

# Barking & Dagenham

Corporate Plan  
2023/26

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## Vision

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In the Borough Manifesto in 2017, following consultation with over 3000 residents and our partners, we set out our long-term shared vision for the future of our borough – **to make Barking and Dagenham a place people are proud of and want to live, work, study and stay.**

To achieve this, we are investing in the future of the borough and its residents. We recognise our strengths and will unleash the potential of our place and its people.

However, it is not enough to just bring new jobs and homes to the borough. Fundamental to our plans is that **no one is left behind**. We want local people to benefit from the growth and positive changes in the borough, and we know to do that we have to address the root causes of poorer outcomes, including poverty and inequality, which all too often hold back our residents.

We want to **create and foster the conditions and opportunities for people to thrive here** – and for our residents to live healthy, fulfilling lives for longer, with more choice and control, better financial resilience, in safe, supportive, and inclusive communities.

## Introduction

Our vision drives the business of the Council, as we work together with our colleagues, partners, and residents to improve opportunity, prosperity, health and wellbeing and the physical environment.

In the five years since the launch of the Borough Manifesto there have been important achievements:

- More than 2,500 affordable homes have been built, with thousands more on the way.
- £4bn of inward investment has been secured with the arrival of film studios, a data centre, UCL PEARL, and the City of London Markets - all of which bring jobs and economic growth to the borough.
- £10.9m has been secured through the Levelling Up Fund to transform Dagenham Heathway.
- The Future Youth Zone, the first in London, opened in 2019 and is a £6m investment in the borough's young people.
- Educational attainment has improved, and school Ofsted ratings are among the best in London. In the 2021/22 academic year, the borough had its best performance on GCSE grades 9-5 in English and Maths.
- The Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme is driving up quality and standards of housing in the private rented sector.
- New transport links to Barking Riverside via the London Overground extension and the Thames Clipper.
- BD Money launched, providing access to affordable credit.
- We opened a network of Community Hubs across the borough, offering safe and welcoming spaces for residents to find support, access services and connect within their neighbourhood.
- The improved homelessness prevention offer has reduced the number of people living in Temporary Accommodation by 400 since 2019.

In addition to these achievements, we have also transformed the organisation. Our ambitious transformation programme, Ambition 2020, secured a longer-term financial position, saving the Council £50m year-on-year. By choosing to structure the organisation in a new way, rather than clinging to outdated models of the past, we have proven ourselves to be innovative. We will need to continue to innovate, to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Despite everything we have done, a hard truth remains. Many outcomes for residents are still poor. In some cases, they have got worse.

Financial stability and security for many residents is worsening. Unemployment and economic inactivity are high, as is in-work poverty. Unsustainable debt is putting people into crisis. Many people are trapped in the housing crisis, finding it difficult to find affordable rents or get onto the property ladder. There is pressure on the limited supply of social housing. Health inequalities are widening, and ill health is adversely impacting quality of life across all ages. Domestic abuse is endemic. These issues are complex and inter-related.

Major international and national crises are fuelling these issues. Covid-19 impacted all aspects of life, and we are still recovering from the impact, as another big challenge faces us. The Cost-of-Living crisis, the worst in 30 years, will hit hard. As one of the most deprived communities in England, residents in Barking and Dagenham will feel the impact disproportionately and have less resilience to cope with the hard times ahead.

Added to this, as demand for services has continued to rise, we have already faced a decade of austerity. For every £1 we received 10 years ago, we now receive just 63p. Our income is going down as our costs are going up, meaning we are forced to make our already overstretched budget go even further. We know now that increases in demand have outstripped our transformation.

Support for the most vulnerable people in the borough accounts for nearly 80% of the Council's budget, and the proportion of spend in the area is rising. The more money we spend on care and support, the less there is for the other things the Council does. So, we need to make sure that we are prioritising our efforts and resources in the right places – the places that will have the biggest impact on improving residents' lives and outcomes. Prioritisation does not mean cuts. It means working smarter, using the insight we have to be more targeted, working in partnership to maximise influence and impact.

We need to build systems and services which can change the directions of people's lives for the better – preventing the big issues of poverty, unemployment, debt, health inequalities, poor housing, and domestic abuse from determining the lives led by our residents.

To do that, we need to think about the Council as a whole, working together, aligned in delivering our vision. Siloes need to be broken. We also need to work with our partners, both statutory and non-statutory, and in partnership with our residents. This requires a genuine commitment to a different way of working, sharing power, knowledge, and resources, and utilising local connections to deliver a better offer for residents. Together, we are better able to drive lasting change in the borough and help residents thrive.

## Our community profile

Having a deep understanding of the borough's population helps us to plan and prioritise effectively so we can best meet their needs and aspirations. Since 2001 there has been significant change in the make-up and characteristics of the population. The latest [Census](#) and [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) reveals these important facts about the people of Barking and Dagenham:

### **The population has grown significantly faster than other places**

- The population size (on Census Day) was 218,900. This had grown by 17.7% since 2011 – the third highest growth rate in England and Wales.
- The population is expected to grow another 42% to 309,000 by 2041.

### **...Barking and Dagenham is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse communities**

- The borough has seen the greatest increase in ethnic diversity between 2011 and 2021 with the percentage of non-White British residents rising by 18.6 percentage points over that decade.
- Two in five residents were born outside of the UK. Nigeria (4.31%), Romania (4.30%) and Bangladesh (4.24%) were the three countries outside of England where most foreign-born residents were born.
- 16% of the population are Black African – the highest proportion in England and Wales.
- 10% of residents are Asian Bangladeshi – the fourth highest proportion in England and Wales.
- The most common language of residents whose main language is not English is Romanian (4.8%) followed by Bengali (3.1%).
- Islamic faith has grown in the borough since 2001 – the percentage of Muslim residents has increased by 20 percentage points. Nearly a quarter of residents are Muslim.
- 45.4% of residents are Christian, down from 56% in 2011.

