

# Barking & Dagenham

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

01 October 2021 to 31 March 2022

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# Inclusive Growth

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## Building new homes

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- On the latest figures, over 3,000 affordable homes will have been completed in the borough between May 2018 and March 2023. This figure includes affordable homes built by all providers operating in the borough. Be First is the largest builder of affordable homes in the borough, but residents will also benefit from a significant number of affordable homes built on Barking Riverside and those built by Housing Associations such as Clarion.
- Reside data shows that around 92% of their homes go to local people and with agreements in place for Registered Provider developments at 100% of first let for social rent properties.
- A large number of new homes were built by Be First completed in the previous six months, including: 95 new affordable homes on the former Sebastian Court site; over 200 new homes on the latest phase of the Gascoigne regeneration; and 169 new homes at the Crown House scheme in Barking Town Centre.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- In August, the Council received an additional £171m of affordable housing grant, the largest allocation of any London borough. This grant will fund additional affordable homes that will start on site between 2022 and 2026. The first schemes from this allocation will start in 2022/23.
- Housing delivery schemes in the Be First portfolio will be reviewed as a matter of priority. Inflation, material, and labour shortages are leading to construction delays. In some cases this will mean schemes in the pipeline will be unviable or plans need to be adapted. If any schemes are deemed unviable then new development plans will be sought for those sites.
- The Be First Business Plan completions due to happen this year include 159 units at Gascoigne East, six units at Mellish Close, and 56 units at Woodward Road.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- Construction delays owing to material and labour shortages, or difficulties in procuring from the supply chain. The war in Ukraine has caused additional material supply issues and construction cost inflation is a major risk which could delay the completion of new homes. In addition, increasing costs could jeopardise scheme viability hence why work is being undertaken to review schemes accordingly.

## Improving the quality and management of homes

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Council's landlord compliance position has improved since the self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing in February 2022. At the time of referral, the Council was non-compliant in all six of the main compliance areas. As of 30 April 2022, two of six of those areas remain non-compliant (electrical testing and fire risk assessments). Both areas are expected to be compliant at the end of Q3 2022/23.
- Responsive repair performance remains below target and we are working closely with BD Group on a comprehensive improvement plan which includes a reduction in the number of open repair jobs, improved reporting on emergency jobs and specific improvements relating to the approach in surveying works.
- Customer satisfaction with repairs remains significantly below target at 41.1% in April 2022 (up from 36.7% in March 2022). This is 45.9% below the target of 87% satisfaction. My Place is working collaboratively with BD Group to influence performance in this area with a key focus on 'right first time' and 'appointments made and kept' as these are key drivers of customer satisfaction.
- The average void turnaround time for General Needs properties in 2021/22 was 96.93 days. Performance has deteriorated from 2020/21 when average void turnaround time was 83.01 days and performance is considerably worse than in 2019/20, which was 45.07 days.
- The stock investment spends based on the Capital outturn for 2021/22 was £15.5m against a budget of £35m which shows the slippages and delays to completing Decent Homes works. The 97% target has not been met but should be by the time the programme completes with catch up activity this year and next. Presently, 93% of all council housing stock meets Decent Homes standard.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Achieve and maintain compliance in all landlord areas of health and safety including delivery of any remedial works following third party inspections.
- Continued working with BD Group to deliver on their service improvement plans covering disrepair, complaints, responsive repairs, and void works.
- Review and revamp My Place to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets the changing needs of residents and the regulatory environment.
- Ensure delivery of the Stock Investment Programme is optimised to underpin the Decent Homes Programme and provide residents with good quality and safe homes that they are proud to call home.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- BD Group lacking capacity and expertise to deliver the remedial works required to support the compliance position leading to further judgement by the Regulator of Social Housing.

- Cost of disrepair claims increasing due to delays in delivering good quality repairs in a timely manner.
- Increased levels of complaints due to poor or no repair could lead to increased scrutiny from the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- Loss of income from long standing voids not being filled quickly. Longer wait times for families in temporary accommodation affects placements into social housing.
- The Decent Homes target for end of 2022/23 will not met due to impact of delays to the Stock Investment Programme.

## Tackling Homelessness

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The total number of households in Temporary Accommodation was 1,399 as at end of Q4 21/22, down from 1,469 households at the start of 2020/21.
- The number of households in Private Sector Leased Temporary Accommodation was at 947, down from 1,086 at the start of 2020/21. This reduction resulted in a financial saving to the Council of more than £200,000.
- Rough sleeping numbers remain low with three people sleeping rough identified in the annual count and numbers remaining around this level on subsequent bi-monthly counts.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- The Private Sector Lease contract is in its final year and therefore needs to be tendered to enable the Council to fulfil our statutory homeless obligations. The procurement is underway and will be finalised by year end.
- £382,525 has been awarded through the Rough Sleeper Initiative fund. This money will be used to commission and recruit to deliver the Rough Sleeping Reduction Plan which aims to achieve a notional zero rough sleeper number by 2025.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- The cost-of-living crisis, no end to 'no fault' evictions, and the end of almost all protections against evictions in place during pandemic are all expected to have impact on demand for homelessness support. Between April and December 2021 there was an average of 157 new approaches each month, compared to an average of 191 approaches between January and April 2022. At current levels this would equate to an additional 408 approaches this year. It is anticipated approaches will increase further, risking Temporary Accommodation reductions and requiring greater spend on prevention (rent deposits and arrears clearance). To mitigate the risk we will step up support, targeting residents who are already struggling for financial awards through Household Support Fund grant, hardship and Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Some demands into homelessness services are attributed to the war in Ukraine, with those approaching due to break-down in relationships with family/sponsor or issues with property. Discussions are on-going with Home Office regarding these issues which are largely the result of the Home Office issuing Visas before checks are completed. Strong

cross-team working around DBS checks, property inspections, welfare visits and community support are helping to manage these issues.

## Providing homes for vulnerable residents

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Panels, set up to consider housing options for specific cases, continue to identify improved housing solutions for vulnerable residents and avoid cost escalation. There have been monthly panels since January 2022. Examples of outcomes include:
  - Placement in suitable Temporary Accommodation while specialist accommodation being made ready for family
  - Issue of immigration status resolved, enabling on-going housing support to be delivered
- The Brocklebank site has now been demolished and plans for development being finalised. Significant cost-avoidance for the Disability Service is invested in the successful redevelopment of the Brocklebank site which is a complex project with surrounding risks.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Set out proposals for the next phase of the vulnerable housing programme. An updated assessment of all vulnerable housing needs will comprise:
  - Updated assessments of vulnerable housing needs across all vulnerable groups (young people, career leavers, mental illness, old age, learning disability, physical disability, or other special reason).
  - Projected trends (growth or decline) over the next 15 to 20 years.
  - A updated review on current pathways into vulnerable housing and looking at the current stock and the tenure mix required to meet demand.
  - An asset review of potential builds and empty spaces.
- Continue to improve the pathways to approve and complete extensions and major adaptations to council homes.
- Complete the housing for older people review which will consider options for repurposing stock which is currently under-utilised. That stock can then be used to meet the housing needs for other vulnerable groups.

### 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.

- The vulnerable housing programme has no dedicated project support to drive this work forward. 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, career 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 LBBD better supports and provides the right housing to vulnerable residents. Currently proposals are being developed to ensure this work is sufficiently resourced over the next 12 months.

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

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

- The Council distributed £48m in Covid-19-related grants to local businesses between March 2020 and March 2022. Of this, over £300k in grants was provided to 86 local businesses who were supported through the Barking Enterprise Centre Business Recovery Programme to mitigate job losses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.
- The 'Make It Here' Film Barking and Dagenham programme, set up to deliver careers, employment, supply chain and community benefits linked to the new film studios, launched in March 2022. This includes a new integrated web platform (<https://filmbarkinganddagenham.com>) to promote the borough as a filming destination and help residents and businesses to understand opportunities in the recorded media sector.
- A Food Sector Development Lead and Food Education Co-ordinator were recruited to co-ordinate the development of a local food strategy linked to the relocation of the City of London Markets, which are expected to start operating in the borough from 2027. Key projects include a new Borough Food School to improve pathways into good jobs in the markets and wider food sector; a Good Food Economy Plan to improve access to affordable, nutritious, and sustainable food; and a food hub to support local food entrepreneurs and improve the food offer in Barking Town Centre.

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

- Launch the 360 and Roycraft House developments to provide new affordable workspace in Barking Town Centre.
- Working with Barking Enterprise Centre to develop the approach to supporting local businesses to manage costs and reduce carbon, including a two-year programme of workshops and support for energy intensive businesses, and access for up to 500 local businesses to a self-assessment tool to help them develop carbon reduction plans.
- Deliver learning and development for teachers and a flagship careers event for up to 800 local young people on opportunities in film under the 'Make It Here' programme; develop a crew list and database of relevant local businesses to promote to visiting productions; support the borough's World Cinema Film Festival; and provide courses for community groups to create short films, with post-production supported by Barking and Dagenham College.



- Recruit a Health and Social Care Co-ordinator to implement a set of interventions to improve pay and standards in adult social care, with actions to improve recruitment, retention, and career progression; develop the personal assistant workforce; launch a business support programme for the sector; and develop the funding and commissioning model to better support good quality jobs and services in adult homecare.
- Identify opportunities to grow the green economy in the borough to support net zero ambitions while creating more good jobs and supply chain opportunities for residents and local businesses. A review, currently being conducted by CAG Consulting, is due to report in Summer 2022.
- Map existing food-related initiatives and resources in the borough and engage residents and community organisations to inform the priorities and approach to developing the Good Food Economy Plan and partnership working with Company Drinks and Sustain.
- Review the approach to Social Value and procurement to maximise impact, including work to increase the number of local businesses whom we procure from.
- Submit a bid (led by Be First) to Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund to support improvements to Barking Town Centre including the development of a Meanwhile Food Hub and explore opportunities to secure further resources through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

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

- A decision by the City of London or Parliament not to approve the re-location of the wholesale markets would reduce the resources available for the food programme to the two fixed-term posts which have been recruited to.
- If the Levelling Up bids are unsuccessful there will be less resource to invest in the Barking Town Centre Strategy and Meanwhile Food Hub.

