

# LDC 2022/23 Corporate Plan Progress Update

## Sustainability and Climate Change

- 1197 households have registered for the summer 2023 **Solar Together Scheme**. The highest number of registrations in all local authorities participating in the scheme.
- 64 7w **Electric Vehicle Charge Points** are to be installed by Connected Kerb in 11 carparks across the district, the project will be completed end of July. This is a fully funded project.
- We have recruited a **Zero Carbon community worker**. Their activity includes: Energy Saving, reducing/repairing/preventing food waste, neighbourhood food/wildlife planting and attendance to other community pop-up and local events.
- The consortium made up of Lewes District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, and Rother District Council have been awarded combined funding of £6,230,700 for the second phase of the **Home Upgrade Grant**. This grant is specific for homes with low energy efficiency, off the gas grid or low income homes.
- **Decarbonising our Housing Stock programme**, evaluating how retrofitting can take our domestic assets to zero carbon when government funding becomes available is publicly available on our website.
- We continue with the successful partnership approach to **Natural Flood Management in the Ouse and Eastern Adur catchment**
- **Cockshut Stream Restoration Project**, we have agreed a contract with Ebsford Environmental who will be constructing our wetland and associated works. During March 2023 we completed an archaeological evaluation and investigations were undertaken, in advance of restoration work to re-route the Cockshut Stream and create a new wetland habitat.

## Building Community Wealth

- We **acquired the headlease to The Marine Workshops (former UTC)** in June 2022 in order to support the regeneration of Newhaven town. The building is being developed into a mixed hub supporting marine and education, commercial space and new public space. Work is continuing on developing the tenant occupation of the building and the council is the process of relocating to this site.
- With the assistance of the **Getting Building fund**, we continue to make sustainable alterations to The Marine Workshops. The building will also provide accommodation for a local college and will be a 'blue space/climate hub' for aquaculture and marine based industry and training
- The council designed and implemented a **brand new grants programme** which allowed broader support for a wider range of voluntary and community groups for the first time. Additionally, a unique fund has been

created to support those fleeing the war in Ukraine. **In response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis**, LDC has created a specific fund and post to support the local voluntary sector as it works to support people impacted by food and fuel poverty.

- The council has **insourced its public convenience cleansing service** and also its office cleaning contract. In addition we have moved to more local providers for some aspects of our housing repairs, so that more local businesses are benefitting from the delivery of this work for the council.
- We established a **modular housing framework**. Local contractor, Boutique Modern have, through this framework, been able to establish a substantial program of works, using modern sustainable construction techniques. This has been not just for LDC, but for Eastbourne and Hastings councils through the same framework agreement.
- In Newhaven there were several under-utilised buildings in the Town Centre which are being developed as a **health and wellbeing hub** for the town.
- Using the principles of '**meanwhile use**'- we are allowing greater spaces for Lewes Community Volunteers and Lewes Climate Hub. In Newhaven a longer term use have been given to The Sidings, a bistro style waterside café.
- Lewes District Council **loaned £155,000 to OVESCO** a local community energy group to develop planning proposals for a solar farm near Ringmer.
- In light of the cost of living crisis, work is underway to develop low cost loans to homeowners in partnership with **Lendology**. This will enable people to access affordable loans for home improvement works providing them with green energy solutions for their homes.
- The Council is exploring applying for **Living Wage Accreditation** and encouraging partners and other local organisations to pay a living wage.
- Our **Local Enterprise and Apprenticeship Programme (LEAP)** continues to provide free business startup support and advice for local residents. It has helped **more than 100 businesses start in last 7 years**.
- The Council has been allocated **£12.8 million** from the Levelling Up Fund for the '**capturing the value of the catch**' project in Newhaven. The project aims to:

Provide **two new fish landing stages** to accommodate 16 small vessels from the Newhaven fishing fleet

Build a **New Centre of Excellence for Seafood Processing** in the town including an auction room and marketplace

Create a **new restaurant and community destination** on the promenade area by West Beach to retain spending in Newhaven for longer and stimulate a local market for fish.

## Delivering Homes

- **148 new council homes** have been completed or are in progress. These homes will also be highly sustainable, accessible and support a range of local needs.
- We have a clear target for **'fabric first'**, making sure the fundamental construction supports our carbon reduction objects.
- LDC have a bespoke approach to **renewable technologies**, reviewed on a site-by-site basis, to reduce Co2 emissions.
- The Council has also **focused on brownfield sites**, making best use of existing under-utilised/redundant land and assets, both within our ownership and that within the wider public sector
- All new Council housing looks to achieve the lowest possible rent levels whilst continuing to ensure viability. As a minimum, **all rents do not exceed Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels**, which typically results in rents between 60%-80% of the market rent levels.
- Greater collaboration and engagement with occupational health, ESCC, and NHS Sussex alongside our own housing needs requirements to ensure **homes meet the identified needs of some specific residents with complex needs**.

## Getting Our Services Right For You

- 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.
- 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.
- Reintroduced **District News** to provide quarterly updates on the work the council has been doing in the community, offering insight into the strategic plans and desired outcomes for the administration.
- **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**, from April 2022, which targets those on the lowest incomes not paying council tax.
- Striving to educate and inform our customers on the environmental benefits of wasting less and recycling more, our regular **Reduce Reuse Recycle Bulletin** sent to 20,000 Subscribers.
- **Recycling and waste campaigns** are also delivered via the council's publications and social media profiles, the latter has some of the highest levels of engagement of all council communications.

- LDC Cost of Living Crisis Fund has supported **12 warm spaces, 10 foodbanks, 9 charities/volunteer organisations/** to support projects to assist local residents in the Lewes District during the Cost-of-Living crisis. In the second round of cost-of-living crisis funding we assisted 26 projects.
- LDC have entered year two of the **Lewes Community Grants Programme** under which we have continued funding for 14 causes.
- **Cost of Living Partners Action Group** formed with 20 members, who meet monthly and have developed an action plan to tackle issues relating to communications, digital inclusion, rural poverty, energy, food and warm spaces, money and debt in the Lewes District.
- LDC hosted two **Cost of Living summits** on behalf of those who are helping to tackle cost of living issues locally. Partners in the local voluntary, community, public and private sector were invited to focus on next steps and furthering the collaborative approach to helping those in need. Updates were provided by organisations working in our communities and network with organisations to develop a cohesive and shared approach to the cost-of-living crisis.