### **...and one of the youngest, with many young families**

- 57,100 (26.1%) of residents were aged under 16 on Census Day – the highest proportion in England and Wales.
- There are 9,400 (12.8%) lone parent households with dependent children – the highest proportion in England and Wales
- Average household size is 2.96 – the fourth highest average household size in England and Wales

### **Residents experience some of the highest levels of deprivation in the country**

- 46,100 (62.4%) households in the borough have at least one measure of deprivation – the highest proportion in England and Wales
- 46% of children are estimated to live in poverty - the third highest rate in England and Wales

## **Despite improvements, levels of education among adults are behind most other areas**

- 37,000 (22.7%) residents aged 16 and over had no qualifications – the highest proportion of all London boroughs. This has improved since 2001 when 45,000 residents aged 16 or over had no qualifications.
- 54,000 (33.3%) of residents aged 16 and over had Level 4<sup>1</sup> qualifications – the third lowest proportion of all London boroughs. In 2001 only 12,000 residents aged 16 and over had Level 4 qualifications.

## **...as are levels of unemployment and economic inactivity.**

- 9,100 (5.6%) people aged 16 and over were unemployed (including full-time students) – the seventh highest proportion in England and Wales – although our unemployment rate halved between June 2021 and September 2022.
- 58,100 residents were economically inactive. Of these:
  - 13,300 (8.2%) were inactive due to looking after home or family (fourth highest)
  - 7,800 (4.8%) were inactive due to other reasons (eighth highest)
  - 17,000 (10.5%) were retired (ninth lowest)
- 28,200 (18%) of economically inactive residents aged 16 and over had never worked (the 10<sup>th</sup> highest proportion in England and Wales), and 43% of people who were unemployed on Census Day had not worked in previous 12 months.

## **More residents are living in private rented accommodation**

- The number of residents privately renting has increased by 412% since 2001 whereas home ownership has reduced by 16%, and social renting has reduced by 7%.

## **...and social renting is more prominent here**

- 18,100 (24.5%) households rent their property from the Council – the third highest proportion in England and Wales. A further 5,200 (7.0%) households rent from another type of social landlord.

## **...and overcrowding is more common than in other places**

- The borough has the second highest proportion of households in England and Wales living in a property without enough bedrooms (17.8%).

## **The self-reported health of the population is worse than most places in England and Wales and we have one of the highest levels of disability in London.**

- 29.8% of households have at least one person who identifies as disabled – the highest proportion in London.
- 4.8% of residents reported that they consider themselves to be in “bad” or “very bad” health. After standardising for age, this is higher than average for London and England

To find out more about the borough and its people, visit: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/about-borough>

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<sup>1</sup> Level 4 or above qualifications: degree, foundation degree, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Master's degrees, Higher National Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certificate (HNC), NVQ level 4 or above, professional qualifications (for example, teaching or nursing)



- We must strive to **support residents at the earliest possible opportunity** – preventing people from moving from a low level of need to an acute one. This is essential in helping them achieve better outcomes and mitigate the effects of the Cost-of-Living crisis.
- We must **improve the capacity and efficiency of the support available** at every level of need, innovating our approaches by strengthening the voice of those with lived experience.

**We will continue to support and help residents with their financial circumstances by:**

- Making it easier for residents to get the support they need within their own neighbourhoods and local communities, through our partners and the Cost-of-Living Alliance.
- Building capacity within our communities and partners to help support residents. This includes working with Citizen’s Advice to deliver training and advice.
- Directing people to find the correct advice and guidance needed to empower them, including BD Money, our new digital hub.
- Continuing to help build financial resilience and promote savings activities through our Credit Union Partnership.
- Minimising costs for our residents where possible – including food costs, through the development and expansion of our food support networks, energy costs through the provision of schemes such as Warm Spaces; and minimising the influence of high-cost credit providers and loan sharks, with access to affordable credit.

**To reach the most people in the best possible way**

We will:

- Put partnership at the core of our response, working closely with partners across the faith, voluntary and community sectors, including the Cost-of-Living Alliance.
- Strengthen the voice of our residents ensuring that our action is tailored to local needs, e.g., the Barking and Dagenham Giving’s Citizen Steering Group which distributes endowment grants, and Cost-of-Living Surveys hosted through the Citizens’ Alliance Network.
- Ensure hardship funding is administered to those that are most vulnerable.
- Use our wealth of data and insight to identify those most vulnerable and reach out in a targeted way.

Supporting residents through the Cost-of-Living crisis cuts across all Council services and priorities. The actions taken here are crucial to enabling residents to realise their potential and there are relationships with support in other areas, for example, raising skills and improving access to employment, especially for those on low incomes; addressing the high cost of housing; reducing homelessness, improving housing conditions; and improving health outcomes.

## Residents are safe, protected, and supported at their most vulnerable

Deprivation and vulnerability are tightly bound together. As a deprived borough, high numbers of residents are exposed to negative impacts on their health, wellbeing, and resilience, and need the support of care and support services. This has only been exacerbated by Covid-19 and the Cost-of-Living crisis, and we are seeing increasing complexity of needs.

In the face of limited resources and difficult market forces, we need to come together with our partners to build a system that supports, protects, and safeguards children, young people and vulnerable adults. Recruitment and retention of social workers, occupational therapists and other professionals is key. A focus on strength-based practice will drive us to deliver and develop services alongside our residents, to keep them safe, free from neglect and exploitation, and able to take up opportunities and realise their potential.