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

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

- Unemployment has come down from the peak of 8.5% between April 2020 and March 2021, but at 7.7% it is still the second highest in the country. 31.5% of residents are economically inactive, up from 25% before the pandemic. Over 11,000 economically inactive residents 'would like a job', up from 5,400 before March 2020.
- Barking and Dagenham was one of three unemployment hotspots alongside Blackpool and Walsall named as Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education 'Pathfinder' employment and skills pilot areas in the Levelling Up White Paper. This has not come with any additional funding or resource. Instead, the Council is working with the Department for Work and Pensions to map existing funding, identify gaps, and make recommendations for improvements in local employment and skills integration.
- The Job Shop achieved its strongest performance in 2019/20, with 1,251 residents supported into jobs. This reduced to 765 in 2020/21 due to Covid. In 2021-22, 856 residents were supported into work (including s106 outcomes).
- The Kickstart scheme, set up by the Government in September 2020 to prevent long term youth unemployment and 'scarring', closed in March 2022 for new starters, who will be supported until September 2022. The Employer Engagement Team worked with 40

employers to create 233 Kickstart places for local young people, over 207 of which were filled. Wraparound support has been provided to 199 of these places to ensure sustained job outcomes with ongoing work to improve the pathways available at the end of their placements, including apprenticeships. The Council has placed 30 young people at the end of their Kickstart placement, 14 of whom have progressed into permanent employment.

- Residents are being supported to access opportunities in growth sectors, including a Community Renewal Fund programme supporting up to 500 residents to understand and access opportunities in the green economy.
- Through membership of the Inclusive Growth Network, support has been secured to design an innovative Social Value programme to create more supported training and work placements for people in receipt of social care support. A focus will be creating opportunities for those with learning disabilities and mental health conditions.
- The Adult College currently has 1,708 learners, 1,117 of which are unemployed. This compares with 1,323 (875 unemployed) in 2020/21 and 1,341 (796 unemployed) in 2019-20. A new training facility, the Barking Riverside Innovation Centre, opened in January 2022 to support entry routes into construction and the green economy (e.g. waste management) for residents. The Centre is in the process of seeking accreditation as a Construction Skills Certification Scheme test centre.

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

- Work with the Department for Work and Pensions to develop the concept and approach to the Pathfinder, alongside efforts to work with them and others to continue to drive up registration and employment outcomes for residents as the economy recovers – including work to improve visibility of employment and training pathways in target sectors.
- Pilot and roll out the proposed supported employment scheme with BD Group, HR, Community Solutions and Adult Care and Support Services.
- Promote greater apprenticeship take-up among local employers by re-launching and promoting the Council's Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme through a series of events and development of a prospectus outlining the local offer of apprenticeship courses available at the Adult College, CU London and Barking and Dagenham College.
- Establish the Barking Riverside Innovation Centre as a Construction Skills Certification Scheme test centre, developing its offer more broadly, and working with Be First to improve the co-ordination and visibility of work experience, training, and supply chain opportunities in construction.
- Recruit to a new strategic post to oversee economic development, the employment and skills strategy, and operational work and skills services. The postholder will review the overall employment and skills offer and long-term financial sustainability options for the service.

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

- The impact of inflation could impact on businesses who might be less willing to hire and train local people in a difficult economic climate.
- Funding and capacity risks relating to achieving 1,000 jobs in 2022/23 through the Job Shop:

- Local NHS commissioners are changing the way they commission employment support for people with mental health conditions, putting funding for the Vocational Support Team at risk for the next financial year.
- European employment and skills funding is winding down, with uncertainties around how these will be replaced – including how the Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply announced by the Government will be allocated.
- Potential gaps in the Work and Skills Team’s funding if other bids in the pipeline are not successful.

## Safe and liveable neighbourhoods

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- A Barking Town Centre Action Plan and working group is in place and delivering long term solutions to improve safety and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in this location.
- Performance has improved in several enforcement areas including the numbers of Fixed Penalty Notices issued, numbers of zero-rated food premises, and £300k of fines were issued to landlords in the last year. A steady stream of prosecutions is now happening following court closures due to Covid-19.
- Two new Anti-Social Behaviour Teams are in place. A pilot team to ensure that cases are better co-ordinated and victims are better supported, has been evaluated and will become permanent; and a new Community Safety Enforcement Team that is focussed on dealing with street-based issues such as begging, and street drinking has started and will be fully established in Q1 2022/23.
- The Controlled Parking Zone programme is progressing although it has been delayed and will not be completed until 2023.
- The Safer Barking and Dagenham campaign has been delivered and received widespread coverage and excellent feedback.
- Keeping our Streets Clean campaign has been shortlisted for Best Campaign at the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2022.
- A new in-house street cleanliness monitoring system has been put in place to allow for operational managers and supervisors to undertake NI195<sup>1</sup> surveys. This is a move away from the previously outsourced process that only allowed for four-monthly assessments via an external partner. This new approach will enable monthly reporting and provide a larger data set which will allow the service to review and remodel itself based on data. Initial data has already shown a decrease in levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting from the last outsourced assessment. Current levels of litter are at 10.53%.
- Initial unreconciled data regarding 2021/22 recycling performance is currently showing an indicative performance of 30.5%, an increase from 26.9% in 2020/21. This will be largely

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<sup>1</sup> Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter detritus graffiti and fly-posting)

due to the increase in materials now accepted as part of the dry recycling service introduced in 2021.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- Deliver the Barking Town Centre Action Plan, ensuring long term solutions are in place to make this area safer.
- Continue to rollout Controlled Parking Zones with the final schemes in the first programme to start consultation in Q1 and Q2.
- Evaluate the privately rented property licensing pilot and decide about the future resourcing of this work.
- Induct the new Community Safety Enforcement Team, ensuring they are working effectively to tackle street based anti-social behaviour, and recruit into a new Anti-Social Behaviour Team following successful delivery of the six-month pilot.
- The Keeping our Streets Clean programme will launch of two key pilots. The first of which focuses on utilising variable interventions (such as letters, engagement, and leaflets), the second focuses on behaviour change of residents with the aim of increasing recycling quality and participation. The first pilot will start at the beginning of July 2022.
- Begin development of a joint Keeping our Streets Clean Strategy between Public Realm and Enforcement which builds on the discovery work as part of the initial programme. This will focus on formalising processes around how street cleanliness and fly-tipping are addressed (including hot spots), and also about utilising behaviour change with residents and other key stakeholders to address root causes.
- Review and remodel the street cleansing service utilising data and intelligence to ensure the most appropriate and effective use of resources.
- Foster resilience within the Waste Collection Service with a focus on recruitment to boost service capacity. Four driver and 14 loader posts (four of which will be apprenticeships) will be recruited. This will allow greater development of staff and improved customer service.
- Implementation of an in-cab waste management system for the Waste Collection Service following the award of the contract award to a preferred supplier. 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 and potential to increase commercial scope.
- 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.
- Opening and launching the Barking Library of Things at Barking Learning Centre. This initiative will allow residents to share and hire objects rather than purchasing from new contributing to the circular economy by focusing on re-use.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- Delays to the Controlled Parking Zone programme mean there is now a challenging timetable to deliver the remaining schemes in 2022 and capacity may be an issue, 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.
- 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.

### Investing in physical and social infrastructure

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Levelling Up White Paper was published on 02 February 2022 and the prospectus for round two on following on 23 March 2022.
- Feedback was received on the unsuccessful Levelling Up Fund bid and has been taken on board as part of the development of bids for round two of the fund. Bids will be submitted for Barking Town Centre and Dagenham Heathway. The deadline for the submission of bids is 06 July 2022.
- The Council and Barking Riverside Ltd 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 have been delays in the appointment of the main contractor but this is expected to get back on track in the next month. The centre is expected to be open in 2024.
- Thames Clipper services to the borough are now operational providing a new transport link to Canary Wharf and Central London.
- The draft Local Plan was submitted to the planning inspectorate and published on the Council's website in March 2022. The plan sets out in spatial terms how the Council will facilitate the delivery of the new homes which are needed to be provided, as well as setting out what infrastructure is needed to support those homes. We continue to progress with getting the Local Plan to examination with the Planning Inspectorate with the preliminary hearings scheduled for July 2022. The examination is likely to commence toward the end of the year.
- We continue to explore options for tunnelling the A13 to improve connectivity across the borough, utilising the funding provided by Homes England to develop the business case. Exploratory discussions are taking place regarding funding options including with the Government and other institutions.
- As part of the Becontree Forever programme and funded through Community Infrastructure Levy, Create London have now completed works on two playgrounds in Parsloes Park by artists Yinka Ilori and Eva Rothschild which are now open to the public. 17 Commemorative plaques designed by Leonor Antunes have been installed across the estate honouring past and current residents of Becontree including Hardy Amies, Diversity, the women strikers of Dagenham Ford, Paul Ince and Dudley Moore.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- Preparing the bid for the second round of Levelling Up funding which launched in the Spring. Two bids are being prepared, for submission in early July, for Barking Town Centre and Dagenham Heathway.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund, worth a total of £2.6 billion, was launched on 13 April 2022. Despite local authority allocations being published by Government, lead authorities have been identified to administer the funds. For London the lead authority is the Greater London Authority. Submissions to the Greater London Authority on proposed interventions are to be made by the end of June, although the process for allocations remain unclear. Detailed work on this and delivery mechanisms etc will follow in Q2.
- As part of ongoing development of the Becontree Forever programme, Create London will undertake installation of street furniture designed by Studio Morison in key areas across the Becontree Estate in the coming months. They will also complete consultation and continue development of an amenity green project with Nimtim Architects which will see a new planting scheme and development of the green spaces located at the junction of Fuller and Lindsey Roads.

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

- Rising costs of materials and labour is putting pressure on the delivery of construction projects which may lead to delays on progress of schemes. Account will need to be taken regarding any bids submitted which include construction projects both regarding budgets and delivery timescales should matters not improve.
- As there is little clarity regarding the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Expectations will need to be managed with local stakeholders regarding the published borough allocations and availability of funding. In addition, there is an expectation that investment plans will need to be submitted in early July, despite funding levels yet to be confirmed for local projects/schemes.

