

Barking & Dagenham

Corporate Plan 2020/2022 Performance and Delivery Update

01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022

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Inclusive Growth

Building new homes

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Housing and homelessness within the Borough remain key issues and whilst we have made positive progress in relation to house building and reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation, there is still much more to be done. We need to improve the condition of the private rented sector as well as ensure that residents (including the most vulnerable) have a portfolio of good quality affordable housing options available to them.
- 292 homes were completed by Be First so far this year¹, by end of Q4 it is forecast 486 homes will be completed; this would be 56 homes short of Be First's 2022/23 Business Plan target to complete 542 homes in the financial year.
- Due to economic downturn and increases in labour and materials, as well as supply issues, scheme viability across the Be First portfolio has been negatively impacted. In response, tenure mixes at Woodward Road, 12 Thames Road, and the Gascoigne Estate have been revised, and some delivery has slipped into 2023/24. More positively, tenure related to London living rent, market rent and shared ownership are all on track. However, Affordable Rent tenure is 40 homes behind target and London Affordable Rent is 16 homes behind target.
- More grant is being sought from the Greater London Authority to support viability of schemes and we are exploring how Community Infrastructure Levy can be used to fund infrastructure projects.

Priorities for the next six months:

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

Key risks in the next six months:

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

¹ As at 14 December 2022.

Improving the quality and management of homes

Key performance and delivery messages:

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

Priorities for the next six months:

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

Key risks in the next six months:

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

Tackling Homelessness

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The total number of households in Temporary Accommodation was 1,321 at end of Q2 2022/23, down from 1,399 (-78) at the start of 2022/23. This is contrary to the trend across London which on average has seen an increase of 1.4% in households in Temporary Accommodation.
- The number of households in Private Sector Leased accommodation at the end of Q2 2022/23 was 890, down from 947 (-57) at the start of 2022/23. This has generated a net saving of £94,000 in the cost of accommodation
- Numbers of households approaching the Council threatened with homelessness remain much higher than 2021/22 with an average of 193 new approaches a month in Q2 2022/23 compared to 155 a month in Q2 of 21/22 (+38). This trend suggests that around 360 more households will approach this year.
- There have been issues recruiting an outreach worker for the Rough Sleeping Team, which is a risk for this area of work.
- The annual rough sleeper count in 2021 recorded 3 individuals as street homeless. The number was suppressed due to the 'everyone in' initiative and wider impacts of covid. The annual rough sleeping count for 2022 will be announced in February 2023.²

Priorities for the next six months:

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

² The count result is embargoed until February 2023.

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

Key risks in the next six months:

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

Providing homes for vulnerable residents

Key performance and delivery messages:

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

Priorities for the next six months:

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

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

Key risks in the next six months:

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

Improving the quantity and quality of jobs in Barking and Dagenham

Key performance and delivery messages:

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

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

Priorities for the next six months:

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

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

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

Key risks in the next six months:

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

Supporting residents to access new opportunities in the Borough

Key performance and delivery messages:

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

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

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

Priorities for the next six months:

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

Key risks in the next six months:

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

Safe and liveable neighbourhoods

Key performance and delivery messages:

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

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

Priorities for the next six months:

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

Key risks in the next six months:

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

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

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

Investing in physical and social infrastructure

Key performance and delivery messages:

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

outstanding issues, primarily regarding the Green Belt and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Further in-public hearing sessions are expected to be held toward the end of 2023. Regular monthly updates mapping the route to these hearing sessions will be published on the Local Plan website.

Priorities for the next six months:

- The new Infrastructure Delivery Board will begin to meet regularly, to discuss what physical infrastructure is needed to support the growth in the Borough. This will align with the timing of when developments will come to occupation and completion, and what money / funding is available. Spending developer contributions like Section 106 and Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy will form a major part of this work. Specialist staff will be brought in to monitor this process.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Developer contributions depend on development taking place. If growth slows down, then less money is received from Section 106 and Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy.

Shaping aspirational places

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Be First has commenced work on delivery plans for each of the Transformation Areas/Aspiration Zones set out in the Local Plan. There is already a clear plan in place for Barking Town Centre and Dagenham East and others will follow.
- Work has commenced at Barking Station to both improve its function and its appearance as the key gateway into the Borough.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Complete delivery plans for Transformation Areas/Aspiration zones.
- Completion of the Barking Heritage project with completion of public realm works including bronze model of Barking Abbey, further mosaics and final event and evaluation report.
- Completion of existing phase of Barking Station improvements including a second row of ticket barriers.
- Commence delivery of Levelling Up fund projects, if funding is secured, taking the forward the Food Hub project with City of London.
- Completion of Industria showing a new model of aspirational workspace and transforming a dated, unattractive industrial site.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Funding is not secured from Levelling Up Fund.

A decarbonised, local energy system

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The impact of inflation and the rising cost of borrowing stalled existing retrofit and renewable schemes and prevented others from beginning, particularly the retrofit of the corporate estate. However, a programme which has been reduced in size and the funding for phase 1 works has been agreed, beginning in 2023.
- Further connections to the low-carbon district heat network have stalled due to the slow-down in construction pipeline for new builds as well as lengthy discussions regarding the terms and conditions of connection and supply agreements relating to completed developments, such as the Gascoigne Estate and the Town Hall.
- Pressures on resourcing has meant discussions with UK Power Networks regarding a local area energy plan have not materialised.
- Progress has been made on determining the infrastructure and capacity needs of the Council's three depots to support an ongoing transition of fleet to electric vehicles. The Energy Saving Trust's Fleet Management Team are providing ongoing support.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Contracts are to be exchanged between LBBB and its corporate retrofit partner, Ameresco in December 2022 with energy efficiency measures and installs being deployed in some of the Council's largest buildings from January 2023 onwards.
- Continued support to B&D Energy in relation to firming up its decarbonisation plan and work with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy on its London study which is testing whether LBBB is a good case study in 'district heat network zoning' as the Government seeks to roll-out lowest cost, lowest carbon heat zones for consumers.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Prices are being locked into the corporate retrofit contracts so inflationary pressures do not push budgets up any further, but further planned phases may stall due to cost.
- Potential decarbonisation options for the network prove undeliverable in the short-term due to difficulty finding adequate local renewable sources.

Energy efficient homes and buildings

Key performance and delivery messages:

- ECO3 funding for the Cosy Homes scheme ended in July 2022 and a new ECO4 programme for energy efficiency measures began in August 2022. Following a procurement exercise the Council re-appointed EON as its delivery partner for the next iteration of the scheme which lasts until 2026.
- Green Homes Grant 3 installs continue to be rolled out but take-up among vulnerable owner-occupiers remains low, despite the high costs of energy.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Deep retrofit pilot installs are expected in January 2023 with orders placed with the offsite manufacturers.
- Wrap-up of Green Homes Grant 3 by end of March 2023 and ramp-up in ECO4 and ECO+ installs supporting vulnerable households with making their homes warmer and offsetting higher energy bills.
- Conclusion of the pilot phase for deep retrofit pilot on the Becontree Estate.
- Development of a stock decarbonisation plan, which has stalled, begins in December.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Take up of free and grant-aided retrofit schemes is not met. There has been modest interest from qualifying households in Green Homes Grant scheme opportunities, although the Council has just sent out mailshots to 8,000 homes considered to be potentially eligible.
- Tenants involved in the deep retrofit pilots choose not to progress or remediation issues relating to the selected properties mean substitute dwellings cannot be found or surveyed in time to maximise grant take-up by the June 2023 completion date.

A green local environment

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Chase Nature Reserve wetlands improvement scheme and Goresbrook Living Landscape projects continue at pace and should be completed in early 2023.
- Good Parks for London 2022 confirmed that LBBD remained in the top 10 for quality parks in the capital, although it fell slightly from fifth place to seventh.
- A growth bid of £50,000 a year was approved to tackle lake and pond maintenance issues following on from repeated issues of fly-tipping, algal blooms and invasive species. The new funding allows the Council to take measures to improve water quality.
- The Council received £85,000 to improve the resident offer in Old Dagenham Park and upgrade facilities and landscaping.
- The Tree Planting Action Plan has yet to be completed and is awaiting input on the desired locations for planting trees on streets and highways.
- The first 28 sites are agreed for the deployment of 116 new electric vehicle charging sockets. Office for Zero Emission Vehicle funding is now being applied for.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Complete the Tree Planting Action Plan and aim to refresh the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.
- Work with Barking Riverside Ltd and its new stakeholder group to progress the action plan to enhance the Ripple Nature Reserve site.
- Continue to maximise grant opportunities to invest in green assets.

- Tender for a consultant to draw up guidance for developer contributions towards Biodiversity Net Gain quotas
- Develop the next stage of the Old Dagenham Park improvement scheme and consult with the public.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Successful recruitment to a green spaces and nature recovery post which is due in November.
- Insufficient capacity to deliver grant funded projects on time
- Public expectations of what can be delivered at the Ripple Nature Reserve exceed what there is funding for.

