

Council Plan

2016 → 2020



CUSTOMERS PLACE VALUE FOR MONEY

FINAL DRAFT

Council Plan

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CUSTOMERS PLACE VALUE FOR MONEY

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- 3 Welcome to our Council Plan which sets out our priorities and key projects over the next few years. This four year sets out the key outcomes the Council will deliver with its partners for our District.
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- 6 The Plan our has been informed and developed in consultation with our residents, partners and other stakeholders. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to contribute.
- 7
- 8
- 9 We will monitor the Plan and report progress to Cabinet each quarter. It will be a 'living plan' that will respond to changing times, and the financial context within which we operate, whilst keeping a focus on the needs of our local communities. We will refresh the Plan annually.
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The data reported in this Plan comes from a variety of sources including the Council's 2015 Residents' Survey, our own performance data and the website 'East Sussex in Figures'. Any questions about the content of this Plan should be directed to the Business Strategy and Performance Team (bsp@lewes.gov.uk)

Introduction from the Leader



**Councillor
Andy Smith**

Lewes District Council is an innovative, efficient and forward thinking council with a proven track record of delivering good quality services and responding dynamically to the changing needs of its customers and communities. We are committed to providing value for money for our residents, and keeping Council Tax levels as low as possible, despite the challenging financial climate.

Over the past five years we have reduced our costs by modernising, whilst at the same time delivering real improvements around the district, both on our own and in partnership. Local residents have noticed what we are doing. Satisfaction with how the Council runs things has improved from 45% to 63% since 2008.

Some of our recent achievements

- 68% of people who contacted us during 2015 rated the quality of service as good.
- Recycling rates have improved from 22% in 2012/13 to 26% in 2015; a green waste service is being trialled in Seaford so customers do not have to take garden waste elsewhere for disposal.
- 45 local entrepreneurs were supported with start-up training during 2015; 33 of these have started their own businesses. 118 young people have taken on apprenticeships at 56 local businesses.
- 110 new students started their first year at the University Technical College, Newhaven.
- Denton Island Growth Quarter development project in Newhaven commenced.
- Over £70 million of additional funding and investment has been attracted into our communities to deliver strategic infrastructure projects over the next 5-10 years.
- A further £18 million has been secured for flood defences and £10 million for a new Port access road in Newhaven.

“ This Plan shows how, over the next four years, we will work to make Lewes District an even better place in which to live, work and visit. There are significant challenges ahead, not least of which is the need to save £3 million by 2020.

As Leader of the Council, I have made a strong commitment to listen to and work with all political groups on the Council, key partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors and Council staff, to deliver some significant projects in the district as well as a major joint transformation programme in partnership with Eastbourne Borough Council. ”

The Lewes district

Our people and places



Our residents, businesses and visitors benefit from beautiful landscapes and historic environment. Our diverse and attractive countryside includes chalk cliffs and downlands, shingle beaches, heathland, wetland and areas of ancient woodland. Our County Town, Lewes, is at the heart of the district and is a popular historic tourist destination. The district has a vibrant and diverse contemporary arts scene and boasts a rich cultural heritage which is important to its economic prosperity

Lewes district has a population of **97,500**

77% of residents live within the five urban areas of Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven, Seaford and Telscombe Cliffs/East Saltdean. The rest live in our **23** rural parishes.



This diversity of landscapes and communities is a great strength. Community life is a strong and distinctive feature of the district. Residents identify closely with their own towns, villages and neighbourhoods. There are specific issues and challenges affecting some local communities in terms of employment, skills, and health and housing factors. Connectivity, rural isolation and access to services can also be an issue for some people.

Our population of 97,500 is projected to grow by 8% by 2027. Life expectancy is higher than the East Sussex average. However, around 20% of people are living with a limiting long-term illness or disability and this is likely to rise by 16.5% over the next decade or so. There is a higher than average occurrence of ill-health and mental health issues (including dementia) in some coastal communities. It is therefore important that we work with our partners to ensure the needs of our changing communities are met. We want to help support people in maintaining healthy and active lifestyles, and to remain living in their own homes.

We benefit from an entrepreneurial economy with self-employment being a significant feature of our district, representing 18% of the economically active population. Over 36% of residents are employed in managerial or professional roles.

Unemployment is below the East Sussex average. However, the proportion of people who are economically inactive but looking for work is notably higher in the district and there is a higher than average proportion of self-employed people.