## Shaping aspirational places

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Following a visit from the Government's high street task force to Dagenham Heathway, initial engagement work with the community has been initiated and is feeding into the Levelling Up Fund round two submission.
- Following a visit to Barking Riverside in April 2022 by the Minister for Art and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Council continues to push forward in supporting Tate Galleries to develop a state-of-the-art, experimental, accessible and inclusive facility for the acquisition, management, preservation and sharing of the Museum's national art, library and archive collections locally. We have also partnered with the National Portrait Gallery and Horniman Museum to bring collections and archives to the borough. The Tate National Visual Arts Collections Hub will be based along the Thames at Barking Riverside and comprise training and digital facilities, library and archive spaces, study and research hubs, accessible storage, artist studios, cafes, laboratories, and social spaces.
- Capital grant has been received from Arts Council England to develop the Woodward Library site into a community arts centre and digital hub that will open September 2023, becoming a base from which the legacy of Becontree Forever activities continue to grow and flourish. Key to the centre's importance is its role in forming a central arts and digital hub currently lacking on the Becontree Estate with both young and elderly residents, and more broadly in the Dagenham area. On the estate there is a clear demand and need for shared digital facilities, as well as a community arts space that has the capacity to host small to mid-scale arts events and activities, extending the creative potential for existing Dagenham-based organisations like Green Shoes Arts and The White House, whilst also forging new pathways for constituents and artists to engage meaningfully in the evolution of the local cultural landscape.
- The Council has agreed to lease Roycraft House in Barking Town Centre to an affordable workspace provider. This initiative will bring new businesses to the Town Centre and provide new public realm in the immediate vicinity. Planning approval has also been granted.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Continue to advocate and build support in central government and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport for Tate National Visual Arts Collections Hub, with a goal of Tate securing funding in 2022/2023.
- Ongoing development of Woodward Library Steering Group and engagement with residents to inform next stages of the community arts and digital hub.
- Barking Station improvements, including creating the second gate line and moving utilities.
- A pop-up exhibition on Barking's history which forms part of the Barking Heritage project is touring three venues in the Town Centre over the coming months.
- Work continues on exploring the vision and opportunities for Thames Road to support the development of an employment-led community that combines homes for Londoners while

providing a unique location for the industrial sector and supporting businesses of all sizes.

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

- Delays to projects caused by increasing costs of construction and lack of funding secured through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and private sector.

**A decarbonised, local energy system**

**Key performance and delivery messages:**

- 152 retrofit and renewable installs completed across the borough under Green Homes Grant 1B.
- Barking Town Centre Strategic Heat Network first phases completed as part of the successful Heat Network Improvement Programme and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding, with connection to the Town Hall and Broadway Theatre completed.

**Priorities for the next six months:**

- Beginning of works delivering phase one of retrofit and renewables installs across the corporate estate and securing borrowing following delays involving potential grant opportunities which did not come to fruition.
- Beginning conversations with UK Power Networks, the electricity district network operator, and other stakeholders, to develop a Local Area Energy Plan, based on existing local and national plans to roll out of heat pumps, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and electricity generation resources to support grid balance and demand.
- Working with B&D Energy on the next stages of their plans to accelerate the decarbonisation of the network.

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

- Decarbonisation of the corporate estate falters due to lack of funding. The Government pulled 0% interest Salix grant-funding and initial conversations with the Mayor of London's Energy Efficiency Fund have been more promising, but the package is less attractive than council borrowing. However, cost inflation is making delivery and borrowing expensive.
- Potential decarbonisation options for the network being undeliverable, at least in the short-term, because of difficulty in finding adequate local renewable sources.



## Energy efficient homes and buildings

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Cosy Homes Programme delivered 1,160 energy efficiency measures, across tenure, in 1,012 homes, delivering £4.7m of expected lifetime bill savings for residents over the next 25 years. The scheme has leveraged in more than £1.3m of Energy Company Obligation (ECO3) funding and is due to save 14,000 tonnes of carbon.
- Installs begin of Green Homes Grant Phase 3 and Homes Upgrade Grant 1 awarded for the delivery of external wall, underfloor insulation and solar panels across 340 vulnerable owner-occupied properties.
- Grant deadline for delivery of the deep retrofit pilot on the Becontree Estate has been extended to December 2022, a contractor for the works has been appointed, and several key planning permissions have been granted.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Continued roll-out of measures under the Cosy Homes programme, transition to ECO4 (which was delayed until June) and delivery of grant-assisted retrofit programmes.
- Agreeing final costs, securing further planning permission, and completion of works on the delivery of 39 deep retrofit properties by December 2022.
- Beginning the process of devising a Stock Decarbonisation Programme for the Council's 17,500 homes.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- Due to the unique nature of the deep retrofit scheme delivery has been consistently challenging and that will not dissipate with potential issues arising over cost inflation which threaten the project and could lead to a pause until 2023.
- No agreement is reached on borrowing to kickstart the retrofit of the corporate estate. Construction, component, and supply chain costs are being fuelled by high inflation.

## A green local environment

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Cabinet approved a direct award of contract to Connected Kerb to deliver 250 additional electric vehicle charge-points across the borough throughout 2022.
- Urban Challenge Fund and the Treescape Funded trees planted on amenity greens across the borough and patches of street planting in the north of the borough.
- Created a partnership with Thames 21 and Thames Chase Community Forest and awarded a grant of £34,000 from the Re-Wild London Fund for habitat improvement works at The Chase Local Nature Reserve.
- £40,000 Development Grant awarded by the Greater London Authority Green and Resilient Spaces Fund towards the Gores Brook Living Landscape project for new areas of riparian habitat including areas of reed, rush, wet meadow, and wet woodland would be created as well as safe points to access the brook linked to a wider network of paths.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Deliver The Chase Local Nature Reserve River, Wetland & Meadow Restoration and Creation Project by the end of 2022.
- Deliver the Gores Brook Living Landscape project.
- Finalise the Tree Planting Action Plan which will continue to help capitalise on opportunities for additional tree planting in the borough's parks and open spaces.
- Tackle the issue of lakes management and maintenance by putting in place sustainable arrangements to maximise the benefit of blue infrastructure for wildlife and residents.
- Recruit a Programme Manager for Green Spaces and Nature Recovery with a specific remit to draw in grant funding, to devise our local ecological recovery plan, and the development of a borough-wide Green Grid. The Programme Manager will also liaise with Be First on Biodiversity Net Gain, and with My Place on public realm improvements and environmental initiatives.
- Recognition of the planting of 49,000 trees across the Borough as a contribution to Queen's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- Insufficient capacity to deliver grant funded projects on time.
- Wider funding challenges mean we cannot develop further long-term projects to improve parks and open spaces such as Ripple Nature Reserve.
- Office for Zero Emission Vehicles and Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure grant funding to support the deployment of 250 charge-point sockets is not forthcoming.
- Failure to commission or recruit specialist expertise to help devise an air quality tariff base rate which can be used to calculate developer's contributions to the Air Quality Action Fund would result in a lack of funding for Air Quality Focus Areas in the borough.

## Money and Debt

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Barking and Dagenham Money website ([www.BDMoney.co.uk](http://www.BDMoney.co.uk)) launched in April 2022. 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. In the first month, 545 people accessed the website.
- Council Tax collection for 2021/22 was 93.64%, exceeding the target of 93.2% and last year's collection rate of 93.18%. 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 was 94.82%, exceeding the target of 86.9% (also last year's collection rate – an increase of just under 9%). Prior to the impact of Covid, collection rates ranged from 97.95% to 98.3% (2016/17 – 2019/20).
- Rent collection for 2021/22 was at 92.16%, below the target of 93.6% and last year's collection rate of 92.6%. Prior to the impact of Covid, collection rates ranged from 96.36% to 97.01% (2016/17 – 2019/20).
- Income maximisation for 2021/22 was £1.759m, an increase of more than two thirds (69%) on the previous year. Income generated in February and March 2022 are the two largest monthly amounts generated since recording for this measure began.
- There were 592 Discretionary Housing Payments awards made in 2021/22, with 124.1% of the £1.026m Discretionary Housing Payments allocation spent, exceeding the 95% target and totalling £1.274m.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Delivery of the Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme & Household Support Fund
- Activity to analyse and progress historic debt across the Council Tax, business rates, rents and social care income streams.
- Deliver a new structure and operating method for rent collection.
- Embed the One View predictive analytics platform into the recovery processes across all income streams.
- Achieve a sustainable budgetary position for Becontree Enforcement.
- Launch a scheme to promote affordable credit to low-income households and those financially excluded.
- Work with our delivery partner to introduce a new Credit Union offer into the borough, offering affordable credit and good savings options.
- Progression of the Council's participation in a No Interest Loans Scheme pilot. The scheme offers consolidation loans to those that do not meet the criteria for other forms of affordable credit, lessening the burden of high-cost credit to these households and helping to ease the pressures that the cost-of-living crisis is causing them.

- Continued development of the BD Money website, offering increased signposting to local partners and introducing an interactive element which allows residents to be quickly directed towards the best possible offer of financial support for their individual needs. The implementation of a 12 month marketing and communication plan, together with a programme of demo sessions to internal and external stakeholders will continue to increase the reach of the website. Phase two of the project is being planned in conjunction with the wider affordable credit offer to develop an interactive facility to help triage resident's financial issues and provide tailored financial support and service outcomes based on individual circumstances.
- Continued resident engagement and input into the affordable credit and money advice offers, putting a co-designed approach at the heart of development.

**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 2023 will create additional support needs and increase the risk for rent and Council Tax collection.

