to young adulthood. The council, schools, parents and pupils all agree that children and young people feeling happy, supported and having positive experiences of wellbeing and resilience is important to them. Moreover, national research tells us that pupils with positive health and wellbeing tend to achieve better academically. In order to make sure all children and young people are given the best opportunity to achieve, partners in B&D should explore opportunities to work together in delivering a stronger early years offer, enabling greater access and efficacy of child mental health provision, and reducing the safety and exploitation risks posed to young people from their context such as school, peers and community.
- Revisiting the growth commission's original recommendations, where they relate to education, more thoroughly, with external challenge. This should ensure that an ecosystem is created in which schools, supported by the BDSIP, the Council and others, have as many tools at their disposal as needed and more than are set out in the draft strategy. A good start in this regard could also be made by identifying further examples of

best practice from the UK and elsewhere and applying the lessons to initiatives in Barking & Dagenham.

- Bolstering the collective capability of the Council, school and other partners to innovate beyond the school gate through the Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership.
- Addressing the drop out rate from education and learning post 16 and reducing the NEET rate among young people, by developing clearer pathways for young people from compulsory education into further and higher learning, or employment, coupled with work experience and mentoring opportunities to build their social networks and connections.
- Revisiting from first principles the under fives challenges facing the Borough where the least progress seems to have been made.

Five: Beyond Civic Foundations; a New Civic Culture

Building a new civic culture, underpinned by a public narrative about growth and regeneration that connects the past with the present and the future; driven by transparency and participation at every level.

We are clear that for the Borough to realise its Inclusive Growth ambitions, it must build a more reciprocal relationship with its citizens, one that challenges the paternalism of its Fordist past. We have recognised the important ways in which the Council has started to build these bridges, from the creation of the Borough Manifesto to the the emerging civil society strategy and the investment made in local civil society organisations. But more needs to be done, particularly in relation to the significant development and regeneration that is planned across the Borough.

For many residents; and particularly the Borough's ever more ambitious, connected and creative young people; the pace and scale of change will be exciting and energising. These residents recognise the need for investment, as well as the opportunities that this investment could create for them and their families. For others; and particularly those in more established communities whose families may have lived in the Borough for generations; change can feel frightening. It is within these communities that more toxic narratives take route, chiefly that regeneration is not for local people, and that any change will be to the benefit of new residents not them. The Council needs to create its own story about how and why the Borough is changing, and what these changes will mean for existing residents.

We have heard enough from the Council's political and officer leadership to know that this narrative exists, and that it is highly compelling. We have also seen enough of the Borough's reform programme to know that it is backed up by a real and substantive policy agenda that is inclusive (although more needs to be done, as highlighted in recommendations above). But it lacks clarity and consistency, and is inaccessible to most residents and indeed many officers tasked with implementing the Council's programme.

A new public narrative for growth and regeneration must be clear about the choices that have been made, and why. To give this narrative real credibility, the Council must be as open as possible about developments that are either planned or in the pipeline. Residents must be able to see what is coming in their community. And they must be able to shape these changes. If the Council doesn't give residents real agency in design and planning decisions (both at the level of individual scheme and at the level of masterplan) as well as decisions as they relate to broader 'people' issues (from skills policy to childcare), they risk reinforcing old paternalistic patterns. In practice this means adopting wide ranging and ambitious approaches to participation, including, where possible, approaches that give residents the power to lead development and regeneration (physical and social) for themselves.

Your challenge is to build a new public narrative for growth and regeneration in the Borough, supported by a game changing approach to community engagement; modelling both as part of the 100th anniversary of the Becontree estate.

- This must start with the production of a unified 'story of place', Borough and Me, that links concrete policies and plans to a narrative that local residents can understand and absorb. This would be the glue that holds together all of the specific policies and plans which are aimed at pursuing Inclusive Growth; the golden thread that runs between physical projects like Barking Riverside and Dagenham Film Studios and the residents of Thames View or the Becontree estate. Borough and me should adopt creative and participatory methods in order to engage residents in this narrative, from competitions for local school children, to Borough wide bus tours targeted at local residents.
- Alongside Borough and me, the Council and BeFirst need to work together in to develop an ambitious approach to working with local residents to shape and enhance masterplans and schemes. Critically, any approach should take as its starting point the desire to involve residents as early as possible in the design process, before important decisions have been made. It should also make use of the latest in spatial mapping and GIS technology so that residents can see, and access information about, all development activity in the Borough. A digital platform could provide the 'front door' to resident engagement with regeneration, increasing its reach and complimenting more traditional 'face-to-face' engagement mechanisms. While many Boroughs make use of this technology on a scheme by scheme basis, very few have adopted such a Borough-wide approach. This would represent a bold signal of the Council and BeFirst's joint commitment to participation.
- Beyond a much more ambitious approach to resident engagement, the Council and BeFirst should explore opportunities to work with residents as partners in growth and regeneration. In practice this means exploring development models like community land trusts (CLT's) that put residents in charge of decision making, asking them to take responsibility for raising finance and leading projects. The Council should work with local civil society partners to explore the feasibility of such approaches in the Borough, drawing on the expertise of the growing number of CLT's and other community led regeneration models in London and beyond. Whilst these approaches are only ever likely to represent a very small part of the answer, they would again provide a powerful signal of intent to civil society, residents and communities.

- An important test case for all of the above is the Becontree Estate, which has shaped the Borough's physical and social landscape since its inception and is treasured by its resident communities. Its construction, starting in 1921, transformed this part of London; so, the centenary anniversary provides a hugely powerful opportunity to model both the new narrative, and the depth of commitment to participation and community engagement. The Council and partners should work with residents to design and implement a programme of physical and social renewal, drawing heavily on the skills and resources of local people. The development of the plan should be itself be highly participatory, making use of the latest developments in deliberative policymaking (for examples citizens assemblies), whilst creating new and more collaborative structures (for example community benefit societies) that could facilitate community governance of the estate in the long term.



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