

CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2028

Taking Eastbourne from Stability to Growth



“ ...this plan sets out how we will work with our partners and communities to ensure a robust and diverse future for the town. ”

Introduction

Welcome to our four year plan. This plan sets out our key areas of priority and focus in the coming years. Eastbourne has lived through challenging times in recent years. The covid pandemic, the cost of living crisis, national and international financial pressures and related issues have put real pressure on the borough in many ways. The next four years are our opportunity to respond to these challenges and help Eastbourne to strengthen, rebuild and grow.

■ This high level plan sets out our ambitions for the coming four years. It will form the basis for detailed work programmes for the

delivery of these goals. The work will initially focus on core stability, which will then give us a strong foundation on which to build future growth and prosperity.

■ The council has always taken a strong community leadership role in the town, and it will continue to do so over the coming years. We are proud of our borough. Despite the challenges of recent years, the town continues to be a notable tourist destination, with much to offer visitors from both at home and abroad. We will continue to enable and support this, understanding that it is in strong collaboration with our partners that we can best meet local and visitor needs.

■ However, we also recognise that tourism alone is not enough to enable our town to strengthen and flourish. Therefore, this plan sets out how we will work with our partners and communities to ensure a robust and diverse future for the town. We will continue to invest in the economic regeneration of our town, taking advantage of inward investment and partnership opportunities.

■ Sustainability has been a key driver over the past four years, and this will continue, with our commitment to achieving a carbon net zero town by 2030. However, we recognise that this can only be achieved by continuing to work closely with our partners, businesses



and local people. Our partnership work will continue, and we look forward to seeing this grow and develop over the next 4 years.

■ We are lucky to live in such a beautiful area. Our downland, as well as our parks and gardens, are unique to Eastbourne. We seek to ensure the town and its surrounds continue to be outstanding environments, to be enjoyed by our residents, visitors and by future generations.

■ The cost of living crisis has taken its toll on our communities. We are committed to continuing to play our part to support those most badly affected and ensure adequate support networks are in place. We also recognise that many people in the town are finding it hard to find suitable accommodation for their needs. We will continue to help support those who are at risk of homelessness or in housing need, along with looking to enable and develop new housing in the town.

■ The core of what the council does is to provide a range of essential services to our residents. Over the coming four years we will continue to ensure these services are of a consistently high standard. We will continue to make use of technology to increase efficiency, whilst maintaining the personal touch for those most in need of support.

■ Our focus for the next 4 years in partnership with you is:

- 1 High quality, responsive services**
- 2 Housing and the cost of living crisis**
- 3 Economic development and tourism**
- 4 Sustainability and environment**



1

High quality, responsive services

Putting our customers and local communities first

Providing excellent customer service and focusing on resolving questions and problems first time is central to how this council operates. We will continue to ensure that our services meet our residents' needs and strive to deliver consistently high quality and responsive services.

OUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS WILL BE:

- **Improve the quality of customer experience by offering a wider range of access routes to our services, including more on-line and self-service options to allow 24/7 access.**
- **Alongside this, ensuring more personalised support, including phone options, are always available for those that need additional assistance from us.**
- **Identify and address inequality in our communities in order to promote fairness, equitable services and a commitment to uphold these principles throughout our work.**
- **Get our communication and engagement right through regular information sharing and consultation.**
- **Continue to embed a culture of continuous improvement, where we constantly re-evaluate our quality of service, finding new and innovative ways to use new technology to make our services better for customers.**



2

Housing and the cost of living crisis

Tackling challenging times

The council has an important role in supporting those in most need in society. Since the pandemic, and the economic challenges that followed it nationally, we have been working hard in particular to support people experiencing hardship due to the cost of living crisis. This work will continue, especially whilst the national economic situation continues to be difficult.

Eastbourne has experienced particular challenges in the provision of housing in recent years. The pandemic increased these pressures and the town continues to have significant difficulties in providing sufficient homes for those needing accommodation. The lack of new places to build properties, given the physical constraints of the borough, adds to these challenges. Given these issues, a new Local Plan to set out policies and proposals for new development is a priority.

OUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS WILL BE:

- **Support those on lowest incomes through housing benefit, council tax reductions and other assistance schemes.**
- **Provide information and advice to those needing extra financial support to let them know what is available and how it can be accessed.**
- **Using available data, and technology, to help identify those most at risk of falling into debt and who require welfare support, so that targeted offers of support can be provided.**
- **Reduce the reliance on temporary and emergency accommodation and improve prevention measures for those experiencing homelessness.**
- **Delivering a new Local Plan to support the provision of more social, affordable, sustainable, energy and resource efficient, climate resilient housing, delivering for our tenants and residents more effectively.**
- **Support independent living, including providing accessible housing for those with physical and additional support needs, and work with partners on integrated health, housing and care strategies to support this.**
- **Develop a pipeline of directly delivered homes by the council to support priority housing objectives.**
- **Prioritise regulatory and legislative compliance to ensure the council owned homes remain at a high standard.**

3

Economic development and tourism

A town which thrives

Eastbourne has traditionally been seen as a tourist destination and our aspiration is for this to continue to be the case. However, over the next 4 years we seek to support diversification of the economy, in particular seeking to bring more investment from IT, digital and creative sectors in the town. We will work with partners, using our strategic role, to attract inward investment and deliver real growth for the area. Our new Local Plan will enable us to address the provision and allocation of employment land. In relation to our own assets, we will re-imagine these in a way that better provides for the town's future and enables sustainability in the longer term.

OUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS WILL BE:

- **Delivery of a new overarching strategy for tourism, income, and economic diversification.**
- **Delivery of projects through government 'Levelling up' funding, 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.**
- **Enabling, through a range of providers, high quality arts and events programmes to be delivered in the town, including world-class musical events, theatre productions and other performances, promoting sustainable travel options where possible.**
- **The establishment of a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) to enable the theatres at Devonshire Quarter to continue to develop and thrive. Alongside this, through effective partnership working, increase the conference and exhibition trade at that location.**
- **Work with our leisure partner Wave Active to deliver an Active Health strategy for our communities.**
- **Delivery of an integrated property strategy which provides a clear future approach to commercial activity, addresses the councils' future asset requirements and tackles the challenges of the town's heritage assets.**

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Economic development and tourism cont'd

■ **Partnership working in the town centre, and other key parts of the town, including through 'Your Eastbourne BID' business improvement partnership, and with Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce, Eastbourne Hospitality Association and Sussex Police, to promote events whilst reducing antisocial behaviour and vandalism, and tackling homelessness.**

■ **Continue to improve the public realm in the town centre to provide a continuous pedestrian link between the railway station and the seafront.**

■ **Support the drive for high speed rail services to the town, enabling a reduced journey time between Eastbourne and London, whilst also continuing to lobby government for improvements to the A27.**

■ **Promote active travel in the town with further improved walking and cycling routes.**



4

Sustainability and environment

Tackling the climate emergency

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019, we have been working to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This continues to be a central pillar of the council's work and underpins our approach to all areas of our work. Our Local Plan, waste and recycling service, our parks and open spaces, our housing services, and our flood and coastal management all have a key role to play in tackling climate change.

Sustainability cannot be delivered without the work of a wide range of organisations, and the community. To this end we will continue to work with a range of local partners, including Environment Agency, Eastbourne Eco Action Network, Treebourne, Eastbourne Archaeology and Natural History Society, Changing Chalk, South Downs National Park Authority, Sussex Nature Partnership, Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Natural England and Sussex-air.

OUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS WILL BE:

- **Promote waste reduction, and encourage people to recycle MORE, as part of a 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' approach.**
- **In line with our Biodiversity and Pesticide Strategies, we will enhance the biodiversity of our public and open spaces in the borough.**
- **We will reduce our use of herbicides, fertilisers and other chemicals at locations such as Devonshire Park and other council run sports facilities, replacing petrol gardening and maintenance tools with electric alternatives where possible.**
- **We will work to replace our waste and recycling vehicles with new versions with lower emissions, to reduce our contribution to greenhouse gases.**
- **Electric vehicle chargers will be introduced at our depots for use by council vehicles and we will also facilitate increased access to public electric vehicle charge points and car share schemes, as funding allows.**
- **Our waste and recycling service will respond positively to up and coming changes in waste legislation to ensure we provide a sustainable and sufficient service for our residents.**
- **The Pevensey and Eastbourne Coastal Management Scheme, where we are working in partnership with the Environment Agency, will have a key part to play in helping reduce the risk of coastal flooding.**
- **Work in partnership on opportunities arising from the Seaford to Eastbourne Nature Recovery Project, launched in summer 2023 by Defra and Natural England'**

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Sustainability and environment cont'd



- **We will both build, and encourage others to build, through our new Local Plan, housing which is affordable, energy efficient, climate resilient, adaptable and locally sourced – including the Modular Housing Framework to increase the use of modern methods of construction (MMC) in the delivery of new council homes.**
- **Our ‘Educate Remind Enforce’ campaign will be used to ensure robust and effective ways of dealing with litter and fly-tipping.**
- **Monitor, and work with partners to improve, air quality in the borough, focusing in particular on nitrogen dioxide and particulate levels.**
- **Continue to utilise the Clear Futures Joint Venture Partnership and Framework to support sustainable and transformational change.**