# Participation and Engagement

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## Building capacity in the social sector

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Social Infrastructure contract, delivered by the BD\_Collective, has been extended. Networks have been established in areas such as: Reimagining Social Care, Food Banks, and Young People. The Neighbourhood Networks programme was launched by the BD\_Collective, and involving local partners, to build upon relationships and trust between residents, the social sector, and the Council. Groups involved include Kingsley Hall; Thames Ward Community Project; Community Resources; Studio 3 Arts; and Radiant Ambitions. Recently, £50,000 of additional funding was secured from the National Lottery Community Fund to continue the programme past its six-month pilot phase.
- The capacity of the social sector continues to grow and offers increasing potential to support the Council to deliver services through groups collaboratively accessing funding to tackle social need. The Social Infrastructure partners published a Social Infrastructure Guide, using teachings from the pandemic to suggest how working collaboratively and putting people and place at the centre of our response to challenge can bring the most effective results. This was followed up by two collaborative workshops on Debt and Social Isolation to begin to embed a more co-ordinated approach.
- BD Giving set up a Community Steering Group of residents for the community endowment which has been meeting monthly and has collaboratively crafted the BD Giving Investment Policy, making decisions on how to invest the endowment and use any financial returns to achieve financial, social, and environmental impact for the borough.
- The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy participative funding process has continued to grow, with more residents taking part and a higher number of applications from community groups than ever before. Round 6 in October 2021 saw £103,000 distributed to 13 local community groups by resident funders. Round 7 is currently being run with £150,000 being distributed to 16 local groups. This round has seen the first collaborative application from a consortium of local organisations, further displaying the increasing connectedness of the sector and local community groups. Furthermore, many of the groups applying for funding have mentioned working with or being supported by different partner organisations in the borough. This further demonstrates the increase in collaborative working amongst partners and the positive impact of the developing social infrastructure locally. Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy resident funders have been interviewed during this round, discussing their motivations for getting involved with the process and the positive impact participation of this kind has had upon them. Their feedback will be released in a visual medium in the coming months to draw together the impact on participants.
- There is a review underway to evaluate the success of the Better Impact volunteer management system which is currently used to promote and register volunteering opportunities across the Council and with some partners. Over 35,000 hours of volunteering have been registered on the platform since its launch. The review will seek to investigate the effectiveness of the platform as a support tool for community partners

and whether it should be included in the next iteration of the Social Infrastructure contract.

- Collaborative efforts across the Council have been taking place to consolidate and refine policy recommendations for a community assets approach that are now due to be presented at Cabinet in Q4 2022/23. Engagement has continued through steering groups, both internally and with our voluntary sector colleagues. During this period an open process has been run to establish a lease for 11 community groups at John Smith House. Future M.O.L.D's is leading a consortium and Studio 3 now run Heath Park Community centre for the community following a similar process.
- The Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum is currently working with national charity Faith Action to build their capacity. This work is due to be completed in May 2023 and includes Faith Action acting as a capacity builder, offering administrative support and input into the development of the Faith Forum's objectives and delivery of their work.

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

- Cabinet to agree on a Community Assets Policy with core actions, principles, and roles and responsibilities which are aligned with a review of commercial assets.
- Grow the Endowment Fund through the BD Giving Investment policy incorporating participatory processes in deciding how the funding is shaped and distributed in line with social and environmental standards.
- Bring the volunteering review through the organisation, assessing how volunteering can be used to increase capacity and better support residents in different areas of the Council, and to ensure a consistent high quality and rewarding experience for volunteers.
- Grow the BD Lottery's ticket sales through a two-pronged approach. Firstly, working with local community groups to support them in advertising their good causes more effectively and selling more tickets. Secondly, running a promotion and publicity campaign within the Council to increase awareness of the BD Lottery amongst staff to encourage ticket sales from employees.

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

- There are several interdependencies across the development of the community assets and the commercial portfolio which require a collaborative approach to resolve issues and develop a community-centred policy which all areas of the Council support and serve. How the next phases of work are delivered in partnership between internal stakeholders and the wider community is key to success and progress.
- Despite increased efforts to promote and stimulate BD Lottery ticket sales, there is still no guarantee of increased ticket sales. Promotion efforts may prove difficult in the context of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis where residents and staff may struggle to justify additional expense in the form of buying tickets.

## Developing opportunities to meaningfully participate

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Every One Every Day platform completed its Autumn and Spring programmes, offering in-person activities to residents. Another 4,000 hours of participation were registered over the last six months.
- 245 projects have been initiated by the Every One Every Day and 4,373 residents are registered on its platform. In March 2022, the organisation launched its Makers in Residence programme offering free space within the warehouse to provide more opportunities for local residents to learn, make, repair, and connect. These activities and the social benefits of them are key to create thriving, resilient, and greener neighbourhoods.
- Integration efforts between frontline Community Solutions and Every One Every Day staff are developing. A workshop was held in April to establish ways of working together through Community Hubs and the Every One Every Day shops. Shared activities have taken place at various locations in the borough with Every One Every Day engaging with new council service users as a result.
- The number of residents registered on the Collaborative Business Programme at Every One Every Day stands at 467. This programme provides residents with the skills and tools to launch local collaborative businesses at varying scales. It gives them the platform and opportunities to utilise and put into practise the skills they have developed through the participation programme that can support them in future pursuits, both recreational and professional, while also giving increased opportunities for social connection.
- Every One Every Day's presence in Barking and Dagenham has been extended for another three years. Over £2m of external funding has been committed, alongside the Council's investment, to continue this ground-breaking participation project.
- Ongoing development of the Cultural Partnership Group comprised of local cultural partners has continued through the establishment of a series of facilitated workshops and discussions over the course of 2022/24. Focus of these workshops will be assessing the needs of residents and the local culture sector, broadening engagement and addressing equality and inclusion barriers.
- In September 2021 Arts Council England announced Barking and Dagenham would become one of 54 'Priority Places' across England as part of their Delivery Plan for 2021/24. As a priority place, the Arts Council identified the borough as a place in which their investment is too low and where the potential for effectively increasing engagement is high. As a Priority Place we will work with the Arts Council and local stakeholders to set bespoke objectives and support their investment across a range of partners and initiatives to increase participation with local people.
- More than 20,000 residents took part in the Jubilee celebrations in early June across Barking and Dagenham, with four days of events taking place in the Abbey Ruins and at Valence House Museum. Events comprised jazz and folk concerts, family activities, participation in the national lighting of a beacon, heritage-focused crafts and activities, community-initiated street parties and the Youth Parade.

- Through the New Town Culture programme 600+ young people and 40+ foster care families have been engaged. This cross-sectoral and cross-service approach pioneering in the realm of children's social care as it sits very much outside of statutory provision. In the long-term New Town Culture has the potential for scalability and replicability in other UK regions. Conversations are already underway with external funding bodies and stakeholders to share learnings and practice.
- Creative Barking & Dagenham has been awarded £900,000 funding from Arts Council England to continue development of their programme of activities focused on increasing participation of local people in community-based arts and culture. This funding will see an expansion of the Cultural Connectors network, with a view to grow the group of residents who will become key decision-makers in shaping activities and take a more active role in events and activities happening in the borough. As a show of strength and support from the Arts Council, Creative Barking & Dagenham has become part of their Creative People and Places National Portfolio Programme 2022/25.

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

- Further integrate the work of Every One Every Day with frontline Community Solutions and partners locally, adopting collaborative processes for working with residents through place-based initiatives.
- Re-envisage and provide greater access to the cultural assets and outdoor green spaces which form part of the Valence Park area on the Becontree Estate in Dagenham, including: Valence House Museum and gardens, archives, culture and heritage collections, culture and heritage education programme, Valence Primary School and Valence Library and gardens.
- Further realise heritage assets as dynamic hubs of arts, culture, heritage, well-being and sustainable initiatives for the local community and broader UK audiences through the development of resilient masterplans that are imbued with community consultation. Eastbury Manor House and Valence House Museum are key sites.
- With the high proportion of large-scale change and additional large-scale cultural infrastructure taking place in the borough, there is work underway to mitigate risk that the smaller Barking and Dagenham originated organisations could be overshadowed or marginalised. Working in partnership with Arts Council England and other key stakeholders, we aim to develop the individual skills, capacities, and capabilities of local creative organisations including Arc Theatre, Green Shoes Arts, Company Drinks, Barking and Dagenham Youth Dance and UKON Careers with a view to raising ambition and participation of local people in the arts.
- Considerable fundraising endeavours underway to support development of heritage sites and projects, and to continue New Town Culture initiatives across Adults and Children's Care and Support.
- Take a more active role as a Consortium Partner in supporting the growth of Creative Barking and Dagenham and the Cultural Connector network.

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

- Lack of funding to continue New Town Culture programming initiatives beyond 2023.



- Lack of funding and core staffing to run heritage sites safely and to meet statutory responsibilities.

## **Facilitating democratic participation**

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

- The Citizens' Alliance Network has exceeded the majority its targets. Participation has been strong. More than 7,000 people are aware of the Citizens' Alliance Network and 34 projects have been delivered through it. This is despite Covid-19 restrictions and the recent pre-election period during which Citizens' Alliance Network activity was reduced, particularly in face-to-face engagement, and traffic through the online platform. Looking ahead the priority is to grow the number of resident-led projects and community conversation meetings to increase participation.
- The online neighbourhood pages were launched in February, comprised of seven local areas showing what's going on in the neighbourhood, where money has been spent, ways to access services, and ways to participate and share views. Initial engagement levels were high but saw a drop-off as no new promotion or activity was published during the pre-election period.
- The first Ward Budget consultation took place in Gascoigne Ward, whereby residents decided how £20k of spending was used to make improvements to Greatfields Park. Over 40 people engaged through the online platform.
- The Citizens' Alliance Network is working with the BD\_Collective's Neighbourhood Network's programme to promote online presences, for example, using interactive tools such as mapping and surveys.

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

- Incorporate the Citizen's Alliance Network into the face-to-face offer of Community Hubs, engaging with residents in all wards of the borough and exploring topics that arise from more informal in-person conversation.
- Incorporate the use of the Citizen's Alliance Network platform and networks into the Net Zero Strategy ensuring that local people are offered the chance to shape the agenda and work with the Council to reduce the borough's carbon footprint.
- Take on teachings from the pilot of the Ward Budget consultation in Gascoigne Ward and implement it in several more wards during 2022/23.
- Develop another participatory budget process with residents.

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

- There is an ongoing need for capacity and skill building on engagement practice across council services. Engagement is often poorly understood or seen as the end of a project rather than a crucial part ensuring the best outcomes for local people.

