

Eastbourne Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-2026 (Refreshed from the 2020-2024 version)

Introduction from the Leader, Councillor David Tutt

“A sustainable thread runs throughout all areas of our work”

Welcome to the 2022 refresh of Eastbourne Borough Council’s corporate plan. The corporate plan is the Council’s overarching strategic document. It sets out our ambitions and vision for how we will provide outstanding customer service and provide Eastbourne’s communities and visitors with a great place to live, work and enjoy. Normally, the corporate plan is set for a four year period, in this case 2020-24. However, due to the unprecedented events of the last two years, it is necessary for us to fundamentally adjust our strategic position to meet present and future challenges and extend its timeframe to reflect the extent of the challenge.

Thus, this mid-term refresh of our corporate plan is set against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. As has been the case with all authorities, the pressures of responding to the needs of our community coupled with huge unavoidable losses of crucial revenue income during this terrible time, has left local government with some huge recovery challenges. When you factor in previous and ongoing pressures caused by the loss of millions of pounds of central grant funding, the ever-increasing inflationary price rises and, as yet unknown, global effect of the tragedy unfolding as a result of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the scale of the challenge is daunting indeed.

There is no quick fix here. The Council needs to rebuild its revenue stream, replenish its reserves and be prudent in its use of resources over the foreseeable future. The Council has been working proactively with the Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in respect of being able to use its capital resources such as borrowing and asset disposal in order to address short term funding pressures (this is known as capitalisation). The Council has also received helpful guidance and recommendations from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on how best to chart a course to future sustainability.

To this end, readers familiar with our 2020-24 corporate plan will notice that, in addition to our ongoing high level strategic themes (Growth and Prosperity, Housing and Development, Quality Environment and Thriving Communities), there is now a whole new overarching strategic theme entitled ‘Recovery and Stabilisation’ which set out a comprehensive programme of projects and actions which are underway to ensure recovery and future financial resilience. Not only does this new theme seek to meet the challenges summarised above but it will also underpin all the other themes. Put simply, our ability to deliver on the stated aims and actions of all the ongoing themes will be largely dependent on our success in delivering the aims and actions under ‘Recovery and Stabilisation’.

Appendix 1

The council will continue to play a key role in community leadership and enabling the long-term sustainability and resilience of our communities. This is particularly important as we continue to redevelop and regenerate Eastbourne as well as provide new homes. Our priority themes continue to reflect our vision to deliver a clean and attractive zero carbon town, producing less waste than before, with a high-quality built environment, excellent parks and open spaces for visitors and residents to enjoy, served by a number of good transport options. Notwithstanding the tremendous challenges ahead, we remain committed to our values and to the future prosperity of Eastbourne.

Eastbourne – Facts and Figures

Population – 103,324

Population increased by 4.9% between 2010 and 2020. Below average for South East England (7.5%).

Population predicted to grow by 2030 to 106,894

Tourism

In 2019, £408.9m spend by tourists to Eastbourne. 81% of overnight visitors stay in paid accommodation (hotels, B&Bs etc).

28.1% of employment is tourism related.

Economy

In 2021 71% in employment. 59.7% employed by an organisation/company, and 11.3% self-employed.

60.8% = full time

39.2% = part time

29% of Eastbourne areas in the 3 most deprived national deciles.

Households

Projected households to 2030: 49,922

Average house price (2020): £245,125 vs £211,000 (2016)

Breakdown of industries

Human health and social work activities – 24.4%

Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles – 19.5%

Manufacturing – 3.7%

Education – 9.8%

Construction – 4.3%

Accommodation and food service activities – 9.8%

Professional, scientific and technical activities – 5.5%

Appendix 1

Administration and support service activities – 4.9%

Public administration and defence – 3.7%

Transport and storage – 2.4%

Information and communication – 1.7%

Real estate activities, excluding imputed rental – 3.0%

Arts, entertainment and recreation – 2.4%

Financial and insurance activities – 1.5%

Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste – 0.7%

Other service activities – 2.4%

Customer Charter - Our Promise To You

We aspire to provide outstanding customer service and provide Eastbourne's communities with a great place to live, work and enjoy. Our commitment to you is enshrined in our new customer charter and you will see us delivering your services through our visible teams of Customer First, Neighbourhood First, Homes First and Environment First.