### Protecting our children and young people and supporting them to achieve

Increasing levels of need are seen most acutely among our children and young people. In the last four years, the number of children on Children in Need support plans has increased by more than 600, a much higher rate than population growth. We also have a high rate of children in care; 66 out of every 10,000 children in the borough. We have a responsibility to work with children to protect them from harm and enable them to achieve in later life. To this end, over the next three years we aim to:

- Deliver an improvement programme focussed on promoting relational social work practice that centres the voice of the child in decision-making.
- Improve the quality and range of placements available, so that we can offer children in care stability in homes that meet their needs.
- Develop clear, supported pathways into adult services, including access to transitional safeguarding support.
- Implement the outcomes of local practice reviews and learning from our local Child Death Overview Panel.
- Further develop our contextual safeguarding approaches to protect children and young people from all forms of exploitation.
- Work to create social and physical environments that reduce their exposure to risks to their health and wellbeing (e.g. obesity, smoking).

### Supporting victims of domestic abuse and tackling underlying causes

At 16.2 offences per 1000 people, we have the highest rates of domestic abuse in London. Helping victims of abuse to escape their situations and rebuild their lives is essential. Following the findings of the Domestic Abuse Commission, and the considerable work that has already been done to strengthen our response to domestic abuse in our borough, we will be rolling out the next phase of our improvement programme to:

- Promote collaboration with our partners in the police and health to establish consistency in approach and commitment.

- Deliver a trauma-informed approach to working with victims, their families and perpetrators.
- Challenge attitudes which normalise and tolerate domestic abuse to bring about long-term change.
- Develop a Public Health approach to domestic abuse which addresses the 'causes of the causes'.

### **Keeping people safe and offering access to care that enables independence**

A high proportion of our population are known to care and support services, resulting from earlier frailty and diagnosis of long-term conditions, and a high prevalence of special educational needs and disabilities.

In preparation for the new statutory CQC regulatory framework, we are moving towards greater place-based and partnership working, through integration with health services and collaboration with local care providers. To build a health and social care system that offers access to the right care in the right place at the right time, we will:

- Design and implement a new operating model for delivering services to support those in our community living with disabilities, and their families.
- Collaborate with partners to improve our offer to residents who have been discharged from hospital, including wraparound care, to prevent cyclical admissions into hospital and promote independence.
- Prepare for the Adult Social Care Charging Reform
- Enable people to live at their optimum level of functional independence, through a focus on recovery, in line with the new Mental Health Act, currently under consultation.
- Build on our social prescribing approach to help residents find support within their communities.
- Ensure more residents with health conditions are assessed, identified, and provided with condition management as early as possible.

## Residents live healthier, happier, independent lives for longer

Central to our vision of enabling people to thrive and realise their potential, is improving the health and wellbeing of people who live and work in the borough. We want people to have the opportunity to lead healthy, happy, and independent lives for longer, whilst knowing that they can connect to the right support at the right time.

### Wider Determinants of Health

Access to health and care services and support is important, but evidence shows wider factors have a greater impact on health and wellbeing. Empowering and enabling residents to live healthier, happier, independent lives for longer requires action across the wider determinants of health, such as employment, education, transport, housing, and community networks which is why we are adopting a “health in all policies” approach (see page 24). We will ensure that improving health and wellbeing is identified as an outcome in all council policies and services.

The complexity of delivering health outcomes requires a place-based partnership approach. The new NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) brings more opportunities and powers to facilitate joint action to improve health and care outcomes and experiences and influencing the wider determinants of health and in tackling health.

Our residents are exposed to more negative influences on health than those in other areas. For example, 68% of households in our borough suffer at least one of the four main aspects of deprivation – the highest in England and Wales. Residents, who are still feeling the direct and indirect impacts of Covid-19, are now facing the impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis, which will exacerbate challenges around poverty, health inequalities, housing, and employment.

We know that we have:

- **The highest premature mortality in the borough in London**, with 404 deaths per 100,000 people aged below 75, compared to 299 for London overall.
- **The lowest life expectancies in London** for both women and men.
- **The highest levels of Year 6 obesity in England.**
- Low levels of school readiness.
- High numbers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

### A data-led, system-wide, and innovative response to living well for longer

We will:

- Deliver the Start for Life programme and the Best Chance Strategy, including the network of Family Hubs and improvements to locality based, early help provision so all children and their families or carers get the right support at the right time, including tackling early neglect, improving perinatal mental health support and uptake of immunisations, breastfeeding, and two-year old checks – as we recognise that the biggest impact can be made at the earlier stages of life.

- Review how we use data, insight, and analysis to target prevention approaches and interventions – including increasing the early diagnosis of long-term conditions (both in adults and children) through targeted action to find the missing cases.
- Develop new system-wide approaches to tackling obesity – including increasing access to safe open spaces for walking and cycling, allowing opportunities for physical activity and promoting wellbeing.
- Develop new frailty prevention approaches and piloting a new homecare and reablement model, aimed at supporting independence, safety, and wellbeing.
- Develop a new digital transformation strategy for Care and Support, becoming leaders in the field of care technology, providing accessibility, convenience, choice, and control that allows residents to have an improved independent quality of life at home and in the community – which is also cost-effective and more flexible. We will work with Care City, a Barking and Dagenham-based non-profit Community Interest Company, to deliver a programme of activity that will help us achieve our digital transformation within Care and Support and the wider health and care system.
- Continue to work with the voluntary and community sector via the BD\_Collective to combat social isolation and loneliness, as improving people’s connectedness to the community is key to building independence, resilience, establishing and maintaining wellbeing.

## Residents prosper from good education, skills development, and secure employment

We believe in the potential of the people of Barking and Dagenham and are committed to creating and fostering opportunities and environments where they can thrive. Fundamental to this, is to support the provision of quality learning and training that enables people of all ages to achieve.