Small companies of between 1 and 10 employees account for 88% of all local businesses. It is critical that we support these businesses to grow and prosper, through advice and guidance as well as suitable, high quality employment premises, so they can provide future employment within the district.

Alongside this, we want to put particular emphasis on supporting our young people to ensure they have the training and skills they need to thrive in the future.

Our commitments

We are making the following commitments to our residents, businesses and communities. These commitments can only be met by working with a range of partners in the private, public, community and voluntary sectors. We are proud of what we have achieved through strong partnership working over recent years, especially our work with town and parish councils. We will continue to seek new and cost-effective ways to work with others to shape and improve services and outcomes for local people.



CUSTOMERS

Our population has a higher percentage of residents over 65 years of age compared to the national average and this is expected to increase by around 45% between 2010 and 2030. These changes will need to be taken into account as we develop our services over the coming years.

Although not an area experiencing high levels of deprivation, there are some parts of our district which require more support than others, due to factors such as low incomes or social isolation. We will work to ensure that these needs are understood and reflected in the way our services are planned in the future.

We will deliver improvements for customers and communities.

PLACE

The Lewes district is a vibrant and diverse place. Balancing the need for growth with the desire to protect and enhance the environment is important to local people.

A recent survey showed that local people viewed provision of affordable housing, economic regeneration, supporting business and campaigning for improved road/rail infrastructure to be important roles for the Council. These views have been reflected in this Plan.

We will achieve investment in our towns and villages.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The financial future is challenging throughout local government. The funding we receive from central Government is likely to reduce significantly over the next few years, ending completely from 2020. We need to find £2.7 million each year if we are to maintain a balanced budget.

At the same time, our 2015 survey indicated that residents would like the Council to keep Council Tax at or below the target rate of inflation. This Plan sets out how we will balance residents' priorities within our diminishing resources.

We will keep close control of our budgets and make the best use of our resources.

Communities

Resilient, healthy and engaged communities



The Council will continue to work with its partners to help local communities become stronger and better able to support themselves. Key to this is the provision of good, accessible information and on-going two way engagement with these communities.

Through our Community Safety Partnership we will work to address environmental crime and antisocial behaviour and aim to reduce the fear of crime. 69% of residents feel we are working to make the area safer, a 6% improvement compared to 2008.

With our leisure, tourism and cultural partners, such as Wave Leisure, we will work to promote healthy lifestyles and support people to maintain their health and wellbeing.

We will also continue to work with key voluntary organisations in the area; they provide a range of advice and support services to a wide cross-section of people, also helping vulnerable people to retain their independence.

82% of people who receive the Council's magazine *District News* think it provides useful information.

We will achieve this by

- Working with Wave Leisure and other health partners to provide information and activities to encourage healthy lifestyles, with a particular focus on the needs of specific parts of the district and an ageing population.
- Working closely with our voluntary sector partners (3VA, Sompriti, Citizens' Advice Bureau, AiRS and East Sussex Credit Union) to deliver key advice services and make effective use of grant funding.
- Working with our voluntary sector partner 3VA to promote dementia awareness across the district.
- Improved engagement with local communities, particularly focusing on how we connect with young people, through the delivery of a new social media strategy.
- Further develop our relationships with Town and Parish Councils to ensure we work collaboratively on local issues, such as housing, infrastructure and rural isolation.
- Working closely with cultural partners, such as East Sussex Arts Partnership and Cultural Advisory Board, to promote a strong arts and culture brand across the County.

Measuring our success

- Increased participation in leisure activities amongst older people and in rural areas.
- More visitors to our leisure facilities.
- Mystery visit satisfaction score of 80% or more at our leisure centres.
- Increased sign up to the Council's social media channels, particularly by young people.
- Residents feel we are working to make the area safer (as measured in the annual community safety survey carried out by East Sussex County Council).
- Reduction in levels of environmental crime and anti-social behaviour such as litter and dog-fouling at key hotspots in the district.
- Enhanced advice/sign-posting services for dementia sufferers and their families, provided through 3VA.
- Increased value of tourism to the local economy.

58% of people aged 18 to 34 would like to get more engaged with us through social media.



Customers

Improved customer service



We will work to improve our customer service by making better use of technology. Our aim is to deliver a better service to customers by joining up our systems and training our staff to handle a wide variety of calls.

In addition we will offer more services on-line, so they can be accessed by customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We hope that this will provide more choice and convenience for our residents.

