



# Council Plan 2023 to 2027 progress report

[Council Plan update report](#) >

## Introduction from the Leader of the Council Cllr Paul Harvey and Co-Leader Cllr Gavin James

Over the past two years, we've made significant progress in delivering on a lot of what we set out to do in our update to the Council Plan, amended in 2023. Thanks to the dedication of our officers and teams, our partners and the support of our communities, we've seen real momentum across the things that matter most to residents. And we've done all this while keeping the council's finances healthy, with a balanced budget.



We've have reached some key milestones on some of our most ambitious projects for the borough. From improvements to make Basingstoke's Top of the Town more inviting and finding a partner to deliver a new Aquadrome to the start of work to deliver much-needed new homes at Manydown, we are laying the foundations for a thriving future.

Helping people to love where they live today is important to us. From putting more crews out on our streets to keep them clean and tidy to upgrades to play areas and public toilets, we've worked hard to deliver practical improvements that residents see every day.

Looking ahead, we're protecting and enhancing vital homelessness services with the refurbishment of May Place House. We are making the renewal of our much-loved Eastrop Park a priority. We have attracted millions of pounds in investment into our Borough, creating jobs and new facilities, and now we are looking to appoint a major investor to help take the future of our Town Centre plans forward. We will bring forward our plans for Manydown South. We're looking to add more new facilities on the Leisure Park.

At the same time, in response to the government's plans to reorganise local government, we are working with other councils to shape proposals for new unitary councils that will deliver all local government services across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to ensure they reflect residents' needs for the future.

Our Council Plan reflects what makes Basingstoke and Deane so special – our ambition, our resilience and the strength of our communities. We are incredibly proud of what we've achieved so far. We're determined to work just as hard over the next two years to build on this progress and deliver on our updated commitments.

## A recap on what we set out to achieve

Read about what we have delivered and our focus for the next two years.

### Contents

- [Council priority: a place where people can have pride in their communities and the borough](#)
  - [Council priority: A borough where we protect, restore, reconnect and enhance our natural environment](#)
  - [Council priority: A council that delivers high-quality services for our residents](#)
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## Council priority: a place where people can have pride in their communities and the borough

Our aim is for Basingstoke and Deane to continue to be a well-designed and beautiful borough, with sustainable communities that thrive and where the most vulnerable are supported. We are committed to protecting, enhancing and restoring our natural environment while delivering the homes and infrastructure our residents need.

This includes building more social rented housing, supporting neighbourhood plans, and updating the Local Plan to ensure development is well planned, enhances local character, and meets community needs without compromising quality of life by an increase in population. Manydown remains a key priority, offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring much-needed homes through a well-planned and infrastructure-led approach.

We want our borough to have a thriving economy with jobs, skills and opportunities for all, while regenerating priority areas and tackling inequality. Our plans include delivering a modern leisure park, improving sports facilities and open spaces, including the renewal and improvement of Eastrop Park, and strengthening our arts and culture to make the borough a vibrant place to live and visit.

We will promote healthy lifestyles, and support community, voluntary and cultural organisations who play such an important role in our borough. Safety is central to our ambitions, and we will continue to invest in community safety patrols to create secure, welcoming places for residents, businesses and visitors.



## What we have delivered in the first two years

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Invested an additional £1.5 million over two years to improve frontline services such as street cleaning and grounds maintenance.

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Delivered our action plan to improve the Top of the Town, supporting businesses with, £61,000 of funding to improve their shopfronts while driving forward jet washing, repainting, refreshing planters and other measures.

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Replaced 6 play areas and work underway on 3 more as part of our play area refurbishment programme with significant improvements and repairs made to 32 other existing play areas.

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Protected hundreds of jobs by keeping The AA in Basingstoke and we are exploring long term opportunities for Fanum House.

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567 new affordable homes delivered, of which 169 homes are for social rent.

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Secured emergency homelessness accommodation for vulnerable residents by agreeing to buy May Place House at the Top of the Town.

