

# Barking & Dagenham

## Corporate Plan 2020/2022 Performance and Delivery Update

01 October 2020 to 31 March 2021<sup>1</sup>

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This report covers financial quarters 3 and 4 of 2020/21 (October to March) but it has been written to give the most contemporary position as at the time of writing; it therefore reflects performance and delivery up to the end of May 2021

## Contents

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<b>Inclusive Growth .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Building new homes .....	4
Improving the quality and management of homes .....	5
Tackling Homelessness.....	8
Providing homes for vulnerable residents.....	10
Improving the quantity and quality of jobs in Barking and Dagenham .....	12
Supporting residents to access new opportunities in the borough.....	14
Safe and liveable neighbourhoods .....	16
Investing in physical and social infrastructure .....	18
Shaping aspirational places.....	20
A decarbonised, local energy system .....	21
Energy efficient homes and buildings .....	23
A green local environment.....	25
Money and Debt .....	27
<b>Prevention, Independence and Resilience .....</b>	<b>30</b>
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.....	30
More young people are supported to achieve success in adulthood through higher, further education and access to employment .....	33
More children and young people in care find permanent, safe and stable homes.....	35
All care leavers can access a good, enhanced local offer that meets their health, education, housing and employment needs.....	38
Young people and adults at risk are safeguarded in the context of their families, peers, schools and communities and safeguarded from exploitation .....	40
Zero tolerance to domestic abuse drives local action that tackles underlying causes, challenges perpetrators and empowers survivors .....	43
All residents with a disability can access from birth, transition to, and in adulthood that is seamless, personalised and enables them to thrive and contribute to their communities .....	45
Children, young people and adults can better access social, emotional and mental wellbeing support - including loneliness reduction - in their communities.....	47
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 .....	50
Tackling inequality in all aspects of our service delivery and within our communities jointly with partners and Public Health.....	53
<b>Participation and Engagement .....</b>	<b>55</b>
Building capacity in the social sector .....	55
Developing opportunities to meaningfully participate .....	57

Facilitating democratic participation .....	61
Designing relational practices into the Council's activity.....	63
<b>Well Run Organisation.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Delivers value for money for the taxpayer .....	65
Employs capable and values-driven staff, demonstrating excellent people management.....	67
Enables democratic participation, works relationally and is transparent.....	69
Puts the customer at the heart of what it does .....	72
Equipped with the tools, information and capability to deliver its vision.....	74

# Inclusive Growth

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## Building new homes

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Just under 1,200 new affordable homes have been completed between May 2018 and April 2021.
- 179 new homes completed by Be First in 2020/21.
- 640 new affordable homes started by Be First in 2020/21.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Handover of new homes on a number of Be First schemes, including Sebastian Court.
- 241 new homes on Be First schemes due to complete in 2021/22.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Construction delays owing to material and labour shortages, or difficulties in procuring from the supply chain.
- Risks relating to the sale of shared ownership homes in the current housing market.

We are on track to exceed the target of 2,000 new affordable homes by 2023. As of April 2021, just under 1,200 new affordable homes had been completed in the borough since May 2018. We expect just over 2,200 new affordable homes to have been built by May 2022 and over 2,700 by the end of 2022.

Most new affordable homes in the borough are being built by the Council itself, through Be First. There are 734 new homes currently on site, across 11 projects around the borough.

241 new homes being built by Be First are due to complete in 2021/22, the vast majority of which will be taken into management by Reside. This will mark a significant expansion in the size of Reside, which will continue to increase significantly in the coming years as it takes new homes under management.

This includes 95 new homes at Sebastian Court due to hand over in July. House for Artists is also due to complete in September 2021, an innovate scheme that will support the Council's wider aspirations for Barking town centre.

The Council continues to actively intervene in the wider housing and land market to speed up the delivery of homes. In May 2021, Cabinet approved a proposal to enable the delivery of new homes at Transport House in Dagenham which will include 75 new affordable homes.

The latest GLA report on London-wide permissions shows that LBBB has the highest proportion of larger homes in its pipeline of all London boroughs. 34% of the homes with permission are three bed or larger.

## Improving the quality and management of homes

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Annual tenant satisfaction survey showed 68% satisfaction.
- The number of residents satisfied with their repair remains very low at 54% against a target of 87%.
- The average void turnaround time for General Needs properties in 2020/21 (Full Year) was 83.3 days, an increase of 38.2 days against the 2019/20 full year average of 45.1 days.
- Work to recover the rent collection position in response to the pandemic delivered a significant in-year improvement.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Carrying out catch up repairs that have been delayed due to Covid-19.
- Deliver improvements to turnaround times for voids and in the repairs and maintenance service.
- Ensure stock investment programme delivery is optimised following the Covid-19 related delays.
- Support residents in rent arrears due to the impact of Covid-19.
- My Place will continue to work closely with BDTP to support service delivery improvements.
- Housing enforcement team to conduct 2,700 outstanding licensing visits.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Decent homes target for end of 2021/22 not met due to impact of delays to the stock investment programme in 2020.
- Risk to rent collection due to ongoing impact of Covid-19.

In terms of housing services for existing homes, the focus has been on maintaining service delivery throughout Covid-19. Frontline staff continue to provide a full service across the borough. There has been no reduction in service level provision across key front-line services.

During the formal lockdowns, the repairs service was moved to emergency repairs only for specified periods. Since February, work has been underway to catch up on repairs, with staff from BDMS redeployed where required to speed up these jobs.

The delivery of the stock investment programme in 2020/21 was significantly impacted by Covid-19. This meant that just under half the budget was spent (£18.8m). Funding for works not carried out in 2020/21 have been rolled over to 2021/22, as set out in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan approved by Cabinet in February 2021. Once the current stock investment programmes are complete, it is forecast that the Decent Homes figure will rise to 97%.

Covid-19 also had a significant impact on rental income collection, particularly in the first quarter of 2020. This affected HRA properties and Reside. The Income Team has been working to

support residents and put in place plans to help them to pay their rent. This meant that despite the challenging context, HRA rental income for 2020/21 came in only slightly below budget. We continue to make a prudent allowance for bad debt in the HRA to minimise the impact of any unrecoverable debt on the longer-term HRA finances.

Within Reside, there was a sharp increase in rent arrears in early 2020. This improved significantly by the end of 2020/21, with collection returning to 95% in March 2021 (from 71% in April 2020). There remains a risk around rent collection in 2021/22 due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, in particular around some specific cases of high arrears. Reside and the Income Team continue to work with residents to assist them with arriving at a payment plan as early as possible.

The annual survey of tenant satisfaction showed that 68% of general needs council tenants were satisfied with housing services. In 2020 the figure was 69%, but the reduction is not statistically significant. The number of sheltered tenants who were satisfied was 82%, up from 80% the previous year (but again not statistically significant). Leaseholder satisfaction was 40%, down from 41%.

The main drivers of tenant satisfaction continue to be repairs, and the overall quality of the home. Therefore, improvements to the repairs service along with the remobilisation of the stock investment programme are crucial to driving improvements to tenant satisfaction. The service is awaiting a more detailed analysis of the satisfaction survey, which will be used to shape improvements over the coming year.

Throughout Q3 and Q4, the My Place Improvement Programme has had to focus on managing front line services throughout the pandemic. However, it has also sought to improve challenging performance around longstanding housing issues such as void turnaround times and repairs. Issues experienced throughout 2019/20 were further exacerbated by the continued Covid-19 pandemic. The average void turnaround time for General Needs properties in 2020/21 (full Year) was 83.3 days, an increase of 38.2 days against the 2019/20 full year average of 45.1 days. The number of residents satisfied with their repair remains very low at 54% against a target of 87%.

During March 2021, there were changes at the executive level within BDTP, with the departure of the CEO and the arrival of an Operations Director to oversee a comprehensive improvement programme. This provides an opportunity to further improve the working relationship between LBBD and BDTP and inject impetus into the improvement journey.

My Place are working closely with BDTP to ensure that their deliverables and outputs are focused very clearly on practical solutions to current service performance challenges. A launch meeting was held with BDMS and My Place management teams in early March 2021. BDMS have formulated a more detailed delivery plan to sit behind their high-level service improvement plan, My Place are providing support to ensure the correct issues are focused on by BDTP. Priority work areas have been identified for the short term while work is ongoing on the overall BDMS Service Improvement Programme, focusing on areas such as disrepair, complaints reduction, clearing repairs backlogs and reducing the length of voids.

Within Regulatory Services, the Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme has been operational since September 2019. 14,800 Licence applications have been received since the launch with an income from licensing of £10.5m. The focus has been tackling the rogue landlords which includes ensuring unlicensed properties get licensed and where appropriate, enforcement action is taken against the landlord by way of Civil Penalty Notice. It also includes ensuring properties are safe to occupy. This is achieved through conducting Housing Health and Safety Compliance inspections. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of compliance visits

had reduced, but the team are now conducting the 2,700 outstanding visits and will have completed these by September 2021. Enforcement activities against rogue landlords have continued and the service have utilised powers to issue Civil Penalty Notices to non-compliant landlords. A total of £143,700 in fines has been issued for housing related offences that could be dealt with by way of fine.

Proposals to review the scheme for MHCLG have commenced alongside the proposals for improving the Private Rented Sector 2022-26. The purpose of the review is to assess what impact the scheme has had in terms of migration and deprivation which were the two factors the Secretary of State granted approval through. This fits hand in hand with the review being conducted, assessing the housing needs and actively looking at the interventions required to improve standards for residents.

## Tackling Homelessness

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- 6 residents remain in accommodation following 'Everyone In' with 72 accommodated throughout the Covid-19 period, with the majority moved into long term settled accommodation.
- Total number of households in Temporary Accommodation is 1,439 (as at the end of May 21), continuing to decrease after reducing total household number below 1,500 by end of March 2021.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Establishment of a rough sleeping team, following successfully bidding for funding from the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative.
- Continuing to support those likely to be impacted on by the lifting of the suspension of evictions through engaging with landlords and improving financial stability.
- Reduction of Private Sector Leased Accommodation as temporary accommodation, accommodating more residents in Council owned temporary accommodation.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Increase in homeless approaches once evictions recommence.
- Increase in single adults rough sleeping due to Brexit and possible increase in those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) status after 30 June 21.

Focus remains on managing the impact of the pandemic as lockdown eases. There continues to be a strong underlying performance in this area with numbers of households in temporary accommodation and numbers rough sleeping on a downward trend.

On rough sleeping, the borough continues to have low numbers supported by a preventative approach. Under 'Everyone In', 72 residents were accommodated with only 6 still in accommodation and the majority moved into sustainable longer-term housing.

On temporary accommodation, numbers have continued to decrease. From a peak of just under 2,000 in Q3 of 2017/18, the total number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced markedly. Barking & Dagenham has had the largest decrease in numbers in temporary accommodation in London since April 2018 (when the Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect). As of the end of May 2021, there were 1,439 households in temporary accommodation.

Homeless approaches reduced significantly at the start of Covid-19 but are now at pre-lockdown levels. As noted below, homeless approaches are expected to increase in the coming months as Covid-19 economic support measures are unwound.

The next six months will be focused on continuing the response to rough sleeping, with the establishment of a dedicated Rough Sleeping Team funded through the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative funding. Since March 2020, the Government has put in place various measures which have meant that evictions are effectively suspended. This position was unwound from 31 May 2021, and it is expected that homeless approaches will as a result.



Community Solutions is taking proactive steps to anticipate this increased demand. There will also be a focus on reducing the number of households in Private Sector Leased temporary accommodation as more of our residents in temporary accommodation are housed within Council owned stock. This will provide more stable accommodation for these residents as well as being more cost effective accommodation for the Council.

## Providing homes for vulnerable residents

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Panels set up to consider housing options for specific cases continue to identify improved housing solutions for vulnerable residents.
- 187 wheelchair accessible homes being built by Be First.
- Concepts for specialist housing co-designed with service users.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Letting of new wheelchair accessible homes on schemes being handed over in 2021.
- Bringing forward detailed proposals for specialist homes on small sites for approval.
- Carrying out works to extend and adapt existing council homes.
- Taking forward the development supported living for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders at the Brocklebank site.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Delays to building projects that will deliver new specialist homes.

Vulnerable People Housing Panels are now fully established and embedded in our way of working. These panels bring together staff from key professionals to identify sustainable housing solutions for the more complex cases.

Since they were formally established in October 2019, 212 cases have been through the panels. As well as identifying the most suitable housing options – considering wider circumstances of each individual/family – better placements are reducing and avoiding costs.

There are 187 wheelchair accessible homes being built by Be First as part of their current programme, which will ultimately be managed by Reside. Close working is ongoing with Reside and Care and Support to plan the allocation of these units and complete any enabling adaptations required for specific households. In addition, the approach of pre-allocating adapted new build homes is being looked at much earlier in the process.

Households on the waiting list who have an adapted housing need are currently being contacted, to make certain that information on their exact needs is up-to-date. A relational way of working with households is being ensured, understanding their wider circumstances and preferences to help identify the best housing options.

The first projects to extend existing HRA homes are underway which will extend three homes to two 5 beds and one 4 bed. The intention is to make this a core part of the HRA capital programme.

Reside has a key role to play in supporting housing options for vulnerable groups. Key areas include supporting care leavers into Reside properties, residents with hidden disabilities (such as mental health conditions) and letting of adapted properties. Work is ongoing with Reside to

ensure that the needs of vulnerable residents are taken into account as the new homes Reside takes into management are let.

Several small sites (mainly former/current garage sites) are being brought forward for redevelopment, with a garage demolition programme commencing soon. The proposals for these include new bungalows, larger homes of four and five bedrooms and purpose-built cohousing/shared housing. A concept has been developed for shared housing, and LBBB care leavers have been involved in the initial design process.

New homes for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder were approved by Cabinet in November 2020 for Brocklebank, which are believed will be the first of their kind in the country. The architects are now progressing the designs, and service users and their families will be involved in the more detailed design process.

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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Business Forum expanded to over 2,500 members and over £58m in business grants distributed since April.
- £1m endowment received and a further £165,000 secured for new post, from film studio operators to deliver employment and skills plan to maximise local benefits from film studios.
- Significant S106 commitments secured in principle through City of London Corporation Wholesale Markets relocation, including £2m towards employment / skills and development of wider food sector, up to a further £2m (pending agreed business case) in capital contributions for new commercial and training facilities for food sector.
- New pilot business support programme launched for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector recovery targeting SMEs, delivered through the BEC with capacity to support up to 200 local businesses by December 2021.
- Social Value procurement policy fully embedded across commissioning teams including establishing of new cross sector Social Value Advisory Panel, and development of a monitoring and evaluation baseline.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Launch of Health and Social Care sector action plan to support improvement in quality of jobs within sector.
- Set up and launch of first full year of film and creative sector programmes.
- Support high street recovery emerging from pandemic.
- Develop in depth Green Industries development strategy.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Continued impact of pandemic restrictions on economy particularly high street
- Challenges engaging with care sector providers still very occupied with day-to-day workload related to long term impacts created by pandemic restrictions this year.

Work started in Q1 and Q2 has been consolidated in Q3 and Q4 to bring together longer term generative work on growth sectors (film, food, and green) and foundational sectors (care, retail and construction) with shorter term work to support the economy cope with the direct impacts of the pandemic.

The Business Forum has further expanded, now numbering over 2,500 members, and the Inclusive Growth and Business Rate teams working together have distributed more than £58m in grant support to local businesses in an operation of this kind unprecedented in scale and speed for our teams. A strengthened relationship with the Barking Enterprise Centre has now enabled the launch of a new business support programme targeting Retail, Hospitality and Leisure SMEs providing up to 200 of these local businesses with 15 hours of one-to-one business coaching, regular peer support sessions and access to direct grants, to pivot their

business models to survive the phase during which restrictions lift but the economy takes time to bounce back, and also gear up for future growth and change coming to the borough. In the next 12 months this huge increase in our direct engagement with the local business base will be built on to consolidate and develop our business engagement function within Inclusive Growth, acting as a 'front door' to businesses and coordinating across the many different parts of the Council who have business interface within their remit in some way to join up our approach.