Money and Debt

Key performance and delivery messages:

- BD Money, the Credit Union partnership, was launched formally in October 2022, following the soft launch in September. As of November 2022, there are 308 members, including 35 council officers, and 36 affordable loans have been disbursed (totalling approximately £65,000).
- The BD Money web platform has supported a growing number of residents with money advice and support. It provides an essential focal point and universal source of financial guidance and self-help tools for households struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. The website enables residents to directly access financial support. It is also a resource for council staff and public and voluntary sector partners to use to support residents and will support the Cost of Living Alliance work. Between April to September 2022 there were almost 10,000 page views. Following the launch of the Credit Union Offer, this has grown to over 22,000 views (as of November 2022).
- Council Tax collection in 2021/22 increased to 93.64% (from 93.18% in 2020/21). The target for 2022/23 is 95.7% and as at end of September 2022, the collection rate stands at 54.05%, 0.5% points down on the same period last year (55.45%). Prior to the impact of COVID-19, collection rates ranged from 95.5% to 95.8% (2016/17-2019/20).
- Business Rates collection for 2021/22 increased to 94.82% (from 86.9% in 2020/21). The target for 2022/23 is 98% and, as at end of September 2022, the collection rate stands at 57.5%, 5.66% points up on the same period last year (51.84%). Prior to the impact of COVID-19, collection rates ranged from 97.95% to 98.3% (2016/17-2019/20).
- Rent collection for 2021/22 dropped to 92.16% (from 92.6% in 2020/21). The target for 2022/23 is 95% and, as at end of September 2022, the collection rate stands at 45.77%, 0.47% points down on the same period last year (46.24%). Prior to the impact of COVID-19, collection rates ranged from 96.36% to 97.01% (2016/17-2019/20).
- Income maximisation generated by the Home and Money Hub for 2021/22 was £1.759m, an increase of 69% on 2020/21. So far in 2022/23, £626,934 has been generated, less than £10,000 below the same point last year (£636,652). The target for 2022/23 is £1.1m.
- 160 Discretionary Housing Payment awards have been made in 2022/23 so far, with 28.27% (£290,550) of available funds allocated. This is below the same period last year where 269 awards had been made with 48.2% (£515,830) of funds allocated. This

reduced spend is due to the Council ensuring other available funding streams³ are fully utilised to support residents with bills and the cost-of-living. Discretionary Housing Payment awards will be stepped up in the second half of the year with the full allocation to be spent.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Continued growth of the Credit Union Offer, including the rollout of the payroll deductions scheme for staff to support workplace savings. Further resident and partner engagement will raise the profile of the partnership within the Borough.
- Continued evolution of BD Money to support the cost-of-living response and provide a tool for partner and community organisations to use to support residents with money issues.
- Currently, £123 is added to Council Tax accounts where a summons is issued for non-payment. From 2023/24 this will change to £63 with an additional £60 only added if court action occurs. This will allow taxpayers up to three weeks to make payment or contact for support before the hearing takes place.
- As of April 2022 reminder letters are now being issued at the end of the month, rather than shortly after a missed instalment. This allows more time for the payer of Council Tax to make payment or contact for support. This is preventing unnecessary court action and reducing the cost burden on taxpayers.

Key risks in the next six months:

- The cost-of-living crisis is placing additional demands on low-income households with the expected impact being additional pressure on in-year collection and available discretionary support.
- The continued natural migration to Universal Credit and planned full migration from 2024 will create additional support needs and increase the risk for rent and Council Tax collection.
- A key element of the Credit Union programme is encouraging increased savings for residents and employees in the Borough. This builds resilience and lessens the probability of them needing to borrow in the future. The cost-of-living crisis is making it more difficult for these savings habits to be built which can threaten financial resilience building.

³ Household Support Grant Scheme, Energy Rebate Scheme, Discretionary Energy Rebate Awards.

Participation and Engagement

Building capacity in and with the social sector

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Launched a Cost-of-Living Alliance, working together with community, voluntary and faith organisations to ensure support is available when people need it most. This follows two cost-of-living summit events held in June and October. A cost-of-living locality model has been developed with community partners, through the BD_Collective and training support from the Citizen Advice Bureau.
- 13 warm spaces are in operation, offering warmth, shelter and places of advice. A small grants scheme of up to £1k has been launched to provide further support to enable organisations providing spaces to keep their doors open.
- Over £1.38m has been secured by the social sector, enabled through strong partnership and joint working across the BD_Collective networks. This is supporting a range of activities led by multiple consortia and organisations including around cost-of-living, health inequalities, community mental well-being.
- The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy participative funding process distributed £263,764 in April and November 2022. Over 170 residents trained and completed the Neighbourhood Fund, Dragons' Den style, participative funding process. 91 community projects have been funded by Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy to the value of £806,000, enabling residents to make decisions on funding in their neighbourhoods.
- Community groups have worked alongside the Council and other partners to support integration of over 100 Ukraine refugees into the Borough and continue to provide vital capacity across asylum and migration.
- Several community spaces are in the process of or have been successfully leased in testing a more collaborative and participative approach to community assets. These spaces include Heath Park, 200 Becontree, Woodward Library, and John Smith House.
- The BD Giving Community Steering Group, a panel of residents, launched the organisation's Investment Policy at Parliament in June for the Council initiated endowment. This document outlines an approach for how to invest the endowment fund and use any financial returns to achieve financial, social, and environmental impact for the Borough. The launch was attended by Labour MP for Dagenham and Rainham and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement, who also announced an additional £450,000 to continue to build the endowment.
- A faith cost-of-living event held in November in partnership with Faith Action with further engagement and action to follow. Al Madina Community Hub partnership launched in November.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Continue to work alongside BD_Collective and the wider voluntary and community sector to support our residents through the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
- Review and further strengthen means of enhancing faith and inter-faith engagement.

- Continue to grow the Endowment Fund through BD Giving.
- Renewed focus on building awareness and involvement in BD Lottery.
- Support BD Giving in the establishment of a business development programme for the Borough, to allow business development grants to be deployed from the Community-led Endowment Fund. The focus of the grants will be food, film, care, and the green economy, in line with the Borough's key sectors.
- Work with Faith Action to develop a road map that coordinates further engagements with Faith Leaders and leads into the formation of a participatory grant making model. This will explore how we can respond to the cost-of-living crisis, using existing funding.

Key risks in the next six months:

- There are several interdependencies across the development of the community assets piece, including the approval of the Growth Bid with Inclusive Growth. How the next phases of work are delivered in partnership between internal stakeholders and the wider community is key to success and progress.
- The cost-of-living crisis may mean that BD Lottery ticket sales stagnate or fall as local people struggle to afford the additional cost.

Developing opportunities to meaningfully participate and facilitating democratic participation

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Estate Improvement Fund launched its pilot stage in August. £100,000 of funding was allocated to improve three estates across the Borough, enabling estate residents to make suggestions on how to use the spending and vote on the most feasible options. Over 100 project suggestions were received with 400 tenant votes and eight priority projects agreed. This marks a substantial strengthening of engagement with tenants, led in collaboration across the Participation and Engagement Team and Landlord Services.
- Since March, over 1,800 residents have discovered the project for the first time. The project has just concluded its largest-ever summer programme over 10 weeks creating over 400 free to access activities, sessions, and learning opportunities with residents. Year Five concluded with over 30,000 hours of participation registered: the highest ever recorded since the project began.
- *Every One Every Day* is a key partner in the Cost-of-Living Alliance. Through offering a huge variety of free to access inclusive opportunities, the project provides residents with new skills to save money, support their mental health, and gain employment.
- An updated *Every One Every Day* project agreement has been signed and sealed to allow for the next phase of funding to be released from the Council, alongside over £2m of external funding.
- The collaborative business programmes remain a crucial support system through the Cost-of-Living Crisis to increase resident employment skills and to develop new livelihoods.
- The cost-of-living residents' survey was launched on the Citizens' Alliance Network (CAN), receiving over 500 submissions from local people. An analysis of the results has been shared with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and has fed into the formation of the Locality Model of support and training offer for those providing support.

- Over 39 projects have been published on the Citizens' Alliance Network. Topics have included Black History Month, Council Tax support, National Hate Crime Awareness Week, and Library of Things.
- 44 newsletters were published over the last year, with almost 3,000 people signed up to the newsletter a 555 increase on previous year.
- Strong partnership working with BD_Collective and other voluntary and community sector organisations to support the co-development of emerging strategies including Early Help, Best Chance and Ageing Well.
- The Heritage Service has now been amalgamated into Culture, and key areas of focus for the service include the initiation of the new Masterplans for Valence House Museum, Collections, Visitor's Centre and Archives and Eastbury Manor House (with surrounding area/assets such as medieval moat, lake and heritage gardens across both sites). Masterplans will focus on a community-engaged, resident-led approach to running of both major heritage site of the Borough with initiatives such as community-run café provisions, and increased programming for families, young people and elderly constituents being planned across all heritage provision.
- A new partnership relationship with the National Trust has been initiated to leverage in support for both Eastbury Manor House and broader heritage green spaces in the Borough.
- Major fundraising initiatives for heritage sites have been undertaken, in particular a funding application to the Museum Estate Development Fund for c.£950,000 has been submitted to Arts Council England for urgent improvements across the Valence House Museum site and neighbouring park area.
- Funding agreed and contracts signed to deliver £13m new sports pavilion, gym, community café and 3G artificial pitches at Parsloes Park as part of the Parklife scheme. Pitches have been completed and an old pavilion has been demolished.
- Chase Nature Reserve River, wetland and meadow restoration project at Eastbrookend Country Park is complete, with a new outdoor gym and children's play area.
- The Summer of Festivals Programme returned with a four-day event celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which was attended by over 20,000, including community led street parties, supported by the Council.
- In July the Summer of Festivals Weekender took place at Parsloes Park including the One Borough Festival hosted in partnership with Love Music Hate Racism. The Roundhouse Music Festival returned including the Pride and Joy Tent organised in partnership with Studio 3 Arts, which was a popular new area at the event. Over 16,000 visitors attended the event across the weekend with good take up from community organisations having a stalls or performing.
- The Steam and Cider Fair had to be cancelled due to the passing of the Queen necessitated the Accession Proclamation and Civic Service which was a fitting tribute to the late monarch.
- Work is taking place to develop an events programme for 2023 that will be deliverable within budget, to avoid a similar overspend in 2023/24.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Re-focus and set a clear future role and vision for CAN that further increases awareness, membership and voice for residents
- Establishing networks and action groups. The main focuses of the groups will be parks and open spaces, greening and the environment, and the cost-of-living.
- Further strengthening organisational skills and guidance in 'good engagement' through Engagement Champions Network and an engagement toolkit.
- To increase integration between Every One Every Day and Universal Services, adopting collaborative processes for working with residents through place-based initiatives.
- To work with Participatory City to embed their work across the Borough, including diversification of equipment and materials, as part of agreeing new leases for the duration of the project.
- Proper accessibility at the Borough's heritage sites for the community through the development of a comprehensive plan to redesign of main access routes to Valence House Museum, archives and collections, including for neighbouring Valence Primary School and Valence Library; prioritisation will be given to safer and better access for school children, elderly visitors, and visitors with disabilities.
- New operational and business plans at both Eastbury Manor House and Valence House Museum focusing on resident participation, site resilience and building inclusion of both community partners and local residents.
- Ensure the new Parklife scheme develops to timetable and that local stakeholders in the Essex football leagues are kept informed on a regular basis about progress.
- Approve the 2023 events programme to enable early preparations and the ability to secure sponsorship.
- A review of the Events Team's fees and charges for hiring out parks needs to be undertaken to ensure the Team are recovering all costs. This is likely to include religious events in parks.
- Plan for the delivery of two large scale external events, Cogo and elrow in the summer 2023, to generate much needed income to the Council and help to secure Barking and Dagenham as an events destination.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Addressing clarity over role and remit of Citizens Alliance Network.
- Timeline delivery on the leases for further embedding Every One Every Day in other spaces.
- An increase in COVID-19 cases over the winter could see more restrictions on face-to-face engagement.
- Funding shortfall at Valence House Museum for urgent repairs and meeting statutory requirements to the heritage site should the Museum Estate and Development Fund application to Arts Council England not be successful.
- A lack of agreement and sign off on the events programme for 2023 will prolong planning, which will drive up event infrastructure costs. Lack of clarity could also lead to overspend if a clear programme is not agreed and costed up in advance.

