

EBC 2022/23 Corporate Plan Progress Update

Recovery and Stabilisation

Commercialisation and increasing Revenue

- Our capital programme is now **exclusively focussed on housing, and/or health and safety priorities**.
- A **review of our property portfolio** has been completed. Said portfolio is now subject to regular update in association with the Strategic Property Board.
- Eastbourne Borough Council's medium term financial strategy and capital programme were both **reviewed favourably as part of CIPFA assurance review** recent revisit.

Delivering high quality customer services

- Implemented our new **chatbot on our website and phone line**; to enable a hybrid approach to our customer service, maintaining our telephone and face to face offering. The Human Parity level of the chatbot, meaning the chatbot has understood and responded to the query, has been at **95.64%** since conception. 24% of queries were also out of hours.
- We now have a **90-Minute service level agreement** to respond to queries via social media.
- Starting April 2023 we are altering what we report, via the corporate performance report, now **reporting the percentage of calls graded high quality**. Aligning our performance reporting to our commitment to improving the quality of our customer outcomes and satisfaction.
- We continue to make effective use of the **apprenticeship levy** with a mix of existing employees. Using this as an opportunity for further development and new employees where we have recruited to an apprenticeship role.
- At times we have been **spending 90% of our monthly levy funds** and have considered other options permissible under the scheme such as transferring up to 10% of our levy pot to another organisation to fund apprenticeships elsewhere.

Delivering Value for money services and responsibly managing risk

- We now have a bot-enabled **Department of Works and Pensions verification of earnings process** was implemented in 2022/23. This automation has resulted in the council being ranked in the top quartile for performance for local authorities.

- Despite the cost of living crisis and recruitment and retention challenges the service has faced, **Council Tax collection** for Eastbourne Borough Council ended the year **0.10% higher than the previous year**.

Generating social value

- We have increased our number of **mental health first aiders** within the organisation including amongst Elected Members and at CMT level. We continue to promote our Employee Assistance Programme which is available for staff to self refer to. Wellbeing days will be held during the coming months which will be open to all staff.
- We have had a **review of our recruitment policy**, reviewed in collaboration with our recognised Trade Union, Unison. All managers involved in recruitment and selection are required to undertake training which will include diversity considerations.

Providing Robust Governance

- CMT continues to meet weekly to oversee progress and performance of the **Recovery & Stabilisation (R&S) portfolio**, with monthly updates provided to the cross-party R&S Member Board and quarterly R&S Member Board meetings taking place. Regular updates through the council's governance arrangements on the progress of R&S were provided throughout 2022/23

Growth and Prosperity

Outstanding in tourism and leisure

- **Bandstand reopened on 23rd April** with a free Silver Band event and then on the 28th April with the first ticketed event and both were sold out. The capacity is less but percentage of sold tickets vs available tickets is higher.
- The View, East Sussex College and Council Regeneration team explored four pilot schemes over the last 12 months, around: Hospitality pre-employment programmes, Work experience placements, , Recruitment initiatives, Apprenticeship recruitment.

Attractive and thriving

- Heritage Eastbourne are working on '**The Big Dig**', which will feature three test pits dug in locations in Eastbourne and encourages the community to dig up their own gardens and present any finds to the team for interpretation.

Currently over 30 private gardens signed up and it's all due to take place 9-11 June 2023.

- Continuing to improve the public realm in the town centre and provide a continuous **pedestrian link between the railway station and the seafront**
- Work on Phase 2a from **bankers corner to Blacks will commence in the summer 2023.**
- **Pedestrianisation of Victoria Place** forms part of EBC's successful levelling up fund bid.

Supporting and attracting business

- EBC are now working with **YourBID business improvement district partnership**. Which has led to further engagement with an expert from the high streets task force planned for May/June

Exciting cultural events

- Delivery of **Levelling Up projects** including:
 - Cultural and education centre at Black Robin Farm
 - Improvements to Victoria Place
 - **Significant public art engagement and learning project in conjunction with the Towner**
- Approximately **60 events held on council land**, the portfolio encompassed a wide variety of interests and catered to a broad audience.
- The **council-run major events** reflected the diverse range of attractions available to residents and visitors. Including a wide range of musical, sporting motor, food and entertainment events.
- The Events Department facilitated the hosting of **numerous third-party events on council land**. (eg Eastbourne Pride, Eastbourne Half Marathon, Eastbourne Carnival, Food Festival, Seafront Markets, Funfairs, Triathlons, 5 LTA registered Tennis tournaments, Bonfire Procession, and Christmas events)
- In 2022, steps were taken to monitor, **measure and reduce the environmental impact of events**, both those organised in house and by third parties.
- Successfully **hosting the Rothesay International Tennis Tournament** at full capacity following the COVID-19 restrictions imposed the previous year was a significant achievement. Out of the major tennis events organised by the LTA, Eastbourne emerged as the frontrunner, receiving the highest satisfaction score (customer survey), which is a testament to the exceptional efforts put forth by the Events Department.

