

Barking and Dagenham Council's

Corporate Plan 2013/14



This document sets out the vision and priorities for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Message from the Leader of the Council

Councillor Liam Smith

The 2013/14 year will be another challenging one with the financial pressures we all face. Despite this we have lots to celebrate with much being achieved in the previous year as we look forward to the year ahead.

We know that again in 2013/14 many local people are facing tough times so we will freeze Council Tax for the fifth year, and continue to provide support to individuals, families and businesses by working closely with our partners.

The Council continues to face challenges. We have had to make difficult budget decisions already and will continue to do so. The reduction in our funding from the Coalition Government comes at a time when there is pressure from London's continued population growth. We are facing these challenges head on, and are working on new ways to continue to deliver services with less money. Some examples include saving money in administration and costs of running the Council to ensure front-line services are protected and reducing senior management costs, as well as strongly pursue opportunities to share services with partners and other Councils including Thurrock.

We worked hard to involve local people in the budget setting process this year to ensure we focus resources in the right places. Despite reductions in resources, all ten Children's Centres that have been inspected so far have been awarded

'outstanding' by Ofsted, and our young people are now able to access high quality training at the Technical Skills Academy which opened in October 2012. This improves access to training and raise skills levels and confidence of the local community to get quality jobs. It provides a real work environment rather than a school or college. We have also continued to implement our estate renewal programme delivering new build homes and use of innovative models to create mixed-tenure and affordable housing provision.

Councillors, the senior management team, and staff from across the Council will work together with our partners in health, voluntary groups, businesses, the Police, Job Centre Plus and Barking and Dagenham College, to deliver our aims for the borough.



Councillor Liam Smith
Leader

Our Borough

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is located at the heart of the Thames Gateway, approximately 11 miles east of central London. It is a dynamic place with a vibrant community, significant investment opportunities and complex challenges. The borough offers a unique mix of urban living with good and improving transport links both into London and the Essex countryside.

There are two main centres - Barking and Dagenham – with investment opportunities through the substantial brownfield sites for development and growth. There has been recent investment in housing estate renewal, leisure facilities and the new technical skills academy. There are also impressive parks and open spaces across the borough's 14 square miles.

London's population continues to grow. Barking and Dagenham has seen a significant overall population increase of 13.4% to 185,911 (2011 Census). This is 22,000 more people since 2001, including a 50% increase in 0 – 4 year olds, placing a huge pressure on school places. In addition there has been the largest decrease in the 65+ age group in London.

The borough is also more ethnically diverse than it has ever been. Increasing diversity offers considerable opportunities, but the pace of change poses a number of real challenges for community cohesion.

Housing

The growth in population has outstripped the increase in households causing a rise in the average number of occupants per household, meaning that Barking and Dagenham now has one of the highest occupancy rates in London. The impact of this is combined with increasing housing costs but our estate renewal programme aims to deliver new build homes and use innovative models to create mixed-tenure and affordable housing provision.

The borough has the highest percentage of lone parent households in England and Wales at 14.3%.

Education and Employment

The 2011 Census shows that the number of residents aged 16-64 with a level 4 qualification and above has more than doubled in number from 11,600 to 28,700 but this is still below national averages. The number of full time students aged 18 and over has more than doubled and educational attainment has continued to improve. Although 28% of 16 year olds and above were recorded as having no qualifications, there has been a 14% drop since 2001.

Like many other boroughs, unemployment is an issue and Barking and Dagenham has a higher level of long term unemployment at 42% when compared to London and England, both at 39%. Approximately 1 in 10 households with dependent children have no adults in employment. This is 50% higher than London.

Deprivation and Health

Barking and Dagenham still experiences higher than average levels of deprivation ranking 7th most deprived in London and 22nd most deprived nationally and our residents are not as healthy as they should be. Compared to other parts of the country they do not live as long.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in 2011 showed that there are high levels of lifestyle risk to health and wellbeing including smoking, obesity and physical inactivity. There are continued high death rates from various diseases, especially heart disease, cancer and chronic lung disease. Other single issues remain problems, for example dementia and the impact of income and fuel poverty on mental health.

Cohesion and Crime

The 2011 Residents' Survey showed that 64% of respondents were satisfied with the area as a place to live but that only 52% felt that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the borough. There have been tensions but partners continue to work hard to promote community cohesion and neighbourliness to ensure the place is safe and peaceful.

Crime levels in the borough continue to reduce, with overall crime falling to 97.18 per 1,000 population in September 2012 compared to 104.53 in the same period the previous year.

Policing on our streets with Safer Transport, Safer Neighbourhoods and Town Centre Teams, as well as the new tenant funded Estates Policing Team in 2012, has also made significant contributions to the reduction in total offences especially around key volume crimes such as motor vehicle crime and the crimes associated with drunkenness and anti-

social behaviour. Challenges remain though, for example, in tackling residential burglary.

The speed of change has been rapid across the borough and there are no signs of it slowing down. This will present many challenges and opportunities moving forward and will have a significant impact on future planning and policy for all partners. Barking and Dagenham is a dynamic place with a vibrant community and complex challenges.