There is much to be proud of already:

- For the first time ever, 95% of our schools are rated “good” or “outstanding” by Ofsted.
- Educational attainment has risen steadily over the years. In 2022, at GCSE, the borough gave its best-ever performance on grades 9-5 in English and Maths, above the national average for 2022. A-Level results have improved on all key performance measures since 2019.
- More young people are progressing to Higher Education from borough institutions. In 2022, over 1,100 young people in total went on to Higher Education. 81% of Year 13 pupils.
- Numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose destination is unknown is low. The borough’s latest performance stands at 2.9% (provisional data) and is expected to be in the top performance quintile nationally.
- Inspiring Futures, the borough’s Cultural Education Partnership, has provided opportunities for thousands of our young people to work alongside diverse artists and organisations.

### **The impact of the pandemic and increasingly complex needs**

There are still challenges. Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 results in 2022 demonstrate the profound impact of the pandemic on the youngest members of our community.

The national picture is seeing rising numbers of children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Locally, demand for EHC plans doubled in 2022 and schools in Barking and Dagenham are welcoming ever-increasing numbers of children with complex needs into mainstream schools.

### **Addressing the high levels of unemployment, inactivity, low pay, and low skills among the adult population**

Over a quarter (26%) of the population, or more than 36,000 people, are economically inactive – 7,800 of whom would like to work – and the borough has the highest proportion of working age adults in London without formal qualifications. While there have been significant improvements since 2011, 22.7% of residents aged 16 and over still have no qualifications, and only 33% have level 4 qualifications.

Our research with out-of-work residents suggests that people with low levels of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, and English take longer to find work than other jobseekers. People who have been unemployed for a long term and those with caring responsibilities, mental and physical health issues or learning disabilities also face additional barriers to work.

**We want to maximise the Council’s wide range of influences and levers to play an even stronger role in raising aspirations and increasing opportunity for people who live and learn here.**

By aligning with our economic development strategy, we are working with partners to ensure local people have access to skills pathways which put them in a position to benefit from growth sectors in the local economy such as film, food, and construction. And we will draw on the borough's cultural partnerships and volunteering opportunities to provide opportunities for local people to learn, develop new skills and broaden experiences.

Over the next four years, we will:

- Work towards exceeding national standards and then London standards across all headline performance areas in the borough's schools.
- Commission Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership (BDSIP) to provide schools with support and training in agreed priority areas, such as primary reading and writing support, and maintaining a sharp focus on communication and language in Early Years.
- Support greater numbers of young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), to progress at ages 16 and 18 to high quality, appropriate destinations.
- Provide positive diverse and inclusive role models for young people through good youth support which improves their mental wellbeing and enables them to realise their potential.
- Increase the number of adults supported by the Work and Skills team and its key partners into employment each year.
- Improve functional skills in the borough – supporting more residents to move towards sustainable employment by improving outreach into disadvantaged communities and expanding literacy, numeracy, ESOL and digital skills provision.
- Improve employment support for people with more complex barriers to work and those struggling with the Cost-of-Living – including a pilot programme to help households in temporary accommodation to move into sustainable housing and employment; improved outreach and support for people struggling with debt; and a new Supported Employment programme to improve employment outcomes among people with learning disabilities.
- Test and develop new approaches to support employers to improve and adapt jobs to attract diverse candidates, meet candidates' flexible working needs and create more opportunities for people with caring responsibilities, disabilities, and mental health conditions.
- Continue to show leadership on apprenticeships and internships and helping local employers to do the same, targeting the apprenticeship offer to residents, especially those from under-represented groups.

## Residents benefit from inclusive growth and regeneration

We have an ambition to accelerate economic growth whilst ensuring it benefits residents and every neighbourhood across the borough. We want to enable residents to thrive by having access to high quality and affordable homes; and connect local people with the opportunities in the labour market.

Neglected for decades by national growth strategies, Barking and Dagenham's post-industrial legacy means it is dominated by micro businesses with fewer than 10 employees and jobs in the lower paid service sectors. The top three local occupations are care workers, cashiers and drivers, and the borough has one of the lowest average annual salaries in London.

However, the borough's land, location and connections to Central London, as well as our young, diverse and increasingly educated population, are also a huge opportunity. Arts Council England has identified Barking and Dagenham as a priority for investment as part of its work to support skill development and future economic growth in the arts, and the borough is at the heart of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, with creative clusters focused on research, experimentation and advancements in new technologies.

The Council is already driving new partnerships to realise these opportunities and bring more good quality jobs to the borough – including UCL's state-of-the-art research laboratory PEARL (Person-Environment-Activity Research Laboratory), film studios at Dagenham East (currently under construction), and the planned relocation of the City of London's food wholesale markets to Dagenham Dock in 2027.

We want to continue to positively transform communities and encourage local businesses to grow; supporting and attracting long term investment that benefits our residents.

### **We are securing new investment, and creating new structured programmes, affordable housing, and local cultural institutions to ensure local people benefit.**

The Council has secured major local endowments linked to the new film studios and the City of London's wholesale markets. Even before the new developments are operational in the borough, these are funding programmes to ensure local people understand and are able to access the new opportunities when they arrive.

The Make It Here programme was launched in 2022 in partnership with the film studios' owner-operators MBS/Hackman Capital. Supported by Film Barking and Dagenham, the programme is working with schools to support teachers, parents and young people understand the potential career opportunities linked to the film studios.

In March 2023, the Council and City of London launched a new Good Food Plan and Partnership to ensure the community benefits from access to healthier, more sustainable food and new employment, training and business opportunities linked to the wholesale markets.

More than £45m in grants and relief was distributed to local businesses to support them through the pandemic, plus additional help for businesses to mitigate job losses and become more environmentally sustainable. The Council continues to work with partners to develop affordable workspace and wrap around business support in Barking Town Centre to help small businesses access new opportunities and grow. The Ice House Quarter, House for Artists, Riverside Mills, Barking Enterprise Centre Three Sixty, and 'Make It Barking' initiatives are examples of how we are expanding and modernising commercial space to support business growth in the borough. We will continue to work in partnership to develop new business support programmes so that local entrepreneurs can thrive.