Housing and Development

Addressing homelessness

- **Answered and responded to roughly 5,700 calls** across the year, from residents who had concerns about becoming homeless, were already homeless when they contacted the team. This unprecedented number reflects increases in demand local, in line with national trends.
- In response to these demands, **a new triage team has been established** which is the single point of entry for all housing needs enquiries. The team has bedded in quickly, and provides high quality advice and consistent responses, to help guide local residents and reduce the number of call handed on for assessment.
- We have developed **a multi-agency homeless prevention hub** to be launched in 2023/24
- Carried out around **900 homelessness assessments**
 - Targeting discretionary housing payment at those at risk of eviction, who can demonstrate an ability to maintain their rent payments going forward – **allocating £242k across the course of 2022/23** to provide sustainable support with rent to **219 households** across the town.
 - **Funding housing advice and support services** through BHT, focussed on reducing the risk of homelessness amongst all residents, including private rented, council tenant and homeowners households.
 - Funding a **homelessness advice and education programme** delivered by YMCA.
- **Fully deployed the County-wide team of wellbeing and employment coordinators**, jointly funded by the Public Health team, who set out to bridge the gap between health and housing, supporting clients in temporary accommodation to improve and sustain their tenancies in the longer term.
- **Rough sleeper initiative** - in conjunction with all ESCC Local Housing Authorities **Awarded funding for the final 3 years**, up to 2024/25 for the rough sleeping initiative.
 - Street Link app** allowing the public to report rough sleepers, which will trigger our outreach team to assist and investigate.
 - RSAP Accommodation programme in Eastbourne has lead to **3 additional properties have been secured** in 2022/23
- EBC have rolled out the **Value for Money Strategy** and a series of Value for Money reviews across a range of services.
- **New Asset Management Strategy (AMS)** from stock condition survey and refreshed Property Services Business Plan.
- **Delivery Programme launched** to incorporate Investment projects/pilots underway in Carbon reduction, Neighbourhood regeneration and Older Persons Accommodation
- Followed an **ethical rent arrears policy**, whilst maintaining excellent performance, utilising customer intelligence and insight

Promoting homes that sustain health & well-being

- **Accessing East Sussex Floating Support Service (ESFSS)**, a short-term housing advice and support ("floating support") across East Sussex provided by BHT Sussex for vulnerable people, who require help to live independently. The service assists over 400 clients each year and delivers tailored services to both the over 60's.

Good access to housing that meet modern standards

- Identifying opportunities to **develop brownfield land sites**, within the wider context of limited land supply in the borough.
- Initiating research work to gauge the views of residents living in **Houses in Multiple Occupation** and assess conditions and standards. The outcomes will be used to consider licencing options.
- The **Working in partnership with local landlords** - incentivising the availability of homes to 'at risk' households, who would otherwise have been placed in temporary accommodation. This work is now delivered through a new dedicated role.
- Setting out supplementary planning guidance (policy D5) – this **requires developers to provide affordable housing** as part of their scheme in line with set criteria, or pay commuted sums in lieu of provision. The tenure make-up must be agreed with the council, the starting point for which is 70% rented vs 30% shared ownership, whilst the agreed size mix should be based on the latest assessment of local housing need.
- Utilised customer insight and community consultation **to develop a neighbourhood improvement plan**, incorporating a range of actions aimed at social and physical regeneration and incorporating the development of social inclusion projects and partnerships that support residents and communities e.g. employment & skills, financial inclusion, health and homelessness projects.

Safe, well managed decent homes

- At the end year our tenants monitor survey reported that over three quarters **77% of Eastbourne Homes' residents were satisfied** with the overall service they received, whilst 81% felt that their enquiries were treated fairly and with respect and 82% were satisfied with the quality of their home.
- Delivering an **improved repairs service** and completing the transfer of the call handling centre in-house from Mears. This will enable Homes First to take the lead and make sure your repair is completed by the right local tradesperson, on time, and in one visit wherever possible.
- Listening to residents – **delivering a comprehensive involvement and engagement strategy** through supporting a residents led scrutiny team to complete reviews of service, delivering a residents stakeholder conference attended by over 80 residents, and promoting resident voice events and area panels.

- Tracked progress and **implemented requirements of the Charter for Social Housing residents** (White Paper) and Building Safety Bill.
- Completed a **full stock condition survey** and implemented a range of safety works to proactively address requirements of the Building Safety Bill and the Hackett Review (Building a Safer Future).
- Developed a range of **performance and satisfaction indicators** in line with regulatory requirements on tenant satisfaction.
- **Further resourced the Customer Experience Team**, whose core remit draws together many of the key aspects of The Charter for Social Housing Residents, including performance management and reporting, complaints and tenant involvement.