Significant steps forward have been made in realising the plans for the film and food sectors. In the past six months the endowment funds have been received, funding secured for a new post-holder and the section 106 negotiation details finalised, which were confirmed with planning permission being granted in the past 6 months for the markets relocation. Alongside this, the Social Value policy has been firmly embedded across commissioning teams. A new Social Value Advisory panel has been developed that now meets regularly drawing together Voluntary and Community Sector partners, council front line staff to advise commissioners and in some cases contractors directly on the most effective design and implementation of social value commitments. In October 2020, the Social Value Policy was launched, stating that all procurement over £100,000 would require a 10% weighting in its tender evaluation that relates solely to Social Value. 29 qualifying procurements since October 2020 have all included this weighting for Social Value in the tender evaluation (excluding any waivers or externally run frameworks), demonstrating 100% compliance with contracts over £100,000 including social value. A baseline has also been drawn up against which impact and implementation can be measured going forward.

Research which was commissioned into career progression and pay within the Care sector was completed in the past quarter and has informed the development of a holistic approach to the Care sector across the borough. Work will be done to set out and implement this over the coming 6 months to introduce a range of interventions to help improve the progression, pay and conditions across the sector using all available levers and powers the Council has – including but not limited to commissioning itself.

## Supporting residents to access new opportunities in the borough

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Over 700 people supported into work through the Job Brokerage Service, exceeding internal targets despite the impact of the pandemic.
- Kickstart scheme established, creating over 170 new paid 6-month entry level jobs for young people so far, and anticipating at least 200 by the end of the scheme in Dec 21, across over 40 local employers including the Council.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Secure the Job Brokerage's role within delivery of the government's Restart programme which has been contracted to Maximus, an employment support organisation.
- Drive up registration and employment outcomes again for residents as pandemic restrictions ease.
- Achieve successful onward pathways for Kickstart employed young people beyond end of their placements, into work or training.
- Establish strong cross-sector working relationships with partners supporting long term unemployed and harder to reach individuals to find work and skills pathways, in face of increased barriers in contact of overall job losses and higher competition for available jobs over coming months.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Significant increase in jobseekers when furlough ends which may put a lot of additional pressure on services.
- Ability to work closely together with the newly appointed Restart programme provider Maximus, as they are not including LBBDD directly in their supply chain: this will require some good quality engagement with Maximus to establish a good working relationship.
- Ability to continue to support long term unemployed clients, and those with multiple barriers to employment, in a context of increased competition for available jobs.
- Ability to support Kickstart postholders in the borough to achieve subsequent longer term employment.

The Employment and Skills team has continued to deliver above anticipated targets, against the odds of the challenges presented by the pandemic. As at March 2021, the Adult College had 641 unemployment learners accessing learning (target 600), with 191 starts in employability programmes (target 120). 850 people were supported into employment (765 – Job Shop, 80 – Vocational Support, 5 – Homes and Money Hub). The 765 Job Shop outcomes include 147 long term unemployed (unemployed for 6 months, as well as at time of appointment).

Over and above the planned activity in the past six months, a major new programme based around the governments' Kickstart funding scheme has been launched. Acting as a Gateway

employer, LBBD has created over 20 new Kickstart funded positions for 16-24 year olds within the Council, with more due to be added in coming months; and proactively generated over 150 further positions within employers across the borough, working to promote the scheme locally, register interested employers, secure funding, and coordinate recruitment working closely with Job Centre Plus, as well as deliver coordinated training and wraparound support through the Employment and Skills team. The scheme continues to grow and it is anticipated that there will be more than 200 jobs created by the end of Dec 2021 when the scheme is due to finish (pending news on whether it will be further extended by central government). This has included both supporting all SMEs locally to apply for the range of vacancies they felt they needed, as well as working with some employers on joint 'cohorts' of posts including within local primary schools, and local care homes and NHS employers.

Whilst the apprenticeship transfer scheme was launched as planned in Autumn 2020, uptake of the transfer opportunity has been very limited and despite some efforts to promote the offer specifically within early years and within health and social care sector employers, it has been concluded that the ongoing pandemic disruption and restrictions have had an impact on employers' interest and ability to seek additional levy funding for apprenticeships. The opportunity will continue to be promoted but will also continue to focus efforts on increasing our own provision of apprenticeship opportunities which has also increased in recent months across the Council.

## Safe and liveable neighbourhoods

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Activity within certain enforcement areas has been affected by Covid-19 with inspections, notices, fines and prosecutions all reduced.
- Covid-19 specific enforcement activity has seen a huge demand with 4,000 compliance visits delivered a week.
- Joint work between Public Realm and Enforcement increased including delivery of Smart Street pilot in Abbey ward. Longer term plan in development.
- CPZ programme started again and now scheduled to complete late 2022.
- New Community Safety Enforcement Team rolled out to enforce Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and deal with begging, street drinking and other ASB.
- The focus for all Public Realm frontline service remained on service continuity. Q3 and 4 presented continued challenges to the service, with the partial shutdown in November 2020, the move into Tier 4 during December 2020 and by the full national lockdown in January 2021.
- Domestic, recycling, and green garden waste collections made on the scheduled day have consistently exceeded the target of 99%.
- The gross income from pest control, trade & green garden waste for 2020/21 was £3.15m, with a net surplus of £431k. Business conditions are still challenging but 127 new customers were signed up for additional services during 2020/21.
- The number of reported fly-tipped cases in Q3 & Q4 decreased to 1,339 cases when compared to Q1 & Q2 of 2,285 cases. This trend may have been as a result of the Covid-19 measures and will be monitored as we move through 2021/22.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Start moving away from Covid-19 specific work and catch up on inspections and other enforcement activity.
- Complete review of anti-social behaviour delivery across the Council, rollout pilot ASB enforcement team and extend the delivery of late night enforcement activity.
- Undertake review of PRPL scheme to agree future priorities and start pilot in one ward to understand how we can better identify unlicensed properties.
- Recruiting agency waste collection staff has been very challenging during Q4. The priority for waste services is to recruit approximately 30 FTEs to permanent positions over the next six months.
- Continuation of the Service digitalisation project to procure a back-office system and mobile “in-cab” technology for waste operations and a CRM/sales solution for trade waste business. The project is currently in the process of market testing.
- Review of street cleansing service to area-based model with a view to delivering sustainable improvements.
- Roll out of mobile technology to Street Cleansing and Parks



Over the past six months, the Enforcement team have been embedding the new operating model, with extended hours of operation for parking and environmental enforcement. The Environmental Enforcement team have been working closely with Public Realm to improve information sharing and joint work to tackle fly tipping and other environmental issues. The Smart Street pilot has been delivered and work is now underway to scale this up as a borough wide approach.

The pandemic has continued to have an impact on the team with certain environmental health functions, such as food safety inspections and housing visits restricted. This has impacted certain indicators such as the number of inspections, Fixed Penalty Notices and enforcement notices issued. However, there has been an increase in housing related enforcement with £170k of fines issued to landlords during 2020/21. Courts have largely been closed for enforcement cases so there has been a sharp reduction in the number of prosecutions and thus a reduction in income although the team are now getting a steady stream of prosecutions.

There has been a large increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) reports, which are specifically related to the pandemic. This includes reports of people not socially distancing or wearing masks, which are being recorded as ASB. A new community safety enforcement team has been rolled out that is focussed on dealing with ASB such as begging and street drinking. Further restructuring is underway that will see this team expanded to cover duties 24 hours a day.

The Controlled Parking Zone programme has been delayed due to Covid-19 but resumed in Q3 and will now be completed in late 2022. The third phase (of five) is well underway with seven schemes planned. Consultation was undertaken with residents in the last period. Two zones were fully completed in May 2021, two rolled out in June and one is scheduled for July. The remaining two still have issues to resolve and are likely to roll out later in the summer.

The continued focus of all frontline services within Public Realm since March 2020 remained on service continuity throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Q3 and Q4 presented continued challenges to service continuity, with the partial shutdown in November 2020, the move into Tier 4 during December 2020 and by the full national lockdown in January 2021.

Covid-19 continues to present a very demanding environment for frontline services across Public Realm. The workload around ensuring a Covid safe workplace and monitoring staff compliance presents an ongoing challenge. Despite these challenges, domestic, recycling, and green garden waste collections made on the scheduled day have consistently exceeded the target of 99%.

Regarding street cleansing, the area-based model was successfully implemented during the summer of 2020 and delivered improved standards in comparison to February 2020. This was achieved with additional staff to address some systemic issues which had caused a significant deterioration in the cleanliness of the streets when compared to 2016. Long term sickness and Covid-19 related issues hindered this progress and as such, sustaining this improved performance over the final two quarters of 2020/21 has been difficult. A further review is being conducted to embed the area-based model. This is focused on joined up working across caretaking and waste and the introduction of mobile technology to increase efficiencies.

## Investing in physical and social infrastructure

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Work has been progressing to deliver schemes around schools, in Becontree and the station and on developing longer term transformational infrastructure interventions like the A13 tunnel.
- Improvement works have commenced on Barking Station as part of the first phase of a wider planned transformation of the station as a gateway to the borough.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Submitting the first round bid to the Levelling Up Fund – focusing on Dagenham.
- Agreeing wayleaves with internet service providers to increase residents and businesses access to superfast broadband connections.
- Agreeing the process for the next round of SCIL allocation.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Failure to secure funding from Homes England/MHCLG to develop a detailed business case for tunnelling the A13.
- Not being successful with the first round bid to the Levelling Up Fund.

Barking and Dagenham was one of only two London boroughs which was placed in the highest priority category for investment from the Central Government's Levelling Up Fund. This funding provides the Council with an important opportunity to unlock some potentially transformative infrastructure projects in the borough.

Since the funding was announced, work has been underway at pace to develop two potential first round bids focused on Dagenham. The first involves delivering improved accessibility, including investment which would enable C2C trains to stop at Dagenham East station, supporting the employment growth in the area that the film studios will bring. The second bid is to support the redevelopment of Dagenham Heathway to deliver improvements to the public realm and retail offer in this important location. Bids for this first funding round were submitted in June. A small amount of funding has also been allocated to develop the second round bid, which will be focused on delivering public transport improvements in Barking. This bid could include a new station on the London Overground extension at Castle Green among other capacity improvements at Barking Station.

Work has also progressed on introducing more 'school streets' across the borough. Five schemes have been operational for a number of months now and feedback from schools and local residents has been positive. Work is ongoing on plans to implement similar schemes at other schools. In Barking Town Centre, a temporary scheme has been introduced to reduce traffic outside the station to make it safer for pedestrians. Alongside this, work is now moving forward on the first phase of improvements to the Station itself, with retail units at the entrance to the station being removed and a deep clean of the station façade underway.

SCIL projects have progressed. Company Drinks have worked with the Council to bring the pavilion up to standard and it will open later in the Summer. Work has also been underway with

Box Up Crime to secure delivery of improvements to their building to make it fit for purpose. As reported previously SCIL receipts were down on forecast in the financial year, so options are being developed to ensure the most effective use of the money.

## Shaping aspirational places

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Planning permission has been granted (subject to s106 and GLA call-in) for the relocation of the three City of London markets to Dagenham Dock.
- The Council was part of a successful bid for the Thames Estuary Freeport, which should support economic growth in Dagenham Dock.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Agree a delivery route to take forward the development of council owned sites on Thames Road to deliver new homes and modern industrial spaces.
- Finalise Master Plan for Chadwell Heath to shape the development of a mixed use area close to a future Crossrail station.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Ensuring that Barking Town Centre reopens safely as lockdown restrictions ease.

Progress has been made in delivery of the vision for the future of Dagenham Dock. The Council was granted planning permission for the relocation of the three City of London markets to the borough. This is a major milestone in the project and a number of benefits for local residents have been secured through the section 106 agreement. This will include funding to deliver improvements to road network and to create training opportunities for residents. The Council was part of a successful bid for a Freeport across the Thames Estuary. This is likely to secure Ford's longer term future in the borough. Close working with partners will now occur to ensure the benefits of the freeport are maximised for Barking and Dagenham residents.

To compliment the purchase of the film studio site at London East, which was announced last year, a deal has been agreed with Hackman Capital/MBS to lease Welbeck Wharf to them. This will mean that film production can start in the borough in advance of the delivery of the main site at Dagenham East, while also spreading the regeneration benefits of the film industry.

Delivery of the Barking Town Centre strategy is continuing. Some notable achievements in the past six months include: the Council agreeing a deal to unlock the redevelopment of Trocall House; work with market traders to expand the market to support the Town Centre's recovery from the pandemic; and a local artist was commissioned to produce a mural celebrating the borough's history.

Progress on the delivery of the Local Plan continues to be slower than anticipated. This is largely to allow time for additional evidence base to be developed to lend support to critical elements of the Plan. Such evidence will strengthen the plan overall and is therefore a sensible strategy to adopt. Work will also be progress over this period to finalise the masterplan for Chadwell Heath.

## A decarbonised, local energy system

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- LBBD was successful in bidding for an additional £4m of grant to expand the Barking Town Centre Strategic Heat Network.
- An additional £1.7m was successfully bid for from the Green Homes Grant (GHG) Phase 1B, plus an allocation of £644,000 has been set aside from Green Homes Grant 2.
- 900 homes and buildings are now benefitting from an element of solar power.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Delivery of 450 Green Homes Grant installs following setbacks.
- Continued roll-out of Barking Town Centre strategic heat network infrastructure.
- Converting Building Research Establishment (BRE) recommendations on solar opportunities into tangible schemes.

### Key risks over the next six months:

- Government claw-back of grant if GHG installs and connection of heat network to public buildings are not completed by the Autumn and end of year respectively.

The previous quarter was challenging with projects such as the Barking Town Centre strategic heat network at risk from cost inflation and the Green Homes Grant programme afflicted by shortage of materials and components, creating uncertainty about the delivery of either to agreed timescales. Equally, difficulties in obtaining internal data in the run-up to the end of the financial year led to a significant stall in the progression of commissioned pieces of work around solar, wind and ground source heat pump opportunities. However, the prospects for the next six months are brighter.

Careful negotiation with the grant-funders at the Heat Network Investment Programme successfully led to an additional £2m uplift in grant to offset unexpected cost inflation in the project and the protection of £1.9m of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding to facilitate the connection of the Town Hall and Abbey Leisure Centre. Pipework has commenced across the Town Centre and pre-application discussions about the design and location of the energy centre have started. The first stages of identifying potential new heat sources and demands across the Dagenham Docks and Dagenham East areas was completed in February 2021 which demonstrated major barriers in trying to decarbonise the network. This has now been taken to the next stage and discussions are underway with key players and industries in the vicinity.

The deployment of renewables on housing stock has been more difficult. While 900 council homes or building now have access to solar energy, mainly through the new-build process, take up of Green Homes Grant (GHG) opportunities for more solar and air source heat pumps installs has been problematic. The Government withdrew its voucher scheme in March and have been forced to extend the Local Authority Delivery scheme by another five months. Locally, it has been a struggle to either attract public interest in air source heat pumps or source

the components due to a shortage caused by post-Brexit regulations and increased demand. However, public interest in solar panels picked up in March, with installs booked in for May. While the GHG scheme has picked up there remains the risk that delivering installs to 450 properties by August will be exacting.

The Building Research Establishment were due to report back in January 2021 regarding the viability of solar and wind commercialisation opportunities, but this is not now expected until April/May. Equally, the Council has identified trial sites on existing high-rise estates which would be ideal candidates for piloting ground-source heat pump communal arrays which take the free heat out of the ground and turn it into cheaper energy throughout flatted blocks. Feasibility studies have been pushed back following further detailed stock analysis.