Designing relational practices into the Council's activity

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Engagement Champion Network completed its first phase. Work over the last six months has focused on planning the Network's next phase, including a survey which was sent to Heads of Services to understand the organisation's needs for engagement practice and what they would like to see from the next phase of the programme.
- An online engagement toolkit has been developed, which will be shared on the staff intranet. The toolkit includes information on the engagement process, spectrum of participation, guidance on who to speak to and where to find other useful resources.
- A review of the Better Impact volunteering platform has taken place. 23 council service areas contributed to a Volunteering Capacity Survey discussing the use of volunteers in their areas. The staff volunteering policy was re-launched in August, including a manual for staff use. A volunteer handbook has also been co-produced with volunteers. Focus is on creating as many new volunteering opportunities as possible by working with different service areas and community partners to increase the overall positive impact of volunteering in the Borough.
- The New Town Culture initiative continues to tie directly into key political priorities in placing the resident experience at the heart of the work we do, particularly as the programme embodies collective strategic aims across Inclusive Growth, Social Care and Public Health. New Town Culture has over the past months redesigned its business plan to feed more directly into LBB's new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy to build resilience and improve multi-agency support for those with adverse childhood experiences, as well as improve physical and mental wellbeing. New Town Culture also supports delivery of aspirations for the upcoming new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which embodies a vision of "working together to give the best chance in life to babies, children, young people and their families".
- As of December 2022, New Town Culture has engaged 600+ young people and continues to work with 140 foster care families.
- The Culture service continues to work on the development of cultural infrastructure on the ground for and with residents and local arts organisations through community-focused schemes which prioritise digital access, resilience and sustainability. A successful capital grant application for c. £240,000 from Arts Council England has allowed for the development of the Woodward Library site into a digital arts hub for the Becontree Estate, allowing for the building of a community-led legacy to the Becontree Forever centenary cultural programme.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Participation and engagement to be embedded in policy, strategy, decision making and place-shaping across the Council – it becomes the heart of how we do business.
- To publish the engagement hub on the staff intranet. This hub will act as an interactive toolkit that supports 'good engagement' shares good practice and builds capacity.
- To continue working with Landlord Services, looking at a potential new approach to tenant engagement, working with TPAS to do so. Linked to this will be the publishing of the Tenants and Leaseholders' Annual Report in January 2022.
- Increase staff volunteering further.

- Through New Town Culture develop ongoing relation practice based Continuing Professional Development programme for social care staff in LBBB Children's Care and support including access to a bespoke accredited MA course in partnership with Goldsmith's University, team training, group reflective supervision and development of bespoke tools.
- Develop new framework for rolling out of New Town Culture income generating model of CPD to offer to other Local Authorities.
- Support New Town Culture programming which allows for retention and recruitment of high calibre staff to LBBB Children's Care and Support.
- Initiate formal Steering Group to inform ongoing development of Woodward Library Digital Arts and Culture Hub, expanding scope of discussions to include input from local businesses, and identify key cultural partners imbedded directly on site; initiate development of 5-year work/business plan for the site to ensure resilience.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Staff capacity to undertake thorough and well-planned engagement projects, to learn, and contribute to the Engagement Champion Network.
- Ongoing senior management buy-in is important for the Engagement Champion Network to progress, building upon what has already happened, and to encourage staff at lower levels to participate in the programme.
- Funding shortfall for future New Town Culture programmes (2024 and beyond) should grant/fundraising initiatives over the next six months be unsuccessful.
- Possible delays to handover of Woodward Library site from Be First to Culture Team/cultural partners due to delay in construction and redevelopment of broader site.

Prevention, Independence and Resilience

Every child gets the best start in life and all children can attend and achieve in inclusive, good quality early years settings and local schools

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Take up of early education places continues to rise. It is now above pre-pandemic levels for all ages. The take up of two-year-old places is at 90%, which is the highest ever, and the highest in London, with Barking and Dagenham ranking 17th in the country. Take up of places for three-and-four-year-olds has improved to 87%, which is above outer London averages.
- 97% of children are accessing a place in Early Years settings rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted. The Borough is in the top 10 local authorities for primary inspection performance⁴.
- Provisional Early Years Foundation Profile results were significantly down compared to 2019, which reflected the picture nationally. At Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths and working at Greater Depth has declined in all subjects⁵, again showing the impact on our youngest children. At Key Stage 1, Maths at Greater Depth remains above national. However, the gap to London has widened in all areas.
- The combined Key Stage 2 Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths (60%) has declined but at a slower rate than both London and national and is now 1.3% above national. Both Maths and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling remain areas of strength and which are above national at the Expected and Higher Standards. However, working at the Higher Standard for Reading, Writing and Maths fell at a faster rate and is now below national.
- Despite the significant challenges of COVID-19 for this cohort, there are increases in all published headline indicators at Key Stage 4. The provisional combined grades 9-5 in English and Maths at 50.4%, an increase of 7.8% on 2019 (42.6%), is Barking and Dagenham's best ever performance on this indicator. This is 0.6% above the national average (49.8%) for 2022.
- At Key Stage 5 overall, the results are very positive. For A levels, on all key performance measures, results have improved since 2019 and in many cases by a significant margin. While most measures remain below national, in most cases, the rate of improvement between 2019 to 2022 for Barking and Dagenham has been faster than national, except for the very highest grades, where the gap to national has widened by 1.9%. On the key indicator A* - B, crucial for Higher Education destinations, the gap to national has reduced from 2019.
- The Arts Award Programme increased from 8 to 10 secondary schools taking part, with over 2,000 Year 7 students achieving certification from Trinity College London this Summer – the single largest cohort submitted in the country for this year.

⁴ Watchsted data

⁵ Reading, Writing and Maths performance in 2019 was 64.2%. It has since dropped to 51.9% in 2022.

- The number of Electively Home Educated children in the Borough is 352. Whilst figures are stable, this represents a rise of 75% on pre-COVID-19 levels. 6.8% of the cohort are open to Social Care and 3.5% have an Education, Health and Care Plan. This is line with national data.
- Pressure on specialist Special Educational Needs and Disability places remains acute and demand outstrips capacity despite the increases in places at Riverside Bridge and in Additional Resourced Provision. The new Special Educational Needs school to be built by the Department for Education has been delayed further and is likely to start construction in early 2023. To alleviate some of the current pressure, the Department for Education approved the expansion of Riverside Bridge by 90 places, with 30 having opened in September 2022. The construction of Pathways Special School has a target completion date October of 2023. Once complete, the school will move to its permanent home from the City Farm school site.
- 58% of children in Barking and Dagenham who received a health and development review at age 2-2½ were at or above the expected level in all five areas of development. This is the second lowest of the 26 boroughs who publish data.
- 27.6% of children are not achieving a Good Level of Development by the end of reception meaning children are going into year 1 behind where they should be (which sets them on a likely trajectory to poorer GCSE grades and then lower employability and associated poorer health outcomes).

Priorities for the next six months

- Work with schools to prioritise speech, language and communication to steadily improve outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Further developing the Local Authority's attendance monitoring and support in line with recent government reforms around our duties around attendance.
- Working with schools, BDSIP⁶ and partners to reduce fixed-term suspensions in schools, with a focus on the primary phase.
- Work continues to identify a new site for Mayesbrook Alternative Provision school to expand pupil intake and improve facilities.
- Formal set up of the Best Chance 0-25 partnership, and development of the Best Chance 0-25 partnership delivery plan and outcomes framework to guide delivery under the four themes (best start to life; thriving in inclusive schools and communities; being safe and secure; and being successful young adults), as part of the Place Based Partnership governance.
- Finalise the delivery plan for Start 4 Life and Family Hubs. Securing the first tranche of funding and commissioning Start 4 Life interventions from providers, including NHS and the voluntary sector, and mobilising ready for delivery post-April 2023.
- Open two family hubs in the North and East locality, achieving a level 2 delivery model and the following 'go further' requirements.