## Designing relational practices into the Council's activity

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Engagement Champions Network has been meeting monthly over the past six months with over 50 council and Be First employees signed up to the Network. Numbers of those attending each session have dropped despite a survey sent out to members in December to identify the best days and times for meeting, as well as to canvass for ideas for the sessions.
- Both internal and external speakers have presented at the Engagement Champion Network, including presentations on Citizen Assemblies at Newham Council, and the Resident Advisory Board that Be First set up.
- An intranet page has been set up for Engagement Champions, offering a place where recordings of the sessions are uploaded, and training guides will be shared.
- There has been collaboration between staff from across Engagement Champions, Organisational Development, Community Solutions and Care and Support to shape and define principles and conditions to foster relational practice and identify good work which is happening.
- Over 100 individuals from the local government sector were brought together across three events to discuss 'what it means to build a relational council?'. The events showcased the work in Barking and Dagenham around social infrastructure and New Town Culture and provided opportunity for learning exchange between local authorities.
- New Town Culture continues to seek ways to effect change at a systemic level whilst also taking a bottom-up approach that gives young people, foster care families, artists, and third sector partners agency in shaping and defining a model that is cognisant of local needs and priorities. Specifically, we continue to explore how this can be achieved by developing three core areas:
  - Developing the Creative Social Work model relating to practice frameworks, standards and policy within Children's Care and Support through training social workers.
  - Building knowledge and competency within London's cultural ecology around working within a social care context.
  - Creating the conditions in which a fully embedded and connected creative offer in the borough gives vulnerable young people agency and ownership in building their creative capacity and personal resilience through a robust referral system and supporting infrastructure.

### Priorities for the next six months:

- Seek to continually improve the way residents are engaged, involved, and listened to across the Council through the work of the Engagement Champions.
- Develop relational council principles and objectives reflecting and enhancing the DRIVE values. Shape a Relational toolkit or frame of reference and develop a set of case studies and stories.

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

- Lack of senior-level buy-in, lack of diverse representation from council departments/services, and a continuing drop-off in attendance of the Engagement Champion Network sessions will undermine the aims and impact of the Network. It will be difficult to build momentum and deliver a structured training programme if attendance from Engagement Champions is low or unreliable.

## 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:

- The take up of early education places continued to rise between October 2021 and March 2022 and has returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Take up of places for three-and-four-year-olds remains slightly below pre-pandemic levels at approximately 82%.
- 97% of children are accessing a place in Early Years settings rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted.
- 95% of the borough's schools are rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted. The borough is above the London benchmark<sup>2</sup> for the first time.
- Schools have continued to cope remarkably well during the pandemic and as we emerge from it. Education and Barking & Dagenham School Improvement Partnership have worked together to support schools to help pupils to catch up, particularly the most vulnerable.
- In September 2021, a successful Race & Social Justice Conference was held with all schools and facilitated by Barking & Dagenham School Improvement Partnership.
- Greatfields Secondary School Phase 2b was completed in Q4 2021/22. Pupils taught at the temporary City Farm site have moved to their permanent location.
- Pressure on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) specialist places continues to be acute. There are not enough local places and the new special school to be built by the Department for Education has been delayed.
- To help alleviate some of these pressures, Riverside Bridge Special School has agreed to expand by 90 places onto the City Farm site. The proposal is subject to Department for Education approval and, if agreed, will commence in September 2022.
- Mallard Primary is a three-Form Entry school which will be built on the Riverside Development to meet the future need from this community. A site, and the size of that site, has been agreed with the developer.
- Pathways Special School secured planning permission on the former Dagenham Motors site in South Dagenham. Works are shortly to commence with completion expected in late 2023.
- The Winter Holiday Activities and Food programme was successfully delivered reaching over 900 children and young people who were eligible for Free School Meals.

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<sup>2</sup> 93% at Dec. 2021 – Source: Ofsted DataView

## Priorities for the next 6 months

- Increase take-up levels in the Early Years, with a particular focus on increasing take up for three- and four-year olds, and to support the sustainability of the sector.
- Evaluating the impact of the 'Doubling Down' project on the provision of extra Early Years education for 50 of the borough's most vulnerable children.
- Developing an understanding around the borough's forthcoming provisional 2022 national test and examination results in the context of the significant impact of the pandemic on children, young people and families.
- Delivering a further successful Year 6 and 7 Arts Award transition programme, aiming to reach at least 75% of the borough's Year 7 cohort.
- The Education White Paper and SEND Green papers were published by the Government in March 2022. Planning Barking and Dagenham's response to these consultations is a key priority.
- Ford View Primary is a new three-Form Entry school which will be built on the Beam Park development and delivered by the Department for Education. Construction will begin in Autumn 2022.
- Oxlow Bridge Special School will provide much needed specialist places and will be located on the former Pondfield site. Construction will begin in Autumn 2022.
- Mayesbrook Alternative Provision ideally require a new site to enable the school to expand pupil intake and improve facilities and their offer to young people. Work is underway to look at possible locations for this.
- Developing an exciting, broad and inclusive 2022 Summer Holiday Activities and Food programme that has an increasing number of opportunities for secondary aged pupils.

## Key risks in the next six months:

- The demand for specialist provision and places for pupils with SEND remains high, requiring an ongoing, determined, and consistent focus to meet need in a challenging financial climate.
- The increasing numbers of children and young people with complex needs is also placing pressure on the Council's Education, Health and Care Team, whose role is to administer the Education, Health and Care process and identify appropriate placements. Despite recent increases in staffing there is still a backlog of applications and reviews which is being addressed.
- Increased market costs from contractors for new buildings and improvements, due to several factors may prove challenging in terms of affordability for some projects.
- Numbers of elective home education children have grown during the pandemic and remain relatively high, placing pressure on the Elective Home Education Officer and Manager.

## **More young people are supported to achieve success in adulthood through higher, further education and access to employment**

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

- In 2021, a record number of Year 11s (98.4%) progressed to an education destination. This is above the sub-regional average of 97.7%.
- The borough has the lowest ever recorded number of young people aged 16 to 18 who are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET). This puts Barking and Dagenham in the top 20% of local authorities.
- 1,062 young people progressed to Higher Education from borough institutions in 2021. The highest ever figure for the borough, and an increase of 70% from ten years ago.
- Careers Hub East has launched, providing support to schools around accessing work-related learning opportunities.
- Successful delivery of the fifth Colin Pond Scholarship Awards, incentivising our highest attaining pupils to stay in borough when studying A-levels.

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

- Delivery of a successful 'What Next?' careers event for schools and young people who are NEET.
- In partnership with Barking & Dagenham School Improvement Partnership, work experience has been reintroduced, following a pause because of the pandemic.
- Looking at how the Colin Pond Scholarship Awards can be sustained against reducing funds.
- Launching a renewed post-16 Partnership with schools to work to improve A-level and technical qualification performance in the borough.
- Completing the development of a 'Young People's Employability Covenant' for the borough.
- Development of a Supported Employment Pathway for vulnerable young adults, including those with SEND.
- Facilitation of the borough's first ever Cultural, Creative and Digital Industries Month with schools.
- Embedding the new Food Education Hub Co-ordinator post with a view to starting work around building pathways into industry.
- Embedding the work of the new Key Stage 4/5 Transition Worker to further support outcomes in the Virtual School for Looked After Children.

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

- Sustaining the borough's strong NEET/ Unknowns performance against an increasing cohort.
- Demand for work experience placements exceeding supply, following the impact of the pandemic on some industries and workplaces.

## **All care leavers can access a good, enhanced local offer that meets their health, education, housing, and employment needs**

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

- A dedicated Housing Officer continues to work jointly with Children's Services and young people to identify appropriate housing offers. This has included the setting up of rent accounts, regardless of the accommodation type, to assist young people with getting used to managing a tenancy.
- From 01 April 2020, care leavers aged between 18 and 25 who have been looked after by the LBBD are exempt from paying Council Tax, including those living outside of the Borough and at University.
- Access to the enhanced leaving care grant (£2,500) and the person's individual savings is standard practice for furnishing move-on accommodation. Access can be requested to a further discretionary grant of up to £1,000 that we would support care leavers to access where applicable (subject to assessment).
- Dedicated resource from the Job Shop to assist with preparing CVs, completing job applications and interview preparation is now in place.
- The Council will pay travel costs to attend work or university until the first pay cheque/student loan is available.
- Access to New Town Culture arts and drama programmes and opportunities specifically for care leavers which are beneficial to emotional wellbeing.
- Dedicated substance misuse support from Subwise who work with young people until the age of 25 years old.
- A full-time mental health practitioner has been recruited to sit within the Leaving Care Team to support young people with low levels of mental health needs.

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

- Pilot a scheme to assist Care Leavers to find suitable, long-term Private Rented accommodation by offering a Rent Guarantor Scheme.
- Establish a group of young inspectors, who are Looked After Children and Care Leavers, who will be supported and trained in undertaking 'mystery' shopping' visits to providers.
- Establish a 'One Borough, One Voice' portal to capture the voice of our Children in Care and Care Leavers views as to their placements.
- 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 secondary mental health threshold once they turn 18. Commissioners are working with social care, voluntary sector, the Clinical Commissioning Group and NELFT to consider the gap in provision. Further work will be undertaken to consult with those who have left care and those who are leaving care to fully understand those needs.

## **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:**

- 88 young people, drawn from eight secondary schools, attended the Young People's Safety Summit in May 2022. Valuable data was gathered regarding safe and unsafe spaces in schools, in the community, online and within peer groups. Spark2Life, BoxUp Crime, Fearless and TootToot, whose services support young people, including those at risk of exploitation, were promoted.
- 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. This project, as well as other streams of work highlighted in this section of the report, contribute to the borough's Step Up, Stay Safe multi-agency programme which aims to help keep young people safe.
- 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.
- Partnership work continues with the Youth at Risk Matrix and schools' Safeguarding Leads to map risks in the borough and target support.
- LifeLine was commissioned to deliver training for parents on the risks of online safety. 100 parents engaged in the training.
- Youth Independent Advisory Group sessions have continued to take place quarterly, bringing together young people with Police representatives.
- The School Health Survey, completed across 29 schools, will provide valuable insights to feed into partnership working in support of children and young people's health.
- School inclusion work with partners to prevent exclusions from schools has been recognised in the LGC Awards 2022 Public/Public Partnerships category.

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

- 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 2022 Summer Holidays.
- Developing a bid for the Youth Investment Fund to develop new youth centres focused on two sites in the borough, Marks Gate and Thames View.