As a valued customer you can expect us to:

Be fair

- Treat you as an individual
- Deliver a professional service
- Be honest about what we can and can't do
- Provide services that do not unfairly discriminate against or disadvantage anyone in the community

Be respectful

- Listen to you
- Be courteous, polite and helpful at all times
- Maintain your privacy and confidentiality
- Do what we say we will do

Be accessible

- Provide modern, efficient online services 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Communicate clearly
- Publish clear, concise and up to date information on our website
- Respond to customer enquiries sent through all channels including social media profiles
- Deliver reasonable adjustments to those needing help accessing our information, premises or services

Be accountable

- Give our name so you know who you are dealing with
- Focus on delivering our core responsibilities
- Clearly signpost how you can provide feedback on our services

Be efficient

- Be knowledgeable, giving accurate information
- Provide online channels that enable you to access our services at your convenience
- Communicate with you electronically, wherever appropriate, but offering other methods if you needed
- Make the best use of council resources to ensure we are providing value for money

Learn

- Aim to get things right first time and learn from experience
- Take complaints seriously and seek to resolve any issues at the earliest opportunity

In return, we ask that you:

- Treat our staff with respect
- Give us the correct information at the right time
- Tell us when something changes
- Share your views with us on council matters that are important to you
- Tell us about anything we can do to overcome barriers to accessing our services.

Recovery and Stabilisation

Eastbourne Borough Council, like all local authorities, was hit hard by the Covid pandemic. As well as ensuring that all parts of our community were properly supported during this unprecedented time, the effect of the pandemic was particularly acute on coastal resort towns like Eastbourne due to the total loss of tourism and leisure income for a long period of time. As a result, we now need to put in place stringent measures to recover our position and provide future financial stability. As well as focusing on sound commercial opportunities, we will ensure the best possible use of our limited resources to deliver high quality customer services. Whilst doing so, we will continue to embed sustainability into our procurement practices and make considered purchasing decisions such as finding alternatives to single-use plastics. We will also become more efficient in our use of energy at our sites, making targeted improvements where cost effective to do so.

Commercialisation and increasing revenue

Achieved through:

- Reinvigorating those commercial asset sites that provide valuable revenue income, enabling the Council to maintain essential and statutory services
- Focusing new capital expenditure primarily on housing, health and safety issues, and only undertaking new commercial ventures when subject to rigorous, sound business cases that are affordable and achievable
- Reviewing our property portfolio with a view to strategic disposals, taking into account capital worth, revenue yield and social value
- Lobbying Government for additional funding specifically to enable ongoing maintenance of heritage assets

Delivering high quality customer services

Achieved through:

- Improving online engagement and digital services
- Responding to customer feedback to improve our services
- Developing our staff with effective use of the apprenticeship levy

Delivering value for money services and responsibly managing risk

Achieved through:

- Automation
- Council tax and business rates which help deliver residents' services efficiently
- Preparing for and responding to local and national challenges

Generating social value

Achieved through:

- Responsible procurement practices including through working with partners on efficient procurement routes to market
- Ensuring staff wellbeing through following work practices that protect and look after the physical and mental health of staff

Having a workforce and culture that reflects the diversity of the local community and providing diversity training in recruitment and selection practice

Providing robust governance

Achieved through:

- Regular monitoring of performance and progress against targets, internally through the Recovery and Stabilisation Board, and through the respective public democratic roles of the Council's Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Governance Committee.
- Liaison as required with external partners and agencies, in particular the Council's auditors, CIPFA and Government.
- Having a workforce and culture that reflects the diversity of the local community and providing diversity training in recruitment and selection practice
- Ensuring that our assumptions of income are realistically reflected in budget setting and that the ambitions and objectives of our capital programme are in sync with the projections of our medium-term financial strategy