Our Priorities

The Council and borough's vision is to:

Encourage growth and unlock the potential of Barking and Dagenham and its residents.

Despite the challenging economic climate, the Council is determined to continue to focus on our borough's priorities. The Council's commitment to these priorities is shown in the actions we will take below:

1. Ensure every child is valued so that they can succeed

- Our Council will improve standards in school by investing £75 million over three year in the boroughs primary and secondary schools and other programmes to provide additional places
- Continued improvement in GCSE results aiming to match national levels for pupils gaining A*-C and maximise the opportunities for post 16 education and training

2. Reduced crime and the fear of crime

- Reduce violent crime by tackling domestic violence and addressing the issues of gangs
- Reduce substance misuse as a driver for crime and disorder through the delivery of the Alcohol, Drugs and Licensing strategies
- Deliver the priorities identified in the anti-social behaviour strategy and respond to the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2013
- To work with partners to reduce Acquisitive Crime and support victims
- Build and support a place where people respect one another and enjoy safe and peaceful lives through the delivery of the Cohesion Strategy

3. Improve health and wellbeing through all stages of life

- Work with partners to reduce health inequalities and encourage healthy lifestyle choices
- Work with GPs and local providers to improve joined up services through children's centres and schools to improve children's health and give them the best start in life
- Promote physical activity including the re-building of Abbey Sport centre by 2014
- Support older people to be active and healthy

4. Create thriving communities by maintaining and investing in new and high quality homes

- Complete the estate renewal programmes to provide 831 new Council and mixed-tenure homes in 2015
- Deliver 472 new and affordable homes through the innovative Housing Local Education Partnership by 2014
- Deliver a major regeneration programme on key sites such as Academy Central and Lymington Fields by 2016 and there is planning consent for 10,000 new homes on Barking Riverside

5. Maximise growth opportunities and increase the household income of Borough residents

- Deliver key strategies e.g. the Economic Regeneration Strategy and the Barking Town Centre Strategy to improve Barking Station, add commercial space, develop 4,000 new homes and create 10,000 new jobs by 2026
- Redevelop Dagenham Dock as a sustainable industrial area.
- Provide access to training through the Adult College and work with the borough's other education providers to increase skills amongst the adult population.

Tracking progress

Our aim and priorities are underpinned by the theme, **a well-run organisation**. We will continue to provide a range of day to day services and effective behind the scenes support to ensure we meet both our legal responsibilities and the needs of the community.

In 2013/14 we will focus on ensuring that we implement innovative ways of working through our IT and customer access strategies enabling quicker and easier access to our services for customers and more efficient ways of working for our staff.

Our People Strategy sets out what we will do to ensure that our workforce are equipped with the skills and knowledge to succeed and are motivated and managed to perform at the their best. We will also implement the budget savings agreed for the coming year, completing restructuring in services and management teams.

Tracking our progress

To track delivery of our priorities we monitor a range of performance measures. These are reported quarterly to senior managers and Members including Cabinet to inform decision

making and where resources should be focused. Detailed performance monitoring is also carried out in departments to support day-to-day service delivery.

In addition the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) sets out how the Council is operating all its activities within a robust governance framework. The AGS includes a section on the Council's performance management arrangements.

We are working hard with other growth boroughs (Olympic host boroughs) to close the gap between our performance and the average across London.

Business planning and risk management

To support the implementation of the Corporate Plan, each of the Council's services develops its own business plan setting out its delivery plans for the year and beyond.

We manage the risks associated with the achievement of our priorities and the management of the Council and its budget through a robust risk management process. The headline risks are summarised in the Corporate Risk Register.

How we will fund our plans – our Medium Term Financial Strategy

The financial principles the Council follows are:

- A balanced budget with decisions based on Members' priorities
- All employees, partners and contractors are required to "treat every pound spent as though it is the last pound in your purse" ensuring continued efficiency, elimination of waste and value for money
- Managers are responsible and accountable for their budgets delivered through strong financial systems and processes
- Robust but not excessive levels of reserves and contingencies, with affordable investments to improve services and maintain assets,
- Effective commissioning of services and a continued focus on income maximisation.

The Council continues to face a significant reduction in its budget due to reduced resources from Government. Our financial analysis shows that we are facing an overall reduction in funding of £17.3m (10%) over a two year period which account for approximately 18% of the Council's overall gross budget which is £708m for 2013/14. Other funding comes from Council Tax (8%), dedicated schools grant (23%) and the remainder from income from services and other third party payments (51%).

The Council's net budget in 2013/14 is £173.4 million, a reduction of £4 million from £177.4 million in 2012/13 and £183.4million in 2011/12. When compared to other authorities, the Council hold a relatively modest level of reserves of £14m which are held in case of significant financial difficulty and it is

therefore essential that a robust and balanced budget is set each year.