At the same time, our local house-building programme is supporting families to stay in the borough by creating new affordable homes to rent or buy. Our development contractor, Be First, is working on plans for eight 'Transformation Zones' which will deliver thousands of new homes. One in five of all affordable homes built in London is built here in Barking and Dagenham. This work is creating hundreds of jobs at least at London Living Wage, apprenticeships and supply chain opportunities in construction. Between 2020-23, Be First sites employed over 400 borough residents including more than 100 apprentices. The Council will continue to use its planning powers to ensure all development activity in the borough generates opportunities for residents.

### **We are ambitious for the borough.**

This is a challenging time and local authorities cannot tackle high levels of structural disadvantage by themselves. Predictions suggest the UK economy will grow slower than any other G20 country except Russia in the coming years, as high interest rates, trade barriers and energy prices impact on business investment and jobs. Success will depend on the work of wider partners, the Government, and the health of the national economy.

But we are ambitious and committed to supporting improvements locally. We will:

- Create more places and spaces for our residents by building more affordable housing (40,000 by 2028) with more tenures.
- Launch new training, business support and community film programmes to ensure residents benefit from opportunities linked to the film studios.
- Launch new programmes with schools, local food businesses and entrepreneurs and community groups to improve access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food in the borough and establish a new borough food school to support this vision and enable access to good jobs in food.
- Drive improvements in the quality of existing jobs in the sectors where many people work – including better pay and progression pathways in social care.
- Deliver social value through our partnership with Care City who will help us achieve our digital transformation within Care and Support and the wider health and care system.
- With support of Arts Council England and key partners, continue to invest in and develop our cultural infrastructure on the ground, and invest in resilience building for our local cultural organisations to ensure they continue to thrive.

- Launch new business support programmes in food and care, help local businesses to understand how to access supply chain opportunities at the Council and the film studios, and improve access to modern industrial space in the borough.
- Help local businesses to access tools to help them to reduce costs, access new markets and become more environmentally sustainable.

## Residents live in, and play their part in creating, safer, cleaner, and greener neighbourhoods.

The places where we live affect our health, wellbeing and happiness, and residents often tell us that the safety and cleanliness of the borough is their biggest area of concern.

### **Making our borough a safer place for current and future generations**

We want Barking and Dagenham to be a place where people from all backgrounds feel safe and live well. We aim to do this by keeping our children and young people safe, tackling crime that affects people the most, reducing offending, and standing up to hate, intolerance and extremism.

We know that:

- Results from the 2021 Residents Survey show that crime is still the biggest area of concern for our residents.
- 42% of residents feel unsafe when outside in the local area after dark.
- There were 5,856 reported incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour in 2021/22, which was a significant decrease (-43.7%) from the previous year.

No one should feel unsafe when walking the streets of Barking and Dagenham. We have engaged with residents to identify where they feel the most unsafe and why, and we have been working hard to address these issues, including increased lighting in dark areas and overhauling our CCTV system. The launch of our Safe Haven scheme provides safe places to go to if people feel threatened, harassed or generally unsafe whilst out in the borough.

We have also invested in a new Community Safety Enforcement Team, who are working with the Police, to tackle anti-social behaviour by increasing the patrols and operational hours in hotspot areas such as Barking Town Centre and Dagenham Heathway.

Our Lost Hours campaign aims to tackle the issue of youth violence, knife crime and anti-social behaviour head on with the community, asking parents to take responsibility for knowing where their children are and what they are doing, and signposting to activities and support available.

### **Proactive, pre-emptive, and creative approaches to challenge anti-social behaviour**

We will work together with people and communities, focusing on strengths and opportunities to build resilience in communities to challenge the corrosive effect of anti-social behaviour, intimidation and harassment caused by a minority of people.

We will:

- Continue to increase the presence and visibility of the Council on the streets.
- Maintain a tough approach to enforcement to bring perpetrators to justice and be a deterrent preventing future offences.
- Tackle serious youth violence and knife crime through a programme of interventions.

### **Keeping our borough clean**

Environmental issues like litter, untidy gardens and fly-tipping have a negative impact on the quality of life for our residents and reduces pride and enjoyment of our public places.

We know that:

- Rubbish or litter is the biggest anti-social behaviour concern for residents.
- An average of 850kg of waste is collected per household each year, which is above the London average of 544kg.
- 26.9% of household waste is recycled every year, which is below the London average of 33%. The most recent data (as yet unpublished) shows improvement, with this figure is now nearer to 30%.

We have already rolled out a brand-new fleet of refuse trucks, improved our street cleaning service with new equipment and extended our recycling service, making it easier for residents to recycle at home.

Whilst tackling the issues that affect us locally, we must also be responsive to Government changes and take advantage of the opportunity presented by the end of the long-term waste management contract, to make changes to our waste and recycling management and achieve more cost-effective services for residents and businesses.

### **Council, businesses, and residents working together for a cleaner borough.**

Improving the cleanliness of the borough, reducing waste and impacts on the environment cannot be achieved by the Council alone, and so we will work with local businesses and our residents to help them understand how changing behaviours is key to delivering this priority.

We will:

- Deliver 'Cleaner Communities', a long-term joint project between Public Realm, Landlord Services, Highways and Enforcement to tackle environmental crime, such as fly-tipping.
- Develop a new approach to keeping our streets and byways clean by harnessing data insight and behaviour change strategies that empower the community.
- Work with residents and local businesses to reduce waste through reusing, recycling and repair.
- Work with ELWA and the other constituent council partners on the procurement of the new waste disposal contract to ensure the borough's needs and priorities are met around waste management.
- Implement weekly food waste collections to all households, as required by the Environment Act 2021.