Growth and Prosperity - Eastbourne in 2026

We will have a prosperous, thriving and sustainable economy which provides opportunities for businesses to grow and invest, supports employment and skills, invests in housing and regeneration along with the infrastructure to support economic growth. Eastbourne will continue to be an outstanding destination for tourism, arts, leisure, heritage and culture but will actively seek opportunities to diversify the town's business offer to reduce the scale of reliance that currently exists in respect of tourism and leisure

Our success measures are:

- Tourism figures
- Retail vacancy rates
- Maintaining high numbers of venue patrons
- Business rates and rent collection figures

Growth & Prosperity in Eastbourne in 2026 will be:

Outstanding in tourism and leisure

Achieved through:

- A refurbished Sovereign Leisure Centre
- An Hotel of Excellence, which will provide students and apprentices 'real time' hotel training opportunities, by working in and experiencing the day-to-day operations and service departments of an operational hotel

- A comprehensive Seafront Strategy

An exciting arts and events programme, including world-class musical performances, theatre productions and a wide variety of bandstand performances

Attractive & thriving

Achieved through:

- Maintaining the heritage environment
- Continuing to improve the public realm in the town centre and provide a continuous pedestrian link between the railway station and the seafront

Supporting and attracting business

Achieved through:

- Exploring in liaison with partners opportunities for further diversification and growth of our business offer in order to reduce reliance on tourism and leisure
- Revitalising Sovereign Harbour Innovation Park
- Working with YourBID business improvement district partnership
- A local industrial strategy which will define how areas will maximise their productivity whilst minimising environmental impact
- Delivery of a seafront strategy with the Chamber of Commerce, Hospitality Association and Federation of Small Businesses.

Growth & Prosperity - Eastbourne in 2026 will have:

Improved infrastructure

Achieved through:

- Continuing to lobby government for a new A27 dual carriageway between Lewes and Polegate
- New integrated cycling and walking routes
- Implementing the Transport for South-East strategy
- Support for high-speed rail services to the town and support for reduced train journey time between Eastbourne and London
- Supporting improved high-speed broadband including full fibre coverage

Exciting cultural events

Achieved through:

- A vibrant and broad ranging events programme
- Successfully hosting the International Lawn Tennis Tournament annually
- Delivering increased conference trade at Devonshire Quarter
- Delivery of Levelling Up projects including a cultural and education centre at Black Robin Farm, improvements to Victoria Place and a significant public art engagement and learning project in conjunction with the Towner.

Housing & Development - Eastbourne in 2026:

We will work alongside residents to deliver decent, safe and well managed housing, meeting the needs of residents by investing in our homes, creating supported communities that work, helping our tenants with their energy bills as we take steps to make council homes more environmentally sustainable, and responding to homelessness and housing needs through maximizing the provision of new affordable housing.

Our success measures are:

- The number of new homes built or purchased
- Reducing the number of families housed in emergency accommodation
- Increasing the number of housing first accommodation units available to former rough sleepers
- Increasing the levels of satisfaction across housing services
- Increasing the numbers of residents helped to remain independent in their homes
- Efficient processing of planning applications

Housing & Development - Eastbourne in 2026 will be:

Addressing homelessness

Achieved through:

- Focusing on prevention, to support households at risk for homelessness
- Developing a Housing hub, co-locating with local authority, health and voluntary sector partners
- Delivering the Rough Sleeper initiative to address the number of rough sleepers in the town and support them in finding suitable accommodation
- Bringing empty homes back into use

Promoting homes that sustain health & wellbeing

Achieved through:

- Exploring how technology can be used to maintain home independence and implementing relevant initiatives
- Further use of grant funding to extend independent living
- Developing integrated health, housing and care strategies

Housing & Development - Eastbourne in 2026 will have:

Good access to housing that meets modern standards

Achieved through:

- Effective development pipeline within the council's housing companies
- Promoting accessible low-cost rental and home ownership initiatives
- Reducing the environmental impact that privately owned homes have on the environment.