While we try to influence Government decisions in the interests of local residents, the Council has no choice about how much money it receives. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) prudently estimates further reductions in 2013/14 and 2014/15. We have had to identify and agree savings for 2013/14 of £16.6m in order to set a balanced budget for the year ahead. We are already working hard to identify ways to meet the remaining budget gap of £6.5million for 2014/15 in addition to planned savings of 7.7m. Significant savings are being achieved such as aiming to save 70million over seven years through Elevate our Joint Venture with Agilisys. Further savings required have meant some difficult decisions particularly in the light of ongoing pressures such as:

- Welfare reforms including the localisation of Council Tax benefit with a 10% (£2m) reduction in funding from Government and potential impact on collection rates
- Changes to Adult Social Care income/charging
- Increase in people presenting themselves as homeless putting pressure on temporary accommodation
- The need to provide sufficient school and education places (2-19) given the highest population growth in London, and the increasingly complexity of need.
- A projected population increase of 20% between 2010 and 2020

We can mitigate against some of the pressures such as allocating £300,000 for non-payment of Council Tax due to the changes in welfare reform.

We do however have the ability to choose how we spend our money and how much money we raise from local residents – and have chosen, again, to freeze Council Tax for the fifth year. This enables us to take advantage of the Council Tax freeze grant from Government equivalent to a 1% increase (a reduction on the 2.5% offered in 2012/13).

Members decide the priorities for the Council and where to focus spending by listening to local people through their surgeries, ward activity, Residents' Survey and from their own policy perspective.



The Council has listened to the views of local people in setting its budget for 2013/14. Residents were able to share their views on the budget proposals through a series of select committee meetings, Leader and Deputy Leader Question Time sessions, on Facebook and Twitter, and through the Council's website. In response to the feedback, changes were made to several proposals including keeping the Broadway Theatre open, funding the Summer Sorted programme from the Public Health Fund, keeping green waste collection and further consultation on sheltered housing provision. Residents and partners played a valuable part in the process ensuring the budget has gone through a robust challenge process before Councillors made their final decisions.

In addition to the General Fund budget referred to above, the Council's Housing Revenue Account, with income mainly from rents, will be used to invest £530.8 million on building new Council houses, the renewal of existing estates and investment in the current housing stock over the next ten years. The Council also receives a Dedicated Schools Grant from the Government's Department of Education to fund services for schools such as support for children with special educational needs and the admissions service. The Council will also be taking on the responsibility for the promotion of public health within the Borough and this will be funded from a separate source of funding which can only be used for that purpose.

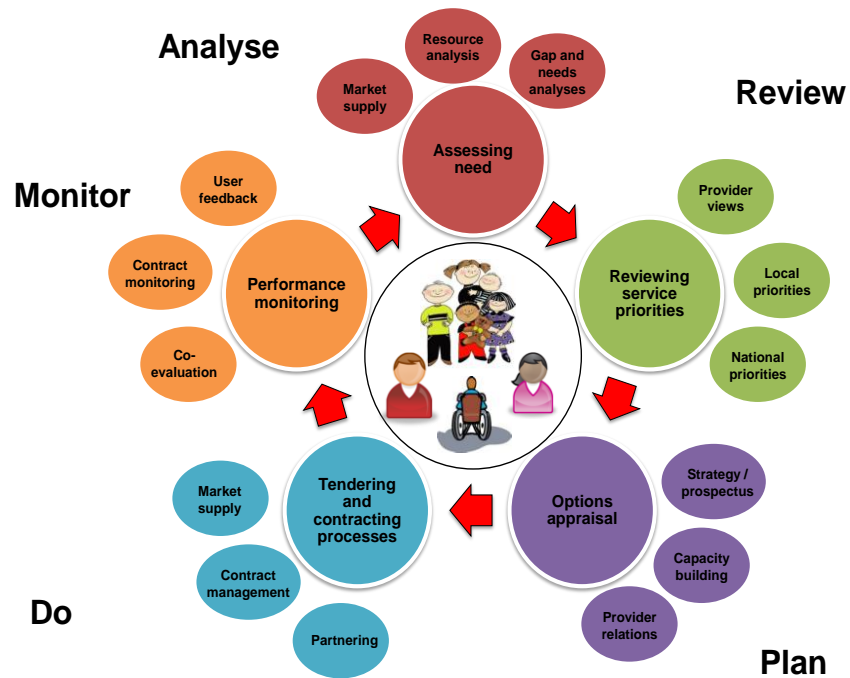
In addition to the significant expenditure on new and improved housing in the Borough, there is also an ambitious capital programme to invest in the Council's priorities. Between 2012/13 and 2014/15, there will be capital expenditure in excess of £373m on:

- a new leisure centre in Barking,
- providing new primary and secondary schools,
- improvements to highways,
- economic development,
- modernising our IT systems.

The Council has also worked with private sector partners to develop self financing schemes to provide over 500 new affordable homes within Barking & Dagenham. On a lesser scale, a number of smaller schemes have been initiated to improve the efficiency of Council operations and the service received by residents.

Commissioning

In commissioning Council services we aim to ensure best value from our partners and providers so that we can attempt to ensure efficient and effective delivery. The Council's commissioning framework below and procurement policies are used to help secure this:



Comments, ideas or questions?

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

If you have questions about this statement, or you require this information in another format e.g. in large print or in a language other than English, please contact the Council's Policy & Performance team on 020 8227 2343.

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