

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 JUNE 2020:**

ANNUAL REVIEW AGAINST THE CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2019/20

Cabinet Member Cllr Bob Deed
Responsible Officer Chief Executive, Stephen Walford

Reason for Report: To provide Members with an update on performance against the corporate plan and local service targets for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee reviews the performance and feeds back any areas of concern to Cabinet.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Corporate Plan priorities and targets are effectively maintained through the use of appropriate performance indicators and regular monitoring.

Financial Implications: None identified

Legal Implications: None

Risk Assessment: If performance is not monitored we may fail to meet our corporate and local service plan targets or to take appropriate corrective action where necessary.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues identified for this report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The last Corporate Plan covered the period from April 2016 until March 2020; it was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 February 2016. This is the final Annual Report on progress against this plan. The new Corporate Plan approved by Cabinet on 16 January 2020 will run from April 2020 until March 2024.
- 1.2 Progress is monitored throughout the year by reporting against the declared Aims for each Priority identified.

2.0 Environment PDG

Aim 1- Increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste

- 2.1 The final result for the recycling rate for the year was just below target at 53.02% compared to 53.43% last year. The residual waste was on target at 365.0Kg last year's final result was 363.7Kg per household.
- 2.2 The waste service has experienced significantly increased levels of recycling and residual waste during lockdown. The service was adversely affected by

staff absences and constraints at the start of the pandemic but services are now mostly operating normally.

- 2.3 Both measures for missed collections are better than target at 0.02% of all collections. The Service achieved its target of an annual cost of less than £45 per household with an annual cost of £43.80. These are fantastic results.
- 2.4 The number of households paying for the chargeable garden waste service just exceeded the target of 10,000 customers.

Aim 2 – Reduce our carbon footprint

- 2.5 At an extraordinary meeting of Full Council on 26 June 2019, Members voted unanimously to support an ambitious cut in carbon emissions; to aim for Mid Devon to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 2.6 Back in 2012, MDDC embarked on a long term energy saving project that would help reduce the Council's energy consumption and save money. Half way through the project the Council, in partnership with Anesco Energy Services, is reaping the rewards and figures show the success of the project so far.
- 2.7 In the first five years the project has saved 3,975,431 Kilowatt-hours (kWh) in electricity and 1,854,450 kWh saving in gas providing an impressive total of 5,829,881 kWh saved.
- 2.8 The Carbon Emissions Baseline figure was calculated and reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 19 December, a recommendation was been made for the Environmental PDG working group to prioritise actions as the next stage.
- 2.9 Comparison with other districts has been considered and discounted at this stage as direct comparisons are not useful where in-house services are different, which is generally the case. MDDC is the only district council with all services in-house in Devon so would tend to have a higher intrinsic footprint regardless of measures taken.
- 2.10 The Net-Zero Task Force was appointed by the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group - made up of Devon's councils, emergency services and business groups - to deliver the Devon Carbon Plan. The Carbon Plan will lay out in stark terms what every resident, organisation and business has to do to reduce emissions and safeguard the planet for the next generation.
- 2.11 There has been some movement on the climate declaration agenda over the last couple of months and the pandemic has had a positive effect on carbon emissions and air quality improvement as has been reported nationally in the press. As part of the work towards recovery ways of capitalising on these positive effects is being considered.

Aim 3 – Protect the natural environment

- 2.12 There have been 18 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued this year despite being down one member of staff for the last quarter

- 2.13 Work with Cullompton Neighbourhood plan group towards a country park (as part of the Garden Village project). A report went to Cabinet 30th May on stage 1 public consultation responses, which was noted.
- 2.14 Cabinet have also recommended to Full Council that the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24 be adopted. This was adopted on 24 July.

3.0 Homes PDG

Aim 1 – Build more council houses

- 3.1 All 26 units Palmerston Park were handed over in August 2019. The houses at Turner Rise were quickly fully occupied. In addition to building 26 properties we also repurchased three former Council Houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme.
- 3.2 Work continues on the feasibility of further development within our own estates and elsewhere for example the conversion of 2 common rooms into new flats.

Aim 2 – Facilitate the housing growth that Mid Devon needs, including affordable housing

- 3.3 Last year was very successful with both measures above target. Bringing Empty homes into use has well exceeded the annual target and the number of affordable homes delivered was well above target as at 31 December.
- 3.4 MDDC held its third Landlord Networking Event focused on improving local housing on 2 October at the award winning Hartnoll Hotel. The event sold out in advance and judging by the feedback received from the delegates and exhibitors, the event was very successful.

Aim 3 – Planning and enhancing the built environment

- 3.5 Performance Planning Guarantee determined within 26 weeks was just below target at 99.9% but all four speed and quality measures were well above the required target. These are all reported quarterly.
- 3.6 The Cullompton Masterplan and Delivery Plan Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension both saw stage 1 public consultations completed.
- 3.7 2019/20 saw the completion of the examination process into the Local Plan Review culminating in the submission of main modifications in February 2020. Although the Planning Inspector's post examination report into the Plan was expected in May, we have recently been advised it is now more likely to be received in late June or early July.
- 3.8 Towards the end of 2019 the Council entered into contracts with Homes England to secure a total of £18.2 m of infrastructure funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund to support the delivery of highway schemes for the A361

junction at Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension and the Cullompton town centre relief road. Both schemes will unlock planned for housing growth and in the case of Cullompton, improve air quality within the town centre.