### **Becoming the Green Capital of the Capital**

The impact of climate change is undeniable and although the UK has seen a reduction in carbon emissions, we know there is more we can do, individually and collectively. That is why we have pledged that the Council will become carbon neutral by 2030 and we will work to support the borough to become so by 2050.

We know that:

- We are in the top five London councils for poor air quality.
- The borough is responsible for emitting 566 kilotonnes of carbon every year.
- Housing, industry and transport each account for a third of our total carbon emissions as a borough.

We need to make some big changes.

Like other London boroughs we have a problem with high concentrations of pollutants outside schools. Air pollution is five times higher on the school run. We have introduced pedestrian and cycle-only zones at pick-up and drop-off times through the School Streets programme, in conjunction with issuing fixed penalty notices and the roll out of Controlled Parking Zones more widely across the borough.

Despite our actions to date, we cannot underestimate the magnitude of the task and our dependence on funding and technological advances to achieve our ambitions. We must also support our residents to adopt more sustainable methods of travelling and provide the infrastructure for moving to low emission transport.

Our 28 parks, and 465 hectares of open green spaces act as important natural carbon sinks and capture noxious emissions. Protecting, preserving and investing in our parks and green spaces sits at the heart of our masterplans for ten of the borough's parks. We have also committed to accelerating our tree planting programme, which has seen 48,000 trees planted over the past two years.

**We need to make some big changes for greener homes, Council services, local industries and public spaces.**

We will:

- Work towards the decarbonisation of the Council's fleet including refuse and street cleaning vehicles by 2030.
- Invest to improve our award-winning parks and green spaces for recreation, sports and leisure, and do all we can to maintain an attractive street scene.
- Plant up to another 50,000 trees across our streets, parks and open spaces.
- Implement Phase Two of the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) scheme with a focus on delivering safer school streets.
- Deploy an additional 250 Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

## **Residents live in good housing and avoid becoming homeless**

Housing is an important determinant of health, wellbeing, and stability. The tragedy of Grenfell Tower and the recent death of Awaab Ishak from exposure to mould show the devastating potential consequences of unsafe housing.

On the other hand, access to affordable, safe, and stable homes provides a foundation for a community in which residents can thrive and achieve their personal, professional, and social ambitions.

### **Improving tenant satisfaction and landlord management services**

As a social landlord to 18,000 households, we are focused on improving tenancy management and driving up satisfaction levels, by:

- Increasing the visibility of Landlord Services in wards to ensure tenant issues are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Improving the speed and quality of repairs and maintenance to prevent stock from falling into disrepair.

### **Improving conditions in social housing**

Though 93% of social housing stock currently meets the Decent Homes standard, we must continue to invest in these assets to maintain their condition and deliver for our tenants. We will:

- Strengthen the inspection and compliance regime to ensure that every Council-owned property meets gas, fire, and electrical safety requirements.
- Launch a damp and mould taskforce.

### **Improving energy efficiency**

The 'Cosy Homes' programme delivered the highest uptake of free installations under the ECO3 scheme London, winning London region's best largest retrofit and insulation scheme at the 2021 Energy Efficiency Awards. In the last two years, we have delivered installations to 2,000 low-income households.

We are well-placed to build on this success. In total, we aim to deliver 2,000 more installations of energy efficiency measures, renewables and retrofits in our corporate estate and across all tenures of housing stock.

Investing in energy efficiency is a win-win; it reduces emissions in the long term and spending for residents in the here and now. This is particularly important in the face of rising energy prices and the highest rate of fuel poverty in England (22.5%). To help more residents to make improvements in their homes, we are exploring innovative options to finance retrofitting.

### **Making efficient use of our social housing stock**

Demand for social housing is increasing. There are 5,800 applicants, currently without access to suitable accommodation, on the housing register.

To deliver sufficient properties that meet the needs of our residents, we need a data-led approach to development and allocation. We will:

- Review the Housing Allocations Policy
- Undertake long-term demand modelling, including identifying the levels of need for specialist and adapted homes for older residents and those with disabilities, to support the delivery of more of these properties.
- Help people to move into affordable rent or private sector rented accommodation where possible to promote stock turnover.

### **Raising standards in the private rented sector**

Private renting in Barking and Dagenham has increased 412% since 2001. Expensive rents, insecure short-term tenancies, and poor conditions are acute problems in the private rented sector. We experience one of the highest rates of landlord possession action in the country, with 347 claims per 100,000 households owned by a private landlord from October to December 2022.

We are committed to raising standards in the private rented sector through a range of enforcement tools, including a borough-wide landlord licensing scheme. Where landlords fail to provide good quality housing, we have taken robust action, issuing over £200,000 of fines through issuing Civil Penalty Notices between April 2022 and February 2023.

To continue improving the quality of private rented accommodation in the borough, we will:

- Apply to renew the landlord licensing scheme to hold landlords to account.
- Target unlicensed properties to make sure we are able to inspect all non-exempt rented properties across the borough.
- Deliver training sessions to landlords to help them understand their responsibilities.
- Deliver 3,000 high quality affordable rent homes by 2025 through Reside, our innovative housing management company. As a benchmark for the local rental market, this will drive quality up and prices down, as well as providing secure tenancies.

### **Helping residents at risk of homelessness or who are sleeping rough**

Our preventative approach to tackling homelessness in the borough has seen great success – the number of households living in temporary accommodation has decreased by 400 since 2019. Helping people move into social housing or affordable rent properties and to sustain tenancies, has saved millions of pounds on expensive temporary accommodation placements.

However, the rising cost of living is bringing increased financial pressure for many residents and with it, the risk of losing their homes. We recognise the need to provide additional support to residents during these times, and so we will:

- Continue to invest £1.4m a year in a rent deposit scheme which is helping people into affordable housing.
- Develop the list of approved private sector landlords, increasing the supply of affordable rents that we can use to exit people from temporary accommodation.
- Deliver proactive contact with people identified as having high levels of debt to help them with achieving financial stability, through the Homes and Money Hub.