## Energy efficient homes and buildings

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The Cosy Homes programme has delivered 738 free cavity, party wall and loft insulation measures for more than 650 households.
- 287 properties have been lifted from E, F and G-ratings to D or above.
- This scheme has leveraged in £773,000 of free funding and is projected to save almost 9,000 tonnes of carbon over the next 25 years.
- This scheme is also projected to provide more than £3m of energy bills savings over the same period.
- Successful pan-London consortium bid for SHDF funding for deep retrofit.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Continuing promotion of take-up of free measures to install green products.
- Ensuring more homes receive energy conservation measures and benefit from warmer properties.
- Delivery of up to 36 deep retrofit Energiesprong properties by December 2021.
- Proposal to Cabinet to formally appoint preferred provider from the Mayor of London's Retrofit Accelerator framework (RE:FIT) to assist the delivery of energy and carbon saving installs across 25 of The Council's highest consuming public buildings.
- Develop the concept of Community Municipal Investments – resident lending towards green projects.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Public reluctance or hesitance means the take up solar PV, external wall insulation and heat pumps funded by Green Homes Grant renders the scheme unsuccessful.
- Replacement funding regimes for corporate retrofit are not in place by time Cabinet approval is sought.

The Council's Cosy Homes programme in partnership with E.ON has gone from strength to strength despite lock-down restrictions over the course of the last few quarters. 650 households received free cavity, party wall and loft insulation through a national scheme called ECO3, which obliges large energy suppliers to provide funded energy conservation measures to qualifying households. This is also being supplemented with Green Homes Grant renewable installs to qualifying households. The expectation is for 2,000 installs by May 2022.

The challenge for retrofit remains ensuring it is scalable and fundable. To meet council and borough-wide targets to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 2050 requires a huge step change in how homes and workplaces are heated and requires both money and cultural and behavioural change. The testing of installs through ECO3 and Green Homes Grant will provide only limited impact in reaching those targets and other schemes being trialled, such as the Energiesprong

deep retrofit pilot, will offer significant technical solutions but at the moment not at a scalable cost.

We continue to road-test deep retrofitting, using the Energiesprong performance specification which seeks to create A-rated energy efficient homes, while cutting fuel bills and providing affordable warmth and comfort using air-tight insulation facades, solar arrays, heat pumps and battery storage as a whole-house package. Having successfully bid for match funding on behalf of six London local authorities, LBBB received £1.08m of external grant from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to support the delivery of 36 properties in the borough by December 2021. Subject to final contract clarifications following a GLA-led procurement, LBBB should appoint its preferred provider very soon, with the design process beginning in July and the beginning of on-site installs in September.

Following a tender exercise in January for a corporate buildings retrofit partner using the Mayor of London's Retrofit Accelerator (RE:FIT) framework, the Council has a preferred provider which has visited 19 of the borough's buildings to draw up investment grade proposals to get those buildings to zero carbon. Official adoption of that partner, proposals and funding considerations due to be put to Cabinet in September. Until April the likely recommendation for funding the project would have been to borrow from either the Salix or Mayor of London Energy Efficiency funds (MEEF) at 0% interest and the expected savings in fuel bills would cover the payback. However, the Government announced the closure of Salix recently, with indications that a new grant scheme would replace it imminently. To complement funding, the Council is also looking to develop Community Municipal Investments which provide a novel and attractive means for local authorities to raise capital efficiently and cost-effectively, whilst increasing engagement and connecting local residents directly to the activities of the issuing authority. This will be facilitated via a crowdfunding platform, administered by an investment partner, and open to national and local retail investors, community groups and residents. It is believed that this will begin to encourage low-risk investment into council greening projects from residents and parents wanting to 'do their bit' to become carbon neutral, while making a small return on their lending.



## A green local environment

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- 250 trees have been planted in smaller schemes across the borough.
- Project Centre commissioned to undertake electric vehicle demand forecasting and identify 150 sites for potential charge-point deployment.
- Urban Movement completing new proposals for cycle networks and refreshed walking routes.
- Electric vehicle survey attracting 200 local responses concluded.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Ensuring that Borough's 28 Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are provided with adequate investment and protection.
- Suitable route to market and procurement strategy to tackle the lack of publicly accessible charge-points in the borough is presented to Cabinet.
- New developer obligations towards air quality and green infrastructure are agreed.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Delays in agreeing the right specification and procurement route to select a charge point operator frustrates progress to gradual roll-out of new charge points into 2022.

The Council made significant progress with tree planting in the previous quarter and continues to seek and exploit fresh funding opportunities in this quarter for the next planting season. Funding bids have been submitted to Local Authority Treescape Fund for tree planting in non-woodland settings and plans to bid to the GLA Urban Challenge in summer for replacing tree sockets in Chadwell Heath/Wood Lane. A refresh of the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy Action Plan is also underway.

The Council has recently turned its attention to the multitude of degraded green spaces across the borough, particularly on the Becontree estate, and is exploring the opportunity to develop an Urban Nature Recovery Network in tandem with additional repurposing of neglected corner greens. Across this neighbourhood we aim to maximise the use of all green sites and create opportunities for nature conservation, foster wildlife corridors between new and existing developments and support wildlife populations to grow and move and have put in a £400,000 bid to the Future Neighbourhoods Fund to finance the development of this work.

This will tackle the ecological drought which exists across the many 'white' spaces of this sprawling estate and may even lead to the identification of new Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation, enhancing biodiversity gain. This would represent the country's first attempt at developing an urban Nature Recovery Network before the legislation and support new Local Plan commitments to a 10% increase in biodiversity through habitat enhancement.

Promoting and facilitating the take up of Electric Vehicles (EV) is critical to the success of this theme. Between December 2020 and January 2021, an online survey was run to gauge the appetite for EV, attracting more than 200 responses. The results of this survey suggested that

the Council had a primary role in being the enabler of infrastructure on its public realm. The results also suggested that this would give residents the confidence to invest in EV. 64% of respondents were more likely to buy EV if LBBD had broader coverage of EV charge-points by end of 2022 and 67% were more likely to invest in EV if there was a Council-endorsed home install package with information about grants.

However, LBBD still lacks the technical expertise and single dedicated resource to fully develop the strategic approach to electric vehicles although the Low Emissions Vehicle Working Group has continued to identify issues and problems previous ad hoc arrangements both to charge-points on the public realm and across the corporate estate. Project Centre has been commissioned to model and forecast future EV demand and identify 150 suitable sites for standard, fast and rapid charge-point installs. Once this review is completed, there will be a tender process for a single preferred charge-point operator who will roll-out, install and manage EV charge-points across the corporate estate. A procurement decision is due to be presented to Cabinet in September 2021. This will be complemented by a similar proposal to 'white-label'<sup>2</sup> an offer with a preferred installer for home-charging kits, where about 85% of EV charging occurs.

Resourcing and funding improvements to green infrastructure and rewilding continues to be a longstanding problem in Barking & Dagenham and requires continued exploitation of external funding streams. Work continues on drafting the latest Supplementary Planning Document to maximise developer contributions towards green infrastructure, including the creation of an Air Quality Fund and specific scheme contributions to protect the SINC's and ensure a 10% gain in biodiversity.

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<sup>2</sup> When a product or service's company branding is replaced with the purchaser's for the end product

## Money and Debt

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Set out our ambitions, vision and programme of work to establish a new Support and Collections Service.
- Continuing to develop and lay the foundation for the Community Banking service with a focus on procurement of a partner provider that can meet our aspirations for fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services, available to every household.
- Built our in-house ethical enforcement service, Becontree Collection Service (BCS), which launched on 12 April 2021.
- Further development of OneView and the Single View of Debt, which went live on 26 March 2021, with the aim of improving understanding of debt, facilitating targeted debt recovery, and informing service delivery.
- Building on the Citizens Online digital exclusion review, 14 Digital Champions have been trained across the service and 1 champion with a key delivery partner – The Source (homeless charity)
- Home and Money has supported over 3,000 residents over the course of Covid-19
- £900k+ support to over 1500 residents through Financial Hardship & Covid-19 support schemes

### Priorities for next six months:

- Continue to ensure residents facing financial hardship are able to access a range of support and interventions that address immediate risks, build financial resilience and ongoing independence
- Implement the Support & Collections programme and establish the new service.
- Develop digital inclusion Zones at BLC and Dagenham Library as part of our wider Community Hubs plan
- Continue to establish more community debt champions / mentors. This is underway.
- Continue work to develop the Community Banking Service, aiming to appoint a partner provider
- Undertake an options appraisal to inform the establishment of an online money advice credit brokerage portal – in line with wider work to tackle debt

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Increased demand as a consequence of Covid-19 and balance of debt prevention with increasing debt. Issues include the end of the Self-Employed Income Support scheme, the end of the eviction ban, as well as the end of furlough for 16,800 jobs

Against the challenging backdrop of Covid-19 significant steps have been taken to establish an ethical and whole system approach to the collection, management and prevention of debt,

building and strengthening our approach to working with residents and households early, and ultimately to build financial resilience.

The ambitions, vision and programme of work to establish a new Support and Collections Service have been set out. This aims to strengthen and integrate our response to money, debt, housing, welfare, poverty reduction, collection, and enforcement. The blueprint for this service will be delivered through a wide-ranging programme of work – the proposals for which have been approved.

Work is continuing to develop and lay the foundation for the borough's Community Banking Service, with the focus in this period on the procurement of a partner provider that can meet our aspirations for a fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services are available to every household.

Alongside the procurement process, steps are being taken to bring forward a business proposal for a multi-provider web platform of financial support. This entails drafting a proposal for a new standalone holistic financial guidance/money advice website that incorporates an interactive credit brokerage facility. This will enable those looking for credit and other financial products to be directed towards various affordable finance providers –the newly selected Credit Union (when identified) and other (national) affordable finance providers such as Fair Finance and Fair For You. The proposal will be developed through our partners at the Financial Inclusion Centre.

The Council's new in-house ethical enforcement service, Becontree Collection Service (BCS), has been built. This launched on 12 April 2021. Becontree Collection Service will fully support residents who are struggling to reach a financially sustainable future. It will also address the wider priority of delivering prevention, independence and resilience, while using all the powers The Council has to collect money owed from debtors who are in a position to pay but have chosen not to. As part of the Support and Collections service development, we will continue to embed the service within the wider support offer in Community Solutions.

Good progress has been made with the development of OneView and the Single View of Debt, which went live on 26 March 2021 and was rolled out across Revenues, Enforcement and the Revenues & Benefits Call Centre from the end of April. This will better enable us to understand debt, facilitate targeted debt recovery and inform service delivery including identify cohorts of residents at high risk, which can then be targeted with preventative actions to help resolve issues early.

Building on the Citizens Online digital exclusion review, 14 Digital Champions have been trained across the service and 1 champion with a key delivery partner – The Source (homeless charity). These champions will focus on debt and ensuring accessibility and support to access support online.

The Homes and Money Hub remained open throughout Covid-19 and has supported over 3,000 residents, facilitating income maximisation of £1.04m. The service has continued to evolve building on our pandemic response, with the introduction of an additional focus on proactive contact to households at risk with an offer of help and to triage calls and visits to the service. Since April 2020, 4,955 calls or visits have been resolved at the first point of contact. The Community Food Clubs supported over 6,000 visits saving residents over £120,000 on food during this same period. Positive steps have been taken in partnership with the borough's Food Network. Through the Financial Hardship and Covid-19 Support Schemes, over £900,000 support has been awarded to more than 1,500 residents.

As we move towards proposed end of Covid-19 restrictions from 19 July 2021, key risks and challenges on the horizon remain. Principally increased demand as a consequence of Covid-19

and effort to balance debt prevention with mounting arrears. Specific issues include the end of Self-Employed Income Support scheme, the effect of the lifting of the eviction ban, and the end of furlough for 16,800 jobs.

## Prevention, Independence and Resilience

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

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

- Schools have continued to support pupils remarkably well despite the challenges of the pandemic. The Local Authority has provided support to schools and Headteachers from Education, Public Health, HR, Health & Safety and Children's Care and Support teams, with help from other partners such as BDSIP and CAMHS.
- Unvalidated results from the 2021 Early Years Census show a drop in take up of the free early learning entitlement.
- National Offer days for Reception and Secondary Year 7 places have taken place successfully. The Council was able to offer the highest percentage in London of first preferences for Reception places for families.

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

- Mobilising the Early Help Improvement Programme and delivering immediate improvement actions to improve practice and oversight of vulnerable children. In parallel improving the MASH service to ensure there is an effective front door for Children's Care and Support.
- Supporting schools in their recovery plans. At the time of writing, government funding has just been announced. This falls far short of the figures recommended by the government's appointed Education Recovery Commissioner who has now resigned.
- Working in partnership with BDSIP to support LA maintained schools in preparation for Ofsted visits. Ofsted will resume routine school inspections from September 2021, with a phased return to inspection from May 2021. There has been one inspection in the borough so far in week commencing 23 May.
- In the Early Years, the focus will include: building on the existing marketing strategy to improve take up of places across all early years settings including schools; and supporting settings to narrow gaps in learning, particularly in Speech, Language and Communication.
- Additional special places remain a priority. The 'School Place Planning and Capital Investment' report to Cabinet in July 2021 will set out plans, where further capacity is needed, to meet forecast demand.

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

- Weaknesses in the Early Help Service undermine the overall journey to achieving a 'good' or better Ofsted rating, as well as MASH improvements
- Further disruptions to schools and pupils' face to face learning while the pandemic continues, and the risk that Covid-19 will worsen existing areas of inequality.

The recent independent review of the Early Help Service to evaluate its safety and effectiveness and to review operational arrangements completed in February 2021. The review identified significant areas for improvement. Addressing the report's recommendations is a top priority and an Early Help Improvement Programme is being mobilised. A new standards framework is being implemented to drive forward improvements in practice, a new operating model is being designed in collaboration with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). The Early Help Improvement Programme will be overseen by the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children's Improvement Board. In the short term there is a suite of actions to deliver immediate improvements to the Early Help Service.

The position of the Early Help Service presents a major risk to protecting and supporting vulnerable children. It is an area of weakness in an otherwise improved Children's Care and Support Service which itself has transformed in recent times and set LBBB on course for an improved OFSTED rating. The improvement of the Early Help Service is not straightforward. It will require significant resources, perhaps more than allocated thus far, and the transformation will be developed and implemented in a post-pandemic context where we can expect higher demand and greater levels of severity and complexity of need associated with domestic abuse, youth violence and mental health. Also, important partners such as the NHS and schools will be recovering from the pandemic themselves adding further challenges to an already stretched system.

Children attending early years settings dipped to a low point in January and February. Unvalidated results from the Early Years Census show take up at 72% for two-year-olds (84% the previous year) and 78% for three and four-year-olds (87% the previous year). Work is underway to re-build uptake to its pre-pandemic levels and to maintain the childcare provider market which has been impacted by low occupancy caused by, for example, changes to parental working patterns. Graded Ofsted inspections are returning, and it is possible not all early years providers will keep their existing inspection judgements. Currently 100% of non-maintained providers are rated 'good' or better.

Early years funding remains a risk due the low occupancy in early years settings at Census time. There is some financial protection for LAs in terms of funding built in through the January 2021 Census. The minimum funding guarantee will give Barking and Dagenham 85% of this year's Dedicated Schools Grant but this could leave a significant shortfall in funds for future years. There is an additional headcount in May and September which may help if take up increases through the year.

Focussing on the outcomes for the youngest children, a priority for the next six months is to support emotional and social development and to work to close learning gaps in speech, language and communication. Returning to a rich and exciting learning environment with outdoor play and natural resources will help the developmental catch up but in reality it will take several months, if not years, to recover what has been lost from children being in lockdown restrictions for so long. Similarly, for school age children, the priority is to catch up on lost learning and development as schools put in place more of their normal routines. Virtual learning approaches developed during lockdown has a part to play in recovery and catch up programmes. BDSIP has supported schools to implement e-learning offers and is providing curriculum support and is sharing best practice through the partnership. The full impact of lost learning and development and what this means for outcomes for children is still largely unknown but research shows deprived and disadvantaged communities will be most affected and that inequalities have likely widened.

