

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 JUNE 2021:**

ANNUAL REVIEW AGAINST THE CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2020/21

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 2020/21.

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 Corporate Plan was approved by Cabinet on 16 January 2020 and runs from April 2020 until March 2024. This is the first annual report against the current Corporate Plan. The attached KPI appendices cover the entire financial year. Progress is monitored throughout the year by reporting against the declared Aims for each Priority identified.
- 1.2 In terms of the priorities for the coming year, the Cabinet will be focused on embedding a recovery from the pandemic, while trying to ensure that delivery against the corporate plan is back on track. As members will see from the KPI report, there are a number of areas that have been dramatically affected by the pandemic and it will be important to understand where these are inevitable and understood 'blips' on a trajectory, where they might be structural changes caused by what's occurred in the last year, and most importantly how to get delivery back on track wherever possible to ensure that corporate aims can be met.

2.0 Environment

Aim - Increase recycling rates and reduce the amounts of residual waste generated

- 2.1 The final result for the recycling rate for the year was just below target at 53.5% compared to 53.12% last year. The residual waste was above target at 379.8Kg last year's final result was on target at 365Kg per household.
- 2.2 The waste service has experienced significantly increased levels of recycling and residual waste during lockdown periods, waste arisings have increased by 1975.57 tonnes compared to last year. All our near neighbours also saw an increase in residual waste per household. The service was also adversely affected by staff absences and constraints at the start of the pandemic.
- 2.3 Both measures for missed collections are better than target at 0.02% of all collections for the second year running.
- 2.4 The number of households paying for the chargeable garden waste service exceeded the target of 11,100 customers. An increase of 16.45% compared to the previous year; this is the largest increase since 2017/18.
- 2.5 Altogether a good set of results, the priority for 2021/22 is the three weekly waste collection trial which is due to start in July for three months.

Aim - Encourage "green" sources of energy supply new policies and develop plans to decarbonise energy consumption in Mid Devon

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan were approved by Cabinet on 1 October 2020. The Climate and Sustainability Specialist started on 1 March 2021.
- 2.8 The Council secured more than £310,000 of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant to fund the installation of energy efficiency and cost-saving measures at its three leisure centres.
- 2.9 The Council will also receive an additional £38,000 in the form of two grants from Salix, which is administering the government funding. These two grants are specifically to assist the development of a Heat Decarbonisation Plan to 2030 (£18,000) and £20,000 for skilled project support on the delivery of our Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme that will be rolled out to the leisure centres. All three funding schemes will help the Council realise its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

3.0 Homes

Aim - Deliver more affordable housing and greater numbers of social rented homes

3.1 No new council houses were built during 2020/21 but one right to buy property was bought back. However in March the Council announced plans to build more than 50 new council houses between 2021 and 2024. For 2021/22 a target of 20 has been set.

3.2 None of the targets for housing delivery have been met but it must be recognised that the Covid pandemic increased the challenges during 2020/21 with the industry being completely shut down during the first period of lockdown. In this light the number of completions should be viewed favourably.

**Aims - Work with Community Land Trusts and other organisations to deliver homes retained in perpetuity for local need
Support the establishment of Community Land Trusts in partnership with Parish Councils and other local bodies**

3.3 Two Community Land Trusts were assisted during 2020/21 meeting the target.

Aim - Work with landlords to ensure the quality of homes in the private rented sector

3.4 Empty homes brought back into use were once again above target at 101 (138 last year).

Aim - Support and grow active tenancy engagement

3.5 A tenant survey was successfully completed with a response rate of 34%. Work is continuing on analysing the results and developing an action plan.

3.6 Staff continued to provide a high level of support to tenants while working from home during the pandemic. Repairs staff were redeployed to maintain corporate assets while non-urgent work was suspended during the first lockdown but have been working fairly normally throughout the remainder of the year. The teams received a lot of positive feedback from customers.

Aim - Work with local stakeholders to initiate delivery of the new garden village at Culm

3.7 Two stakeholder forums were held remotely during 2020/21, in August and September, on the Building with Nature accreditation and the Connecting the Culm project.

4.0 Economy

**Aims - Identify strategic and tactical interventions to create economic and community confidence and pride in the places we live. This includes a continued focus on Town Centre Regeneration
Develop and deliver regeneration plans for all 3 main towns in partnership with Town and Parish Councils, private and third sector and**

communities Promote the regeneration of our Town Centres by working with landlords and property developers to improve and increase the supply of quality housing

- 4.1 Progress has been made on both the Tiverton Town Centre and Cullompton Town masterplans during 2020/21 with stage 2 consultations for both scheduled for 2021/22.
- 4.2 The Council's own retail properties have good occupancy rates with only three vacancies across the portfolio in Tiverton, one of which has been let subject to contract.
- 4.3 The number of empty business units across the district have reduced during 2020/21 and the number of business rate accounts has increased, although this is partly due to small businesses registering for the first time in order to secure grant funding.
- 4.4 The Council has administered £36M of Covid grant funding to businesses over the course of the pandemic along with £2M of new rate reliefs. This was an enormous amount of work undertaken by staff from Revenues, Growth and Economic Development, redeployed Leisure staff and Finance.
- 4.5 Growth and Economic Development and Public Health staff have worked hard to help businesses and retail areas to open safely when they were allowed after the periods of lockdown.

Aim - the creation of South West Mutual Bank and seek opportunities to encourage new branches being opened in areas that aren't well-served by existing banking services providers

- 4.6 A meeting was held in December 2020 by the Deputy CE and the Cabinet Member for Finance with SW Mutual Bank's Director to receive an update on progress. Clearly, the prevailing Covid19 challenges have slowed down previously identified actions and delayed key milestones, however, at the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that a quarterly progress update report would be provided in the future.

5.0 **Community**

- 5.1 In addition to the business grant funding referred to above the Council has £534,410 funding specifically to help adversely affected individuals through Hardship funding and Self Isolation payments. For the latter the Council had 263 applications up to March 2021; 104 were paid (£52k), 144 rejected and 15 were awaiting assessment.

Aim - Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon

- 5.2 Town centre Wi-Fi projects are proposed to be delivered in 2021.

Aim - Seek opportunities to address public health issues and disparities to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Mid Devon

- 5.3 Despite the Leisure centres being closed for several periods during the pandemic a few people were still referred under the various schemes and started in the Autumn. These programmes will continue in 2021/22.
- 5.4 During the closures Leisure staff were redeployed to other services including Street Scene, Planning, Housing, grant payments and NFI work. During the first lockdown some were working on the Shielding project and later with community testing at EVLC and vaccinations at LMLC.

Corporate

- 6.1 The Planning KPIs are all on target or better than target.
- 6.2 The responses to FOI requests have been 100% on time for two years.
- 6.3 The Council's own industrial units had 100% occupancy rates at the end of the year.
- 6.4 Collection rates for Council tax and NNDR are only slightly below target which is a real achievement during a pandemic when no formal recovery took place.
- 6.5 The Devon and Somerset Metro Board reached an important milestone in February, submitting a Strategic Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport to reopen stations at Cullompton and Wellington. This is a crucial step forward in the process of implementing improvements to the rail network including the provision of these new stations.

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Circulation of the Report: Leadership Team and Leader