Sadly, some people do end up sleeping on the streets. It is important we find and help these people with their immediate situation and to secure long term accommodation. Barking and Dagenham has been awarded more than £900,000 between 2022 and 2025 to deliver a three-year Rough Sleeper Initiative which will strengthen our response and capacity to support people who are on the streets. We have pledged that by 2025, no-one sleeps rough for more than 72 hours without a plan to exit them from rough sleeping.

## Our principles

To support our priorities, a set of principles have been developed to be applied to our work across the whole Council. Together, with our values and culture, these principles will drive service delivery, performance, and innovation.

### Work in partnership

Our collective response to Covid-19 and the Cost-of-Living crisis has demonstrated the strength of partnership working within the Council, and in the borough. We are committed to build on this, as we work together to develop new ways of supporting our residents and creating opportunities for them to thrive.

We need to break down existing siloes within the organisation. We will identify where we could work better and more effectively in partnership with others – other public services, community and voluntary organisations, businesses, local institutions, and our residents. And we also need to recognise where others are better placed to deliver what is needed, as the Council shifts to an increasingly enabling and facilitative role within the borough. We are one organisation in a growing social infrastructure approach, where everyone has a part to play, and where through power and resource sharing, we can collaboratively tackle the challenges facing our borough.

### Engage and facilitate co-production

We commit to creating more opportunities for residents and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) to directly shape, influence and be part of making decisions that affect their local communities.

We will work with community partners to create more places and spaces for people to meet, work together, and participate meaningfully in their local area. The developing social infrastructure in the borough, and platforms, such as Citizens' Alliance Network support our desire for genuine collaboration. Resident engagement, networks and action groups provide tangible opportunities for people to engage with their communities and council services, shifting the balance from change happening *to* people to people *making change happen*.

Ultimately, it is about shifting the mindset from empowering individuals to raising their ambitions, to recognising that that ambition already exists and that we, as facilitators, can create the spaces, relationships and processes for residents and community partners to act on it, for the benefit of their communities.

### Be evidence-led and data driven

We hold a wealth of information and data about the people and place of Barking and Dagenham. This insight is key in supporting us to deliver the best possible services for our residents – services that are personalised, targeted, effective and efficient. We will enable more effective and earlier use of data to inform better decision-making, better service design and delivery - and to inform

prevention and early intervention, which leads to better outcomes and less intensive (and costly) service provision.

Being transparent about all elements of data use in data analytics and predictive analytics is hugely important to us, because how we manage the use of information is critical to the relationship of trust we have with our residents.

### **Focus on prevention and early intervention**

We will endeavour to ensure that people get the right support, in the right place, at the right time, to stop their problems becoming crises and aim to deal with the wider, root causes of the problems, preventing future incidents.

We will make best use of customer insight and business intelligence to ensure we make informed decisions and prioritise our resources appropriately, embedding the principles of prevention, prediction, and early intervention into everything we do.

We will engage with residents, the community, and partners, drawing on their knowledge, insight, trusted connections and resources, and committing our own support and resources in turn through collaboration, to develop a whole system approach to prevention and early intervention, which is key to better outcomes and financial sustainability.

### **Provide value for money**

Residents expect to see that taxpayers' money is well spent. Despite the scale of the financial pressures that we – and all Local Government – currently face, we are committed to maintaining high quality services and continuing to improve the outcomes for our residents. We therefore need to work even harder to maximise the impact of the limited resources we have.

We will continue to ensure that the Council is financially stable with a balanced budget, and that they are sufficient controls and processes in place to provide assurance. And when we use our significant spending power, we ensure maximum value for money and social value.

### **Be strengths-based**

Strengths-based practice is a collaborative approach between the person supported by services and those supporting them, to identify their strengths and capabilities and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help them.

The aim is to enable people to achieve their goal or desired outcomes and reduce reliance on traditional services. The Council is committed to working in a strengths-based way, firmly rooted in our belief in the potential of all Barking and Dagenham people and our commitment to empower communities to build our future together.

### **Adopt a "Health in all Policies" approach**

Social, physical, and economic environments and conditions, collectively referred to as the 'social determinants of health' have a far greater impact than medical or social care services on how long and how well people live. Factors include socio/economic factors (income, employment, education,

isolation), behaviours (smoking, alcohol consumption, diet, and exercise), and the quality of and access to the environment (housing, green spaces, clean air, and water).

Adopting a “Health in all Policies” approach means a common commitment to maximising the positive health impact of all council functions – e.g., the building and maintenance of housing, job creation, community engagement.

### **Strengthen risk management and compliance**

The health, safety, and wellbeing of people in our borough is paramount. We take our legal obligations and requirements seriously. We identify and manage risk appropriately and proactively and encourage a culture of accountability and ownership at all levels. We will make sure that our regulatory and statutory functions are the best they can be.

## Putting equality and diversity at the heart of everything we do

Barking and Dagenham is a vibrant, dynamic and culturally rich community, and we believe this is something to be proud of and celebrate. However, we know that celebrating diversity alone is not enough. We must also acknowledge and do more to address the disparities and inequalities that exist within our communities.

We need to understand our diverse communities better, and to embed this understanding into how we shape policy and make decisions. One size does not fit all. We need to recognise that treating people equally does not solve problems of inequality. Everyone is different and, through better understanding of their experiences and needs, we can design and deliver services and provide opportunities that are better tailored to our residents, with the aim of reaching an equal outcome.

Equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion are fundamental principles in the way that we work.

### Our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 places specific responsibilities onto Public Sector Organisations, which is called the Public Sector Equality Duty.