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Driven forward plans for a new Aquadrome and have enabled the major refurbishment of the ice rink, as part of our improvement plans for Basingstoke Leisure Park.

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Tackling poverty in the borough through a new strategic partnership bringing together public and community and voluntary organisations.

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Secured £300 million of inward investment in the borough, with Great Wolf progressing their proposals for a hotel and indoor water park following the agreement of an in-principle deal.

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Protected our biggest cultural assets (The Anvil and The Haymarket) for years to come through a £1.6 million repair programme.

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Delivering new communities at Manydown North through an infrastructure-led approach, with work underway on the main resident gateway, paving the way for new homes.

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Supported the sale of Festival Place with major investment underway by the new owners, as part of our work to improve the town centre.

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Delivering improvements in the town centre and Basing View by launching the search for an investment partner.

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Secured Basingstoke Community Furniture Project's future in their current location by agreeing to sell the building.

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Removed car parking charges at Eastrop Park and Bell Street Car Park in Whitchurch.

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Progressed our draft Local Plan through consultation with local communities. The plan has been developed to meet government targets while taking an infrastructure-first approach to development in the borough.

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82,000 residents and visitors enjoyed our events programme, including Basingstoke Festival.

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## What we have delivered in the first two years

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Supporting Citizens Advice Basingstoke to find a new town centre location and funded them to deliver a new drop-in service for Residents to get the support they need in our community centres in Oakridge, Popley and Buckskin.

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Supported residents across the borough to take pride in their areas through community clean up activities following the launch of our annual Keep Basingstoke and Deane Clean campaign.

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Providing employment and personalised support for young job seekers through Basingstoke Youth Hub, in partnership with Inclusion Education and DWP.

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Launched Listen Up – a live music event held in venues across the Top of the Town to boost the nighttime economy.

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Secured the future of 24 Swan Street by agreeing a new lease with Kingsclere Youth Performing Arts Centre.

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Supported 102 aspiring homeowners through new bespoke one-to-one appointments and helped 220 people through three low-cost homeownership events.

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Recognised for the high level of support we offer for those suffering domestic abuse by being accredited by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. We are only the fifth borough or district council in England without directly owned social housing stock to achieve this.

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Carried out repair work at the paddling pool, made improvements to the play area and gave the toilets a makeover as part of improvements at Eastrop Park.

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1,701 visits to council-supported mental health drop-ins, 339 young people took part in Relax Kids sessions and YPI Counselling provided 3,082 hours of targeted counselling for young people 6,919 visits to council-supported activities to help people stay active, including cardiac, Parkinson's and health walk sessions, and 746 people were referred to targeted exercise programmes to help manage health conditions.

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Supported projects and initiatives to strengthen local communities and support our economy with over £1.5 million of funding through the Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds.

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While driving forward plans for a new community centre in South Ham with Sovereign Network Group, we purchased The Beacon which is being refurbished to provide more short-term space for the community.

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Over 950,000 visits to council-owned community centres, following our support for community associations to deliver services and activities and a programme of events to promote inclusion for local residents.

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Supported projects and initiatives to strengthen local communities and our economy with over £1.5 million of funding through the Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds. This included supporting 54 community and voluntary organisations with £618,000 to support residents with the cost of living, improving residents' quality of life and supporting people into employment.

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Secured 326 new homes and more car parking on Basing View as part of a build to rent offer after agreeing terms with Packaged Living.

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## **What we have delivered in the first two years**

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Progressed plans for a new 18-hole adventure golf course and golf pod style driving range at the leisure park, as part of a £1 million investment.

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Enabled community and voluntary organisations to provide more support for residents across the borough through £2.3 million of grant funding.

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Supported 77 businesses to grow their businesses, upskill their staff and diversify the rural economy with £660,000 of grant funding.

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Given communities more control over how their area evolves by supporting neighbourhood planning initiatives.

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Supported 7 projects to increase participation in creative activities, showcase local history, support local grassroots music and inspire young people to work in the creative sector with £180,000 of funding.

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Supported 54 community and voluntary sector organisations with £618,000 of funding to deliver projects aimed at supporting residents with the cost of living, improving residents' quality of life and supporting people into employment.