We will achieve this by

- Improving our customer service to ensure more enquiries can be dealt with by speaking to just one person.
- Delivering high quality services for our customers including options to self-serve on our website and increasing use of social media and email alerts.
- Investing in new technology to speed up and improve the service people receive when they contact us.

Measuring our success

- Increasing the proportion of phone calls answered within 30 seconds.
- Monitoring, acting on and learning from the customer complaints and compliments we receive.
- Increasing the number of people registering for our email alert service. We aim to sign up 1,500 new users each year.
- Customer contact – user satisfaction with the Council's website.
- Satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the Council.

Around **7,500** calls come to our switchboard each week

63% of customers contact us by phone; **75%** of these calls are about our waste and recycling services

20% of customers contact us via email

Over **800** e-forms are submitted via our website each month

83% of local residents use the internet

Place

Delivering sustainable new housing and infrastructure



Lewes is the second most expensive market town in England in which to buy a home. The average house price is £408,641, making it a challenging place for first time buyers as well as those on lower incomes. As the housing authority we have over 1,700 people on our housing register and in 2013 we estimated this would increase by 374 people per year. We estimate that only 244 Council homes will become available each year to meet this need.

As a Council, we have a clear commitment to deliver more new affordable housing. We have established a range of public/private arrangements which will see the Council using its assets to stimulate growth in the housing market at a local level. We have an ambitious house building programme, which will see over 5,800 new market and affordable homes built by 2030.

We recognise the need for infrastructure improvements to support new and existing homes and businesses. Our planning policies and the operation of the Community Infrastructure Levy are aimed at securing such improvements.

We will achieve this by

- Using our planning powers (including our policy to ensure 40% of new housing is affordable) to encourage and enable developers to deliver further, suitable and sustainable housing in the district.
- Working with our commercial partners (Santon) to implement the development of over 400 new homes (40% of which will be affordable) as part of the North Street Quarter Regeneration Scheme in Lewes.
- The Local Growth Fund project – delivering up to 30 new Council homes for rent on 7 sites owned by us.
- Working with local communities on Neighbourhood Plans, to guide future land use and identify where housing can be built.
- Campaigning for improvements to the A27 and A259, rail infrastructure and rail services.
- Installing photovoltaic panels on council buildings and encouraging local renewable energy projects.
- Enabling the delivery of key infrastructure projects in Newhaven, including flood alleviation and the Port access road.

Measuring our success

- Delivery of over 1,400 new homes across the district, 40% of these being affordable.
- 10 adopted Neighbourhood Plans in place by 2020.
- Flood Alleviation Scheme delivered to unlock development sites in Newhaven.
- Flood defences in Lewes completed in partnership with the Environment Agency.
- Southern part of Newhaven Port area made accessible for development.

Campaigning to improve local road and rail infrastructure is a *top priority* for local people

Place

Growth and prosperity



The district is an outstanding location for business and enterprise with a diverse community of over 4,700 businesses. They employ over 30,000 people from a wide catchment area.

Key sectors include public administration, cultural and visitor services and destinations, creative industries, education and health, retail and manufacturing.

Lewes, Seaford and Newhaven have good rail links to London, Gatwick and the Sussex coast and beyond. The district benefits from good access to the trunk road network, with the A27/A26 linking Lewes and Newhaven to neighbouring Brighton and Eastbourne. The nearby A23/M23 provides access to London, Gatwick and the M25.

The port of Newhaven offers cross channel passenger and freight services to Dieppe and beyond to northern European. There is great potential to open up a European market with in excess of 450 million customers.

We recognise the importance of inward investment and have an important role to play in enabling new and developing businesses. We will work closely with strategic and

economic partners to bring about investment in jobs, skills and training opportunities. This will contribute to the regeneration needed, especially in coastal and rural areas.

With our cultural partners we will present a distinct visitor brand for the district that promotes the vibrant arts and culture on offer.

We will achieve this by

- Developing the Enterprise Zone in Newhaven which has the potential to deliver 2,000 new jobs.
- Working in partnership to deliver super-fast broadband to businesses across the district.
- Providing advice and support to help businesses across the district to grow and invest, including small businesses and the self-employed.
- In partnership with others, ensure a clear arts and cultural brand for the district is developed.
- Provide visitor services across the district in line with our Tourism Strategy 2015-2018.
- Continue to make the case for Gatwick as the most sustainable location for a second runway in the South East.