When carrying out our functions, the Equality Act says we must have **due regard** or think about the need to:

- Eliminate **unlawful discrimination**.
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic<sup>2</sup> and those who don't.
- foster or **encourage good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

### Our equality commitment

We recognise the need to go beyond the responsibilities set out in the Equality Act 2010. We will ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion remains central to everything we do, from the money we spend and the people we employ, to the services we provide.

Our Equality Objectives for 2023-27 have been developed in line with, and as part of, the Corporate Plan priorities for the same period to ensure that tackling inequalities is at the heart of our vision.

- **Addressing structural inequality:** activity aimed at addressing inequalities related to the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, including unemployment, debt, and safety.
- **Providing leadership in the community:** activity related to community leadership, including faith, cohesion and integration; building awareness within the community throughout programme of equalities events.

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<sup>2</sup> Protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

- **Fair and transparent services:** activity aimed at addressing workforce matters related to leadership, recruitment, retention, and staff experience; organisational policies and processes including use of Equality Impact Assessments, commissioning practices and approach to social value.

Specific areas of focus have been identified under each objective, to demonstrate the impacts being made. These will be kept under review, and we will monitor and report on progress.

## Meeting our responsibilities and commitments

The Council as **a service provider**, we will:

- Understand that treating everyone the same does not address inequality. We will listen to, and understand, the needs of residents to ensure that access to services is fair.
- Involve service users and representatives in decision-making processes and service design.
- Complete Equality Impact Assessments to assess the impact of our decisions on those with protected characteristics, and to implement mitigations for adverse impacts, where possible.
- Operate an open and transparent complaints procedure.
- Require all organisations we commission to deliver services on our behalf to take the same approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The Council as **a partner**, we will:

- Realise our role as a system leader in tackling inequality.
- Use research and analysis to underpin and strengthen our work to reduce inequality.
- Share knowledge and resources, where appropriate, to enable effective efforts to address inequality.
- Communicate with and engage partners in the delivery of our Equality Objectives.

The Council as **an employer**, we will:

- Aim to employ a workforce that reflects the diverse community of Barking and Dagenham, at all levels.
- Build and embed an inclusive and transparent culture where all feel comfortable and valued, and free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and victimisation.
- Use recruitment processes that are equitable and inclusive, recognising the needs of diverse candidates.
- Promote equal access to career development opportunities for all and provide support in acquiring the necessary experience and skills needed to progress.
- Provide training to all staff and Members, to ensure that they understand their role in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Strengthen the Employee Support Networks and consult with them on policy changes impacting staff.
- Continue to implement the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standards action plan, as one of 18 local authority pilot sites.
- Publish our gender and ethnicity pay gaps – and take appropriate action to reduce gaps, where identified.

## The way we work

How our staff are led, managed, and engaged is key to the Council delivering the priorities set out in this Corporate Plan.

Our workforce needs to be clear about where we are heading and aware of the values and behaviours we expect them to uphold and demonstrate to get there.

Our foundations are strong – we are a Gold Investors in People organisation - and we strive to be even better.

### Values

We want every Barking and Dagenham Council employee to embody our DRIVE values in their working life every day, and in interactions with each other, with partners and with residents.

- **Delivering** our best, every day – and doing what we promise.
- **Responding** in a prompt, positive way to our community's needs.
- **Inspiring** others with our attitudes and actions.
- **Valuing** people for who they are and what they can do.
- **Engaging** with others to improve our resilience and flexibility.

### Our culture

We want to be an organisation that strives to deliver the best service and support the best outcomes for residents. In doing this, we will create a culture linked to the DRIVE values focussed on three key areas:

#### **Accountable and inclusive leaders who harness the talents and resources of all, managing the complexities, tensions and challenges**

We understand that no one person has all the answers – and the leaders of the organisation need to create a culture of leadership at every level, to harness ideas and co-create solutions. We want everyone to be their best self at work regardless of their background or cultural identity and we recognise that our diversity makes us stronger. We aim to attract the best people who truly share our values, and nurture and grow talent in the organisation.

#### **Collaboration at the heart of everything we do**

We drive a culture that encourages and facilitates partnership working, internally and externally, working beyond siloes. We collaborate, proactively problem solve, coming together to put residents at the heart of everything we do – and to co-produce with partners and residents. We work hard to understand our communities, their needs, their strengths, aspirations and how best to engage and work with them.

#### **Performing at our best**

We get the basics right, deliver on our priorities, tracking performance, measuring impact, and focussing on improvement. We use data and insight to deliver services that are personalised,

targeted, effective and efficient, and seek and act on feedback, using it as a driving force for learning. We take the time to recognise good practice that speaks to our values.

## Turning strategy into action

The Corporate Plan sets out high level priorities and objectives for the organisation over the next two-four years. It provides strategic direction and explains how public resources will be used to deliver change and improvement which will achieve the vision and targets in the Borough Manifesto.

### Corporate Plan Outcomes Framework

Clearly stating the Council's aims and how we intend to achieve them is important for local accountability, and by including outcomes measures we can evidence performance, progress, and impact.

Twice a year, Cabinet, who is responsible for implementing the Corporate Plan, will receive a report appraising performance and progress to outcomes in relation to its priorities. This ensures transparency and local accountability. The Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, is responsible for performance management in the Council and there are robust mechanisms which ensure oversight and rigour.

To find out more about the Corporate Plan Outcomes Framework, and to view past performance reports, visit: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/performance>

### Wider strategic framework

Alongside the Corporate Plan sits a suite of policies, strategies, and plans which set out in more detail our goals and how we will achieve them. For more information visit: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/plans-and-priorities>

### Service Plans

Beneath thematic and issue-based policies, strategies and plans sit even more detailed Service Plans which are refreshed every year. These are developed across all areas of the Council to ensure everything we are doing aligns with the vision and priorities, and that strategy is turned into action. We call this the 'golden thread' which joins high level strategy to day-to-day operational delivery.