

Environment & Housing Deputy Leader's Statement 2020/21



INTRODUCTION

East Staffordshire Borough Council has three Corporate Priorities:

- **Value for Money Council**
- **Community Regeneration**
- **Environment and Health & Wellbeing**

The following statement sets out how the Deputy Leader for Environment and Housing and officers within this portfolio area will contribute to achieving these priorities, as well highlighting key achievements from 2019/20.

However the activities outlined in the statement are often cross-cutting themes with overlaps into other areas, and throughout the statement there may be examples of joint delivery with other Executive Members as well as managers from other sections.

Each of the statements made by the individual portfolio holders will then be collated to form the basis of East Staffordshire Borough Council's Corporate Plan for 2020/21.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019/20

Over the past 12 months, the Council has been working hard to improve its services and is currently on track to achieve [INSERT %] of this portfolio's milestones set for 2019/20 by the end of this financial year.

Some of these achievements are highlighted in the following section.

Further development of SMARTER Working Initiatives

Building our successful approach to SMARTER services, we undertook a detailed whole system review of our Waste Service, including commercial waste, examined how we carry out these important functions, and explored even more effective and efficient ways of service delivery.

We also developed a programme plan to implement the recommendations of the SMARTER Street Cleaning review.

Maintained a Strong Building Consultancy Service

In order to demonstrate a strong Building Consultancy Service, we carried out a full implementation of the LABC (ISO 9001) Quality Management System for Building Control.

Maintained a High Quality Environmental Service

We continued to be productive on recycling and waste reduction and where possible we worked proactively with Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Management Board.

We maintained top quartile performance on litter, detritus, fly posting and graffiti and whilst facing a significant increase in contaminated waste, and despite not achieving the set target, we did successfully collect over 99% of presented bins.

SMARTER Communications in Environment Services

Aligned with the Council's Digital Strategy, we revamped the Council's Waste Management and Street Cleaning sections of the website and used Social Media platforms to provide timely, relevant and useful information to residents.

Responded to Government Policy Changes

DEFRA's Resources and Waste Strategy and the emerging Environment Bill proposed some significant changes in waste policy, and impacts on local council operations. During 2019 we responded to the DEFRA consultations concerning Extended Producer Responsibility, a Deposit Return Scheme and Consistency in Waste Collection Systems.

Delivered Excellent SMARTER Services

We continued to deliver excellent services to the residents of East Staffordshire, maximising income through collection rates, reducing former years' arrears, and increasing the collection of overpaid Housing Benefit. We reviewed the Business Rates Relief policy which provided additional flexibility into how we administrate the policy when new reliefs are provided by the Government and we continued to grow our tax bases through a series of reviews of discounts, exemptions and reliefs.

Proactively Met the Welfare Reform Challenges

We reviewed the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. We proactively managed the impact of the partial introduction of Universal Credit full service within the Borough, and improved the processing of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims to an average of 5 days, which is the best performance ever achieved by the Council. We also worked proactively with external stakeholders to prepare for the Universal Credit Managed Migration when the roll out is announced by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Delivered Better Services to Support Homelessness

We have built on the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act, proactively improving our service through a series of initiatives such as maximising the utilisation of self-contained temporary accommodation for

homeless applicants and reducing the void turnaround to an average of six working days. We also ensured that the average time from appointment to an initial decision for homeless applicants was well below the 10 day target.

We produced a business plan and commissioned additional professional assistance from Grafton to tackle homes that have been empty for two years or longer within the borough. There are a series of targets for this activity to bring empty homes back into use each year of operation.

Tackling Rough Sleeping

We have continued to work proactively and reviewed our options for continuing outreach services to rough sleepers, ensuring that support is continued to be offered to any rough sleepers in the Borough. We also organised our annual rough sleeper count (again to Government standards) in the winter to ensure we have an accurate and verified picture of our rough sleeper situation.

OBJECTIVES FOR 2020/21

The Council is determined to continue to build on its successes during 2019/20 as it moves forward into the 2020/21 financial year. It will continue to improve performance, service delivery and value for money through delivery of the Council's three Corporate Priorities. Achievement of these priorities will be supported by the **Environment and Housing** portfolio through delivery of the objectives detailed in the following section. The specific performance indicators identified to measure these objectives are referenced in the paragraphs below.

SMARTER Waste (Target Ref No. EH08; EH09; EH10; EH11)

We will review the outcomes and impacts from the Environment Bill, including the deposit return scheme, the extended producer responsibility and consistency in collections as well as making preparation for the possible introduction of separate weekly food collections.

We will continue to work through the SMARTER Waste and SMARTER Street Cleaning initiatives to implement efficiencies, cost savings and income generation where appropriate, as well as improvements and new ways of working. These will be delivered in a series of sequential steps in order to maximise opportunities when they arise.

We will commence an essential strategic procurement exercise covering the replacement of our refuse collection vehicles and street cleaning vehicles to take effect from when the current contract expires in October 2021, whilst also considering opportunities to improve on their environmental performance. The Council's Dry Recycling Service Contract and Garden Waste Contract expire in March 2022 and we will engage with partners to carry out a detailed appraisal of all the options available prior to any procurement activity.

Housing Strategy Initiatives (Target Ref No. EH19; EH20; EH16)

We will refresh the Housing Strategy and adopt a new version to take us up to 2025. We will also continue to support the delivery of the Empty Homes Contract and provide a six-monthly performance report. As we are entering into a new phase with the Housing Register Service we will also look at opportunities for improving the service and delivering potential efficiencies with the delivery partner which will help to keep operating costs to a minimum.