Safe, well managed and decent homes

Achieved through:

- Giving residents a voice in how their homes & communities are managed
- Reducing the environmental impact that council owned homes have on the environment

Locations regenerated and more housing

Achieved through:

- Agreeing a new Local Plan that sets delivery targets that meet local housing needs
- Working with public sector partners to utilise shared assets
- Working with public / private sector partners to deliver new affordable housing
- Identifying sustainable locations for development
- Transitioning to the delivery of new carbon neutral & environmentally friendly homes
- 'Living above the shop': encouraging and repurposing premises above shops and commercial units to be used as residential accommodation

Quality Environment - Eastbourne in 2026:

We will have a clean and attractive zero-carbon town, producing less waste with better air quality than before. The town will have a high-quality built environment, excellent parks, open spaces and be served by a number of good transport options.

Our success measures are:

- Percentage of household waste recycled
- Addressing the number of fly tips
- Annual figure for food inspections
- Reducing the incidents of graffiti
- Improved carbon reduction through biodiversity
- Delivering a new flood defence scheme

Quality Environment - Eastbourne in 2026 will be:

Effectively tackling waste

Achieved through:

- Waste reduction education campaigns
- An effective local authority-controlled waste company (South-East Environmental Services)
- Waste crime addressed

Protecting the environment

Achieved through:

- Following a contaminated land strategy
- Following our Biodiversity and pesticide strategies and action plans to enhance the biodiversity of public and open spaces
- Planting more trees and greening urban areas

A low carbon place

Achieved through:

- Implementing an air quality strategy which is ambitious but achievable
- Electric vehicle charging points throughout the borough
- Residents cycling and using public transport more through improved infrastructure

Quality Environment - Eastbourne in 2026 will have:

Sustainable open spaces

Achieved through:

- A comprehensive Downland Strategy
- Improved parks and open spaces
- Measures to promote Eastbourne as the eastern gateway to the Southdown National Park
- Progression of the Eastbourne Park Plan

Thriving Communities Eastbourne in 2026

Our vision is for strong communities where individual residents and their different organisations and support networks have the resources they need to be healthy, feel safe, and thrive. Key to this is our work with partners through the Eastbourne Youth Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership, and with partners in the police, health services and East Sussex County Council. We will also promote equality and foster positive relationships.

Our success measures are:

- Reducing levels of crime per 1000 population compared with similar areas
- Benefits processing times
- Surveys demonstrate residents feel safer

Thriving Communities - Eastbourne in 2022-26 will:

Promote inclusion and address deprivation

Achieved through:

- Fostering positive relations between communities
- A more accessible town (using our disability access audit as a starting point)
- Working with residents to help understand inequality and putting in place measures to reduce isolation
- Promoting financial independence by improving access

Promote physical health and mental well-being

Achieved through:

- Working with Wave Leisure, other activity providers and the East Sussex Public Health team to promote physical activity
- Improving the facilities provided at the Sovereign Leisure Centre
- Promoting walking and cycling as both leisure and commuting activities

Thriving Communities - Eastbourne in 2022-26 will have:

Actively engaged communities

Achieved through:

- Supporting the activities of local voluntary and community groups
- Working with partners to represent the interests of identified groups
- Supporting staff across the council to take part in voluntary activities

Safe communities

Achieved through:

- Identifying and addressing risks and emerging threats such as 'cuckooing' and county lines
- Ensuring that new developments and regeneration schemes adhere to 'secure by design' principles
- Working with the police and other local agencies to tackle local crime and disorder, by identifying emerging threats and targeting measures to address these

Safe residents

Achieved through:

- Working with partners to uncover and tackle domestic abuse and hate crime
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults through clear procedures to identify them and secure required interventions
- Working closely with partners to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking
- Running campaigns that promote safety in the home