

OUR VISION

Introduction

Message from the Leader of the Council Cllr Liam Smith

We are all aware that over the next few years we will face some tough challenges as an organisation. With public finances being squeezed by the Government and a new focus on how we deliver our services through the Localism Bill, it is essential that we look at how we work and what our priorities are to be over the next few years.

Looking over the last year, and looking over the next few years, I do see some fantastic opportunities for us as a borough to lead the way for not only our employees but also the residents across every ward.

That is why we have worked hard to set forth a plan that will deliver a more prosperous life for people from every social and economic background.

We are moving forward with our estate renewal plans, ensuring that some of our most vulnerable citizens are able to have a place to live that they deserve, we will keep Council Tax frozen again, continue our highways investment, lobby the government for more funding to set the right conditions to create jobs, ensure our school results keep improving, open a new skills centre, and continue to invest in our public realm.

Excitingly, because of the dedication shown by so many of our staff, we are now firmly part of the Olympics, giving everyone a real reason for optimism about 2012.

It is important as an organisation that we pull together during tough times, because that will help us create a long lasting legacy. With the appointment of our new Chief Executive, Stella Manzie, we have an outstanding professional who I believe will help us deliver on our priorities and challenge us to work in new ways.

Our local people deserve to be able to fulfil some of their aspirations, and even during tough times I am committed to making that happen.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Our vision for the Borough is *Building a Better Life for All* with the key aims of raising household incomes; school and post-16 education; and housing and estate renewal.

Members redefined the policy priorities of the Council (Policy House) and through the policy-led budgeting exercise, reallocated resources to priorities. This has helped us set a balanced budget for 2011/12 but there is still more to do.

The Council made £20m savings in 2010/11. Public sector finances will continue to be tight. The reduction in the amount of money available to us comes at a time when our community's needs are becoming more complex and our population is growing faster than in other areas.

The challenge for the Council is so great that the old methods of making savings will not be enough. We have to think very differently about how we continue to deliver services on behalf of our community with much less money.

We have no option but to re-prioritise and to look at innovative ways to save money while still protecting frontline services. That will mean hard choices in the next three years.

We are though, ahead of the game. Through our Joint Venture partnership with Agilysis, we will save about £70m over seven years and our determination to review our services and reduce costs while improving quality will help us save much more.

Agilysis won the contract to work with the Council in a jointly owned business (joint venture) from 1 December, Elevate East London LLP (Elevate), to deliver council services in a new way - in a ground-breaking move which will deliver improved customer service, better value for money, and significant savings to council taxpayers.

We have already frozen all council salaries for the next two years - apart for staff paid less than £21,000 per year. We have reviewed interim and consultancy contracts and brought in a third staff voluntary severance/early retirement scheme to minimise the need for compulsory redundancies. We have remodelled Council support services with a smaller corporate core.

Our approach to modernisation and transformation has not changed. We developed a Transformation Roadmap which will help identify where investment can make significant budget savings and improve service delivery; are reducing the costs of our accommodation; and looking at sharing services with other Boroughs and Partners.

The Decentralisation and Localism Bill may change the ways in which services are delivered in Barking and Dagenham. It is likely to provide new freedoms and flexibilities; new rights and powers for communities and individuals; reform to make the planning system more democratic and effective; and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally.

The Government's current health reforms are one of the biggest changes since the NHS was founded over sixty years ago. They mean that the Council will become more central to the local health care system, take on responsibility for public health and have a bigger role in shaping local health services. We are starting to implement these changes which take effect in full from 1 April 2013.

The People Strategy sets out the actions we will take to ensure that we have the right organisational style (a way of doing things) to meet all these challenges well. The focus is on:

- Workforce planning – having the right people with the right skills
- Performance management and reward – rewarding good performance, addressing poor performance
- Well-being – creating a working environment where people can be productive
- Management development – ensuring our leaders and managers are equipped to fulfil their roles

- Employee engagement – keeping our people informed and making them feel part of the future.

We want to be an organisation which encourages innovation and considered risk taking, where talent is developed and nurtured and people are treated fairly and with respect.

Stella Manzie is the new Chief Executive of the Council. She has a wealth of experience that she brings to the role and she is a significant addition to our management team. Stella is very excited about her appointment and sees this role as one of the most exciting and demanding in local government. She is looking forward to working closely with councillors, staff, local residents and all our partners. I am extremely happy to welcome her here.

Building a Better Life for All

1. Our Vision for the Borough

Our vision for the Borough is *Building a Better Life for All* with the key aims of:

- Raising household incomes
- School and post-16 education
- Housing and estate renewal

The priority themes of the Council as shown in the “Policy House” are:

- Better together
- Better homes
- Better health and well-being
- Better future

We developed the “Policy House” to show how our priorities, policies and strategies fit together, and to make clear what is important to the Council and to the Borough.

2. The Way we will Work

We **will put the customer at the heart of what we do**. To ensure we can meet customer needs we need a well run organisation that is:

- Understanding and responds to its customers and citizens, and supports people to help themselves and their community
- Innovative, leaner, and more efficient with lower support costs and lower costs of assets
- Using technology to modernise working practices and open up new opportunities for sharing information and communicating better
- Taking opportunities for sharing costs, minimising waste, and maximising external funding
- Well managed with a well developed and motivated workforce
- Respected with a good reputation for “doing business”
- Delivering its statutory duties in the most practical and cost-effective way.