⁶ The Barking and Dagenham School improvement Partnership is a not-for-profit social enterprise providing school improvement and related services to schools and other education providers.

Key risks in the next six months:

- The demand for specialist provision and places for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability remains high, requiring an ongoing, determined, and consistent focus to meet need in a challenging financial climate.
- Requests for Education, Health and Care assessments doubled in 2021/22. The increasing numbers of children and young people with complex needs is placing pressure on the Council's Education, Health and Care Team, whose role is to administer the assessment process and identify appropriate placements, and on Education Psychologists, who contribute to the process. Despite recent increases in staffing, there remains a backlog of applications and reviews which is being addressed.
- A growing need for greater mental health support in schools, with increased support required in some areas, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. This is due to a rise in post-pandemic mental health issues in children and young people.
- Delivering the Start 4 Life and Family Hubs agendas will be a significant challenge both in terms of speed that the Department of Education want things mobilised and in terms of resource needed to make it work. There is a need for the whole system to move to this model to make it viable and sustainable. The Department of Education will protect funding for the programme but central government spending cuts across local authorities will reduce the capacity to implement change and result in insufficient infrastructure or resource to develop and deliver a sustainable service and model unless there is commitment internally.

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

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The pandemic had a significant impact on work experience opportunities and the brokering of these placements by BDSIP was paused for over a year. From early 2022, the work experience offer restarted and now includes placing groups of pupils from seven secondary school pre-16 cohorts, two post-16 cohorts and placing a small number of pupils from special schools.
- The Council met and exceeded its commitment to deliver 73 work experience placements, hosting 99 placements from April to November 2022. As part of the end of year review and evaluation a more structured work experience arrangement is being scoped for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- The work experience offer to T Levels⁷ has been extended and will be hosting three T Level work experience placements for students undertaking a T Level qualification in Management and Administration – Business Support. As part of the package of support for students each will be supported with a travel and subsistence allowance in line with the Council policy for employees.

⁷ T Levels are new 2-year courses which are taken after GCSEs and are broadly equivalent in size to 3 A Levels. T Levels offer students practical and knowledge-based learning at a school or college and on-the-job experience through an industry placement of at least 315 hours – approximately 45 days.

- A renewed post-16 partnership has been established which comprises representatives from schools, Barking and Dagenham College, the Council and BDSIP.
- The Colin Pond Trust awarded 62 scholarships students in November 2022.
- A new Key Stage 4/5 Transition Worker has been appointed to support outcomes in the Virtual School.
- The proportion of Year 12s and 13s in Barking and Dagenham who were not in education, employment or training or whose post 16 destination was 'unknown' decreased significantly from 3.7% to 2.9% (the December-February average). This is the Borough's best ever position.
- For Care Leavers who are in education, employment or training, the Borough's performance at the end of September 2022 was 68%, better than the national average of 50%, the London average of 54%, and higher than the Borough's 2021/22 performance (62%).
- Care Leavers progressing to Higher Education has improved. Six students achieved GCSE level 4 and above in five subjects or more, enabling them to go on to study at the Advanced or National Diploma Level. Eight students progressed to university, achieving required A Level grades, which is a 100% increase from four young people who progressed to university in 2021.
- The number of young people progressing to Higher Education from Barking and Dagenham schools has risen by 8% and the number of young people progressing to Higher Education from schools and Barking and Dagenham College has risen from 1,044 in 2021 to 1,105 in 2022.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Increase engagement with the Post-16 Partnership with an initial focus on A Level teaching.
- A Young People's Employability Covenant is being developed to ensure local young people benefit from new education, training and employment opportunities which accompany major regeneration and economic development.
- Put in place better support so that more young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability move into employment before the age of 25.
- Support the development and opening of the Barking & Dagenham Further Education Food College, with a dedicated officer to support strong local uptake.
- Deliver a Cultural, Creative and Digital Careers month in partnership with schools.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Sourcing sufficient work experience placement opportunities is gradually improving, however there have been challenges with rebuilding the pool of work experience placements.
- Looking at how the Colin Pond Scholarships Awards can be sustained against reducing funds.
- While numbers progressing to Higher Education have risen, the proportion of Year 13s progressing to Higher Education from schools this year has declined from 83% in 2021 to 81% in 2022. We need to investigate and monitor this and act if necessary.

More children and young people in care find permanent, safe and stable homes

Key performance and delivery messages:

- A Permanence Task Force is now in place which oversees all permanence activity.
- The Looked After Children Management Panel continues to review the Looked After Children cohort aged 0-18, exploring all options for residential placement exit, fostering opportunities and improved scrutiny of decisions by management.
- A multi-disciplinary panel has reviewed residential placements relating to the quality, safety and outcomes as well as opportunities for step-down.
- The Specialist Intervention Service has greatly improved the edge of care offer through increased family contact, family support work, volunteer offer and play therapy. The service has seen a 74% increase in referrals since September 2021.
- The Pause Project has continued to support women to develop the skills to manage their lives more successfully; of the 32 Pause graduates, there has been zero live births.
- There has been an increase in foster care rates and a rise in the number of foster carers recruited over the last two years – from 141 in March 2020 to 154 in March 2022. Foster carers are providing homes for 176 Looked After Children (compared to 164 at the end of previous year).
- We are the lead and advisory partner in developing The London Accommodation Pathfinder which will improve the sufficiency of quality secure remand accommodation across London.
- Xantura has been commissioned to develop the One View⁸ platform to quantify the cost of growth across the range of Looked After Children and Care Leaver services and make plans for both improvement and financial mitigation. We are also signed up partners to developing the pan-London dynamic sufficiency tool which will give benchmarking data and highlight cross-London pressures as areas for joint work.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Agree sign-off and publish the new Sufficiency Strategy for Children's Social Care which will inform the approach and workplan followed by commissioning until 2026.
- Deliver the Permanence Improvement Plan alongside the development and establishment of programme governance processes and groups to share roles, responsibilities, and risks.
- Further refine and develop the Sufficiency Insights Tool for Children's Social Care with Xantura.
- Look at collaborative commissioning models with other local authorities to achieve better value for money arrangements and alleviate strain on budgets through joint commissioning of high cost, low quantity placements.

⁸ OneView is a data platform which brings together data from five key service areas to provide a single view of the individual/household to help inform decision-making.

- Develop stronger market support and engagement to improve placement commissioning. The intention to commission and procure placements that offer bespoke and highly skilled practitioners that can meet the needs of our children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders or complex disabilities to prevent placement breakdown and instability.
- Increase the overall foster care provision and develop more specialist foster care for children with complex needs.
- Work more closely with health commissioning partners to develop integrated sufficiency planning and support; for example, placement support for children with complex medical needs, and fast-track Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services support for specialist Foster Carers.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Key risks are those faced by all local authorities in London and across the country. These include: rising numbers of children in care; higher demand for specialist provision; limited secure provision; difficulty recruiting and retaining foster carers; and, dynamics in the private market. These risks and pressures have been set out by Ofsted in new research on placement sufficiency for children in care and care leavers published in November 2022.
- Ofsted is set to introduce new legislation for semi-independent accommodation providers, which are currently unregulated. This new legislation is welcomed as it will likely improve the quality of semi-independent providers for those who provide accommodation for 16-18-year-olds. However, the financial burden this will place on providers during the cost-of-living crisis, and the time taken to register for inspection, could force a number of providers out of the market space as they chose to provide more high-cost disability provision or lower cost unregulated 18+ accommodation. Reduction of providers in the 16-18-year-old market will likely cause significant budgetary strain.

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

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Vulnerable Housing Programme has accommodated 145 Care Leavers in paid for accommodation.
- Making Housing a Home, an information leaflet on housing and accommodation options for Care Leavers or Homeless 16–17-year-olds, has been developed outlining the process, support offered and different accommodation types.
- A pilot a scheme was launched in October 2022 to assist Care Leavers to find suitable, long-term Private Rented accommodation by offering a Rent Guarantor Scheme.
- The Local Authority will now pay travel costs to attend work or university until the first pay cheque/student loan is available.
- Dedicated substance misuse support from Subwise, who work with young people until the age of 25 years old, is now co-located with the Care Leaver service at the Vibe.
- Consultations have been carried out with young people who were Looked After and have a range of actions and outcomes which are being developed and implemented.

- A full-time mental health practitioner has been recruited to sit within the Leaving Care Team.
- In partnership with Habitat for Humanity, approximately 16 beds of high specification shared flats have been developed in empty spaces above shops, providing new affordable accommodation for Care Leavers. Habitat for Humanity are to set up and establish a workshop for upcycling furniture with, and for, vulnerable young adults to go into future properties.

Priorities for the next six months:

- The intention within the next 12 months is to establish a group of young inspectors comprised of Looked After Children and Care Leavers who will be supported and trained in undertaking mystery shopping visits to providers.
- By the end of April 2023, we will have established a portal on One Borough Voice to capture the Children in Care and Care Leaver views as to their placements. They will also be able to feedback anonymously and complete a simple online placement survey.
- We plan to commence health workshops to include sexual health including contraception, dental health, and emotional wellbeing.