- The TootToot safeguarding app will be rolled out this year.
- Analysis of the School Health Survey at the Young People's Health Summit will inform commissioning and outcome priorities for the Council's 'Best Chance' plan.

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

- Winding down the Young Londoners Fund programme in December 2022, while looking at how to sustain elements of the programme without continuation funding available.
- Exploring options to identify coordination funding support for the Step Up, Stay Safe programme.

### **Zero tolerance to domestic abuse drives local action that tackles underlying causes, challenges perpetrators, and empowers survivors**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Domestic Abuse has been established as one of the key priorities of the Children's Safeguarding Partnership and work is being undertaken specifically in the Early Help and Neglect sub-group.
- 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 begun 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, these have been costed and procurement work is commencing with Refuge to mobilise this work and initiate an early intervention service which will help to manage demand into Children's Care and Support.
- 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. In addition, through the Community Safety Partnership we have secured six months of funding for the ReMove Abuse Co-ordinator's post which is funded through the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, London Crime Prevention Fund.

#### Priorities for the next six months:

- Establish a clear governance route for Domestic Abuse including roles and responsibilities, as well as clarify where risk is held across all services.
- Initiate an improvement plan with the MARAC<sup>3</sup> to ensure intelligence is shared in an accurate and timely way between decision-makers and service providers.

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<sup>3</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.

- The current provision for domestic abuse has been mapped and whilst it is extensive, it needs greater cohesion. Work on a new commissioning plan for domestic abuse will be begin shortly to ensure gaps are filled, duplication is removed, and that we are commissioning best value evidence-based 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:

- 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.
- Securing ongoing funding past March 2023 for the delivery of the ReMove Abuse Perpetrator Programme. An element of the funding is delivered through the London Crime Prevention Fund, however there is limited funding available.

**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>4</sup>**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Fully reopened day services, which will include the reconfiguring of the offer for young people transitioning to adult services.
- The Baby and Us parenting programme at Heathway Resource Centre which supports maternal mental health had its first cohort of parents attending.
- Ensure that the identification and actioning of safeguarding concerns are proportional and robust, focusing on outcomes for service users. Cases will continue to be dip sampled by the Principal Social Worker and Head of Service to ensure quality of intervention and assessment.

#### Priorities for the next six months:

- Remodel the Portage Service as part of the Target Operating Model work which will mean that we are better able to meet the needs of children and families.
- Work on the Autistic Spectrum Disorders diagnostic and pre/post diagnostic pathways is developing. Co-designing the behaviour pathways with parents will start in earnest.

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<sup>4</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).

- Becontree Children's Centre will roll out the summer offer for families with a disabled children.
- Route planning for September 2022 school transport and offering Independent Travel Training to young people in specialist provision, where appropriate.

#### 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 churn is hampering this.
- 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 our service users and potentially moving them to new settings, which is another factor putting pressure on caseloads.
- 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:

- Adult Mental Health continues to see sustained pressure on the mental health and dementia pathways. Barking and Dagenham 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 NELFT and Community Solutions 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.
- NELFT 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.

#### Priorities for the next six months:

- MIND have been awarded the Mental Health Peer Support Service which will create an expert by experience team to support people with emerging or fluctuating mental health needs. This is in the implementation phase and will be rolled out across Barking and Dagenham in the next three to six months.
- Additional funding has been awarded to further develop the Drugs and Alcohol Team. This will include an enhanced Hostel Offer, the Shannon Trust literacy programme in

prison and in the community for those in contact with the Criminal Justice System, specialist work mentors to sustain people in employment, and work with community groups and religious organisations to ensure that the Drugs and Alcohol Team offer is culturally sensitive to the needs of all communities.

- After a successful recruitment campaign by NELFT, the two Mental Health in Schools Teams are fully operational in two primary schools and two secondary schools; this links to the Early Help pilot in the North Locality. A phased roll out across all schools will start in January 2023.
- 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.

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

- Given the daily struggle that people living in poverty experience life to be, it is not surprising that poverty increases the risk of mental health problems and is both a cause and consequence of mental ill health. Given the number of residents experiencing unemployment, zero-hour contracts, and who are experiencing the long-term impact of reduced income due to furlough, 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 based on average length of open caseloads for secondary Mental Health services.
- As the dementia diagnostic pathways have now resumed, Adult Mental Health are expecting to see significant rise and the number of older adults with a formal diagnosis of dementia. Due to Covid-19, most older adults have experienced a delay in a dementia diagnosis which means early intervention packages are no longer suitable. As such there has been a rise in double-handed packages and residential/nursing care placements. Commissioners expect this trend to continue until Q3 2022/23. Growth in such placements is driven by the current size of the NELFT dementia diagnosis waiting list coupled with expected demographic growth.

**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:**

- Demand for social care, in the form of requests for support continued to increase, as did council-funded provision. The number of people in receipt of care and support services increased by 7% over the 2021/22 financial year, from 2,694 to 2,886.
- The number of safeguarding concerns raised has increased with a total of 1822 concerns raised in 2021/22 - 3% more than the previous year. Despite the increasing number of concerns, safeguarding remained outcomes focused. Risk reduction continues to be a key outcome of enquiries, with performance at or above the target of 90% throughout the year. Additionally, adults at risk continued to achieve their desired outcomes from safeguarding, with 96% achieving the outcomes expressed.
- The number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications made to the Council rose to record levels. A total of 821 applications were received in 2021/22 - 14% more than the previous year. The length of time taken to process applications continues to improve.
- Short-term crisis intervention services remain effective and efficient. Between April 2021 and March 2022, the average length of closed services was 4.5 weeks; this is a reduction from 6 weeks in 2020/21 and remains within the target of 4 to 8 weeks. Outcomes for people completing the service have improved significantly.
- Overall, the number of council-supported admissions of adults to care homes have increased since the pandemic. For older adults (aged 65 and over), the rate of admissions increased by 5%.
- For younger adults, aged 18 to 64, the rate of admissions to care homes increased from 6.9 per 100,000 people in 2020/21 to 13.1 per 100,000 people in 2021/22.
- LBBD has continued to work jointly 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 and vaccine take-up.
- The Better Care Fund provides financial support for councils and NHS organisations to jointly plan and deliver local services. Every year, the local authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group are required to make a submission to NHS England to set out how the Better Care Fund is delivered and how our performance meets several metrics and national conditions, as set out in the policy framework. This is now completed and will focus on:
  - Hospital Discharge Planning and Support
  - Targeted Out-of-Hospital Care
  - Community Wellbeing, Care and Support
  - Integration, market stabilisation and Covid recovery
- We are working with Havering, Redbridge, the Hospital Trust and NELFT to continue to develop the Barking Havering and Redbridge Integrated Discharge Hub. This new Hub

is working well, particularly with the Community and Hospital Assessment Team within Adults' Care and Support.

- Additionally, we have launched two new jointly commissioned services with the Clinical Commissioning Group to support discharge. The first of which is eight 'discharge to assess' beds in a nursing home in Barking and Dagenham with wrap-around therapy support. The second is a Home First project in which therapists meet residents at home when they are discharged from hospital to assess needs.
- The Carers Charter has been adopted by all system partners within health and social care and was formally approved by the Cabinet in February 2022. Partners praised the co-production work that was undertaken with carers to develop the Charter.
- A new Aids and Adaptations Policy has been adopted which sets out how private homeowners, housing association tenants and private tenants with disabilities will be helped through aids and adaptations to live as independently as possible in good quality homes that meet their needs.
- We aspire to become the national leader in care technology. Therefore, we have tendered for, and launched, a new All-Age Care Technology service with Medequip. This exciting new service is focused on using the most innovative technology in the care and support arena to support residents to be empowered and live as independently as possible.

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

- Monitoring and analysis of new initiatives, technology, packages and placements to determine further areas for commissioning and operations and the way that we work with health partners.
- Taking learning from the Adult Social Care Peer Review in May. The Peer Review focused on safeguarding and was undertaken by senior leader peers from other London boroughs. The Review was being used by the London branch of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services as a test for the new Care Quality Commission inspections and used a new proposed methodology.
- Preparing to take forward the Adult Social Care charging reform (cap on care costs) and Fair Cost of Care legislation requirements.
- At Cabinet in June 2022 the procurement strategy was agreed for re-tendering the extra care service contract which will be awarded to a provider for the provision of extra care services delivered at Harp House, Darcy House, Fred Tibble Court and Colin Pond Court. The successful organisation will be required to provide 24-hour care and support to the residents of the schemes, including a range of personal care and support tasks which will enable residents to live independently for as long as possible.

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

- 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. The Council is working with Havering and Redbridge to look at a sector response. An uplift has been applied for older adult homecare and care home providers and this will be reviewed again as part of the Fair Cost of Care exercises that will be undertaken over the coming

months. It is not yet known how the Cap on Care Cost legislation will impact the provider market, but we are keeping a watching brief on this area.

## **Tackling inequality in all aspects of our service delivery and within our communities jointly with partners and Public Health**

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

- The Covid-19 Contact Tracing Team successfully contacted 47% of cases in November, which rose to 81% by the final week of operation on 24 February 2022.
- Uptake of first, second and third doses for Covid-19 vaccination increased between October 2021 and March 2022. Abbey remains the ward with the highest number and percentage of unvaccinated residents, followed by Gascoigne.
- Work continued on development of the new Integrated Care System across North East London as the date for arrangements to be in place was delayed from April to July 2022.
- Development commenced on piloting community-led weight management services funded by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. The pilot is working with Al Madina Mosque, Harmony, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Thames Ward Community Project and Creative Wellness.
- The first 'deep dives' on inequalities in access and outcomes for key public health services were completed on Stop Smoking and Weight Management Services finding they are not reaching those in greatest need.