To be successful though we also have to work together in the right way. Our values set out how we work together as one team to provide excellent services. They are:

- Putting our customers first
- Taking responsibility
- Treating each other fairly and respectfully
- Working together as one team
- Achieving

excellence

3. Transformation and Modernisation

3.1 Through Partnerships and External Working

We will have to become a different organisation, re-shaped to deliver our priorities with far fewer resources. This will help us to take a fresh look at the way community needs can be better met, by bringing together public agency budgets and resources in an area.

We will become an organisation that commissions services, delivered through a mixed economy, some in-house, some by partners and other service providers, and some in the community. There will be more sharing of services and partnerships with other providers. We will manage the delivery of all services through a strong outcome based model and a value for money framework.

We will focus on continually improving how we deliver services, so we can do more with less, and in new and different ways.

3.2 'Our Approach' to Transformation

Our approach is to use customer and management information to drive business planning based on residents & service users' needs; embrace the opportunities that the internet and growing web services provides for our community; use flexible and modern communications methods to ensure staff can share ideas across traditional service lines and support each other in problem solving. Our approach underpins the transformation and modernisation of the Council.

The transformation roadmap that has been developed captures all current and intended transformational activity across the organisation. It helps understand where to focus and gives a broad indication of timescales and resources required. Transformation will be managed through a Transformation Board, which will provide the gateway to access corporate resources (investment cash or people or support).

3.3 Principles of 'Our Approach'

'Our Approach' to business transformation and for improving efficiency using a customer contact approach (the customer can be external or internal) is based on the following principles.

1. Policy/Democratic engagement/Local Strategic Partnership

This is our Policy House, the overall policies and plans that guide our decisions and actions. Our policies and plans were developed with other organisations and the public where appropriate.

2. Strategic, knowledge based commissioning

Strategic commissioning is about putting the right services in place to deliver local needs, making the best use of available resources. It involves a knowledge based

analysis of the needs of users, and setting up contracting arrangements for value for money services from a variety of sources (Council directorates and elsewhere in the public, private and voluntary sectors).

3. Finance, asset and resource management

We will make best use of the funding and resources that we have, and be a well run organisation with innovative, leaner, and more efficient services. We will take opportunities for sharing costs, and ensure that our style (the way that we work) really supports transformation.

4. Fit for purpose professional advice

Our support services (ICT, HR, finance, facilities management etc) will in turn put their customers *at the heart of what* they do, and provide advice that front-line services need to be effective. We will have lower support costs, lower costs of assets and use the appropriate technology to manage customer contact.

5. Needs based services – driven by intelligence based policy

We will learn about, learn from and understand what our internal and external customers need, and make sure that our policy guidance sets this out clearly. Our improved customer relationships will be supported by timely, meaningful standards and service level agreements, so that service levels and costs are clear.

6. Focus on joined-up, personalised delivery – in house or managed

Our services will be joined-up personalised and designed around life events. We will learn from our mistakes and become more coordinated in the way we deliver these services, Our strap line for customer service focussed service design is 'Own it, fix it, learn from it'.

7. Ease of access, lower cost channels, end to end experience

Our services will be accessible to all customers, who only need contact us once. We will encourage customers to use less expensive and more efficient ways of getting what they need from us, and increase the level and volume of internet self-service and phone based access via B&D Direct for basic services and enquiries.

Face to face services will be accessed by the most appropriate service centre – Children's Centres, Library etc, and the OSS provides access to appointments and bookings, handling documents and access to web based and phone based information for those in person.

4. Our People Strategy

If the transformation of the Council is to be successful and we are to deliver excellent services, then we need an organisational style which truly reflects our values and our focus on improving value for money and services to customers.

The People Strategy sets out the actions we will take to ensure that we have the right organisational style. The focus of those actions is on:

- Workforce planning – having the right people with the right skills
- Performance management and reward – rewarding good performance, addressing poor performance
- Well-being – creating a working environment where people can be productive
- Management development – ensuring our leaders and managers are equipped to fulfil their roles
- Employee engagement – keeping our people informed and making them feel part of the future.

We must engage our staff in the process of transformation. To do this, we need to redefine our “employer brand”: what we stand for as an employer and what we can offer the people who work here.

We want to be an organisation which encourages innovation and considered risk taking, where talent is developed and nurtured and people are treated fairly and with respect.

What this means in practice is that we commit to:

- Enabling staff to be customer service focussed
- Encouraging people to be innovative, we accept we sometimes fail and we learn when things go wrong and celebrate where they go right
- Ensuring people know how to maximise technology and business systems
- Giving opportunities to people to maximise their potential
- Building a healthy, resilient and diverse organisation
- Focusing on efficiency, capacity and performance to maximise productivity
- Providing inspiring leadership and effective management to build employee engagement and motivation
- Being flexible in the way we employ staff and the way that they work to meet customer needs
- Building a true sense of partnership with our people.

5. Our Directorate and Divisional Plans

Our **Policy House** in *Building a better life for all* shows our key themes, our priority outcomes, and our Members’ Priorities 2010. Our **Performance House** shows the top level performance indicators that we will use to track our progress in delivering these outcomes. Both are shown overleaf.

These Policy and Performance Houses drive and inform directorate business plans which contain more detailed action, performance indicators, measures and targets.

These business plans will drive and inform team plans, and in turn your work plan. Your work plan will show what you have to do, to what standard, and by when to help us deliver our priorities and outcomes, for our communities in Barking and Dagenham.