Key risks in the next six months:

- There is an on-going need to address identified gaps in Looked After Children, Children in Need, and mental health provision, while taking a holistic view on the prevention of escalation to statutory services regarding children and young people's mental health service provision.
- There is a gap in wellbeing and emotional support provision for Looked After Children and Care Leavers who do not meet the secondary mental health threshold once they turn 18.
- The cost-of-living crisis is likely to disproportionately impact Care Leavers and those with No Recourse to Public Funds.

Young people and adults at risk are safeguarded in the context of their families, peers, schools, and communities and safeguarded from exploitation

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Nearly 2,500 young people have been reached through the Young Londoners Fund 'From Roads to Communities' programme. 200 young people were reached in Q3 quarter alone.
- Three Youth Independent Advisory Group meetings have been held this year. The group sees young people engage with the Police on key topics.
- Following the completion of the School Health Survey by a record number of schools and students, 30 schools were provided with a small grant to action issues raised through the survey.
- An Expression of Interest has been submitted to the Youth Investment Fund for the extensive refurbishment of Padnall Hall in Marks Gate into a youth centre.
- 88 young people from eight secondary schools attended the third annual Young People's Safety Summit. Outcomes of the summit have been fed into the Community Safety

Partnership, Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Contextual Safeguarding Steering Group.

- The latest phase of the Lost Hours campaign was launched in October 2022 with focus on primary school age and parents of younger secondary school children. The launch was followed by a four-week integrated advertising campaign which included outdoor advertising, paid digital advertising, and social media content. A toolkit of materials was also produced for secondary schools to push out to parents. There is an appetite to run further similar events as a series of roadshows with secondary schools.
- A Year 6/7 Transition group, including LBBD, schools, and BDSIP, worked together to focus on identifying vulnerable children who were due to transfer to secondary school.
- Over 6,000 children and young people completed the comprehensive School Health Survey which provides detailed and rich data around health priorities, including sexual health and attitudes towards violence in teenage relationships.
- The Young Londoner's Programme has returned and outcomes are at pre-pandemic levels and is in line with project targets. Project partners are BoxUp Crime, Spark2Life and Studio 3 Arts.
- The Violence Reduction Unit has extended funding for after-school activities in Mayesbrook Park, the Borough's Alternative Provision. The Council has also been selected to participate in the Violence Reduction Unit's inclusion programme.
- In support of young people's health and wellbeing, trauma informed training was offered to all schools.
- 100 parents engaged in the training on the risks of online safety. The training was delivered by LifeLine Projects.
- School inclusion work with partners to prevent exclusions from schools was shortlisted to be a finalist in the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2022 Public/Public Partnerships category.
- Barking and Dagenham was the highest scoring bidder to receive Home Office funding from the Young Women and Girls Fund. Funding will be used to recruit a dedicated worker who will provide gender specific support to young girls at risk of exploitation.
- Funding was awarded for a Turnaround programme which will fund two posts to work with those on the edge of custody through an approach to early intervention for children and their siblings.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Review the pilot called 'Inclusion Matters', which is a live risk register for vulnerable pupils, and rolling this out to all schools in the Summer term 2023.
- Further embed a Mental Health and Trauma approach with schools including the Inclusive and Nurturing Schools programme, funded by the Violence Reduction Unit, for 10 schools to aim to reduce youth violence and peer-on-peer sexual abuse through staff training.
- Develop a bid for the Youth Investment Fund to develop new youth centres focused on two sites in the Borough, Marks Gate and Thames View.
- Continue to work in partnership with secondary schools around the 'Lost Hours' campaign, running roadshows, promoting key campaign messages and the digital toolkit, and working

in partnership with social care staff so they can use the resources as a safeguarding tool as part of their work with parents and families.

- Review the Step Up, Stay Safe Strategy to align with Children's social care strategies and to review future funding plans.
- Continue to support all providers who are delivering the Greater London Authority's Young Londoners Funded project to meet their quarterly participation targets as they were pre-COVID-19.
- Deliver an inclusive and comprehensive Young People's Safety Summit to all schools to capture young people's views and priorities around safe and unsafe spaces, and for the outcomes to be acted upon by the Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- The new Early Help Target Operating Model will enable the Youth At Risk Matrix (YARM) workers to continue to deliver work at the highest level, supported by early intervention work to support adolescents.
- Continue to promote the Ben Kinsella Trust Exhibition and encourage schools and other professionals working with children and young people to book onto the workshops. The workshops aim to challenge attitudes to knife crime and show young people they are the architects of their lives and should make positive choices.
- Review delivery of the Local Violence and Vulnerability Action Plan that is focused on safeguarding and educating children and young people and positive diversion from violence.
- Develop a new three-year Community Safety Strategy based on the recently completed Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Host a multi-agency launch event for the new Exploitation Strategy and develop an action plan with multi-agency commitments which will inform the Adolescent and Extra-familial Harm Improvement Plan.
- Increasing the number of places available to secondary-aged pupils as part of the Holiday Activities and Food programme and developing a comprehensive programme for the 2023 Summer Holidays.

Key risks in the next six months:

- The Young Londoner's Fund programme ended in December 2022, with no further funding available. Risks have been identified around ongoing funding for youth crime prevention activity as this relies heavily on grants. This includes funding for the Ben Kinsella Trust Exhibition, YARM workers and other prevention, diversionary and targeted work.

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

Key performance and delivery messages:

- A needs analysis has been specified and work has started to identify need and ensure services are tailored to users with intelligently designed pathways.
- Early conversations have started to agree a joint assessment tool across the partnership. This will enable joined up processes and better joint commissioning to meet need.

- Three additional Independent Domestic Violence Advocates posts have been agreed through the Early Help Improvement Programme.
- The Violence Reduction Unit Local Violence and Vulnerability Action Plan sets out key priority areas for reducing serious violence, including a focus on improving women's safety and the delivery of the ReMove Abuse Perpetrator programme. Funding for this has been secured to sustain the programme until 31 March 2023.
- Building on the work of the Domestic Abuse Commission, from March to May 2022 an end-to-end review of domestic abuse systems was carried out. Following this, the Domestic Abuse Improvement Programme was agreed.
- We have established clear strategic oversight of domestic abuse including re-establishing key structures within the Community Safety Partnership (the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group).
- A Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership practice week on domestic abuse was delivered. As part of this, leadership reviewed frontline practice and how domestic abuse incidents are responded to across all services.
- Information, advice and guidance for staff has been reviewed and improved. Domestic abuse toolkits have been developed. Toolkits on the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference⁹ (MARAC) and parental conflict are also being developed so staff can differentiate between the two.
- Intranet pages now include information for all council staff and focused practitioners on how to address domestic abuse, as well as full information on how to make referrals to appropriate interventions. These pages are being replicated on the multi-agency partnership website.
- Internet pages have also been updated to improve community understanding of domestic abuse, the services available and how to access them. There is also information for residents on how they can help family or friends affected by domestic abuse.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Produce a new Violence Against Women and Girls strategy.
- Effective mobilisation and embedding of the new domestic abuse services and related contract management and monitoring to ensure outputs and outcomes required are delivered.
- Commission additional interventions agreed by the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership, including a children and young people's therapeutic/advice service.
- Design new multi-disciplinary teams seeking to ensure a whole family approach to domestic abuse with the right service delivered at the right time.
- Develop and implement a domestic abuse and violence against women and girls communications and campaigns plan until March 2023.

⁹ A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

- Implement a new risk assessment tool across the multi-agency workforce, ensuring a shared language and shared understanding of risk.
- Deliver the MARAC Improvement Plan including the implementation of a predatory offender approach, the agreement of a new operating protocol, and the development of a data tool.
- Development of a housing standard of excellence in our responses to victims of domestic abuse and their families.
- Work with schools to link healthy relationships learning in schools to our services, and ensure effective links built – this includes revitalising the work of Operation Encompass¹⁰.
- Establish a clear governance route for domestic abuse including roles and responsibilities, as well as clarify where risk is held across all services.
- Secure funding to deliver the Safe Haven scheme that aims to provide safe spaces in community settings through local businesses to support residents (in particular women and girls) if they feel unsafe or vulnerable in the community.
- Workforce development to equip staff with the skills to support families impacted by domestic abuse. Safe and Together training is an example of the learning and development that will be provided.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Securing ongoing funding past March 2023 for the delivery of the ReMove Abuse Perpetrator Programme. The intervention element is being incorporated into different parts of the programme as far as is possible, but resourcing decisions will be required.
- The longer-term resourcing of the commissioned services and interventions forming the domestic abuse service offer also needs consideration across the Council and partners.
- There is a national shortage of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and it is possible that Refuge may struggle to recruit to the agreed posts in a timely way.

All residents with a disability can access from birth, transition to, and in adulthood that is seamless, personalised and enables them to thrive and contribute to their communities¹¹

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Becontree Children's Centre ran an extensive summer programme for families with disabled children including trips to Southend, Chessington, Arts and Crafts, and parenting support.

¹⁰ Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

¹¹ This is intrinsically linked to the "Every child gets the best start in life and all children can attend and achieve in inclusive, good quality early years settings and local schools" theme, and the developments in Early Help (as summarised above).

- The Baby and Us parenting programme at Heathway Resource Centre which supports maternal mental health had completed its first cohort of parents and has recruited parents to deliver the programme going forward.
- Identification and actioning of safeguarding concerns are proportional and robust, focusing on outcomes for service users. Cases are routinely dip sampled by the Principal Social Worker and Head of Service to ensure quality of intervention and assessment.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Short Breaks tender will be completed, which will provide vital support services for families with disabled children. The Council has a statutory duty to provide short breaks within their area; this will include both 'crisis' breaks and breaks designed to ensure family life can be maintained to reduce family breakdown.
- Re-model the Portage Service which will mean that we are better able to forecast and meet the needs of children and families.
- Develop a joint strategy with Health, Education, and the voluntary sector to support young people who meet Care Act eligibility when they transition to adult services.
- Work on the Autistic Spectrum Disorders diagnostic and pre/post diagnostic pathways is developing. Co-designing the behaviour pathways with parents continues to be a joint priority in partnership with NELFT.
- Work alongside the Early Help Hubs to develop an integrated offer for families with children who have profound disability.
- Recruitment of an additional two social workers to bring the Life Planning Team to full capacity.