There have been developments in support for vulnerable pupils. The Team Around the School (TAS) pilot has operated in three primary schools alongside 'Vulnerable Pupil Hot Clinics' and 'Team Around the Area' support structures (both newly established in Autumn 2020). This has

further enhanced joined up multi-agency working to improve outcomes for pupils and families. An evaluation of the TAS pilot was conducted in March 2021. We are now exploring expanding a modified version of the pilot to enable more schools to take part in the future.

The borough's schools have done remarkably well to support children during the challenges of the pandemic with invaluable support from partners such as BDSIP and CAMHS. Since January there has been a focus on supporting children back into school, transition arrangements for year six/seven pupils, mental health and wellbeing support, and the awarding of qualifications for the 2020/21 academic year.

Increasing the provision of school places for the borough's growing population is progressing well. Greatfields Secondary School is under construction and we expect approval from the DfE shortly to build Greatfields Primary School. Barking and Dagenham has one of the largest house building programmes of any local authorities and this requires appropriate school infrastructure to keep pace with the new population. A further primary school which will be called Mallard is approved for Barking Riverside by 2024/25. Major developments in south Dagenham and the Dagenham Dock areas are coming forward which will create demand for new primary places in those locations. Education is currently working with Be First as new schools will be needed to make the developments sustainable and enable the Council to meet its statutory function of providing a school place for every child who wants one. Positively, the Council was able to offer the highest percentage in London of first preference reception places to families following a successful national offer day.

Importantly, special school places are increasing too and by 2024 the following are planned for completion. Pathways will move to its permanent site in South Dagenham. A new special school called Oxlow Bridge will be built on the former Pondfield site. The 'School Place Planning and Capital Investment Report' (Cabinet, July 2021) sets out plans to meet forecast demand for special places.



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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- As at February 2021, there were 3.7% of young people categorised as 'NEET' or with an 'unknown' destination. This makes us one of the best performing boroughs in East London.
- 84% of the year 13 school cohort progressed to higher education. 42% of the total number of year 13s went to a top-third institution.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Ensuring NEET provision is effective and co-ordinated through the Post-16 Provider Forum.
- Collaborating with Inclusive Growth commissioners to develop the apprenticeship offer to maximise opportunities from regeneration projects.
- BDSIP and LBBDD are engaging with schools to support and rebuild the provision of work experience in the medium and long term.
- Renewing the post-16 partnership with schools and Barking and Dagenham College to strengthen careers opportunities and destinations and improve outcomes across all post-16 strands.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Working to support young people in year 11 and 13, who have suffered the most disruption in their exam years, into good post 16 destinations which meet their interests so that, as far as possible, they are not disadvantaged further.

Destinations for young people after finishing school are positive. The percentage of year 11s that progressed to education, employment and training is up 0.6% compared to 2019<sup>3</sup>; this is the largest increase of any East London borough. Looking more specifically at NEETs, between December 2020 to February 2021, there was an average of 3.7% of young people categorised as 'NEET' or with an 'unknown' destination. Whilst this is higher than last year by 0.2% (representing just 21 extra young people) due to the severe impact of Covid-19, this is one of the best performances in East London which is very positive against the backdrop of the pandemic.

Progression to higher education has improved, increasing by 12% across schools compared to the previous year. More young people than ever (84% of the year 13 school cohort) are going to University and 42% of year 13s from schools went to a top-third institution, helping the borough's young people to compete in the labour market. Alongside this, 47 top achieving

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Year 11 activity survey data

GCSE students who have chosen to stay in the borough to study at A level have been recognised and rewarded through a Colin Pond Scholarship (£500 per pupil).

In the next six months the focus will continue to be on supporting schools with identifying and reducing NEET numbers including through partnership working with Barking and Dagenham College. The borough's Post-16 Provider Forum will be key to ensuring NEET provision is co-ordinated and effective, and that opportunities are well-publicised to young people. The NEET Adviser Team in Community Solutions will engage and support young people into EET providing early intervention and the local apprenticeship offer will be further developed to maximise opportunities from regeneration projects.

Undoubtedly the biggest challenge is this area, and for the Provider Forum, is preventing young people becoming NEET and providing a good supply of opportunities, especially for those with vulnerabilities. Young people with SEND<sup>4</sup> are being supported through Barking and Dagenham College's 'REACH Supported Internship Programme'<sup>5</sup> but this programme has been impacted by Covid-19 which has reduced progression and employment opportunities.

As a result of the pandemic there has been a downturn in the provision of work experience and employers are struggling to re-introduce practical, onsite work experience because of Covid-19 restrictions. In addition, schools need to maximise teaching time to make up for lost learning from the closure of schools, taking attention away from work experience programmes. Furthermore, BDSIP<sup>6</sup> lost much of its work experience related traded income from schools. BDSIP have adapted their careers offer for schools with the 'Aim Higher' programme being delivered online with partners in the sector. An 'Insight into Management' programme is planned involving a range of employers to make up for missed opportunities.

In response to some of the challenges above the Council is working closely with BDSIP and London East Enterprise Adviser Network to provide other work-related learning opportunities for schools. A renewed post-16 partnership with schools, Barking and Dagenham College and the Council will be put in place. This will aim to expand careers opportunities and destinations for young people, strengthen outcomes for young people (post-16) across all qualifications, and draw together all strands of post-16 settings.

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<sup>4</sup> Special Educational Needs

<sup>5</sup> a one year work preparation programme for students with learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders

<sup>6</sup> Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership

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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- There is a robust quality assurance plan as to inspecting unregistered/unregulated providers. There has been significant development of Quality Assurance processes and mechanisms to ensure high quality and standards of accommodation for Children in Care and Care Leavers
- LBBD joined West London Commissioning Alliance's Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle (WLCA DVP) to increase provision for supported accommodation
- LBBD has also joined the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG), to increase access to fostering, residential, residential special schools and supported accommodation provision

### Priorities for next six months:

- LAC and Care Leaver Sufficiency Statement is due to be presented to Cabinet in the Autumn
- Developing information sharing systems to share provider intelligence and concerns across key safeguarding professionals
- Establish a group of young inspectors who will be trained and supported to carry out mystery shopping visits to providers

### Key risk in the next six months:

- If demand for accommodation increases, along with the severity of need, we be unable to secure sufficient high quality provision to meet the needs of Children in Care and Care Leavers resulting in several placement moves which reduces stability.

The new Corporate Parenting and Permanence Service is further strengthening permanence and planning since its launch in Spring 2020. There are now four Corporate Parenting teams responsible for children up until the age of 18 and two Leaving Care teams responsible for care leavers aged 18 through to 25. This service will have a clear focus on permanence for children and improving the experiences and progress for children in care and care leavers.

Decision making for children who come into care is overall timely, planned, and appropriate. We have increased investment in good edge-of-care services to ensure, where possible, children can remain at home with their families. Our new Specialist Intervention service went live in July 2020 and will help us tackle the significant challenges that neglect, domestic abuse and other factors keeping children on the edge of care pose.

Most children are placed within family settings with improved permanence practice and planning. Good performance has been maintained in ensuring long term placement stability for Children in Care which has held up at 70% during the difficult pandemic period. Especially good is that not more than 10% of Children in Care were put into a short-term placement. As mentioned elsewhere, 92% of Care Leavers were in suitable accommodation at the end of Q4.

Sourcing and arranging the right placement at the right time is difficult in ordinary circumstances so to perform to this level during a crisis is an achievement.

A key priority in the past six months has been to quality assure the use of unregulated and unregistered supported accommodation providers having made a large number of placements to these. As the at end of March 2021, 40 Children in Care, aged under 18 years old, were placed with such a provider, as were 113 Care Leavers.

Quality assurance capacity and capability has been strengthened through the recruitment of additional staff in the Brokerage Team and there is better monitoring of placement demand and placement sourcing, and in general better oversight of placements to ensure standards are met. Safeguarding is at the centre of quality assurance and commissioning activity with robust processes to monitor and manage risk as well as drive forward service/provider improvement. The Safeguarding Risk Register which captures provider issues and concerns is reviewed monthly by key senior professionals and teams from operations and commissioning. Red-rated risks are escalated to the Director of Children's Care and Support and there is other senior management oversight through the Corporate Safeguarding Triggers. In the coming months, our quality assurance mechanisms will be strengthened further by developing a simple system to share information, including provider concerns, between the Independent Reviewing Officer's Team, the Local Authority Designated Officer, and social workers. A successful pilot of the system is ready to be implemented across social worker teams following some further testing.

A regular quality assurance visiting schedule is in place to detect and monitor issues and concerns. As part as a rolling programme, more than 40 visits will be carried out over the next six months. Priority for visits is given to unregulated/unregistered providers where there are many young people are placed or if issues/concerns have been previously reported. There have been concerns about several unregistered/unregulated providers within the borough (but not used by LBBD). Those concerns were formally reported to the local authorities which do use these providers for them to be investigated. Commissioners and the QA team, currently work closely with the Local Authority Designated Officer and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) team to share information and intelligence as to providers. We have recently developed a simple system for IRO's to raise any provider concerns, following their visits to children. We plan to role this out to the social workers teams once we have successfully tested this process with the IRO service.

LBBD has joined West London Commissioning Alliance's Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle (WLCA DVP) and is making placements to accredited providers for residential care homes, IFA, and since March 2021, supported accommodation. Because the WLCA DVP has more robust accreditation processes than other DVPs LBBD is encouraging members of the existing Preferred Provider Network to become accredited with WLCA DVP which will raise the minimum standard of provider quality.

In February 2021, LBBD joined the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG), to increase access to fostering, residential, residential special schools and supported accommodation provision. In addition to the benefit of access to provision the CCRAG maximises our resources in quality assuring provision and intelligence sharing about providers across the 34 partner local authorities.

In the next three months we plan to establish a group of young inspectors who will be trained and supported to carry out mystery shopping visits to providers. By the end of June 2021, we will have established a portal using One Borough Voice to capture the voice of Children in Care and Care Leavers about their placements. The survey will allow for anonymous responses giving confidence for them to be open and honest about their experiences. Feedback from the

surveys will inform the provider risk ratings and be triangulated with all other performance and intelligence data.

The Looked After Children's Sufficiency Statement, a critical artefact for Ofsted inspectors, is due to be presented to Cabinet in Autumn. It will set out demand and supply needs for accommodation and our plans to meet gaps in provision over the next two years.

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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- 62.7% of care leavers are in education, employment or training as at end of March 2021.
- 92% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation.
- Capacity of beds at Summerfield House was extended for mothers and babies during the pandemic.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Improve our mental health and well-being offer to Care Leavers.
- Engage our Care Leavers much earlier, from age 14 years, in preparation for independence and support planning.
- Improve our offer as to accommodation and support options for Care Leavers.
- Continue to develop the Care Leavers Covenant.
- Continue to strengthen our engagement of Care Leavers as part of the Children in Care Council.
- Opening the YMCA care leavers provision which has met delays.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Ability to engage Health Partners to support drive forward the improvements and investment required, at the pace required, to enhance the mental health offer to Care Leavers.
- The long-term impact of the pandemic may exacerbate resource pressures faced in supporting the increased needs of Care Leavers.

LBBB has a comparatively high proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training (62.7% as at Q4 2021), and notable efforts have been made to support young people's education, employment, and training aspirations through traineeships with Be First, and inhouse apprenticeships and internships. LBBB's Leaving Care Advisors are persistent in their efforts to engage young people who are reluctant to accept offers of support.

As part of the Sufficiency Strategy, we have been involved in developing a Pan-London business case, with a funding proposal to the Department for Education, to create more welfare remand provision in London. However, these plans are now on hold and there are risks around financing the project. The opening of the 36-bed YMCA Care Leavers provision, originally due in December 2020, is delayed. Despite these challenges, we have maintained 92% of Care Leavers being in suitable accommodation as the end of March 2021.

Over the last six months, 11 Care Leavers moved into Be First's Modula housing scheme. This is part of a wider programme of work that has been carried out in the last two years to increase the variety of housing options for care leavers. Schemes such as this enable more Care Leavers to live in the Borough, closer to their family, friends, and community networks.

A Care Leaver, accommodation and housing options document is currently in development that aims to outline the different accommodation and housing options available to them. This document has been co-produced with Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The 21-bed contract with Look Ahead, Summerfield House was extended for mother and babies, including Care Leavers with babies to ensure their safety over the pandemic and to enable more time for young mothers to gain independence skills and to facilitate their move into independent housing provision in a way that is carefully planned and managed.

Floating support and tenancy sustainment for Carer Leavers is being promoted and is being delivered by the Independent Living Association who have been successful in the past in delivering independence outcomes for Care Leavers moving out of the Foyer.

These different Care Leaver accommodation schemes and solutions are being delivered through the broader work of the Preventing Homelessness 16 to 25 year old Strategic Group as part of a refreshed improvement plan following feedback from MHCLG and a DfE National Adviser. Several sub-groups are contributing to the delivery of the Sufficiency Strategy and making sure it is informed by the lived experiences of vulnerable 16 to 25 year olds.

## 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:

- Recruitment of our Independent Scrutineer, to support the Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Continuation of the “Step Up, Stay Safe” (SUSS) Programme, including a second phase of the “Lost Hours” campaign working with secondary schools.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Independent Scrutineer to engage with communities to develop community response to tackling physical chastisement.
- Develop multi-agency safeguarding training programme.
- Take forward Adult Safeguarding Peer review.
- Improve the online safety of children at risk of exploitation.
- Strengthen and improve our safety planning and risk assessments as to Children in care who go missing and who are vulnerable to exploitation.
- Strengthen partnership working, especially Health’s engagement within MASH and interface between Early Help and MASH.
- Delivering the next SUSS workshop, including Member and director-level sponsors, focusing on the impact of commissioned services.
- Launch the Ben Kinsella Trust anti-knife crime exhibition at the Foyer, Barking, to schools from September 2021. The exhibition will include a section about ‘Lost Hours’ with pictures and videos, including from the Peter Chesney Foundation and parents who have experienced loss due to knife crime.
- The SUSS ‘Theme Leads’ working group has been focusing on how SUSS can support children’s and young people’s safety online, including for younger age groups, following a reported rise in online exploitation during Covid-19. Connected to this, the next phase of the ‘Lost Hours’ campaign will take place with the borough’s primary schools.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- A return of increased COVID-19 restrictions in the future would risk impacting safeguarding and community partners’ ability to work in schools, community settings, and/or youth provisions.
- Some projects in SUSS are reliant on fixed term grant funding. Over the next 12 months, there will be a focus on working to secure further funding for some programmes with partners in SUSS.



LBBB, working with children and young people and the statutory partners, have successfully recruited an Independent Scrutineer, who will chair the Safeguarding Children's Partnership in going forward. This scrutineer will hold partners to account regarding meeting our Safeguarding priorities. Several very strong applicants were put forward for the role, however LBBB's appointed scrutineer best reflects the lived experience of many of our young people living in the borough.

The business case to invest and recruit a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training Coordinator has been approved by The Safeguarding Children Executive Board. A multi-agency safeguarding training programme is being developed with a priority focus on commencing the roll out of multi-agency training in tackling neglect, domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation and online exploitation.

To support align partnership/board agenda items and facilitate the sharing of relevant information, monthly partnership meetings are held between the Safeguarding Business Managers and the Community Safety Policy Manager. Updates to each of the boards/partnerships so to ensure alignment of the safeguarding priorities and actions being taken.

The 'Step Up, Stay Safe' (SUSS) programme has been ongoing. A second phase of the 'Lost Hours' campaign took place on 24 March 2021, with the borough's secondary schools. Half of the borough's secondary schools re-shared the #LostHours content and/or took part in an online exercise about 'County Lines'. The Youth At Risk Matrix (YARM), Box Up Crime, and Studio 3 Arts were able to respond to incidents of serious violence affecting young people in the borough and support schools whose pupils have become victims of knife crime. A workshop with partners, including some Members, was held in December 2020 which highlighted key projects, activities and services in SUSS and was well received. A further SUSS workshop with stakeholders on 30 June 2021 focused on the impact of commissioned services in SUSS.