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Recognised for our work to end violence against women and girls by being reaccredited by White Ribbon until October 2028.

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Provided 111 new parking spaces in residential areas in Popley, Brighton Hill, South Ham, Buckskin, Norden, Tadley, Overton and Kingsclere as part of our parking in residential areas scheme.

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## **Our focus for the next two years**

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Delivering a new Aquadrome, subject to planning permission, attracting other leisure uses in line with latest trends and improving connectivity as part of our future ambitions for the leisure park.

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Delivering new homes and office spaces to support the vibrancy of the town centre and Basing View, working with an investment partner.

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Progressing infrastructure work and the delivery of community facilities, schools and new homes at Manydown North.

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Carrying out detailed work to explore how we will renew and improve our much-loved Green Flag awarded Eastrop Park.

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Our comprehensive refurbishment of May Place House to protect essential services for residents at risk of homelessness.

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Continuing to deliver our annual events and culture programmes that people enjoy so much and applying to become the UK's first Town of Culture.

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Continuing to work with local businesses and attract external investment to support our local economy.

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## Our focus for the next two years

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Developing a vision for southern Manydown for sustainable and connected communities, including new homes, green spaces, schools, shops, sports hub and transport corridor by finding a partner.

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Continuing to build strong relationships with healthcare partners to support them to bring forward a new hospital/health campus and improve access to healthcare services.

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Working with partners to try and attract university-level education to the borough, despite significant funding challenges facing the higher education sector.

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Continue tackling poverty in the borough by working collectively with our partners.

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Further CCTV cameras will be installed in the town centre as part of our commitment to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour and supporting local businesses.

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Launch of a new North Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum as part of the council's commitment to tackling domestic abuse and working collaboratively across North Hampshire.

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Continuing to work with Basingstoke Town Community Football Club to support their aspirations for a sustainable future.

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Consider how we best support parish and town councils and neighbourhood planning groups to work on plans for their areas in the future, such as a potential grant scheme, following the withdrawal of government funding.

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Oversee and support the delivery of an infrastructure-first approach to development to ensure that essential facilities and services are in place to support new communities.

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## Council priority: A borough where we protect, restore, reconnect and enhance our natural environment

Through our Council Plan, we are committed to protecting, restoring and enhancing the natural environment, improving biodiversity, air quality, river health and landscapes, while becoming a carbon neutral council by 2025.

A focus will be placed on reducing waste and increasing reuse and recycling to address current recycling rates, including supporting the Community Furniture Project to expand its work in a larger local facility.

We will lead a strengthened programme of action on climate change and biodiversity, including targeting areas to become local nature recovery networks as part of a wider coordinated approach to enhancing our natural areas and green open spaces. This includes making Basingstoke town centre greener, investing in our highly-valued parks and open spaces and creating new parks, like what is being proposed at Manydown.



Our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy will continue to guide actions and activities to reach our overall carbon neutral target. Where possible we will install solar photovoltaic panels on our own assets and actively encourage others to, as well as supporting and promoting renewable energy sources.

We will encourage and support greener transport options including better walking and cycling routes and electric vehicle infrastructure.

We value our precious water assets and will ensure we continue to meet our commitments to improve the quality of our rivers in accordance with our Local Plan while focusing on lobbying relevant authorities to protect and restore them in the climate and borough's interest.

## **What we have delivered in the first two years**

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Named as the joint-best district council in the UK for how we collaborate on climate action.

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Cut vehicle emissions from our bin lorries by up to 98% by switching from diesel to a low-carbon biofuel.

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Met our highly ambitious target to be carbon neutral in 2025 (subject to final figures due to be released in summer 2026).

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Introduced kerbside food waste collections across the borough which could boost our recycling rate by 52%.

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Reviewed the borough's net zero strategy, working with communities and businesses to cut carbon. Borough emissions are down by 25% since 2018 – more than in any other district in mainland Hampshire.

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Adopted a biodiversity strategy to help focus and hasten local efforts to reverse species decline and support nature recovery.