Key risks in the next six months:

- The pressure within the children's Life Planning Team shows no sign of abating. Caseloads are still above recommended safe caseload thresholds. Additional capacity has been recruited; however high staff turnover is hampering reduction and stability in case load numbers.
- As Care Quality Commission and Ofsted inspections restart post-COVID-19, several residential settings have been rated as 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate'. This necessitates reassessment of service users and potentially moving them to new settings, which is another factor putting pressure on caseloads.
- The number of children with profound Autistic Spectrum Disorders requiring residential placements due to behaviours that challenge remains a concern for commissioners.
- Following a business case, additional funding for the Autistic Spectrum Disorders diagnostic pathway has been given, but only in part, meaning there remains a capacity gap between demand and delivery.

Children, young people, and adults can better access social, emotional, and mental wellbeing support - including loneliness reduction - in their communities

Key performance and delivery messages:

- After a successful recruitment campaign by North East London NHS Foundation Trust, the two Mental Health in Schools Teams are fully operational in two primary schools and two secondary schools. A phased roll out across all schools will start in January 2023.
- MIND have rolled out a Mental Health Peer Support Service across primary care which will create an 'expert by experience' team to support people with emerging or fluctuating mental health needs.
- Children and Young people are continuing to report emotional and mental wellbeing issues following the pandemic, and the need for support has increased significantly over the past two years; nationally 50% of young people report suffering from anxiety.
- The NHS Core20PLUS5 for children and young people lists emotional and mental health as key priorities for action to reduce inequalities. Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to support the reduction of health inequalities at both national and system level focusing on the most deprived 20% of the population (Core20) and specific inequalities populations.
- Adult Mental Health continues to see sustained pressure on the mental health and dementia pathways. Barking and Dagenham continues to have the highest number of women requiring inpatient care in North East London.
- There continues to be sustained pressure on the dementia pathway with significant chronicity of presentations due to delayed diagnosis. Families are also more inclined to ask for residential and nursing home placements, in part due to the vaccination programme and the perception that care homes are now safe for their loved ones.
- The continued work with North East London NHS Foundation Trust has ensured appropriate move on accommodation for people in hospital or supported living who are well enough to manage in the community with a package of care which maximises independence. This has significantly reduced the number of delayed discharges.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Ensure the Start 4 Life perinatal mental health offer is commissioned and implemented (including a training offer for the wider children and families workforce), and clear identification and referral pathways are in place across the system.
- Local authorities still await the final Liberty Protection Safeguarding legislation and time scales for implementation. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards operational team continues to roll out training across Care and Support in anticipation of the final guidance.
- North East London NHS Foundation Trust have continued to develop pathway mitigations for the increasing number of women that require inpatient care due to mental health crisis. This has included specialist intervention for women who are at risk of having their children taken away due to substance misuse or enduring mental ill health.
- Delivery of the Drugs and Alcohol Needs Assessment and Strategy, which will sit within the newly formed Combatting Drugs Partnership.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Given the number of residents experiencing unemployment, zero-hour contracts, and who are experiencing financial struggle we would expect to see a rise in demand across all mental health services.
- At points during the pandemic demand for inpatient acute care rose by 36%, all of whom required assessment and packages of care on discharge. The core numbers in Mental Health services have risen and numbers are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023/24.
- As the dementia diagnostic pathways have now resumed, Adult Mental Health are expecting to see significant rise in the number of older adults with a formal diagnosis of dementia.
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities funding for the MIND programmes comes to an end in April 2023, commissioners are seeking external funding to continue the programmes.

All vulnerable adults and older people are supported to access safe, timely, good quality, sustainable care that enables independence, choice and control integrated and accessed in their communities, and keeps them in their own homes or close to home for longer

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Work with health partners, Barking, Havering and Redbridge colleagues, and local care providers to ensure the health and social care system responded effectively to the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic, particularly around hospital discharge, infection control, market resilience, vaccine take-up and cost-of-living.
- A Fair Cost of Care exercise to ascertain the cost of providing care in Barking and Dagenham sustainably has been carried out with the local care provider market. This was in preparation for the now delayed Adult Social Care Charging Reforms. The Council has submitted these rates to the Government, including a plan to reach these rates by the 2024/25 financial year.
- A new Adult Social Care Discharge Fund has been announced, with £760,000 given to Barking and Dagenham to free up hospital beds and support discharge into social care. The fund can be used flexibly to support discharge including workforce capacity, recruitment initiatives, homecare packages and residential care. The Discharge Fund is pooled within the Better Care Fund and will require agreement from the Integrated Care Board. Funding must be spent by 31 March 2023.

Priorities for the next six months:

- The Care Quality Commission have a new responsibility to independently review and assess local authorities and Integrated Care Systems in delivering their duties. The focus will be on four key areas: working with people, providing support, ensuring safety and leadership. Each of the areas have a list of evidence, measures, outcomes, and best practice which will be used to determine the Council's ability to meet duties. Assurance inspections of local authorities will begin in April 2023 and therefore operational social care, Community Solutions and partners will be developing a self-assessment and undertaking inspection preparation over the next six months.

- The Council will continue to undertake preparation with partners for the Adult Social Care Charging Reforms (Cap on Care Costs), despite the Autumn Statement delaying the legislation for two years to October 2025. This delay is welcomed to work through the multitude of changes required to enact the legislation, although there are concerns regarding the funding that will be provided to support local authorities to prepare and adequately resource the system, plus workforce changes required.
- Award the tender for the provision of extra care services at Harp House, Darcy House, Fred Tibble Court and Colin Pond Court.

Key risk in the next six months:

- An inspection report published by the Care Quality Commission on 16 November rated Chaseview care home, run by HC-One, as inadequate. The care home is the largest in the Borough and currently has 89 residents, 61 of which are Barking and Dagenham residents. The home supports older people and people living with dementia. New council placements were suspended to the home in September this year following concerns that were echoed by the Care Quality Commission. Commissioners have been working closely with the home to follow an improvement plan to make significant changes to services.
- Meeting the Fair Cost of Care could cost the local authority up to £7m, including inflationary increases. The local authority has been given just over £600,000 so far to support these changes. There is a current lack of clarity on what funding will be given to the local authority, particularly given the pressures in the market and the delay in Charging Reform legislation. This will be an ongoing risk until a viable level of funding is provided by the Government.
- Recruitment and retention remain an issue across health and social care providers due to ongoing COVID-19 and Brexit issues, as well as the impact of inflation, the rise in living costs and the increase in National Living Wage. The situation is being closely monitored to ensure this does not affect placements and packages across the market and there is close dialogue with providers about workforce support.

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

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Heading into Winter it is important to increase immunisation uptake for priority groups. As at 05 December 2022, 28% from all priority groups combined had received a seasonal flu vaccination compared to 30% regionally for North East London. For COVID-19 seasonal booster vaccination, uptake in Barking and Dagenham for all priority groups was 31%, behind the North East London average of 37%.
- Measles Mumps Rubella at age five and Polio vaccine for one- to nine-year-olds are areas for improvement. As at end of September, the uptake of MMR vaccine first dose was 83.7%, and for second dose 73.6%. Polio vaccination uptake was 30.5%, as at 05 December 2022. This is behind the North East London average which is 36.6%.
- The Place-based Partnership Board and Integrated Care Board sub-committee have been established. The Babies Children and Young Peoples and Adults Delivery Groups are established, as is the Executive Committee, chaired by LBBD's Chief Executive as the place-based lead for the Partnership.

- The refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment have been published.
- Engagement on priorities for Joint Local Health and Wellbeing strategy 2023/2028 has started.
- £1.1m funding secured from the North East London Integrated Care Board to implement a health inequalities programme.
- An unmet needs analysis was undertaken to understand the number of residents with manageable conditions which are undiagnosed and therefore not in treatment.
- Implementation of Office of Health Improvement and Disparities funded community delivered weight management services for children and families and adults; children and families pilot was completed in September; the adults pilot continues.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Publication of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and joint outcomes framework
- Finalisation of the Place-based Partnership governance structure and recruitment to leadership posts therein.
- Work across the Council to prepare for the new ways of working needed within the new Place-based Partnership for April 2023, using a health in all policies approach.
- Deliver the COVID-19 boosters, seasonal flu and childhood immunisations, in particular targeting high risk groups and maximising uptake.
- Deliver five service impact reviews (Healthy Lifestyles, Domestic Violence, Personalised care, Cost of Living support for Families and Employment) to identify how services can be most effective to reduce demand for high-cost services and improve health and wellbeing.
- Delivery of 11 workstreams of the Barking and Dagenham Health Inequalities Programme across the Place-based Partnership and undertake a process to co-produce a bid for 2023/24 funding from the NHS North East London Integrated Care Board.
- Complete Office for Health Improvement and Disparities funded community-led weight management service pilot for adults and undertake Phase 2 of the community services for children and families.
- Monitor the ongoing 'mini-Health Checks' pilot for 30- to 39-year-old adults of Black and South Asian heritage who are at greater risk of cardiovascular disease at an earlier age. These health checks are a valuable opportunity to promote other health messages to this cohort; for example, immunisations and vaccinations.
- Present the unmet needs analysis for manageable health conditions analysis to key partners (e.g. BHR Long Term Conditions Transformation Board, Adults Delivery Board, GP Federation) and work with co-produce an approach to address this need and work.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Coronavirus remains a serious health risk.
- Low uptake of Measles Mumps Rubella and Polio vaccinations increases the risk of outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses in children.
- Capacity and capability of community and health sector partners to deliver health inequalities commitments given increasing demands.