LBBB's Violence Reduction Action Plan was recently reviewed by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) with feedback from the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) who were positive about LBBB's leadership and governance, partnership working, and examples of good practice such as the Step Up Stay Safe programme, Lost Hours campaign, and Youth At Risk Matrix (YARM) work through schools. A key challenge across the Action Plan is trying to develop and sustain long term programmes/services/interventions when the patchwork funding model for such things is short term and 'hand to mouth'. For example, there are immediate risks relating to the expiry of funding for Trauma Informed Training and the domestic abuse perpetrator programme. While we expect the Government to extend funding in some cases, and for new funding streams to emerge (e.g. relating to the new Domestic Abuse Bill) uncertainty around the continuation of funding beyond a 12-month horizon, or the need to find new grant funding streams is a constant challenge.

In relation to contextual safeguarding, three pilots have been established as part of a three-year programme of work with the University of Bedfordshire. This continues to address the extra-familial contexts being risks young people face outside the family, looking at peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods.

- Pilot 1: Focuses on taking forward the findings from the school safety summit that mapped safe and unsafe spaces for young people. This pilot has been reviewed and found there was strong partnership engagement and commitment to adopting and embedding a contextual safeguarding approach, but more focus is needed as to measuring outcomes, which is being taken forward. This work continues, with surveys with local businesses at Barking station being completed to increase engagement and communities within the contextual safeguarding agenda.

- Pilot 2: Focused on training five Contextual Safeguarding champions, developing further training, such as online safety and testing the Peer Assessment toolkit, so to embed a culture where child practitioners gain a greater understanding of young people's contexts outside of the family home e.g., peer groups, so to support ensure a more holistic safeguarding approach. The recent review of this pilot found that this pilot is successful however the impact and level of change attributed as a result, was not yet evidenced.
- Pilot 3: Preparation is underway. It will establish contextual conferencing for those on a Children in Need plan but where the risk is extra-familial and how young people can manage risk.

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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Final report from the LBBB Domestic Abuse Commission was published in March 2021.
- Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation assessment was undertaken in February 2021. We were not awarded the accreditation but have received useful learning which will be embedded before reassessment over the next 6-12 months.

### Priorities for next six months:

- reMOVE abuse pilot mobilised and is meeting targets. A midway report will be produced by evaluators in Summer 2021 to inform next steps and ensure we can maximise external funding opportunities.
- Set up of a partnership to take forwards the recommendations set out by the LBBB Domestic Abuse Commission.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- There have been several projects mobilised and learning shared relating to domestic abuse. There is a risk that projects will work in isolation, which is why a priority is to establish a Barking & Dagenham Against Domestic Abuse Partnership.

The LBBB Domestic Abuse Commission launched its report at an online event in March 2021. The report attracted significant interest from local groups as well as from the specialist sector. The principal theme of the report and clear call to action is for survivors to be believed and responded to with empathy and consistency. This is unsurprising given how central survivors and their testimony were to the Commission. The next steps will be to form a partnership group to take forward the report' recommendations.

Refuge have continued to support survivors, receiving 262 referrals in Quarter 3. Following a surge in demand, referrals appear to be reaching a plateau and Refuge are refocusing on face-to-face peer support groups, community champions training and development of the peer mentor programme.

Refuge, Cranstoun and the MARAC have developed a multi-agency training offer for 2021/22 which has 15 dates across the year. Demand for the training is such that the intention is to add more dates.

The reMOVE abuse programme was able to fully mobilise following delays from funders and is now delivering one-to-one and group work to perpetrators alongside an accommodation offer which allows survivors to remain safe in their home (where safe and appropriate to do so).

80 social workers have completed the Safe and Together training and a new cohort of 12 are starting. Learning so far has been that it has had a profound impact for participants in the training and that the training needs to be further embedded over the coming year and worked into the partnership delivery plan in response to the Domestic Abuse Commission recommendations.

In February 2021, the Council undertook an assessment for accreditation for the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) best practice award relating to housing responses to domestic abuse. Although we were unsuccessful in achieving accreditation on this attempt we will take learning and improve on weak areas with the aim to become DAHA accredited in the next 6 to 12 months.

Following recommendations from the Domestic Abuse Commission report, Community Solutions have worked to maintain the Survivors Panel, with a group of survivors who are keen to hold coffee mornings, provide peer support and set up offers for other survivors. Community Solutions have committed exclusive use of the BathHaus in Barking Learning Centre for survivors of domestic abuse. The survivor group, Council colleagues and local groups are excited to see how this can work going forwards and how we can use the move to community hub working to share space with survivors in the community.

Children's Care and Support have led on the development of a daily risk management process with partners in relation to high-risk MASH referrals. Developed following appetite to adopt a daily MARAC response, the work has improved relationships with health partners and specialist agencies working in the borough. The new process has improved referrals and uptake with CAMHS<sup>7</sup>, ensuring children have specialist mental health support to recover from adversity.

IRIS, a programme to improve identification and response to domestic abuse in GP settings has performed well, despite the vaccination programme impacting GP availability. Referrals have increased and presently there are 16 surgeries undertaking training, and three that have completed training and have been awarded IRIS domestic abuse informed status.

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<sup>7</sup> Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

**All residents with a disability can access from birth, transition to, and in adulthood that is seamless, personalised and enables them to thrive and contribute to their communities<sup>8</sup>**

**Key performance and delivery messages:**

- Block contracts for supported living have been reconfigured, which means that they are better able to meet local demand. One of the provisions is primarily for younger adults from the age of 17. This means that we are minimising the number of moves a young person will make when transitioning to adult services.
- Learning Disability Employment Manager is supporting service users into voluntary and paid employment opportunities while supporting those in employment to maintain their jobs during and post Covid-19.
- 8 young people have successfully completed Travel Training.
- Positive Internal Audit has assured the service is effectively using resources in accordance with remit.
- Implementation of the Home to School Transport Policy.
- Transfer of Education Psychology Team and EHCP team back to education and Portage moving into the Disability Team.

**Priorities for next six months:**

- ASD Behavioural Team and diagnostic framework will be developed with parents, clinicians, CCG and commissioners to support service users.
- Reopening of day services, which will include the reconfiguring of the offer for young people transitioning to adult service.
- Scoping and reporting the opportunity to open Oval Road as a children's disability respite service.
- Implementing Baby and Us parenting programme at Heathway Resource Centre
- Developing the Shared Lives offer to include respite and day services, and ensure that the training pathway for foster carers wishing to continue to care for young people when they turn 18 is proportional to their knowledge and skills base.
- Start to look at the long term housing needs for older adults with a Learning Disability

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

- Significant cost-avoidance is invested in the successful redevelopment of the Brocklebank site which is a complex project with surrounding risks.
- The number of have children and young people in the disability service continues to rise creating pressure on social worker caseloads.
- As CQC / Ofsted inspections restart post-Covid-19, we have seen several residential settings being rated as requires improvement and inadequate. This necessitates reassessment of our service users and potentially moving them to new settings, which is another factor putting pressure on caseloads.

The Disability Service Improvement Plan takes a whole-system view, consolidating various improvement and service development projects into a single cohesive plan which is being delivered in collaboration with staff and service users. The key objectives of the plan are to:

- Support service users to develop resilience and live independently as they are able
- Give service users a voice to change and shape services so that they meet their needs
- Develop services that are flexible to meet individual assessed needs, including stronger pathways for service users that present with LD and mental health needs
- Improve the accessibility of services
- Improve the supported living offer and develop new accommodation that meets long term needs

The Heathway Resource Centre which has moved to Becontree Children's Centre, capital works will be completed this month. The Centre will open following national guidance, which will be announced on 15 June 2021, and an assessment by Public Health. It is hoped the Centre will open sometime in the Q2 of 2021/22. The Centre is under the management of a qualified social worker, which has strengthened our early help offer and management of risk.

There remains significant pressure on the Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) diagnostic pathway, with up to three year waits for diagnosis. The CCG has invested £1.6 million across the local health economy to ameliorate the wait time but will not offer pre- or post-diagnostic support.

Work continues to ensure all service users have a cognitive assessment as part of the baseline for the learning disability dementia pathway; this will ensure service users who are clinically distressed can be supported appropriately and in a timely way. We continue to work with Inclusive Growth, to consider creative ways of providing supported accommodation for the learning disability population as they age so they can remain in their home for as long as possible.

There continues to be significant pressure in the Life Planning teams in the Disability Service with caseloads above recommended levels. The service has struggled to find appropriately qualified and experienced staff to bring down caseload numbers, commissioners are working with non-framework providers who are suitably qualified to increase capacity.

## 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:

- Developing a team of Primary Mental Health Workers (PMHW) with NELFT and the CCG who will work in schools and with GPs to support young people with anxiety and depression
- Hoarders Pathway has now opened for referrals offering Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) in the home.
- Government has delayed implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards; nevertheless the Mental Health Team have continued training (both children and adults social work teams) so that we are ready to implement the new legislation.
- Implemented the homeless / substance misuse pathways for people with complex needs living in the hostels

### Priorities for next six months:

- Reducing social isolation for older adults with a dementia diagnosis with engagement from Essex Cricket Club and Sporting Memories who will be running activities from July 2021
- Working with NELFT we will be supporting the commissioning of the Mental Health Peer Support Service, which will create an expert by experience team to support people with emerging or fluctuating mental health needs
- Implementation of the Schools Mental Health Team with Community CAMHS and Education
- Pilot of Antenatal Listening Visits based within Health Visiting to support pregnant women with lower levels of mental health need
- As Covid restrictions start to ease we will start supporting service users who have recovered from a period of ill health, back to living independently in the community.
- Implementation of the Criminal Justice pathway, which will support those leaving custodial sentences back into the community

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Given the daily struggle that people living in poverty experience life to be, it is not surprising that poverty increases the risk of mental health problems and is both a cause and consequence of mental ill health. Given the number of residents experiencing unemployment, zero hour contracts and furlough we would expect to see a rise in demand across all mental health services.
- At points during the pandemic demand for inpatient acute care rose by 36%, all of whom required assessment and packages of care on discharge. The core numbers in MH services have risen and we would not anticipate returning to pre-pandemic numbers until 2023/24 based on average length of open caseloads for secondary MH services.

Focus has been on delivering workstreams of the Mental Health Improvement Programme which emphasises the importance of early intervention with clear step-up and step-down processes to ensure acute and emerging mental health needs are met in a timely and thoughtful way. The programme addresses fragmented care pathways, ensuring service users with multiple vulnerabilities can access good quality, outcome-focused care, preventing escalation to specialist services.

The Mental Health Social Care Team has seen a 32% rise in referrals, all which require assessment, intervention and packages. Demand is expected to reduce during 2021/22 but not return to pre-Covid-19 levels until 2023/4 based on average lengths of stays, complexity of presentations and social needs that are arising from assessments. There is also a notable rise in the number of young people that will transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services. This will necessitate social care services to assess and support them as part of transition planning. Sustained pressure within mental health services is anticipated for at least the next two years.

As Health Services start to return to their pre-pandemic functions, a rise in older adult adults presenting for dementia diagnosis is predicted. Due to the significant delays in diagnosis, it is expected people will present with more complex and acute needs requiring packages of support to remain at home. Families, having not wanted to use care homes during the pandemic, will be more accepting of and/or requesting residential care which could drive costs in this area. An 8% increase in requests for support relating to memory and cognition in Q2 supports this view. Demand for this service is expected to rise further in the next 12 months as clinical assessments pathway will return to full capacity as clinicians move from the Covid-19 frontline to their substantive roles. We are seeking to offset pressure by embedding the Admiral dementia nurses within both Memory Lane and Adult Social Care Mental Health team to intervene earlier and prevent escalation to residential or nursing care, develop a range of social activities for service users and their families to reduce social isolation, as well as packages of care that seek to maximise independence and quality of life.

Essex County Cricket Club will be running coaching sessions over the Summer for service users with dementia and their carers. Sporting Memories, a programme which uses sporting memories and physical activity to tackle loneliness, depression, and dementia decline. Activities suitable for everyone include table cricket, walking cricket, and clock cricket - which has proved to be very popular among dementia sufferers. By championing sports and physical activity, it is hoped we can reduce social isolation for older men and engage them in services.

External funding was secured to work with the Homeless Team and Change Grow Live, a substance misuse service provider, to reconfigure support pathways within hostels. People who are homeless have complex needs and so we have enhanced the hostel support offer with peer mentors, substance misuse workers, counsellors and housing move on teams.

In the last two quarters 23 people were moved on from hostels into independent or supported accommodation, some of whom were street homeless for many years. One person has also gained employment. There is joined up work with St Mungo's to ensure the support is ongoing and to work towards tenancy sustainment.

Further funding was secured from Public Health England to improve drug treatment in order to reduce drug related deaths and re-offending. Learning from the work in the hostel will be focusing on individual outcomes rather than project KPIs. This allows practitioners more flexibility to support individuals in sustaining and maintaining change. The team will include substance misuse workers, mental health practitioners, support for education (basic literacy



skills), welfare and benefits support. Importantly these forms of support will be in place prior to release from prison or probation orders.

Offenders to be assessed away from what could be seen as an establishment and treating them as residents with a fresh start. A dedicated DWP work coach will advise on applying for jobs but also about apprenticeship opportunities for those individuals who have never worked before. It is anticipated that with such bespoke support many offenders will get opportunities opened to them that they have never previously had. Commissioners are working with the social value team to look at apprenticeship placements within the borough for this cohort.

The Criminal Justice Pilot will include working with Young People in Youth Offending and support schools to improve the educational offer to this cohort of young people to prevent future entry into the criminal justice system.

**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:**

- Care and Support services have been reliable and resilient, although the impact of the pandemic is manifesting in mental health services and there are an increasing cohort of younger adults who are being supported to live with care needs at home.
- LBBDD has worked jointly with health partners, Barking, Havering and Redbridge colleagues and local care providers to ensure the health and social care system responded effectively to the second wave of the pandemic, particularly around hospital discharge, infection control, market resilience and vaccine take-up. We will build on this work and learning as we roll-out the changes in our Adults Improvement Programme.

**Priorities for next six months:**

- Support the most vulnerable residents to recover from the effects of the pandemic
- Remodel hospital discharge and support to residents at home
- Tender for an ambitious care technology service
- Roll out the Adults Care and Support practice model working with the Social Care Institute for Excellence

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

- A possible delay in the implementation of new hospital discharge arrangements due to the dependency on the establishment of a new discharge coordination unit and changes within other organisational structures across the BHR system.

The second wave of the pandemic tested the resilience of our social care workforce, both within the local authority and in the provider market, particularly during the first few months of 2021 when the second wave was at its peak. However, partners from across the health and social care system have continued to work closely and collaboratively, taking learning from the first wave to minimise Covid-19 transmission and better support vulnerable residents.

During this period, nearly all providers across residential care experienced a Covid-19 outbreak and we worked closely with these care homes to manage the outbreaks swiftly and safely. We did this using coordinated outbreak management teams (with input from a range of health and care professionals), infection control grants, Infection and Prevention Control specialist advice and visits, and our continued outreach support to all social care providers through the Provider Quality Team. Vaccine roll-out also started and continued in earnest during this period for all social care staff, with upwards of 70% of the LBBDD frontline social care workforce, 91% of care home residents and 76% of care home staff having their first jab in this reporting period. We have worked with BHRUT, GPs and providers to drive up vaccine uptake. In January Barking and Dagenham was bottom in London for care home staff vaccinations and is now in the top third of all London Boroughs.

The BHR system have worked in partnership to commission a range of activities to help individuals to be discharged from hospital as safely and quickly as possible during the pandemic to designated care homes, homecare agencies and other types of supported accommodation. The pandemic has provided a big learning opportunity for commissioners and operational staff in LBBD and across the sub-region. Service user pathways, support, information and advice and communication flows were reviewed and improved through collaboration between system stakeholders in response to the pandemic.