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

- The updated Joint Strategic Needs assessment and Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment will be launched in September 2022. The Annual Director of Public Health Report 2022 will be presented in draft form to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2022.
- Work is underway to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 associated vaccination hesitancy on child Measles Mumps and Rubella vaccination rates. The Council is working with Together First to coproduce community-led action to increase uptake with pilots being delivered in 2022/23.
- As part of recovery and 'bringing back fairer' core services, work is underway to commission a partner to provide improvement support for NHS Health Checks. A parallel commission will pilot 'mini-Health Checks' 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.
- Delivery of community Weight Management Services will commence, with both outcomes and process evaluated. The whole system approach to obesity will be renewed in partnership with the Obesity Action Group and other partners following Covid-19.
- Develop a proposal for North East London Integrated Care System funding on health inequalities to create a programme that builds on the assets and good practice developed during the Covid-19 pandemic and emerging opportunities.
- Data analysis will be undertaken to review 'unmet need' (i.e. people living with an unidentified, unmanaged condition) for high burden conditions.
- Covid-19 vaccination efforts will focus on vulnerable groups and will likely follow the model used prior to the pandemic for other respiratory illnesses such as Influenza.

Vulnerable cohorts will be prioritised in terms of targeted messaging, access and delivery.

- Public Health input into the new Inclusive Growth Strategy will ensure that health and wellbeing delivery is weaved throughout, and especially in relation to delivery of the Barking Riverside Wellbeing Hub.
- Work continues with NHS partners, Barking Riverside Ltd, voluntary and community partners and residents on the New Model of Care for Barking Riverside, including procurement of a new GP provider and other community services.
- Public Health will support the Best Chance for Children working group to develop strong outcome statements and evidence-based logic models to support delivery of system aspirations. It will also provide leadership for the re-design and re-commissioning of the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme contract in Barking and Dagenham (the contract ends August 2023), aligning service outcomes with the Children and Young People Plan, Early Help Strategy, and Government initiatives such as Start for Life and Family Hubs.
- Agree governance and build strong foundations for the Barking and Dagenham Borough Partnership to operate in shadow form by 01 July 2022 as part of the new Integrated Care System infrastructure.
- Develop a new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Barking and Dagenham as the current Strategy ends in 2023.

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

- The Covid-19 pandemic continues, including the risk of new variants and impact of fatigue on vaccination take-up. Barking and Dagenham has a heightened risk due to lower vaccination rates and higher risks of infection due to population demographics.
- If the place-based partnership structure is not agreed and established in shadow form by 01 July 2022 it will compromise the Council's place-based leadership role. A report will be presented to Cabinet on 12 July 2022.
- Slow progress on the construction process of the Barking Riverside Wellbeing Hub could mean it is delayed. There is a risk it will not be ready for the NHS to provide services which is important to meet demand from the growing population of Barking Riverside.
- A large value contract for the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme needs to follow procurement rules for re-tender, and in the process it needs to align with the direction of travel for provider collaboratives and place-based outcomes.



# Well Run Organisation

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## Delivers value for money for the taxpayer

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The General Fund budget for 2021/22 was £173.614 million. The outturn position is still being finalised at the time of writing but is anticipated to be broadly on budget. The Budget Support Reserve has a balance of £11.4 million which could be used to fund any overspend at year end. The improved financial position has been driven by unexpected grant income in the final quarter of 2021/22 and careful budget management during the second half of the financial year.
- There was a savings target of £8.210 million for 2021/22, of which £2.641 million were new savings approved in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, £5.033 million are unachieved Ambition 2020 savings brought forward from previous year(s), and c.£536,000 are Transformation Programme savings in Care and Support. £4.799 million of these savings depend on efficiencies and cost reductions, and £3.411 million are based on new or increased income. 47% of savings are rated as high risk. A full update will be provided to Cabinet in the outturn report.
- A dividend of £6 million was received from Be First from their retained surpluses from the financial years up to 2020/21. Other commercial income has also been received from Be First to make up the budgeted £10.3 million return to the Council. There is a dividend of £2 million from Barking and Dagenham Trading Partnership included within the Council's budget. There was no dividend received from Barking and Dagenham Trading Partnership in 2021/22. Income from Reside companies are included in Investment income budgets have fallen short of budget; however, other investment income is offsetting this shortfall.
- We have achieved additional social value commitments and outcomes across the five social value themes from 56 procurements which met the policy criteria. Two suppliers have won a tender process without providing any social value commitment but 97% of eligible suppliers demonstrated a commitment to provide additional value to residents and business within the borough. Some outcomes achieved this year include:
  - Five work placements and four job roles advertised and filled through the local Job Shop.
  - 140 hours donated for student industry talks, career days, student placements, business support, mentoring, skills development, and employability skills.
  - 24 weeks of formal work experience for local school pupils.
  - £20,000 donated to the River Roding Trust to plant 60 semi-mature trees and install 10 benches along the Roding.
  - Donation of equipment and goods, including: 50 food parcels, 22 laptops for schools, 30 personal alarms, and free office space for the voluntary and community sector.

- At the end of Q4, 80% of the original plan of risk and compliance audits were at least at draft report stage. This is short of the target for the end of Q4 which is for 95% of audits to be at draft stage.
- By the end of Quarter 2 the Counter Fraud Team had accepted 175 new cases for investigation and completed 96 cases. This has resulted in the recovery of four Housing Revenue Account properties and detected fraud in excess of £225,000.
- Preparation for the Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning system replacement (i.e. HR, Payroll, finance and procurement systems) go-live from 4 April 2022 was a primary focus for Q3 and Q4. iTrent (HR and payroll) and Advanced e5 (Finance and procurement) both went live as planned. The new systems will be more cost effective to manage, and they are adapted for local authorities to use, and so simpler and more efficient. Key to the new systems is a focus on effective business process management, digital service design, and mobile working where appropriate. Examples of improvements include better employee and manager access to information about staff, project accounting and managing income.

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

- Complete the 2019/20 external audit of the Council financial statements. The external audits of the 2020/21 Council and Subsidiary financial statements and grant claims will begin during Q2 2022/23. The draft 2021/22 Council financial statement will be published in Q1 2022/23.
- Deliver an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for approval by Cabinet in July 2022. This will form the basis to develop proposals that will deliver a balanced budget beyond 2023.
- The new Procurement operating model was agreed at Assembly in March 2022. It is now being implemented to reflect changes to the Contract Rules. The new operating model will improve procurement compliance and ensure good practices and processes which achieve best value.
- Continue to support the Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning system replacement programme to ensure delivery of the remaining system components following the go-live date of 04 April 2022 and embed new processes with managers and employees. Further improvements by September 2022 will include improved budget management.

#### **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. The Government's approach to fair funding, business rates and sustainable social care continue to be developed and are yet to be announced. This forms a significant risk to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- The continued delays to external audits persists 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:**

- Dispersed working arrangements continue. Council buildings re-opened on 04 April. Health and hygiene messages continue to be in place to keep our workforce safe, and there is ongoing provision of testing from staff in front line roles, Personal Protective Equipment, and enhanced cleaning and other measures.
- Although the total number of apprenticeship starts were lower than expected in 2020/21, the offer has been expanded and there is a good level of take up more recently. The number of entry level apprenticeships has increased, and new level 7 strategic manager apprenticeships expands the offer at leadership and management level.
- The Council is working on plans to achieve platinum Investors in People. Over the next two years development progress will be continuously reviewed as part of a flexible model of assessment.
- The inclusive employer programme is delivering several key actions: a review of harassment and bullying, with a new communication, training and engagement plan.
- The Council achieved highly commended in the Public Sector People Managers Awards for innovation in recruitment, for the work on senior recruitment and under-representation, and for equality and diversity in recognition of strengthening the role and voice of staff networks.
- We have launched the Thrive app as a pilot wellbeing measure for front line staff in Public Realm, We Fix and My Place. This group of staff have much more limited access to support through the Council's intranet. The app is available through smartphones, and provides a wellbeing offer to a traditionally excluded group.
- Plans and timelines have been agreed to review the approach to talent management and succession planning. This will mean a framework to retain and develop staff, with a particular focus on under-represented groups.

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

- The Dispersed Working Programme will be tested on an ongoing basis, with a detailed survey with staff planned for October/November 2022.
- All six priority areas in the Apprenticeship Action Plan will continue to be implemented, with a focus on delivering the pipeline apprenticeships as quickly as possible including increased access to entry level apprenticeships.
- An Investors in People staff survey will be carried out in June/July 2022, feedback from which, as well as from recent focus groups, will provide evidence and insights to shape the next stages of organisation development. As a Gold Investor in People we are now working on achieving accreditation at the highest level which is Platinum.

- Implement a new approach to employee performance management for this year, with a full review ready for 2023.
- Apply for the Mayor of London's Good Work Standard subject to successful London Living Wage employer accreditation.

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

- Working in the context of a pandemic presents challenges in terms of business continuity, absence, ill health and wellbeing. But good processes and management oversight are in place.

### **Enables democratic participation, works relationally and is transparent**

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The focus of the Lost Hours campaign has been to encourage parents to have a better understanding of what their children are doing online, and specifically to address the issue of online exploitation. This was supported by a programme of training sessions for parents through our partner Lifeline to help educate them about their child's online activity.
- Phase three of the Cleaner Barking and Dagenham campaign was delivered. During the campaign, around 100 residents participated in community litter picks. The campaign had 230 social media posts, with 2,100 likes, 560 likes, 150 shares and 370 comments. The 2021/22 online Resident Insight Survey showed that 75% of residents had heard about the work the Council is doing to create a cleaner borough. The amount of household recycled materials that is collected has increased by 8.27% in the last year. This is due to the success of the extended recycling scheme launched in Spring 2021.
- The Safer Barking and Dagenham campaign was launched. The campaign uses a mixture of outdoor advertising formats, including roadside billboards, advertising on the side of buses and railing banners, combined with both free and paid-for digital advertising. We are still waiting for tracking results for the outdoor advertising, however the paid-for geotargeted digital campaign performed well, with the campaign video featuring an Enforcement Case Worker generating 20,902 views and the Enforcement Officers on patrol video generating 7,902 views. Overall, the digital paid-for advertising achieved 608,269 impressions and 78,266 interactions<sup>5</sup>.
- Further bursts of the Fostering campaign were executed between December 2021 and May 2022 led to 49 enquiries and 2,675 unique visitors to the fostering webpage. A new more lucrative offer for foster carers was launched just before Fostering Fortnight in May. This has been supported by a heavyweight borough-wide and external campaign. Another burst of bus advertising will go live soon, building on the success of the artwork installed in Barking Station.