Well Run Organisation

Delivers value for money for the taxpayer

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The new iTrent and Advanced E5 systems for HR/Payroll and Finance/Procurement went live in April 2022 replacing the Oracle ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) System. The new systems will be more cost effective to manage, and they are adapted for local authorities to use. LBBD will be able to work with our ERP supplier to identify areas where we can make business processes more effective. As these systems are based in the cloud, they will continue to evolve and develop throughout the life of the contract with a focus on improving employee experience and digital processing. Examples of improvements already achieved include better employee and manager access to information about staff, budget forecasting, supporting entities and managing income.
- The Council's General Fund budget for 2022/23 is £183.060m – a net increase from the previous year's position of £9.4m. The current forecast outturn position including movements to and from reserves and the income position is £196.698m which would be an overspend of £13.637m (7.45%). This is a significant overspend in the period and is driven by significant cost pressures such as the Local Government pay award and the increasing costs of social care. In addition, there is the impact of a changing balance of costs between the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund.
- There is a savings target of £6.219m for 2022/23 including those brought forward from previous years. £3.600m of these savings are either fully achieved or expected to be achieved in year. £2.354m are at high risk of not being achieved at all with the remaining £0.265m being uncertain or only part achieved in year.
- At the end of Q2, 13% of the plan of risk and compliance audits were at least at draft report stage. This falls short of the target for the end of Q2 which is for 25% of audits to be at draft stage but the plan remains on track for 100% delivery by the yearend deadline. An exercise has been completed to risk assess the schools in the Borough to inform a risk-based schools' audit plan and work is now underway against this plan. Seven draft reports have been issued since the start of the year, six from the risk and compliance plan and one school plan. Six of these have progressed to the final report stage with all of those being awarded either reasonable or substantial assurance opinions.
- By the end of Q2 the Counter Fraud Team had accepted 37 corporate fraud and 136 housing cases for investigation and completed 128 cases. This has resulted in the recovery of 8 properties and savings of £190,000. (This compares to the last period which recovered four Housing Revenue Account properties and detected fraud in excess of £225,000.)
- There were 16 data breaches reported during Q2 which is a significant improvement over the same period last year (25 breaches). Most data breaches relate to human error, e.g. sending email to incorrect recipients. Mandatory cyber security and data protection training was completed by all staff during Q2.
- Completion of the 2019/20 external audit of the Council financial statements remains a priority. The 2021/22 subsidiary external audits are being completed in line with the Companies House deadline of 31 December 2022.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Complete the 2019/20 external audit of the Council financial statements. The external audits of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Council and Group financial statements and grant claims will begin during 2023/24.
- Complete the 2021/22 subsidiary external audits in line with the Companies House deadline of 31 December 2022.
- Deliver a balanced budget for 2023/24, a medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) and a Treasury Management Strategy to Cabinet and Assembly in February/March 2023.
- There is potential for risks and opportunities to materialise and for management action to be taken to reduce overspends. The overspend can be managed by use of the budget support reserve, however, the current level of overspend would deplete the reserve, increasing the risk in future years. The position will continue to be closely monitored and risks and opportunities recognised as soon as certain.
- The iTrent and Advanced E5 systems went live with a minimum viable product (MVP) and phase 2 of the project is being planned during Q3/Q4 to deliver further improvements and functionality to the core products. The focus for phase 2 is better management information, making business processes more effective, driving further automation where possible, and further rationalisation of the HR business applications to take advantage of the iTrent capabilities.

Key risks in the next six months:

- The external trading environment for the Council and its commercial companies continues to be challenged by the impact of rising inflation, COVID-19 and Brexit, all of which are factors driving increased operational and construction costs. The impact of increasing cost inflation will also affect residents and is likely to lead to increased demand for public services.
- There are significant risks to funding that will become clearer when the Local Government Finance Settlement is published in late December. The Government's approach to fair funding, business rates and sustainable social care continue to be developed and the detailed proposals are yet to be announced. This forms a significant risk to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- The continued delays to external audits of the Council's Statement of Accounts 2019-20 persist causing additional work and a reputational risk to the Council with respect to assurance on its governance. An alternative audit firm has been contracted to audit grant claims to mitigate the risk to the Council financial statements audit.

Employs capable and values-driven staff, demonstrating excellent people management

Key performance and delivery messages:

- The transition to the new ERP systems has meant that corporate reporting on sickness absence and equality, diversity and inclusion information has been impacted due to changes in how the new systems produce management information. These are now priority areas for the ERP project to get in place.

- The current phase of dispersed working has reviewed office accommodation and working arrangements enabling flexible plus staff to return to working in the Borough on average twice a week from December 2022. The temperature check in December 2022 aims to provide feedback from staff on new arrangements to continue to test the model.
- Good progress continues to be made against the current apprenticeship action plan, with pipeline apprenticeships at all levels. Most scale 5 and below job vacancies are now converted to apprentices. The new process has been successfully implemented and services continue to support the apprenticeship offer for new and existing staff at all levels.
- The Inclusive Employer Programme continues to be implemented and includes the launch of a new policy on Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation designed in conjunction with the staff networks. The policy includes a process for flagging concerns informally and confidentially. The programme is focussed on a range of workforce initiatives including inclusive leadership and inclusive recruitment.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has been reviewed and relaunched. Information has been provided to staff at staff roadshows on the range of wellbeing support that's in place. The EAP continues to help employees deal with personal problems that might negatively impact their work performance, health and wellbeing.
- Talent management and succession planning frameworks are in development, with a focus on succession planning first with pilots on expectations for the new year.
- Good progress has been made against the Mayor of London's Good Work Charter, with the outcome expected to be announced in December 2022.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Investors in People (IIP) Platinum level review work will continue, including gathering evidence against the standard with a big focus on staff engagement, participation and reward/recognition. The IIP survey results from July 2022 have been used to assess progress, working closely with the IIP Assessor to gather evidence against the standard.
- The Apprenticeship Action Plan will be reviewed in April 2023 with new targets for apprenticeships for the council to meet.
- Roll out of self-sufficient manager tools and a review of IT systems which support these such as recruitment, Performance Feedback and Development reviews.
- Review the Inclusive Employer action plan and implement actions.
- Review and implement Performance, Feedback and Development reviews ready for April 2023 and onwards.
- Continue to promote the newly launched dispersed working training programme, which focuses on wellbeing and fostering a productive working environment. This is part of the wider Leadership and Management Programme.
- Review of staff benefits to support cost of living crisis and to ensure that current benefits are promoted and utilised.
- Implementation of talent and succession planning to support grow our own, and retention strategies.

Key Risks over next six months

- Recruitment and retention challenges are more evident since Brexit and the pandemic. Succession planning and talent management will identify the key principles that determine a hard to fill role and critical roles.
- Working in the context of significant change and external pressures, such as the cost-of-living crisis presents challenges in terms of wellbeing, ill health, staff engagement, absence and business continuity. But good processes and management oversight are in place with continued development in this area.

Enables democratic participation, works relationally and is transparent

Key performance and delivery messages:

- All Cabinet Key Decisions and agendas were published in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The annual canvass in 2022 achieved the highest ever return at 95.3% (94% in 2021; 91.8% in 2020; 89.7% in 2019).
- The Safer Barking and Dagenham campaign Phase 2 focuses on women's safety using insights from the women's safety survey. The campaign strategy development sets out to use integrated borough-wide activities alongside more targeted activity in the hotspot areas identified by the women's safety survey. The campaign launches in December 2022 and links in with the 16 Days of Activism towards violence against women and the launch of the Safe Havens scheme. The campaign aims to improve perceptions of safety, through communicating the increased enforcement and police activity across the Borough and the support available to help women feel safer.
- Fostering campaign: a further burst of activity launched in December 2022 which follows the success of the 2021 campaign, which focused on giving a child a better Christmas through becoming a foster carer.
- The Cost-of-Living campaign launched in December 2022 working with our community, faith and voluntary sector partners as part of the Cost-of-Living Alliance to provide information to residents on the range of support available in the Borough. A cost of living themed booklet was sent to all homes in the Borough and is being made available in libraries and GP surgeries. A further booklet was distributed to homes before Christmas, emphasising cost of living messages. The campaign strategy and creative approach is currently being finalised and has been co-created with our Cost-of-Living Alliance community partners. The campaign will employ both targeted and borough-wide advertising channels and use a suite of personas based on real life case studies to tell the human story of some of the support available. A toolkit of materials to share with partners to push out to their community contacts and channels will also be produced.
- A recruitment campaign is due to launch in December 2022. It will form part of Children's Care and Support's workforce strategy to recruit more permanent social workers across various levels. The campaign consists of digital and trade press advertising, both targeted and broad brush to extend the reach of the campaign to a national audience of social care professionals. A designated website/webpage for social care recruitment will be built and will include information about current jobs and a sign-up function, so potential candidates can be contacted when jobs become available.