Since it was established in December 2019, the social prescribing model, delivered through the borough's six Primary Care Networks (PCNs) have received 1,466 referrals with 2,455 needs identified. Initially, as the pandemic hit, referrals started to decrease but are now increasing. Two of the Primary Care Networks have now approached Barking & Dagenham to recruit an additional link worker and a health and well-being coach to be part of their multi-disciplinary team. This expansion demonstrates faith in the social prescribing model and its success in delivering outcomes in relation to money and debt, social isolation, employment and education, mental health, physical health, domestic abuse and substance misuse.

Lockdown and restrictions have been particularly difficult for our vulnerable, older residents, particularly as the social infrastructure they rely on has reduced. Community-based networks such as BD CAN, along with organisations like the Independent Living Agency, Carers and Barking and Dagenham and Reconnections, have continued to put in initiatives to reduce loneliness and isolation and embed practical support such as food and medication pick-ups and training around the use of technology to connect with others. Community Solutions helped set up and run the borough's Central Food Hub between March to September 2020. The Hub distributed food and essential supplies to BD CAN partners and those who were 'shielding' and required additional food support. This enabled BD CAN to support over 2,000 residents (including medicine pickups), and Community Solutions to deliver c.250 emergency parcels to shielding residents. In addition to this, the Intake team have made upwards of 20,000 calls to support the most vulnerable residents during the pandemic, particularly those who were shielding. The Social Prescribing service linked people into befriending and support services as well as providing a range of virtual programmes to address social isolation and other needs.

Requests for adult social care increased during the 2020/21 financial year, with 3,442 requests, compared with an average of 3,282 in the same quarter in 2019/20. However, hospital discharge, although challenging, has not led to the levels of social care demand that were predicted during the pandemic. The number of people admitted to long-term residential and nursing care fell to the lowest level seen in several years, a trend that echoed national patterns as people sought community-based alternatives to care home placements during the pandemic.

The number of safeguarding concerns raised during 2020/21 is the highest number reported in the past seven years, with 26% more concerns than 2019/20. Upon analysis, there was an increased proportion of safeguarding concerns raised in relation to adults aged 18-64 during the pandemic, as well as a greater proportion of referrers from health services. The analysis shows that professionals and providers have maintained a commitment and focus to safeguarding throughout the pandemic and that the work that we have been doing to improve safeguarding referrals with partners is working.

Progress has been made in the delivery of our Adults Improvement Programme and this is the continued priority over the coming months. Over the next quarter we will look to remodel our hospital discharge arrangements with Havering, Redbridge, the hospital trust and NELFT, bringing social workers back into the community and establishing a new unit to coordinate discharges. Additionally, LBBD will be reviewing hospital discharge pathways to ensure they are clear, improve the patient experience, and outcome focused. The overall aim of the review is for residents to stay as independent as possible and away from long-term care options.

An example of this new pathway will be a new therapy-led discharge process which will see individuals assessed at home rather than in hospital. The success of this work is dependent on the timely establishment of a new unit to coordinate discharge and the implementation of a BHR-wide bank of therapists, as well as a number of organisations simultaneously disaggregating their resources from the current hospital set-up. This is being planned and worked through by BHR-wide groups but remains a collective risk over the next quarter for Care and Support.

As well as our work on hospital discharge, we will be tendering for an innovation Partner for a new Care Technology Service, rolling out a service with St Francis Hospice for end-of-life care at Kallar Lodge and receiving a report from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to support the roll-out of strengths-based working with our social workers and the community.

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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Most of cohorts two through six, including the shielding population, those with underlying conditions and people aged 65 and over, received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine

### Priorities for next six months:

- Further roll-out of the vaccination programme to prevent new cases of Covid-19 and related deaths from the virus. Engaging vaccine hesitant groups within the population is a priority.
- Delivering the Barking and Dagenham Delivery Partnership roadmap and driving forward integration of mental health and care and support services
- Taking forward recommendations from the Public Health-led review of widening inequalities caused by Covid-19.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Legacy challenges created by the temporary shutdown of some health services and changes to health seeking behaviour have resulted in lost opportunities to make positive health service interventions to diagnose and treat health conditions.

Health inequalities, as well equality generally, have grown because of Covid-19. Not only because the virus itself has disproportionately affected ethnic groups and older people, but the economic fallout has negatively impacted socio-economic outcomes. This is true across the UK but especially so for Barking and Dagenham which has a diverse and deprived population. In response to rising inequality a review of the impact of Covid-19 has been commissioned to analyse inequality and consider how local public services can close equality gaps. The review is underpinned by key data sets and published evidence including intelligence on cases, hospital admissions, and mortality rates to better understand underlying risk factors. The review will inform the forthcoming Director of Public Health Annual Report and the development of the next Corporate Plan in 2022.

Inequalities are high on the agenda with our partner organisations too. NHS Operational Planning Guidance for 2021-22 emphasises the need to take further steps to develop population health management approaches that address inequalities in access, experience, and outcomes, which can only be delivered through effective partnership working across systems. Integrated Care Systems will be fundamental to delivering this. Over the course of quarter 3 and 4, the East London Health and Care Partnership was formally designated as an Integrated Care System (ICS), and the Government released its White Paper setting out legislative proposals for a Health and Care Bill, which will place ICSs on a statutory footing and delegate more commissioning and decision-making down to the place, or borough, level. In parallel, the Barking and Dagenham Delivery Group has been working on a Roadmap to becoming the Barking and Dagenham Borough Partnership in 2022. This has involved sharing ideas with peers across Barking, Havering and Redbridge and working with an independent organisational

development consultant to reflect on how it can become a stronger, more effective body that can take on more significant functions. The Delivery Group is furthering its identified priority areas for integration and service development, including integrated models of mental health care and support for both adults and children and young people, along with developing the multi-disciplinary team model in care homes. The Delivery Group's Roadmap to a Borough Partnership has identified additional priorities for delivery, all with alignment to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Front and centre of these new priorities is taking forward integrated place-based care and addressing inequalities.

The arrival of the Covid-19 vaccination programme has been the most important development in this reporting period. Strong partnership working has enabled roll out of the vaccine across the borough at pace. By the end of quarter 4 most of cohorts two through six, including the shielding population, those with underlying conditions and people aged 65 and over, received their first dose of the vaccine. Notably, the Covid-19 vaccine programme began during the second wave of the pandemic, a period in which Barking and Dagenham had the highest case rate in England for 12 days<sup>9</sup>. The Covid-19 case rate improved dramatically from thereafter; the number of cases confirmed in February 2021 was 85% lower than January 2021. Lower case rates and fewer Covid-related deaths can be attributed in large part to the vaccination programme and the high vaccination rate for older age groups.

Legacy challenges have been created by the temporary shutdown of some health services, changes in health seeking behaviour and from the social and economic fallout of lockdown. Actions have been taken to mitigate this, including encouraging the public to seek advice for any health concerns, adaptations to the delivery of services such as hybrid digital models to accommodate social distancing. Although still operating in a reduced capacity, there was a notable upturn in the number of NHS Health Checks performed in quarter four, up approximately 50% from quarter three. This is a positive sign, but activity is still far from normal levels and the system regaining capacity to run health screening programmes and inspiring residents' confidence to access healthcare will be a priority going forwards. Significant improvements have been made over the past year in public health intelligence to support the health protection function in response to the impacts of the pandemic. This leaves a legacy of improved analytics and data sharing which can be utilised to tackle challenges in health improvement, closing health inequality gaps, in addition to improved health protection responses in the future.

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<sup>9</sup> This was the period between 30 December 2020 and 11 January 2021

# Participation and Engagement

## Building capacity in the social sector

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Distributed £100,000 of NCIL funding across 12 community groups, and a further £9,500 has been raised to support groups. In total more than £350,000 was distributed in 2020/21
- Created a central endowment fund for the social sector that is hosted by BD Giving and initially totals £905,000.
- Four different networks have been successfully launched by the BD\_Collective, supporting and connecting community groups and council colleagues as they focus on tackling complex challenges facing the Borough.
- Made progress on the preparation of a Community Assets Policy, with significant research and engagement having taken place which will inform the final policy

### Priorities for next six months:

- Working closely with the BD\_Collective, BD Giving and other partners as they grow their networks in the Borough, including the development of Neighbourhoods and Social Isolation programmes.
- Engaging the sector and the community on the priorities for the forthcoming Community Assets Policy, along with internal stakeholders, while making progress on developing the policy itself.
- Transferring the endowment fund to BD Giving and working with them as they begin to grow the fund and distribute it to community groups through participative processes.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Pressure on capacity and funding of the voluntary and community sector compromises the ability to take forward joint work

Over the past six months the social sector in the borough has continued to collaborate with each other, and with the Council, to support residents. This has involved running their day-to-day offers using online platforms, where necessary, as well as delivering vital support services in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The BD\_Collective has gained traction over the past six months cultivating and growing a 'network of networks' that can support the social sector. Progress has been made on the social infrastructure contract held by BD\_Collective. Better Impact, a shared volunteering platform for the Borough has been established, with social sector organisations gradually beginning to use the platform to access volunteers. However, take-up to the platform has been slower than anticipated; this partly due to community groups' capacity being reduced by the pandemic. The Reimagining Adults Social Care and Early Help for Families networks have continued to meet. These are being convened by the sector, with LBB and social sector partners coming together

regularly, with the latter sharing their experience of working directly with service users and learnings they have taken from this. There has been a strong emphasis on collecting service user testimonies and building case studies based on service users experience, which learnings from these hopefully reflected in future practises. New networks have been launched focused on food banks and young people. Work has begun on shared programmes of work between the Council and community groups, focused on Neighbourhoods and Social isolation, which will involve working closely in partnership with the BD\_Collective.

Barking and Dagenham Giving has made significant progress in the past season. In December 2020, Cabinet agreed to transfer endowment fund to BD Giving for the social sector. The £905,000 fund is made up of Corporate Social Responsibility Payments, Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) income and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable grant funding and is due to be transferred to BD Giving in the coming months for them to grow and distribute. This will follow the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. Round five of the Council's NCIL funding process has concluded and was delivered exclusively online with a new representative selection and training process to recruit new residents to the decision-making panel. During this funding round £100,000 was distributed across 12 community groups; plus a further £9,500 has been raised to distribute to local community groups involved with the Local Lottery.

Faith groups have played a key role in supporting the community throughout the pandemic and the Faith Policy Action Plan has continued to be monitored and delivered through the Faith Forum. Interfaith Week was successfully delivered in November and the first in-person faith event was successfully delivered in April celebrating Vaisakhi. The Council has worked closely and effectively with Faith partners throughout the pandemic to ensure that places of worship have safely opened, operated and addressed challenging issues related to lockdown compliance and safety.

Community hall leases have continued to be managed with liaison with local stakeholders around the usage of these halls. Engagement across the Council and with partners has progressed feeding into the development of a new Community Assets Policy. An external resource was brought in to conduct internal engagement and research regarding best practise and shared priorities regarding community assets. Policy development will continue with the aim to have the final policy agreed by Cabinet towards the end of 2021.

BD Citizens Alliance Network (BD CAN), run by local community groups, ran until March 2021, with the day-to-day responsibility of running the system being taken up by the newly formed Food Banks network from November. Following March, and as demand for BD CAN significantly decreased, the running of the platform was taken over by the Intake team in partnership with the Independent Living Agency, who continue to respond to requests for support that come up. The strong relationship between the social sector and the Council is evidenced by the speed and effectiveness with which BD CAN was established and the way in which it was able to adapt response to changing demand. BD CAN works collaboratively between multiple social sector and faith organisations, this is testament to the effective work that has been done by the BD\_Collective, over the past six months and before. Furthermore, the leading role social sector organisations have taken in delivering BD CAN and supporting residents highlights how the social sector's capacity has been built up.

Fundamentally, there is a clear sense of the social sector having made significant progress in the past season, and indeed the past financial year. Through the work of the BD\_Collective, BD Giving, Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum and other key partners, the social sector is more connected and coordinated in its work to support residents. Continuing to work closely with the sector and partners such as the BD\_Collective, on collaborative workstreams such as Community hubs and Neighbourhoods and Social Isolation, is a priority for the next six months.



## Developing opportunities to meaningfully participate

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Every One Every Day (EOED) has continued to see Tomorrow Today Streets projects run, giving residents the opportunity to participate from their own homes. Progress has been made with the Collaborative Business programme, with up to 30 young people being hired as apprentices. An agreement has been reached to install a collaborative coffee shop business in the Wilds Ecology Centre, in partnership with Barking Riverside, which is a significant part of the platform being embedded in the Borough for the long term.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Securing the future of participation in the Borough, through sustainability discussions with Participatory City around the future of the Every One Every Day platform.
- Complete the review of opening times for heritage sites and ensure Covid-19 secure and safe opening of the sites.
- Completion of the Conservation Management Plans.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Getting traction on Every One Every Day, heritage and cultural planning is more difficult and harder to sustain if meaningful in person participation cannot happen – any deviations from the current roadmap to recovery that central government has proposed, would represent a considerable risk to the participation agenda.
- New Town Culture funding from MOPAC is at risk beyond this financial year.

In the past six months, participation has continued to take place online wherever possible, meaning that residents have been able to participate virtually, despite pandemic-related restrictions.

A new metric for assessing the impact of participation for residents is being used to survey residents who have taken part in different activities such as the NCIL funding process, volunteering, or the participation through the Citizens Alliance Network (CAN). Results from these questions are encouraging, with the majority of residents who responded reporting the positive impacts of participating in different activities, which include:

- An increased desire and confidence to be involved in local decision-making or local community work
- Feeling confident they have a good understanding of the borough
- Wanting to make a change in their community or their own lives and feeling confident they can do so.

To obtain a baseline set of data to compare against results from residents who have actively participated, four of the 'Impact of Participation questions' were included in the Residents Survey which has a sample size of 1,000 residents. Comparisons between respondents of the

Residents Survey and those from the residents involved in the participation activities mentioned above supported the idea that participation has wider benefits beyond the benefits of the activity itself.

Every One Every Day (EOED) shops were closed due to Covid-19. Operations were moved online to their 'Mighty Networks' platform and residents were able to participate from their homes through the 'Tomorrow Today Streets' programme with the aim of creating smaller eco-systems of participation across the borough. Despite these efforts to move participation opportunities online the impact of Covid-19 will affect the number of participation opportunities which could be created during the programme's five year lifespan. Expectations for key metrics in terms of numbers of people participating, number of hours of participation recorded and number of projects initiated.

EOED have made efforts to re-open their in-person participation facilities to residents in a controlled manner but have been repeatedly impeded by Government guidelines and restrictions on in-person participation. However, EOED are planning to launch a Summer programme which will offer extensive opportunities for in-person participation. Progress has been made with EOED's collaborative business programme, through which 30 local young people being hired as apprentices as part of the Kickstarter programme.

There has been real progress made with embedding the platform into the Borough for the long-term via the Wilds Ecology Centre, with a partnership between Participatory City and Barking Riverside seeing the development of a co-operative coffee shop business within the centre itself. An evaluation model is being created which will enable Participatory City to assess the value created and financial savings delivered by the model.

EOED governance arrangements have not been affected by the pandemic. Meetings between the Council and Participatory City continued to be held online including funders board, project board and regular working group meetings. Sustainability planning discussions have been had with Participatory City and are progressing well with teams from the Council and PC working together closely, discussing the future of the EOED platform. Funders are being kept updated with regards to this future planning, with further progress due to be reported upon at the next Funders Board in June. This sustainability and future planning is a key priority for the next six months.

Heritage Services continues to be disrupted due to Covid-19. Other than a short period of re-opening between lockdowns, the sites have remained closed since March. Valence House is planned to open in May and Eastbury Manor House in June 2021 in line with Government Guidance. The Education Programme being delivered at Valence House has already received a number of inquiries and bookings from schools. A review is taking place of opening times for heritage sites. Despite significant difficulties presented by the pandemic, progress continues to be made on the conservation management plans. Strategic plans for both Eastbury Manor and Valence House have been commissioned which will map out the future for the sites, including identifying opportunities to develop the site and programme to ensure the visitor experience and ultimately increase footfall and income generation.