Measuring our success

- Increase in the number of businesses assisted through the Business Rate Relief Scheme.
- Facilitate an annual visual arts festival in the district.
- Clear promotion of the district as a distinct visitor destination.
- Delivery of an annual business awards scheme with good uptake from local businesses.
- Level of investment into local businesses secured through partners.
- Enterprise Zone established, resulting in increased occupied commercial floor space of 55,000m² in Newhaven .
- Delivering increased broadband coverage and speed in the district.
- 700m² of new modern floor space for growing businesses on Denton Island.
- 140,000m² of commercial space, 300 public car parking spaces and a new 1,864m² health centre in Lewes.

Place

Clean and green district



Rightly, our residents value their high quality environment. They believe rubbish and litter is more of a problem now than in 2008. We expect the district to remain a clean and beautiful place to live, work and visit, as a result of continued effort to protect the quality of the local environment.

Our residents think good recycling and waste management services are vital to maintaining a clean and green district. We are currently below the national average recycling rate for district councils in the South East (42.9%). We will invest significantly in our recycling services and aim to encourage much higher rates of recycling.

Our parks, open spaces and nature reserves are highly valued by local residents and visitors alike. We have a strong track record of environmental enhancement and bio-diversity schemes which aim to preserve natural habitats for future generations.

We will achieve this by

- Introducing a waste service that prioritises recycling and ensures these services are easy to use and collections are frequent – recyclable waste (including food waste) to be collected every week and remaining household waste to be collected fortnightly.
- Extending the chargeable fortnightly green waste collection service, currently piloting in Seaford, to the whole of the district.
- Developing a high profile campaign on new recycling services, so residents are well informed.
- Working with our new grounds maintenance contractor, Town and Parish Councils and local volunteers to maintain high quality public parks and community spaces.
- Exploring new opportunities to increase income.
- Working with the police and other agencies to tackle environmental crime such as litter and fly-tipping.

Measuring our success

- Increased levels of recycling – we aim to recycle 47% of household waste by 2019.
- To enhance the provision of waste collection and disposal services in the district, through delivery of a new Materials Recovery Facility in Newhaven. This will make our waste operation more efficient and cost-effective and provide future commercial opportunities.
- The number of parks and open spaces devolved to local communities.

88% of local people are satisfied with our refuse collection service.

Our current recycling rate is around **26%**, better than in 2014/15 but short of our ambitious target.

74% of people are satisfied with our recycling service.

Value for money

Delivering sustainable services



The financial outlook for local government continues to be bleak. Having already absorbed cuts of 40%, we anticipate that our Revenue Support Grant will be completely withdrawn by 2020. We are already well on the way to managing this reduction, but recognise that we need to continue to remain agile and flexible in how we manage our services within a tightening financial environment.

We have an ambitious capital investment programme, which will yield new income streams for the Council. But at the same time, we must continue to explore new ways of delivering services.

A significant element of our future savings will be achieved through our Joint Transformation Programme, which will see us integrate all our services with Eastbourne Borough Council by 2020 and deliver savings of £2.7 million per year.

We will achieve this by

The formation of an integrated council with Eastbourne Borough Council through the full integration of management, services and ICT to:

- Protect services delivered to local residents while at the same time reducing costs for both councils.
- Create two stronger organisations which can operate more strategically within the region while still retaining the sovereignty of each council.
- Meet communities and customers' expectations to receive high quality, modern services focused on local needs and making best use of modern technology.
- Build resilience by combining skills and infrastructure across both councils.
- Develop a shared model of governance that enables the sovereignty and democratic legitimacy of each council to be maintained.

Measuring our success

- Council tax precept remains below the target rate of inflation.
- Deliver a balanced budget and savings of £2.7 million each year.
- Encourage our residents to self-serve, using our website.
- Percentage of invoices paid on time.

Our total spend reduced by 4% in 2013/14; we were in the lowest third compared to other similar councils.

We have reduced spending by 2% since 2012/13 and spend is in the lowest third amongst similar councils.

We increased the value of our assets by 6% in 2013/14.

Value for money

Our budget and spending 2016/17



Our budget and spending 2016/17

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Where does the money come from?

Pie chart to follow

Our capital programme 2016/17

Pie chart to follow

Where does the money go?

Pie chart to follow

2016/17 Council Tax

The average level of Council Tax (for Band D properties) in the Lewes district will be £X,xxx.xx for the year from 1 April 2016.