- The Council received £450,000 funding, in March 2022, from the Government's Levelling up department to deliver a COVID-19 Vaccine Champions programme to increase vaccine uptake amongst residents. £50,000 of funding was allocated to deliver behavioural change communications activity to support the programme via borough-wide and targeted advertising alongside community engagement activities and interventions via our community sector partners. A behavioural change specialist agency, Claremont Communications, were commissioned to deliver the campaign. Following extensive audience research and insight gathered via local community partners, a campaign was delivered in August and ran through to early September. Claremont's evaluation showed that 26.83% of the people they surveyed recognised the campaign.
- The Grime and Punishment video series has been re-launched following the pandemic, informing residents about all the work our Enforcement Teams do to make Barking and Dagenham a better place. The first episode gave a look back on a case involving an illegal puppy farm in Dagenham and the process through the criminal justice system. Six editions of the Grime and Punishment series will be going out each year.
- One Borough Newsletter sign-up continues to grow significantly following the implementation of a sign-up box which has been added to all pages of the Council's website, and when residents register for a My B&D Account. As of 23 November 2022, there are 21,184 newsletter subscribers – a 29.9% increase since April 2022. An automated sign-up option will also be added to the Green Garden Waste collection service sign up form which should continue to increase sign-ups in early 2023.
- Follower numbers on the Council's social media channels also continue to grow; as of 1 November 2022, there were 18,510 Twitter followers (up from 17,601 on 1 April 2022); 16,775 Facebook followers (up from 15,866 on 1 April 2022); 3,301 Instagram followers (up from 3,032 on 1 April 2022); and 9,608 LinkedIn followers (up from 8,909 on 1 April 2022).

Priorities for the next six months:

- Implementation of Elections Act 2022 which, amongst other new requirements, introduces Voter ID for elections from May 2023. LBBDD does not have an election scheduled until 2024 so has offered to support other non-London local authorities at their elections, to gain first-hand experience of Voter ID processes and procedures.
- An independent review of the Council's social media accounts is currently being carried out to inform future direction. The aim is to increase engagement and use influencers to amplify council messages. A new strategy will be finalised at the end of 2022, with training for staff taking place in early 2023.
- A campaign plan is being developed and will determine funding for future campaigns. This plan should make allowance for continuation of already established campaigns: Lost Hours, Cleaner B&D, Safer B&D, Cost of Living, and align with new target areas the Council wants to focus on having reviewed progress against the Borough Manifesto targets at year 5 in our 20 year journey.

Key risks in the next six months:

- The calling of a snap General Election between now and late 2023 would present risks due to the new Voter ID requirements, as Electoral Administrators continue to be very concerned at the lack of progress by the Government in establishing the infrastructure to

support Voter ID and the lack of a national publicity campaign highlighting what will be expected of voters in the future.

- The Boundary Commission for England rejected the comments submitted by LBBD's Local Returning Officer (the Acting Chief Executive) during the first stage of consultation on the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies, which were aimed at reflecting the Borough's new ward arrangements in the new Parliamentary constituencies. The Local Returning Officer has resubmitted a strengthened argument for the new Parliamentary constituencies to reflect the Borough's new ward arrangements during the final consultation on the Commission's revised proposals, the outcome of which will be known in June 2023.
- A lack of funding for campaigns will limit the effectiveness of campaign activity. Further funding for a number of established campaigns has not yet been identified.

Puts the customer at the heart of what it does

Key performance and delivery messages:

- Contact centre performance has dropped from an average of 70% of calls answered to 66% year to date as of September 2022. Performance has been impacted staffing issues such as the change of ex-Elevate contracts to align to the Council's core hours from 40 to 35 hours. Staffing issues are being resolved with an assessment centre being established to close the staffing gap by January 2023. It should be noted that excluding Revenues and Benefits calls the contact centre is performing at 81% of calls answered.
- Rents and Council Tax lines have seen an increase in calls by roughly 10% from the previous six months. The demand in this area centres around more requests for payment arrangements to be set up. 27% of all Revenues and Benefits Calls are Council Tax payment related. Digital self-serve improvements continue to increase adoption for making payments online via My B&D.
- Average handling times have increased to 10 minutes and 11 seconds indicating more complexity in calls across Housing and Repairs and Revenues and Benefits.
- Despite some performance challenges, satisfaction with the Contact Centre is good. Overall satisfaction is at 87%, and at 91% for call handling satisfaction versus a target of 85%.
- Following the local elections which took place in May 2022 we have seen a return to normal for our members casework and the numbers which are being received. Within Q1 and Q2 there has been 2,134 pieces of casework submitted via our members. The percentage performance has dropped to 77%.
- Freedom of Information requests which have been completed within timescale of (20 working days) is now sitting at an average of 82% this remains under the stated Information Commissioners Office target of 95%. The Feedback Team have implemented strategies to improve the performance, and this is having a positive impact with September's performance at 95%.
- The Feedback Team are working with Information Governance and Customer Experience Teams to build an internal webpage. This will assist services in understanding how and when exemptions can be applied. We are asking services to highlight repeated request

types and if the information can be published which will enable the use of exemptions to be applied and lessen the time spent working on individual requests.

- The performance for upheld complaints has risen slightly to 39% from 32%. This continues to remain in line with the performance of other local authorities. A large portion of the upheld complaints (32%) relate to missed collections.
- We launched the new Barking and Dagenham website in August and resident feedback has been positive.
- The ChatBot, which automates simple interactions and acts as a virtual assistant has seen a total of 17,686 conversations +35% vs. the previous six months. 93% of ChatBot uses were rated as 'successful conversations' which is +7% on the last six months. The next phase in development is to integrate full processes so that residents can complete payments for services.
- The Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Group has continued to bridge the digital divide with a range of supporting services; access to data for residents who lack access via the National Databank, 50 digital champions (+5 from the last report) and device lending will go live in January, where we have 25 Chromebooks to use as part of this service.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Integrate top 10 service journeys into the Chatbot, where residents can complete a full request without having to call us or go into one of our buildings.
- Website iteration to move away from the website being used as an information tool to an interactive digital product for residents to connect and complete most end-to-end transactions (this includes live webchat which is launching in December).
- Focus on offline user research to complement the Voice of the Customer Programme. This will focus on Community Hubs and other Universal locations.
- Implementation of live web chat will enable Customer Service Advisors to handle more than one interaction at a time and create a seamless handover from webchat to telephony to reduce call waiting times.
- Continued learning and sharing of insight from a resident's perspective which arise through complaints and Member Enquiries will be applied to drive continuous improvement across all council services.
- Focus on longer term customer access with an ambition to integrate the customer access model (in person and telephony, with a digital offer) to create a simple, single version of the truth in supporting residents.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Scaling up digital access will reduce human interaction.
- Lack of shared responsibility for channel shift and cultural resistance to change.
- Shared Service Model, staff morale across customer teams both contact centre and Universal may drop as we look to new ways to address service demand.
- Customers view the online experiences as one whole. However, the Council's online experience is made up of several moving parts owned by different directorates, services, and teams. This presents challenges when trying to build a better managed and

consistent user experience with a single intuitive design system. This is why the omni-channel digital strategy is important as well as ensuring the interfaces of customer facing platforms are as good as they can be and integrate well with other systems to give a feeling of a singular digital experience.

Equipped with the tools, information and capability to deliver its vision

Key performance and delivery messages:

- A follow-up Enterprise Resource Planning delivery phase was completed in October 2022. This has included several reporting enhancements, implementation of the budget monitoring tool and supporting staff through any initial issues immediately post going live.
- We are in the process of renewing our OneView platform with Xantura, the current provider. We need to ensure we maintain the functionality we have built as well create room in the contract for scaling up of the product to increasing numbers of staff.
- The systems supporting homes and asset management is a key focus, with several systems (including Capita Open Housing) being used to manage different parts of the operation. The current contract with Capita for the housing management system has a breakpoint in late 2023. Having reviewed the system with My Place through the summer, the contract will be extended in 2023 up to the end point in 2025.
- The Wide Area and Local Area Network service at LBBD sites were at the end of their support lives and contract periods. New network connectivity including wide area connectivity, Local Area Network and WiFi at all sites has now been implemented. This has delivered a higher performing, simpler and easier to support network for a lower cost to the Council.
- Cybersecurity capability and resilience continues to be reviewed to enable the Council to protect itself against ever evolving cyber risks that could affect the delivery of services. The focus is incident response and vulnerability management. New cyber security tools and processes have been added over the past few months. The threat level is continually reviewed to consider any additional capability or work required to maintain a robust security stance.

Priorities for the next six months:

- Ensuring the next OneView contract is fit for purpose and enables the organisation to meet its ambition for the platform to support service delivery across significant parts of the frontline.
- Additional hybrid meeting room equipment is being installed in the town hall through December. Additional equipment for specialist settings will be trialled in the new year.
- The Council has secured grant funding from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to help with some cyber security remediation work. This work around testing of backups, disaster recovery testing and some work on our mover, joiner, leaver process will be carried out over the next six months
- IT are implementing the new infrastructure required to support the roll out of new laptops in 2023. Devices are expected to start rolling out with new security features and Windows 11 in Q1 2023/24.

- The current recruitment system is being reviewed with a view to contract renewal or system replacement before the contract end in April 2023.
- IT will commence recruitment of geospatial specialists to support the use of Geospatial Information System and other geospatial tools across the Borough in support of other council services.
- Improve cyber security tools to bring new response capabilities to the Council's services and reduce the risk of interruption to services.
- Work will continue with the services requirements for business systems which involves developing technology roadmaps for services. The roadmaps focus on business functionality and how to make best use of the internet, web services, business automation, and mobile working technologies. This work is to ensure IT applications fully support smarter service design and enable better services for residents to access their information or needing to request services.

Key risks in the next six months:

- Cyber security continues to be a major risk with attackers continually increasing the sophistication of their attacks. IT are working to improve resilience in this area including a growth bid for additional cyber security tools.