Locations regenerated and more housing

- Total of **165 homes developed** across the town between April 2022 & March 2023, whilst **438 homes are under construction** and a **further 665 have planning permission** across the town.
- **Six affordable homes** were completed during the past year, with a further **102 have planning permission**. We are increasing supply and 31 of these were on site at the beginning of April and the majority are expected to be ready for new tenants to move into during this financial year.
- Continuing support to public sector partners, including **East Sussex College Group**, to deliver Estate Strategies that maximise the proportion of affordable housing.
- Working to facilitate delivery of some of the larger third party stalled sites in the Borough which have planning consent but are not being brought forward for delivery.
- Rolling out different delivery and funding models for the Council's own programme of new housing to incorporate **specialist supported housing (SSH)** to meet specific housing needs of older persons accommodation and those requiring accessible accommodation.

Thriving Communities

- Contributing to a range of multi-agency activities focussed on creating **safe spaces for women and girls**, reducing the risks present in and around the night-time economy. This work includes; close collaboration with local police to support operations promoting engagement with licenced premises; raising awareness of drink spiking; reducing the harms associated with alcohol use; and funding the Eastbourne Street Pastors.
- Approving a recent bid from the Eastbourne Business Crime Partnership (EBCG) to deliver a new **Night-time Marshall service in the town centre**. Their role will be to prevent vulnerable persons becoming victims of crime, help licenced premises control incidents, and support the management of taxi ranks.
- Funding the **replacement of four CCTV cameras in Seaside Road, Terminus Road and along the seafront**, to rectify recurrent fault and improve imaging. CCTV across the town viewed 7,000 emergency and priority incidents across the year.

- **Sponsoring Eastbourne Youth Radio's broadcast**, an established initiative that engages young people deliver a week-long programme of 'on air' programmes that discuss a range of topics including mental health and wellbeing, knife crime and bullying.
- Supporting the Council's Neighbourhood and Environment First teams work to keep public spaces across the Borough clean, tidy, and free from rubbish. In the year to date (April to November) the teams **dealt with over 950 reports of fly-tipping, graffiti, rubbish, and abandoned vehicles**.
- Directly funding projects delivering; **security adaptations** that allow victims able to stay in their existing home feel safer; community arts sessions focussed on improving the confidence of hate crime, domestic and sexual abuse victims; and a sports rehabilitation programme targeted at NHS referrals diagnosed with mental health conditions, likely to increase their risk of experiencing abuse.
- Participating in the **Violence Reduction Unit**, a Sussex Police and County led task force, co-ordinating a strategic approach to tackling serious violence across East Sussex. Work in Eastbourne continues to address issues in identified 'harm hotspots' across Devonshire Ward.
- Preparing for the implementation of a **new (statutory) Serious Violence Duty**. This requires community safety partnerships to draw together local strategic needs assessments that identify patterns of serious violence and explore its causes
- Directly funding organisations to deliver **programmes engaging and supporting young people**, including those provided by the YMCA and the local fire cadet service, who both run programmes designed to boost confidence, improve self-esteem, and develop new skills.
- Pushing through plans to implement a new **Public Place Protection Order (PSPO)** focussed on addressing the incidence of anti-social driving in specified areas of the town.
- **Continued to fund key voluntary sector services** such as Citizens Advice and BHT with additional support for the VCSE and youth activities (including the Youth Partnership, Disability Involvement Group and Cultural Involvement Group).
- Through the **Cost-of-Living response support** was made available to food initiatives, vulnerable children and specialist money advice.
- Delivered training to teams on **safeguarding and equality & fairness**.

Quality Environment

- Operational performance indicators remain largely within target, with good service in key areas. **SEESL quality trademark is maintained** through diligent governance, control and auditing of its services.
- **Environment First and Neighbourhood First have collaborated** to address fly-tipping and other waste crime proactively, both removal and enforcement activity
- EBC have been awarded a major grant by **the Urban Tree Challenge Fund**, **1,000 street trees were planted** in the town through 2021/22 and 2022/23 thanks to the phenomenal efforts of Treebourne volunteers and council officers.

- **Transform the street scene** in some areas where previously there had been low canopy cover. The focus now and for the next 3 years is on maintaining the young trees and seeing them safely through to maturity. A tag with a QR code, attached to the tree cage, links to an app so that volunteer residents can 'adopt' a tree and record when it has been watered.
- **18 7kw electric vehicle charge points** are being installed in 3 EBC owned car-parks. (Devonshire, Hyde Gardens and Redoubt). The project will be completed by the end of June.
- EBC are supporting Co-wheels with the **launch of a new Eastbourne car club** which will include an electric vehicle in Hyde Gardens.
- Following our Biodiversity and pesticide strategies and action plans to enhance the biodiversity of public and open spaces, we have **created more wildflower areas** across the borough, as well as **developing a small wildflower meadow**. We have also created more nature areas within our cemeteries, to enhance plant life and pollinator species.
- We have installed a **new play area at Shinewater Park** and will be upgrading a further two play areas this year. Two new bridges are planned this summer for Princes Park.