Cultural Commissioning continues to support arts and community-based organisations in the borough through key commissioning initiatives. A Women's Empowerment Month programme ran throughout March 2021 which saw the launch of the Barking and Dagenham Herbal Network with Company Drinks and the Good Food Collective, a series of online talks and events with Pen to Print and local culture partners such as the East End Women's Museum and

the premiere of Arc Theatre's new film made with girls involved in their Raised Voices programme. A new initiative by Studio 3 Arts' called A Week of trans Visibility was supported in March which saw artist Tabby Lamb curate an online dance celebration, talks and other events.

Becontree Forever a comprehensive programme of cultural activity, launched in March 2021, will run throughout the Centenary year of the Becontree Estate into 2022 and beyond, involving hundreds of artists and partners and significant commissions. Press reception for programming has been strong, with the bulk of activity shifted to begin from June 2021 onwards due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The centenary is an opportunity to celebrate the estate's groundbreaking and radical beginnings and to reimagine Becontree's future. Cultural Commissioning is working in collaboration with other services to bring to fruition 5 major public realm commissions with artists Yinka Ilori (a new playground for Parsloes Park), Eva Rothschild (a series of new climbing structures also in Parsloes Park), Leonor Antunes (a series of commemorative plaques across the estate to highlight the rich history of people who have lived there), Studio Morison (new street furniture in key shopping parades across the estate) and Nimtim Architects (re-developing amenity greens in three areas of the estate in partnership with RIBA). These commissions are curated by Create London who are project managing the installation process of all commissions which will commence in June. In addition to these major public realm projects, for the Becontree Forever public engagement and cultural programme the Culture Service, is collaborating with residents and local partners such as the schools on the estate, Arc Theatre, Barking and Dagenham Youth Dance, East End Women's Museum, Girls Like Us, Green Shoes Arts, Love Music Hate Racism, Studio 3 Arts, Soul and Sound and The White House and national partners such as EFG London Jazz Festival, Focal Point Gallery, Serpentine Galleries and the Wellcome Trust.

The Events team are leading key celebratory moments throughout the summer and autumn including community festivals such as Becontree 100 and Roundhouse Music Festival which will see world-renowned artists such as Frank Turner, the Boomtown Rats, Don Letts and Idles take to the stage in Parsloes Park, free of cost to all residents. They are also working in partnership with EFG London Jazz Festival to bring the festival to the Borough for the first time in its history, with local sites such as the historic Dagenham Roundhouse and UCL Pearl to be used for workshops and performances. In addition to these and other community events, we are developing a Winter Lantern Parade and Chitty Lane Street Party with local schools Becontree Primary and Henry Green to mark the exact anniversary of the first houses built in Becontree. Programming will involve craft workshops, local history sessions, performances and a parade planned and developed closely with local Head Teachers and school children to take place in early November. To ensure all residents have an opportunity to participate in these key celebrations, Events have also commissioned toolkits by local artists that are designed for use by residents in local care homes and schools, and also available to download online.

This winter and spring saw programmes led by artists Joe Namy, Sarina Mantle, Elsa James, and Blak Outside Collective, commissioned in partnership with local partners The White House and Company Drinks.

New Town Culture continues to forge new pathways in partnership with Social Services and external organisations like Goldsmith's University, Tate, Serpentine and South London Gallery, developing workshops for young people from our Foster, Youth Offending and other Services.

New Town Culture receives project funding through the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) which is due to end in early 2022. Discussions are taking place with MOPAC to

extend this funding until the end of December 2022 with a view to focus on fundraising towards the approximately 1.2 million required to continue the programme for an additional 3-4 years. Whilst we are optimistic funding can be secured and are actively pursuing conversations with potential funders and partners, this is not guaranteed and therefore it is important to note New Town Culture is at risk beyond this financial year.

Over the next six months, a key priority will be continuing sustainability discussions with Participatory City over the future of an in-person participation platform embedded throughout the borough and as part of the wider social infrastructure of Barking and Dagenham. Also through maintaining participation opportunities for residents through our Culture, Leisure and Heritage offers, while navigating the complications and barriers to participation that Covid-19 presents.

## Facilitating democratic participation

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Over 7,000 residents are aware of the Citizens Alliance Network (CAN) platform, with over 1,400 separate contributions to the 34 online projects.
- A recent project on Women's Safety has seen coverage in multiple national media outlets, and a significant increase in levels of resident engagement.
- A regular CAN governance group has been set up and is meeting regularly to help steer the platform's development and growth.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Begin to hold in-person meetings with residents, in addition to online meetings, as there is a move towards recovery from the pandemic.
- Continue to add projects, looking for opportunities to support residents who want to take action on issues that matter to them and social sector groups also.
- Develop support for council staff to engage more with residents and to use CAN.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Any setbacks or changes to the government's proposed roadmap to recovery from the pandemic would represent a significant challenge for the CAN platform as being unable to meet in person makes it harder for residents to make connections with each other and develop deeper and more meaningful conversations.

Central to this priority is the progression of the Citizens Alliance Network (CAN), a platform for which community mobilising and democratic participation can be conducted from throughout the borough. The CAN Project Manager, in post since March 2020, has led on a development process to build CAN into a broad and active platform for democratic participation.

Over 7,000 residents are aware of the platform, with over 1,400 separate contributions to the 34 online projects. These include 23 Council initiated projects, 8 social sector-initiated projects and three which are resident-led. A recent project on Women's Safety has seen a significant jump in engagement measures, people are aware of CAN and are actively contributing to the platform with comments, questions and being part of discussions. This project has seen significant engagement with residents and has been highlighted by national media outlets. Over the last six months, a series of online 'Community Conversations' have taken place, bringing residents together with officers and Members to explore the projects and themes in more detail.

A refresh of the CAN online platform has seen the webpages updated to make them more accessible and engaging. A regular CAN governance group has been established and meets monthly. The group's remit is to steer the platform's development and plan for its continued growth.

Over the next six months, there are several priorities for CAN. Firstly, continuing to expand the Network to grow the number of projects and the amount of engagement. Secondly, developing an 'in person' CAN offering, as part of broader neighbourhood offering, to enable residents to come together and connect with each other after the pandemic restrictions are fully lifted.

Thirdly, to develop training and toolkits to support council staff in using CAN to its maximum potential to engage residents in policy and service development to deliver more impactful outcomes.

## Designing relational practices into the Council's activity

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- 2020-21 was the first full year of regular engagement and consultation opportunities delivered by One Borough Voice (OBV). The total number of visitors to OBV in 2020-21 was 41,165, exceeding the 20,000 visitor target. And the number of visitors that engaged was 9,861, more than double the target of 4,000.
- Cross-cutting workstreams such as Community Hubs, Neighbourhoods and Community Assets are all being run in a collaborative and partnership focused way.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Sustain the visitor and engagement numbers achieved, by continuing to raise the profile of OBV and support services to use OBV to provide residents with meaningful opportunities to participate and influence decision making.
- Ongoing cross-cutting workstreams such as Community Hubs, Neighbourhoods and Community Assets all require collaborative working alongside a partnership approach with the social sector, if they are to succeed and this is a priority for the next six months.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- The need to engage online may reduce as we move out of lockdown and some services resume face-to-face interaction. This may impact on OBV usage.

Relational working is a key aspect of the participation and engagement priority. This priority is interdependent between the key strategic priorities (Inclusive Growth; Prevention, Independence and Resilience; Well Run Organisation; and Participation and Engagement) and it requires extensive joint working across the Council and embracing co-production and co-design practices.

Towards the end of 2020 and into the beginning of 2021, colleagues from Strategy and Participation have been meeting and are meeting colleagues from Inclusive Growth, My Place, Community Solutions and Care and Support to scope out and identify ways in which joint working across the Council can add value to critical ongoing projects and, specifically, ensure they are participatory by design and in delivery. These include: the Community Hubs; Community Assets; and Neighbourhoods workstreams, all of which need to be collaborative and participative if they are to succeed. Another fundamental part of relational working involves working closely in partnership with the social sector, where power is shared equally and partnerships are genuinely equal. All of the above three workstreams again require a partnership approach between the Council and the sector if they are to succeed and such an approach will be reinforced as we move forwards, ensuring that is adopted throughout the Council as we work with our partners. We cannot work in silos, we must be working collaboratively and in partnerships, across the board.

Usage of One Borough Voice (OBV) has continued to increase as a platform to engage and consult with residents, staff and partners in the borough. The end of year figures shows there

were 41,165 visitors and 9,861 engagements. This volume of interactions far exceeds the initial targets (20,000 and 4,000 respectively).

Residents have been consulted on a wide range of topics including the Council's budget proposals, Public Space Protection Orders, and the development of a Carers' Charter. One Borough Voice also hosts the Citizens Alliance Network which led on discussions and sought community views on parks improvement and resident's experiences during the pandemic.

More services are choosing to use OBV to obtain customer feedback on a regular basis. Residents accessing services such as the Homes and Money Hub and Housing Repairs, or who have had contact with Children's Social Care, are being asked to share and rate their experiences. Ongoing opportunities for residents to have their say will lead to resident-led improvements to services.

The examples above show the versatility of the platform and opportunities to engage residents. Creative and diverse use of OBV to hold dialogue and canvass residents on important community issues is integral to our relational approach. In the next six months, we will create more engagement opportunities that are meaningful and of a high standard.



# Well Run Organisation

## Delivers value for money for the taxpayer

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- The 2020-21 financial year was the final year of the Ambition 2020 programme which had a total target of £48.824m savings to be delivered in the period 2017-21. £36.781m (75%) of the Ambition 2020 savings have been achieved. A further £10.350m has been deferred or delayed into the 2021-22 financial year of which at least £1.741m is directly attributable to the impact of Covid-19. If these deferred savings are delivered 97% of the savings target will have been achieved.
- At the end of Q3, 39% of the original plan of risk and compliance audits were at least at draft report stage. This falls short of the target for the end of Q3 which is for 50% of audits to be at draft stage. At the end of Q3, 62% of the schools' audits were at least at draft report stage. This exceeds the target for the end of Q3 which is for 50% of audits to be at draft stage.
- By Q3 the Counter fraud team had accepted 88 cases for investigation, recovered 4 HRA properties and detected fraud to the value of £166k.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Begin to deliver savings programmes relevant to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) inclusive of the £10.350m, deferred from 2020-21.
- Develop an updated (MTFS) to be taken to Cabinet in July from which a detailed savings plan will be developed over the summer.
- Prepare for the Oracle Replacement implementation to ensure it is delivered well and on time.
- Improve compliance with procurement rules.
- Completion and Audit sign-off of the Statutory Accounts for The Council and its subsidiary companies.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Covid-19 outbreak and the lockdown has resulted in increased costs of providing services and reduced income from fees and charges. It has also further compounded already existing risks in areas with existing demographic and needs led pressures such as care and support. This remains a financial risk this year.
- The longer term impact of Covid-19 and the potential for economic downturn is a risk for The Council and its subsidiaries as is the ongoing delay to Local Government Funding Reforms
- The timetable for the Oracle Replacement implementation project remains challenging.

The 2020-21 financial year is the final year of the Ambition 2020 programme which had a total target of £48.824m savings to be delivered in the period 2017-21. £36.781m (75%) of the

Ambition 2020 savings have been achieved. A further £10.350m has been deferred or delayed into the 2021-22 financial year of which at least £1.741m is directly attributable to the impact of Covid-19. If these deferred savings are delivered 97% of the savings target will have been achieved.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Assembly in February sets out the need to develop savings or income proposals of c£7m per year. Government have delayed funding reforms and social care reform appears to be unlikely to be resolved for the 2022-23 financial year. An updated MTFS will be presented to Cabinet in July from which a detailed savings plan will be developed over the summer.

The 2020-21 budget of £155.796m was approved by Cabinet in February 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic and the UK response (lockdown) started before the beginning of the financial year and has had a considerable impact on the Council's financial performance during the year. Additional costs have been incurred in a range of areas especially Enforcement, Care and Support and Homelessness (Community Solutions) while other services have not been able to operate normally and have lost income as a result. There has also been a considerable diversion of leadership and management activity and staff time to support the pandemic response which has meant that some new initiatives and savings plans have been delayed.

Even without Covid-19 there were underlying overspends or pressures in several areas – some of which have been worsened during the pandemic while others have been temporarily alleviated. As a result, the Council has an expenditure overspend of £27.948m against its financial plans including transfers to and from reserves. Following strong lobbying from the Local Government sector the scale of the pressures was recognised by Central Government in the form of a variety of grants – both ring-fenced and non-ring-fenced. This has resulted in £30.439m of additional income recognised in the 2020-21 financial year. The net result is an underspend of £2.491m. This is an improvement since the in-year forecasts reflecting both improvements in expenditure/income trends in some service blocks and significant additional grants released by Central Government in the final quarter of the year.

The financial risk resulting from shortfalls in financial returns from LBB owned companies remains high. The Business Plans of the trading companies have had to flex to respond to the effects of Covid-19 resulting in a loss of income in some companies which has not been recovered in this financial year. This is most evident in the results for BDTP where a loss is forecast. A recovery plan is being developed to ensure the business returns to profitability and stems the impact of further losses.

Significant focus is being given to compliance with procurement rules as 25% non-compliance with raising a Purchase Order prior to goods/services being commissioned was reported in March 2021. The Council's Contract Rules require a Purchase Order to be raised prior to any goods or services being procured except in circumstances where such compliance is not practicable as this enables prompt payments to suppliers and supports effective budget management. Actions taken to date include improving the reporting processes to provide better data to services to action, further training within services and re-enforcing compliance through budget management training. Further engagement and culture change messages are being included in the Oracle Replacement Project and procurement compliance training is being included in the summer programme of lunch and learn sessions.

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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Achieved Investors in People Gold, with some indicators at platinum level.
- Average sickness absence is 5.7 days per employee (excluding Covid-19 related absence).
- The Council's contribution to the Apprenticeship Target was met at the end of the four-year period.
- Implemented a new approach to recruitment and selection to improve candidate experience including the launch of a new recruitment and onboarding system.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Implement a dispersed working model enabling staff to work remotely or at different LBBD sites.
- Undertake staff temperature check to measure impact of Covid-19 on wellbeing, track progress since the Investors in People Gold review, and approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion.
- Work towards the Good Work Standard but acknowledging key risk set out below.
- A new workplace Apprenticeship action plan to support 2021 onwards targets.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- Despite meeting HR and organisational development criteria to achieve the Good Work Standard, at present we have no mechanism for confirming if contractors in our supply chain pay the London Living Wage. This is a significant barrier to achieving the accreditation.

Supporting the Council to maintain Covid-19 safe services has been a key focus. Reviews of risk assessments and individual health risk assessments are in place, and good support for staff who were Clinically Extremely Vulnerable enabling them to return safely to work.

A new approach to recruitment and selection has been delivered through the e recruitment and onboarding platforms. Talent Link was implemented in November 2020 and Enboarder went live in February 2021. This has enhanced manager and candidate experience. One of the key features of TalentLink is anonymised applications to all areas of the service which will help minimise unconscious bias. Analysis of the recruitment diversity data, by ethnicity and gender produced for internal audit shows the positive impact of anonymising applicants' identities on the system until after the shortlisting process. Recruitment metrics have been agreed which will track the progress made and measure impact, these will be reported in from Q2 2021-22.

Investors in People Gold level accreditation was achieved in February 2021. Positive evidence gathered during the assessment demonstrated that the Council are performing at an advanced level of performance against the vast majority of 'We Invest in People' indicators. Some of the themes within those indicators either are, or are on the verge of being, high performing

(Platinum). Detailed action planning will start after a follow up session with the Assessor, an internal group has been set up to oversee this work.

Excluding Covid-19 absence the sickness absence target has been met with 5.7 days reported in April 2021, compared to 7.3 reported in April 2020. Ongoing work on wellbeing, sickness absence management interventions continues to help the organisation to keep sickness at a low level, following our “firm but fair” principles.