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<sup>5</sup> Number of clicks, swipe ups, likes, shares, video views over 10 seconds.

- One Borough Newsletter sign-up continues to grow since the sign-up box was added to the homepage of the Council's website in July 2021. Currently there are 16,191 newsletter subscribers: a 21.6% increase over the last nine months.
- Follower numbers on the Council's social media channels also continues to grow, as of 01 April 2022, there were 17,601 Twitter followers (up from 16,446 on 01 April 2021); 15,866 Facebook followers (up from 14,448 on 01 April 2021); 3,032 Instagram followers (up from 2,455 on 01 April 2021); and 8,909 LinkedIn followers.
- The statutory Polling District and Polling Places/Stations Review, in response to new ward arrangements published by Local Government Boundary Commission for England, and publication of new Register of Electors was completed on 01 March 2022.
- Local elections were successfully held on Thursday 05 May 2022. Turnout (24.5%) was lower than for previous local elections (29.5% in 2018 and 36.5% in 2014).

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

- Funding has been secured for the next phase of the Lost Hours campaign which was launched at the end of June 2022. It re-focuses on the primary audience of the campaign, parents of younger secondary school children, pushing out the original hard-hitting creative and messaging to encourage parents to take greater responsibility for their children's whereabouts and actions. A key component of the next phase will be extensive engagement with secondary schools. The media launch of the campaign will take place in a secondary school, inviting Year 7 and 8 pupils and parents to an event which will showcase a short film produced for the campaign, as well as hearing from key partners and people featured in the film.
- £50,000 has been outlined for a vaccine hesitancy campaign, following a successful bid of £285,000 which was awarded to the Council from the Government's Department of Levelling up to address Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy. The funding will be used to run a social marketing campaign targeting demographic groups with the lowest uptake (Black residents, Eastern European residents and young residents aged 18-25).
- An Annual Campaign Plan which is aligned to political and organisational priorities needs to be developed. This should make allowance for continuation of already established campaigns: Lost Hours, Cleaner Barking and Dagenham, and Safer Barking and Dagenham, while recognising new campaign priorities, in particular a priority to support residents through the cost-of-living crisis.
- An independent review of the Council's social media accounts will be commissioned to inform future direction. The aim is to increase engagement and use influencers to amplify council messages.
- Identify opportunities for sponsorship/grant funding to help mitigate forecasted overspend in relation to the Events Programme. Increased supplier costs and additional Platinum Jubilee events have added pressure to the allocated budget for events programming.
- Preparations for new Elections Bill, which is expected to bring in Voter Identification and several other new measures and requirements.

### Key risks in the next six months:

- The Fostering campaign needs to convert activity into new recruitments to increase the number of in house foster carers for Looked After Children so they can achieve permanence. Failure to recruit more in house foster carers will mean reliance on expensive independent or high-cost residential provision. Therefore, consideration should be given to promoting the campaign in a wider geographical area, and better targeting of potential foster carers through print and face-to-face outreach. Converting digital interest into applications and initial conversations with the Fostering Team should also be an area of focus to ensure the campaign is making an impact.
- The calling of a 'snap' General Election between now and late 2023 would present risks due to the anticipated requirements of the new Elections Bill and different boundaries for local Wards and parliamentary constituencies. In respect of the latter, the Council has made representations to the Parliamentary Boundary Commission to bring these issues into line, during the first stage of consultation on the Commission's Parliamentary Boundary Review 2023. However, the Boundary Commission's final proposals are not due to be published until June 2023 and must then pass-through Parliament.

### Puts the customer at the heart of what it does

#### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Contact centre performance remains around 70% for calls answered. It must be noted that from February to March 2022 the percentage of calls answered exceeded 70%, averaging 76%. Call volume averages dropped to 28,000 per month compared to 33,000 for the previous six months. However, demand through Council Tax lines and repairs has seen more complex calls meaning waiting and handling times are longer. Resource is not at optimum but new and creative ways with digital improvements is encouraging self-service.
- Average handling time has been below seven minutes throughout February and March 2022 (averaging 6:23 minutes) and average wait times dropped to 4:27 minutes. This demonstrates a good balance between demand and capacity.
- A fundamental area of concern is housing repairs enquiries and contacts. Long appointment lead times on key trades are driving longer conversations and there has been an increase in the level of chase-up calls for follow-on works by 5% (23% to 28%).
- Despite some performance challenges satisfaction with the Contact Centre is good. Overall satisfaction is at 87%, and at 92% for call handling satisfaction (averages for 2021/22).
- Since the launch of the ChatBot, which automates simple interactions and acts as a virtual assistant, there have been 16,600 interactive conversations, a 33% increase compared to the previous six months. 86% of ChatBot uses were rated as 'successful conversations' which is a significant difference compared to the public website yielding a success rate of 20%. The success of the ChatBot has been key to driving the performance improvement in call handling and call volumes described above.
- Multiple ChatBots focused on specific topics are in operation. These have helped customers better understand what the ChatBot can and cannot help them with. The ChatBot is constantly updated to include questions residents are asking which have not

been answered previously. This has also helped us to drive improvements to the website as the ChatBot by nature identifies weak points in content quality and navigation.

- The volume of complaints and Member Enquiries cases increased in the lead up to the election as expected. The higher than usual volume impacted on the ability to respond within 10 working days to Member Enquiries, performance for which averaged 82%.
- Freedom of Information requests completed within timescale (20 working days) have been averaging 82%; this is below the Information Commissioner's Office target of 95%. Challenges have arisen with the level of understanding across the Council on when and how exemptions should be applied which slows down responses or means we are responding to Freedom of Information requests that are in fact outside the scope of the legislation.
- Performance is as expected in relation to complaints upheld with 35% of cases finding fault with the actions undertaken. The majority of these relate to missed bins collections. The proportion of complaints upheld is within target and inline with the performance of other local authorities who experience similar challenges with common types of complaints.
- The Council continues to work on the key challenge of improving and modernising customer services and how residents interact with the Council. An important first step of this is to re-design the Council's website so it promotes self-service via digital channels. Another important step is to reduce digital exclusion. In response to this, the Digital Inclusion Group has supported the delivery of 45 volunteer Digital Champions across local libraries to support people with limited digital skills. There is also ongoing work internally to address digitally excluded staff.

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

- Focus is on the longer-term Contact Centre Recovery Plan with the deployment of live web chat towards the end of August 2022 and integrated systems making it easier for Customer Service Advisors to manage calls.
- Re-design of the Council's website to improve navigation and accessibility is a priority; The website has a customer satisfaction score of just 21% which means only two out of ten people who visited our website found what they were looking for.
- Further development of the Voice of the Customer Programme, which gathers resident feedback at various stages of an interaction with the Council, is needed to drive service improvements. A Customer Panel Community will be established to act as a steering group to design and test innovative approaches and solutions.
- 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 which arise through complaints and Member Enquiries will be applied to drive continuous improvement across all council services.
- Increasing staff knowledge on applying exemptions to Freedom of Information requests is necessary to avoid resource and time being used to respond to requests which could reasonably be exempted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A policy is in development which will clearly set out the types of exemptions and how they

can be applied. This will assist all services in applying and recognising applicable exemptions (e.g. repeat, vexatious, or overly cost intensive to answer).

- The Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Group can be leveraged further to deliver real impact in the borough, including but not limited to: growing the network of Digital Champions from 45 to 75; launching a pilot laptop lending scheme; fully understanding the digital skills gap for LBBD employees; and using the newly developed community banking website to initiate at least 100 debt interventions.

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

- Investment in digital services is needed to improve customer access, supporting demand management, self-service, and the provision of good quality information and advice.
- 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, and in some cases externally too. This presents challenges when trying to build a better managed and consistent user experience with a single intuitive design system. Hence 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:**

- 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 and ends in 2025. The Council needs to decide whether the best approach is to stay with Capita and upgrade to their new housing product or to adopt a different approach at the 2023 breakpoint. To inform this decision a review of housing technology requirements is being undertaken and will be reviewed. This review needs to have a focus on two key areas to improve the delivery of services:
  - Data: including the data quality of tenants and leaseholders, data quality of housing properties; the best approach for managing commercial properties; and the compliance requirements for all properties.
  - Digital technology: the need to improve customer and employee experience, making full use of digital methods of communication and smarter service design.
- The Wide Area and Local Area network service at council sites were at the end of their support lives and contract periods. As such, a refresh of the Wide Area and Local Area network connectivity including Wi-Fi is required. All sites will have had their network service refreshed by the end of July 2022 delivering improved performance and security.
- The new Enterprise Resource Planning solutions, iTrent and Advanced E5 (including HR and Payroll; and Finance and Procurement solutions), went live on 01 April 2022. This included smooth closedown of Oracle and archiving of information on 31 March 2022 and migration of data between systems. A significant amount of testing, data validation and training has taken place, as well as building new integrations between key systems which hold financial information. Part of the improved employee experience being delivered alongside the new Enterprise Resource Planning system is a Customer Relationship



Management system for reporting and managing internal staff requests, problems and issues for IT, HR and Finance services. This has been implemented in parallel with the Enterprise Resource Planning system rollout. It will now be extended to support our Procurement, Finance, and Income Management services enabling better management of issues that staff experience with core business systems and processes.

- My B&D, a portal for residents to manage accounts with us and use online services, went live in September 2021.
- 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.

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

- A follow-up Enterprise Resource Planning delivery phase will be completed by September 2022. A Product Manager will be recruited to lead on automation and advanced functionality in HR. System developments and improvements will lead to better employee experience through digital processes driving effectiveness and efficiency in those services.
- Commencement of the implementation of My B&D Phase 2 which once delivered will provide an improved customer journey when registering for a My B&D account, seamlessly linking a resident's Council Tax, Housing Benefits and Housing Rents accounts. In addition, Phase 2 improvements will allow residents to view balances through their My B&D accounts.
- 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.
- The contract for the Council's predictive analytics platform, One View, will come to an end next year. A priority over the next six to 12 months is to engage with the wider council to design the next phase of the work and then design implementation and subsequently deliver it. This will ensure we continue to have a ground-breaking predictive analytics platform.

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

- Cyber security continues to be a major risk with attackers continually increasing the sophistication of their attacks.