Continue to Deliver Better Services to Support Homelessness & Tackle Rough Sleeping (Target Ref No. EH14; EH15; EH17; EH18)

We will promote and help to nurture the development of the Burton and East Staffs Homeless Partnership, which will help to further enhance the coordinated approach of the borough's volunteer and charity organisations which all provide support to the homeless clients.

We will evaluate and build on the existing Housing First and Navigator projects which are currently funded until March 2021. A new project titled "Homes4Me" is due to launch in Spring 2020 and this will provide accommodation to those rough sleepers with very complex needs.

We will continue to improve the services on offer by maximising the utilisation of self-contained temporary accommodation for homeless applicants and maintaining the void turnaround to an average of six working days. We will also ensure that the average time from appointment to an initial decision for homeless applicants is held at three days.

Deliver Excellent SMARTER Services (Target Ref No. EH01; EH02; EH03; EH04; EH05; EH06; EH07)

We will continue to deliver effective and efficient services across Revenues, Benefits and Customer Contacts, maximising income through collection rates, reducing former years' arrears and continuing to increase the collection of overpaid Housing Benefit. We will review policies where applicable and implement the new Business Rates Rate Relief Policy; we will continue to ensure that Housing Benefit processing at the Borough Council side is carried out as efficiently and swiftly as possible. We will also work proactively and prepare for any Universal Credit Managed Migration requirements which may come from the DWP.

MEASURES AND TARGETS FOR 2020/21

The Environment & Housing portfolio has identified a number of measures and targets for 2020/21 which will contribute to the delivery of the objectives detailed above. These are set out in the following tables.

Value for Money Council

Ref	Measures	Target 2020/21
EH01	Continue to Maximise Income Through Effective Collection Processes (Previously BV 9 & 10)	Collection Rates of - Council Tax : 98% NNDR : 99%
EH02	Continue to Maximise Income Through Effective Collection Processes: Reduce Former Years Arrears for Council Tax; NNDR; Sundry Debts	Former Years Arrears for: Council Tax; NNDR; Sundry Debts; <i>To Be Agreed Post Outturn</i>
EH03	Maintaining excellent customer access to services with face-to-face and telephony enquiries	99% of CSC and Telephony Team Enquiries Resolved at First Point of Contact Minimum 75% Telephony Team Calls Answered Within 10 Seconds
EH04	Continue to Improve the Ways We Provide Benefits to Those Most in Need: Time Taken to Process Benefit New Claims and Change Events (Previously NI 181)	<i>To Be Agreed Post Outturn</i>
EH05	Working Towards the Reduction of Claimant Error Housing Benefit Overpayments (HBOPs): % of HBOPs Overpayments Recovered During the Year; % of HBOPS Processed and on Payment Arrangement	% of HBOPs Overpayments Recovered During the Year; % of HBOPS Processed and on Payment Arrangement; <i>To Be Agreed Post Outturn</i>

Ref	Measures	Target 2020/21
EH06	Implement the new Business Rates Rate Relief policy	Revised Policy implemented (April 2020)
EH07	Prepare for Universal Credit Managed Migration	Two Member Briefings (March 2021)
EH08	Further Development of SMARTER working (Waste Collection)	Continue with SMARTER Waste Review Service Two Update Reports with next steps (March 2021)
EH09	Further Development of SMARTER working (Street Cleaning)	Implement the SMARTER Street Cleaning Programme Update report on IT Management System (March 2021)
EH10	Essential Procurement Activities	Dry Recycling Contract / Garden Waste Contract Procurement commenced (Options Report) (June 2020)
EH11	Essential Procurement Activities	Vehicle Procurement concluded (November 2020)
EH12	Minimise The Number Of Missed Bin Collections	Number Of Missed Bin Collections: Achieve 99.97% successful bin collections across the Borough (March 2021)
EH13	Respond to Government Policy Announcements	Complete responses to Government consultations in line with consultation deadlines

Environment and Health & Wellbeing

Ref	Measures	Target 2020/21
EH14	Delivering Better Services to Support Homelessness	Promote, monitor and report on the Burton and East Staffordshire Partnership, produce two activity reports during the year (Sep 20 / Mar 21)
EH15	Delivering Better Services to Support Homelessness	Evaluate and build on the existing MHCLG/ESBC projects to target entrenched rough sleepers with two activity reports during the year (Sept 2020 / Mar 2021) Prepare and submit new applications to MHCLG as and when appropriate during the year
EH16	Proactively reducing the number of empty homes in the borough	Produce annual contract performance report (March 2021)
EH17	Delivering Better Services to Support Homelessness	Average time from appointment to initial decision for homeless applicants of 3 days
EH18	Continue to Maximise Utilisation of Self Contained Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Applicants	Reduce 'Key to Key' Void Turnaround to an average of 6 working days
EH19	Improving our Housing Strategy Initiatives	Refreshed Housing Strategy (December 2020)

Ref	Measures	Target 2020/21
EH20	Improving our Housing Strategy Initiatives	Report opportunities for improving Housing Register Service (December 2020)
EH21	Maintain Top Quartile Performance For Street Cleansing - Litter	<i>Maintain Top Quartile Performance</i>
EH22	Maintain Top Quartile Performance For Street Cleansing - Detritus	<i>Maintain Top Quartile Performance</i>
EH23	Maintain Top Quartile Performance For Street Cleansing - Graffiti	<i>Maintain Top Quartile Performance</i>
EH24	Maintain Top Quartile Performance For Street Cleansing – Fly-Posting	<i>Maintain Top Quartile Performance</i>
EH25	Maintain Top Quartile Performance On Recycling	Household Waste Recycled and Composted: <i>Maintain Top Quartile Performance</i>
EH26	Maintain Top Quartile Performance On Waste Reduction	Residual Household Waste Per Household: <i>Maintain Top Quartile Performance</i>