The Council’s contribution to the Apprenticeship Target was met at the end of the four year period. A strong pipeline of varied apprenticeships is in development which will continue to provide entry-level apprenticeships, professional and career progression opportunities and upskilling for existing staff.

Achieving the Mayor’s Good Work Standard accreditation is proving challenging. Criteria, in terms of HR and as an employer, can be met. However, reporting mechanisms are not in place to evidence that the Council, Schools and Company supply chains pay the London Living Wage (LLW). There are still contractors in the Council supply chain who do not pay LLW which is a potential barrier to securing accreditation.

Work is presently being carried out by the Commercial Team to ascertain high risk categories and how quickly those suppliers can come up to standard. At least 80% compliance should be assured before self-certifying as compliant. The Oracle Replacement system will help with tracking compliance but this will not be until the end of 2021.

A request to mandate the LLW within terms and conditions is included within the Social Value Impact Report which is due to go to Cabinet in July 2021. There is a commitment to work with schools and their supply chains, who also need to be compliant to achieve the accreditation, in a planned approach. A new plan is being developed for achieving all three levels of the Good Work Standard whilst the LLW supplier issues are resolved.

## Enables democratic participation, works relationally and is transparent

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Successful Postal Vote registration campaign carried out in Q4, resulting in an approximately 40% increase in registered postal voters to 27,957 for May 2021 elections
- Usage of One Borough Voice has continued to increase, with the number of annual visitors far exceeding the target of 20,000, with a total of 41,165 and the number of engagements exceeding its target of 4,000 by reaching 9,861.
- Over 7,000 residents are aware of the CAN platform, with over 1400 separate contributions to the 34 online projects. A recent project on Women's Safety has seen coverage in multiple national media outlets, and a significant increase in levels of resident engagement.

### Priorities for next six months:

- Development of Member Induction programme in preparation for May 2022 Local Elections
- Sustain the visitor and engagement numbers on One Borough Voice, through continuing to raise the profile of the platform and supporting services to undertake timely and meaningful engagement with residents.
- Continue to improve the number of Cabinet reports that have Equality Impact Assessments, where required.
- Beginning to hold in-person CAN meetings with residents, in addition to online meetings, as we continue to move towards recovery from the pandemic.
- A behaviour change campaign to follow the recently published report, aimed at tackling the normalisation of Domestic Abuse in the local community

### Key risk in the next six months:

- As we move out of Lockdown, the need to engage with residents online may reduce as services return to face to face interaction. This may negatively impact on the usage of OBV.

The bedrock of participation is enabling residents to exercise their right to hold elected officials to account, either through the ballot box or through involvement in local decision-making.

Electoral Services delivers open and fair elections and ensures compliance with direction from the Electoral Commission. LBBDD has a high proportion of registered voters, in 2020, 91.6% of household properties gave a positive response to the annual canvass, up from 89.7% in 2019 and achieved with Covid-19 restrictions in place. The GLA Mayoral election took place in May 2021, which was originally due to be held in May 2020, with a by-election in Thames ward on the same day to fill a vacancy arising from the resignation of a councillor.

The Law and Governance Service has an excellent record of compliance with Access to Information law, bringing openness and transparency to decision-making. The Statutory Forward Plan for executive decisions is routinely published with 100% compliance with the law,

and 100% of committee agendas were published five clear working days in advance of the meetings in line with statutory deadlines. Residents can therefore be confident democratic processes are delivered to the highest standards.

The Covid-19 restrictions meant that Council meetings were held virtually over the last financial year which see an increase in attendance and good feedback from local residents and external partners. Covid-19 regulations that allowed virtual committee meetings to take place came to an end on 7 May 2021. This means that all formal Council meetings must now be held in a physical meeting room.

Whilst the Council are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and have achieved a lot in this area in recent years, there continue to be ways to strengthen the approach and embed equalities in policy and decision-making. The number of Cabinet Reports that have an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), where required, is slowly increasing, with 57% compliance in Q4 2020/21. EIAs are an important tool, ensuring that we are putting residents are the centre of policy and decision-making. The Strategy and Participation team has been proactively identifying reports that will require an EIA and supporting services to ensure that they are of a high standard and fully consider the impact of the decision on residents with protected characteristics.

Communication with residents is at the forefront of the approach to participation. Consideration is being given to priority campaigns for the 2021/22 financial year, funding, availability and resources, based on council priorities and in consultation with the Leader's office. There will still be a need for Covid-19 related campaigns and communications activity.

Phase 2 of the Cleaner Barking and Dagenham campaign continues to roll out (it started in April 2020 and will continue until Autumn 2021) with ongoing communications activity, principally daily social media posts. The focus is to highlight the effort of Waste and Street Cleansing staff to keep the borough clean and tidy during the pandemic, and to share the fantastic work our community have been doing to help keep our borough clean and tidy. An extended recycling scheme has been launched which will help the Council to increase recycling rates and has been positively received by residents. This is being promoted across all channels, including videos, social media posts, news releases and newsletter articles. The Green Garden Waste Collection service has already achieved 7,000 subscriptions this year – the total achieved at the end of 2020, so we are on track to beat last year's figures. The Cleaner Barking Dagenham campaign has helped to improve resident perceptions about our Waste and Street Cleansing service, with over 8,000 likes, 2,000 shares, 2,300 clicks and 3,500 comments on social media. As lockdown restrictions continue to ease over the coming months, the service will develop and promote more community engagement and participation through organised litter picks and other community initiatives.

Lost Hours is a campaign aiming to tackle the rise in youth violence and anti-social behaviour in Barking and Dagenham. Phase 2 of the campaign launched in February 2021, later than planned due to the Covid-19 pandemic and schools being closed during the Autumn/Winter term. This phase of the campaign was focused on engagement with secondary schools, using them as the conduit to the campaign and leveraging their channels and relationship with parents. In March, a day of action was held, whereby schools took part in sharing and pushing out campaign messages and content.

Phase 3 of the Lost Hours campaign is due to launch at the end of June 2021 and is focused on parents of primary school age students in years 5 and 6 as their children transition to secondary school. The aim of this phase of the campaign is around early intervention. To ensure that the campaign is relevant to parents with younger children the campaign has been evolved using more relevant imagery and messaging (i.e. not quite as graphic/shocking). The campaign will be

delivered via engagement with schools, again leveraging their channels and through incorporation with the transition programme. A digital campaign will also run alongside this activity.

A Fostering campaign to help recruit foster carers launched in May 2021 to coincide with Fostering fortnight. The campaign focuses on sharing stories of fostering using real life case studies of foster carers and children who were in care. The integrated campaign incorporates targeted and borough-wide advertising across a range of channels. The campaign has a strong digital focus and uses a short film to produce engaging and rich content. The campaign will be phased and run throughout the financial year 2021/22 and there will be ongoing monitoring and tracking to ensure campaign effectiveness and the campaign materials will be tweaked accordingly.

Other key campaigns for 2021/22, to date, will include:

- Domestic Abuse (DA) campaign – a behaviour change campaign to follow the recently published report, aimed at tackling the normalisation of DA in the local community and encouraging victims to feel believed so that they report incidents and seek help;
- B&D Working Together – to help encourage residents back into work and training as the economic fall out of the pandemic continues to have an impact on local residents
- Reconnecting with the community – helping residents to reconnect with each other and the borough as lockdown eases, through our events programme and other participation and engagement opportunities.

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

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

- Appointment booking system delivered in March 2021 for Registrars, Bulky Waste and Pest Control.
- Chat Bot became active on The Council website in April 2021 with a focus on parking and waste enquiries.
- Complaint's response times despite falling behind target have improved in Q4, 2020-21, particularly regarding housing and repairs.

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

- Continue to find efficiencies and financial savings through the re-structure of the Contact Centre and Customer Experience Digital Team.
- Improve the customer experience for tenants contacting us regarding housing repairs, where currently customer satisfaction and experience is an issue.
- Digital inclusion work to support closing the gap on skills and accessibility for residents and staff.
- Develop open and transparent 'Voice of the Customer' dashboards and share with services so that our customers can shape service improvement.
- Address Digital Inclusion in the borough: Recruit Digital Champions, ensure residents have the means and support to access council platforms et al.

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

- Ensuring that there is a balance of resources with aspirations and use technology to its maximum advantage.
- Resourcing the Digital Inclusion project
- The success of 'Voice of the Customer' relies on individual service engagement and a culture change across the organisation.

The Contact Centre and CIT (Continuous Improvement Team) underwent a review to identify efficiencies and financial savings. A restructure was implemented in April 2021, with staff successfully redeployed into new roles. The service continues to put steps in place to ensure performance is maintained with less resource.

Customer Experience Team, previously the CIT, now have greater focus on the entire customer experience, to enhance customer satisfaction, reduce spend, and improve employee satisfaction. This will also help to find more-effective ways to collaborate across functions and levels, a process that will deliver gains throughout the Local Authority and its trading entities.

Digital Inclusion is one of the team's biggest deliverables for 2021/22. The Council are looking to ensure that digital poverty and lack of digital skills are minimised as a risk factor for digital exclusion. KPIs are being developed to track the project's success.



Upheld complaints continue to perform below 45% demonstrating that the service responds well and is resolving residents' issues well. Despite not achieving the target in response to casework within 10 working days, there has been a 10% improvement since the last report. This has mainly come from Repairs where BDMS are working through a Service Improvement Plan in collaboration with the Council. It is noted that 65% of all complaints come from 3 service areas: Public Realm, Parking and Repairs.

There has been an increase in calls to the Contact Centre in Q4 2020/21 routed through the switchboard related to Parking. With the introduction of more CPZ areas an increase was expected, there has also been an increase in out-of-hours Parking calls. Parking call themes are mainly around visitor permits, renewing/acquiring new permits where customers are struggling to use the new system to obtain these. The team are working with the Parking service to create supporting content on the website to help customers.

Despite the challenging situation customer satisfaction scores have continued to exceed target.

A new booking system was implemented on 31 March 2021 to support pest control, bulky waste, and the registrar services. The system provides teams with more flexibility to manage diaries. This has reduced administrative pressures providing more scope within the Registrar service to work with customers.

The Council have introduced a webchat feature to its website giving residents another digital option for self-service. The Chat Bot three month pilot went live on 1 April and is due to finish at the end of June 2021. The pilot has been a success and has hosted over 20,000 conversations with residents. The Chat Bot pilot has enabled the Customer Experience Team to identify the requirements for a comprehensive organisation wide solution.

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

### Key performance and delivery messages:

- Exploratory investigation into the Website Redesign has taken place with a possible platform identified.
- Progress on the Oracle Replacement project has been positive
- Completion of migration to Cloud technology
- Return of IT services to The Council from Agilisys

### Priorities for next six months:

- The Oracle Replacement project particularly around testing and preparing for implementation
- Finalise the IT and Digital Strategy
- Submit a business case to the relevant groups boards and start procurement of an appropriate Chat Bot solution.
- Allocate budget and resource to the Website Redesign project.
- Implement the agreed cyber tool to counter some of the advanced persistent threat (APT) risks that typify Ransomware attacks.

### Key risk in the next six months:

- The timetable for the Oracle Replacement implementation project remains challenging.
- The Chat Bot and Website Redesign projects are contingent on the development and approval of an acceptable business case including provision of sufficient resource.
- The Council will need to remain vigilant around cyber security given rising levels of cyber attacks on the public sector.

The Council has completed the complex migration of its Core technology services and most business applications to Microsoft Azure Cloud during Q3. In parallel, the Council has moved from Citrix technology for access to key Council systems to Microsoft Windows Virtual desktop. These together mean that we have a very modern, cost efficient infrastructure with high levels of performance and flexibility.

Following the rising levels of cyber attacks on Local Government, we are increasing focus on both the Council's cyber security and starting to consider cyber security within the supply chain. Through Q3 the IT service were reviewing the impact on Local government of cyber attacks on Councils particularly the disastrous impact of Ransomware on two councils in England. The team has worked extensively with NCC in a cyber assurance exercise sponsored by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in parallel with our migration to public cloud. The Council will investment in cyber tools to counter some of the advanced persistent threat (APT) risks that typify Ransomware attacks. Procurement on a specific product completed at the end of Q4 and implementation has started.

The applications team is in the final development stages for the replacement My Account solution named DCAP (Digital Customer Ambition Programme). This is expected to go live in September 2021. It will deliver a range of benefits into the Council's customer facing services both online and through the Contact Centre. It is anticipated that following a short period of settling in for the new service, Phase 2 development will commence with IT working together with the Customer Experience Team to enhance the digital service offer across the Council and its partner organisations.

Discovery work around Robotic Process Automation technology has commenced to understand the true scope for cost savings and process improvements through automation across the Council.

The IT team are working through a number of procurements for the replacement of contracts that were handed back from Agilisys in December 2020. For some of these we have extended the existing contracts to provide sufficient time to properly review, specify, re-procure and migrate to new service providers. There are a number of key procurements underway for Cloud Management services, and Database Management services in particular. These are expected to be fully migrated by the end of September 2021.

The IT team are working with the Oracle Replacement programme to establish the best approach for delivery of archive data access going forward. This is a challenging area where the historic approach of unnecessarily maintaining legacy system is not fit for purpose due to cost, GDPR compliance, support and security risks.

In a lot of Council sites, the network equipment is now at end-of-life with suppliers signalling that they will no longer be supporting the equipment with security and other updates from the end of 2021. This was taken to Cabinet in Q4 2020/21 and approval given. The IT service have made provision for this in its capital budget and have carried out proof of concept and pilot implementations on sites over the last 18 months to ensure that the new delivery approach to site network provision is fit for purpose. The IT Team expect to complete deployment of new network infrastructure to all relevant Council sites by December 2021.

The IT team are in the final stages of the project to migrate services from EE to our new mobile telephony contract. This started in January 2021 and is due to complete end of July 2021. Cloud telephony was successfully completed in December 2020 which approximately 18 schools within the borough buying in to the service. IT have since received interest from other schools in the borough to move to cloud telephony.

A key aspect of the Council's transformation since 2015 has been to become a data-led organisation which harnesses the depth and richness of data sets we hold (and exists elsewhere) to drive policy and operational decision-making. The internationally recognised Insight Hub has been at the centre of this shift, pioneering new tools and data science techniques.

The Social Progress Index (SPI) 2019 (the latest version) was published on time in November 2020 and scorecards are available on LBBDD's website. The SPI is key to understanding and comparing inequalities and social challenges and helps us, and partners, to target efforts at a neighbourhood-level. The SPI since 2016 has shown steady improvement across all wards across 50 key indicators to April 2020. Next year's Index will detail the true impact of Covid-19. It has been used to decide resource allocation for Community Hubs.

The SPI has now also been expanded to cover progress against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). LBBDD is the first local authority in the UK to map the indicators to the global goals. Whilst there is no universal methodology for mapping data to the SDGs, the

Council have attempted a methodology like that of the SPI. The results illustrate the need to focus on environmental quality, particularly areas such as pollution and climate change. These fit and support the Council's net zero carbon ambition.

The Resident Matrix – a single view of a household and the demography of the borough - has been updated to 2020 and is being used for infrastructure and regeneration planning at Barking Riverside, as well as to provide key insights and demographic profile information to inform our response to Covid-19 and provide in-depth analysis of inequalities ahead of the refresh of the Equality and Diversity Strategy in 2022, aligned with the next Corporate Plan.

One View, a triage tool and case management system which is integrated with key data sets, has successfully been adapted to give frontline workers a Covid-19 case management system. This element of OneView will continue until at least September 2021. OneView has also been expanded to cover Single View of Debt, which is currently being rolled out to the Revenues and Benefits staff.

The Borough Data Explorer has been updated. There are over 110 indicators to track progress against the Borough Manifesto.

The Insight Hub has been working on a "Levelling Up Model" to support the Council's bidding process to the levelling up fund. Publication of the model is expected in the next quarter.

We had a successful Census in March 2021 with over 95% completion rate in the borough. There was an excellent effort across the Council particularly in libraries to support Census completion.