Other

- 3.9 Most measures were either on or above target except for Average days to re-let which was just outside the target of 14 days however lettings have been suspended during lockdown. For Properties with a valid gas safety certificate, this has been even more difficult during the lockdown with some tenants refusing access or self-isolating. Our contractor has continued to work throughout the lockdown and is to be commended for their work and safe working practices.
- 3.10 Staff have continued to provide a high level of support to tenants working from home during the pandemic. They have also had to deal with increased numbers of homelessness approaches. Repairs staff have been redeployed to maintain corporate assets while non-urgent work has been suspended during the lockdown.

4.0 Economy PDG

Aim 1 - Attract new businesses to the District

Aim 2 - Focus on business retention and growth of existing businesses

- 4.1 During the Covid 19 pandemic the Growth and Economic Development service have been heavily involved with processing the business support grants (with Revenues service) and co-ordinating community voluntary groups, they have also taken the lead in the Council's shielding response.

Aim 3 - Improve and regenerate our town centres with the aim of increasing footfall, dwell-time and spend in our town centres

- 4.2 For Empty Shops, the vacancy rates in Tiverton and Crediton have deteriorated over the last year but Cullompton's have improved being the only PI on the appendix showing as "green". This is an exact reversal of the position last year.
- 4.3 According to the British Retail Gazette, the UK vacancy rate for town centre retail units hit 10.3% in July 2019, so although only Cullompton currently has less empty units than target, all three towns are below the national vacancy rate.

Aim 4 - Grow the tourism sector

- 4.4 There were five successful Electric Nights events for 2019/20 at Tiverton Pannier Market.
- 4.5 40 businesses from Mid Devon's food, entertainment and hospitality sector attended the first leisure and tourism event to celebrate the launch of the new Visit Mid Devon website. The event was held on Wednesday, 26 February 2020

at Petroc College, Tiverton and hosted by the Visit Mid Devon team; a partnership, between the Council and the Tourist Information Service (run by Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life).

Other

- 4.6 A report on the position regarding the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan went to Cabinet on 21 November 2019 and during 2019/20 work has progressed preparing draft policies and site options. These are expected to come before the respective Cabinets/Executives of the Great Exeter authorities in the next few months prior to public consultation. The revised timetable now envisages adoption in 2023.

5.0 Community PDG

Aim 1- Work with local communities to encourage them to support themselves

- 5.1 The Council continues to support key third party organisations with strategic grants of around £75,000 per annum.

Aim 2 – Work with Town and Parish Councils

- 5.2 MDDC's Monitoring Officer provides training to parish and town councils on request and also attended a number of their meetings. She also receives regular requests for advice from parish clerks.
- 5.3 Member Services provide a monthly update to parish clerks as well as organising and hosting the annual clerks' event in the autumn.

Aim 3 – Promote physical activity, health and wellbeing

- 5.4 The Council invested in the region of £10,000 to improve the existing tennis courts, at Lords Meadow in Crediton, making them multi-purpose for the use of netball as well as tennis. The improvement work was completed on budget.
- 5.5 The paddling pool in Westexe Park, Tiverton was reopened in time for the school summer holidays.
- 5.6 A total refurbishment of the fitness studio at Culm Valley Sports Centre in Cullompton costing £200,000 was completed in time for the New Year.
- 5.7 The Council's Leisure centres have been closed since 20 March with most staff having been furloughed but a number have been re-deployed to other services, including several to the community shielding project. Others include staff helping with back office, grant applications and cleaners to help with the extra hygiene requirements during the pandemic.

Other

- 5.8 MDDC's website was upgraded from 1 July 2019. We then upgraded our other websites for accessibility i.e. Culm Garden Village, NMD Building Control and Leisure. Advice is being given to Town and Parishes regarding their websites. Mid Devon Matters; a quarterly newsletter was launched at the Mid Devon Show.
- 5.9 MDDC has successfully applied for £1.2 million of Government funding to support the regeneration of Cullompton's historic town centre. The Council submitted the bid to Historic England for a share of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone, under the Government's High Streets Programme. The bid is specific to Cullompton.
- 5.10 Public Health Officers continue to work to keep residents safe as regarding food hygiene, undertaking prosecutions where necessary. Mid Devon has recently been named as one of the safest areas to eat out.

6.0 Corporate

Overarching priorities:

- 6.1 Our collection rates remain very high with NNDR achieving target at 99.2% and council tax at 98.5%. Recovery is expected to be lower in 2020/21 due to the pandemic.
- 6.2 The Response to FOI requests have been 100% on time since April 2019.

7.0 Awards

- 7.1 Each year the Parliamentary Review aims to showcase the best of business, journalism and politics in its prestigious publication. In September MDDC was recognised in its feature on best practice.
- 7.2 One of our solicitors was shortlisted for the Legal Professional of the Year Award, run by Lawyers in Local Government (LLG). The awards ceremony has been postponed to later in the year when the results will be announced.
- 7.3 MDDC's Electoral Services Manager received a national award in recognition for her support to the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), South West Branch and contribution to electoral services.
- 7.4 MDDC's Tiverton Pannier Market Team has received an award for National 'Market Team of the Year'. The award was made by the National Association of British Market Authorities and recognised the achievements and dedication of the small team
- 7.5 MDDC's CCTV Supervisor and Police Support Volunteer received two separate awards in recognition of his contribution to policing in Devon.

7.6 The Council's Land Charges team have won the Digital Data Award at the Land Data Local Land Charges Awards 2020. The Digital Data Award recognises the importance of high quality data and focuses on the five characteristics of high quality information; accuracy, completeness, consistency, uniqueness and timeliness.

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Circulation of the Report: Leadership Team and Leader