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Helped over 10,000 residents and hundreds of businesses with free tailored advice through activities and support provided by our innovative, first-of-its-kind Green Team.

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Helped residents to make energy-saving home improvements, like insulation, to tackle households' cost of living pressures and cut carbon by accessing nearly £6 million of grant funding.

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An additional £22,000 has been spent on our services, instead of energy bills, thanks to solar panels on our buildings that have generated enough zero-emission electricity to earn us an estimated £15,000 and cut our bills by a further £7,000.

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Started a new project to install hundreds of solar panels across more of our community centres to save money on energy bills and cut carbon.

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Supported nature conservation efforts with 17 groups and over 250 volunteers now working alongside us and Natural Basingstoke to care for more than 300 hectares of green space that nurture native species and absorb around 860 tonnes of carbon each year.

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## **What we have delivered in the first two years**

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Helped to protect the North Wessex Downs for the future by agreeing a long-term management plan for the national landscape and lobbying government to maintain safeguards against homes and roads being built there.

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Little Pen Wood due to be declared as our 11th local nature reserve in early 2026. We have also begun work to declare Old Down as a local nature reserve.

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Completed our Hatch Warren and Beggarwood Biodiversity Improvement Zone pilot project, which saw the different management of the area boost species diversity by 56% with 237 plant species and rare insects now present.

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80,000 council-owned trees proactively managed and we have planted 750 new trees.

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Worked with partners to safeguard our borough's water courses to maintain and restore our valued chalk streams.

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30 additional electric vehicle chargers installed to make it easier for residents and visitors to swap to zero-emission vehicles. There are over 50 chargers across the borough with at least one in every ward.

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## **Our focus for the next two years**

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Progressing work to designate Old Down as a nature reserve, including consultation with the community.

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Helping residents to reduce waste and increase their recycling, to include plastic pots, tubs and trays, once Hampshire County Council has built its new recycling facility.

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Delivering on action identified in the updated Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy, adopted in December 2025.

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Expanding our programme to fit solar panels on council-owned community centres. Buildings earmarked include Rooksdown, Tadley, Rucstall and Roger Morris community centres, The Irish Centre in Basingstoke town centre, Oakridge Hall for All, Old Down Hall and the Sycamore Centre in Winklebury.

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Continuing to deliver an expanded programme of tree and hedge planting across the borough.

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Continuing to progress new local nature reserves across the borough, in line with our priority programme.

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Proactively drive the Environment Agency to ensure their statutory obligations regarding improvements in water quality, including monitoring, are met and lobby water companies on their legal responsibilities to improve their storm sewage discharge performance.

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Working with partners to encourage key improvements to sustainable transport, enhanced electric vehicle charging infrastructure and improved walking and cycling routes.

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## **Our focus for the next two years**

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Collaborating with partners to reduce emissions across the borough.

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Continuing to support residents, communities and organisation save money, improve nature and reduce carbon through the Green Team, including developing additional support streams where suitable.

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Providing more allotments and improving facilities at existing sites as part of our ongoing investment in allotments across the borough.

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Our Ranger teams will continue to work with our valued volunteers to regenerate biodiversity across the borough.

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## **Council priority: A council that delivers high-quality services for our residents**

We want to strengthen communities, deliver high-quality services and create active, healthy and inclusive neighbourhoods. We will do this by providing excellent frontline services. We will invest in cleaner streets, improved grounds maintenance and better play areas, as well as enhancing parks and open spaces. Our focus includes improving access, such as providing quality public toilets, and continuing to improve our waste collection services.



We recognise the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis for residents across the borough and will develop an anti-poverty strategy to support those most affected. Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion across our growing communities is central to our approach.

We will prioritise customer-focused services, clear communication and financial sustainability, working collaboratively with partners across Hampshire and beyond to achieve our shared goals.

### **What we have delivered in the first two years**

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Our Make a Difference teams have tackled areas in need of extra care and attention, covering a total area of 3,613,794 square metres – equivalent to roughly 506 professional football pitches.

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4,764 fly tips removed by our operations team.

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10 years of tackling homelessness and rough sleeping through the Basingstoke and Deane Social Inclusion Partnership.

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We have invested an additional £1.5 million over the last two years as part of targeted action to improve how streets and parks and open spaces can look their best.

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## What we have delivered in the first two years

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A comprehensive approach to organisational improvement with every service area delivering an improvement plan which has enabled really good performance against key performance indicators for our services.

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A 6% increase in residents who said they felt well informed about council and services.

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Our zero tolerance approach to fly-tipping has seen us issue 1 caution, 75 Fixed Penalty Notices, 25 prosecutions and 24 written warnings and an 11% decrease in fly-tipping incidents cleared by our operations team between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

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£19.77 million income received last year from the property that we own (almost double the amount we get from council tax) which helped to fund our services for our residents.

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£200,000 reinvested into our capital budget following the sale of former mowers and handheld tools used by our operations team.

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Beggarwood Park, Eastrop Park and War Memorial Park awarded Keep Britain Tidy's Green Flag award.

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Over 1,000 people signed up to our new dedicated Facebook channel to provide regular updates on waste collections.

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Improved open spaces at Whiteditch Playing Fields and Upper Sherborne Road Open Spaces, using developer funding, as well as improvements at Brighton Hill and Popley. Works included coppicing and planting trees, hedges, wildflowers and bee-friendly bulbs.

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Over £83,000 spent on upgrades to public toilets across the borough and opening times extended to increase access to toilets in Eastrop Park, War Memorial Park, Kingsclere and Overton.

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17,500 kilometres of hard surfaces managed to minimise weeds in the last two years which is the distance from Basingstoke to Australia.

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Set new targets to make our customers' experience even better through our new customer experience strategy.

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6,000 miles of roads swept during leaf fall season each year and 6 million square metres of grass cut 8 times every year.

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Secured and delivered 82,000 kitchen and 72,000 kerbside caddies, 900 shared food waste bins and 4.3 million compostable liners, as part of our roll-out of food waste collections.

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Completed 4.2 million black bin collections and 2.1 million green bin collections across the borough each year.

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Our customer service team answered 192,137 calls, 67,831 emails and helped 33,000 customers visiting our offices.

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## **What we have delivered in the first two years**

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94% of homeless approaches to our housing team resolved without the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

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Over 300 people facing homelessness or rough sleeping supported through our homeless pathway and Winter Night Light Shelter.

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1,575 litter bins across the borough emptied weekly, totalling 81,900 bins every year.

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Launched new staff values for the organisation, alongside other organisational improvements, to support the delivery of priority outcomes for the borough.

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95.87% of respondents finding revamped council magazine useful or very useful.

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Delivered a new customer relationship management system to support key elements of our customer experience strategy which will enable some of the core aspects of the customer strategy such as automated feedback.

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£4,052,772 of funding awarded through disabled facilities grants, supporting 395 projects to help residents adapt their homes to meet their needs.

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170% increase in traffic to the Love Basingstoke website which showcases what's happening locally.

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Love Basingstoke social media engagement has increased by 330% through a series of marketing campaigns to promote the borough and showcase everything that's on offer.

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## **Our focus for the next two years**

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Continuing to strengthen our frontline services to residents that make the borough a great place to live, including additional investment to keep streets clean and parks and open spaces looking their best.

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Continuing our overall approach to improving our organisation and services to maximise the positive impact for the borough and our communities.

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Continuing to deliver improvements to our play areas across the borough, prioritising the play areas most in need.

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Continuing our trailblazing approach, including early intervention and an individual-led approach, to prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping while responding to significant challenges in the wider housing market.

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Delivering a new system to manage and respond to customer complaints more efficiently.

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Making best use of technology and AI to improve digital services and options to make residents' experience better.

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## **Our focus for the next two years**

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Continuing to use our assets effectively so we can continue to invest in services and projects to improve the borough.

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Continuing to be as efficient as possible and manage our money carefully so that we retain our strong financial position.

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