

**CABINET**  
**5 APRIL 2022**

**Corporate Plan 2020-24 – Mid Point Review**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Leader, Cllr Bob Deed  
**Responsible Officer:** Chief Executive, Stephen Walford

**Reason for Report:** To consider the progress against delivery for the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 at its midway point. This report reflects on performance against achievement of the priorities over the past two years, undertakes a brief gap analysis to understand where delivery is untracked via existing KPIs, identifies a range of challenges to delivery moving forward and, ultimately, recommends a refreshed corporate plan be brought back to cabinet for consideration and onward recommendation to full council as appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. That the Cabinet notes the progress on delivery of the Corporate Plan.**
- 2. That an updated version of the Corporate Plan be brought back to Cabinet in due course, reflecting the known gaps and refreshed delivery priorities.**

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** This report provides an update on the current corporate plan 2020-2024.

**Financial Implications:** There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, if performance is not at the expected or desired level then resources may need to be reviewed or redirected to enable improved performance.

**Legal Implications:** There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, if performance is not at satisfactory levels, the risk of legal challenge arising increases.

**Equalities Impact Assessment:** Customer feedback can help the council identify any groups of people who may potentially be experiencing our services differently to the majority of our customers. When reviewing performance and making recommendations on priorities, the council should be minded to consider how services might impact on different sections of the community.

**Risk Assessment:** Any areas at risk of missing target are highlighted within this report. Members are asked to consider these areas and consider any proposed remedial actions.

**Climate Change:** There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report. However, some individual supporting projects reflect specific elements of the council's climate change agenda as set out in the corporate plan.

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 It is now two years since the Council adopted its second Corporate Plan, a period in which there have been major changes locally, nationally and globally. The Corporate Plan was adopted a matter of weeks before the pandemic

struck, therefore it is safe to say that the first half of this plan period is not quite what the council may have envisaged at the time of its approval in February 2020. It is therefore appropriate to take some time to reflect on the progress against the Council's Corporate Plan, to review our successes and to review the priorities where necessary as we move into the second half of the Corporate Plan (2022-2024).

- 1.2 Additionally, it has created an opportunity for the business planning and performance framework to be reviewed and realigned to the needs of the council at this point in time as it reflects on the successes of the past two years and the challenges going forward.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan included at Appendix A, was adopted by the Council in February 2020. It set out the Council's aims and priorities, and expanded on these with an explanation of the Council's thinking and the key actions that would deliver on these priorities.

- 2.2 The Corporate Plan is a document which sets out what the council want to achieve in the district to support and enrich our communities and businesses and the environment we live in. The Plan retained the four key priority areas that were identified in 2016 and these continue to 'map' onto the thematic 'Policy Development Groups' (PDGs) that make up part of the council's governance structure to enable targeted focus by elected members in each of those areas.

## **3.0 Pandemic Delivery**

- 3.1 The global pandemic has clearly impacted on virtually all aspects of life over the last two years. Mid Devon District Council has played an important role in responding to this challenge, along with our partner agencies to develop 'Team Devon' and support our business communities and the welfare of our residents.

- 3.2 During the pandemic the council facilitated the Mid Devon Shielding Hub for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and has been managing the Covid Financial Hardship Fund. With support from officers across the council (including from Leisure, Housing and Customer First) the Community Support Hub has provided essential food supplies, practical support and advice to 585 vulnerable households in need of help and during the national lockdowns delivered 236 emergency food parcels.

The Council has also administered a financial hardship fund, in partnership with CHAT and Navigate charity, with funding from Devon County Council and Central Government. The scheme has received a large number of applications, with a total of 554 applications to the fund, and has distributed over £48k in emergency relief as well as providing signposting to other emergency support and money and debt advice.

- 3.3 The council has also administered the COVID Test and Trace mandatory scheme (where of 925 applicants 42.49% received support) and the discretionary scheme (where of 827 applications 41.89% received support).
- 3.4 The pandemic led to a step change in the way the council works, with services able to continue being delivered digitally and remotely. Officers (and councillors) have made use of modern technology for example by having virtual meetings instead of face to face meetings. The Council implemented virtual meetings live streamed to the public with recordings placed on our website, making the decision process transparent and accessible. While legislation allowing remote votes has since lapsed, the council continues to broadcast its meetings and holds many non-decision making meetings in a digital way to minimise travel requirements, improve sustainability and fit better with the range of other time commitments of its members (as well as increasing public access and engagement).
- 3.5 Officers have continued to show a high level of dedication and flexibility with many taking on additional duties or being redeployed as necessary to support the numerous front line activities required as part of the response.
- 3.6 To achieve our strategic priorities within the current financial constraints, and while we continue to emerge from the pandemic, it was necessary to continue to reform how key services and activities are designed and delivered, and also how we work across the local public sector system and with our partners in the most efficient and effective way. This learning continues and while in some areas a reversion to a pre-pandemic 'normal' is returning, in others the last two years have opened a window into a new way of working that is being felt across the country from both a business and employment perspective.

#### **4.0 Gap Analysis**

- 4.1 There is a requirement to review our use of internal and external sources of data to ensure our performance can be appropriately benchmarked, compared and assessed in a specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) way. A large amount of the council's operational performance (and hence strategic delivery) is tracked via a basket of key performance indicators (KPIs) reported to members regularly.
- 4.2 What is clear is that there are a range of aspects in the corporate plan where no specific KPI (or suitable proxy indicator) exists to measure performance. As part of this review, a short gap analysis was undertaken to review the existing framework and highlight any gaps that will not be addressed without intervention outside of the existing performance management framework.
- 4.3 The gap analysis can be located at Appendix B.

#### **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Throughout the planning and performance management cycle, risks are identified, assessed and appropriately managed. Mid Devon District Council has a comprehensive risk management framework in place with clear governance, including reporting of strategic level risks to Cabinet and the Audit

Committee. Strategic risks and operational risks are reviewed regularly, with high-scoring risks reported through the relevant corporate and council channels.

- 5.2 The latest high-scoring risks, alongside a report on performance went before the Audit Committee on 22 March 2022.

## **6.0 Successes**

- 6.1 Given the background of significant challenges posed by the pandemic, the Council has made significant progress against the aims in the plan. Achievements include:

### **6.2 Homes**

The Council has been working hard and recently developed and adopted a new, comprehensive and innovative housing strategy (2021-2025) ensuring a whole organisation approach to housing enablement, delivery and management.

- Planning consent has been secured to deliver a number of new zero carbon council houses and construction / delivery of these will take place later this year
- The creation of a multi-disciplinary Housing Strategy Delivery team
- A 5 year rolling development programme for 1-4-1 receipts
- An additional, emerging 5 year non-1-4-1 development programme
- Identification for potential areas/sites for up to 500 new social and affordable homes
- 2019-2020 – brought 138 empty homes back into use and in 2020-2021 brought back 101 empty homes, strong performance against a target of 72 each year
- Commissioned a major new Housing Revenue Account scheme of 70 new affordable homes at Post Hill and will be added to our Council Housing Stock, now at RIBA Stage 2-3;
- Regular engagement with Homes England and the Affordable Homes Programme, and
- Initiatives to focus on brownfield regeneration and sustainable development - including meeting life tenure needs through physical adapted standards and emerging neuro-diversity work to support the most vulnerable customers

### **6.3 Environment**

One of the most notable initiatives is related to the commitment to increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of residual waste being generated and collected through our waste services.

A trial of three weekly residual waste collection in parts of the District took place between July and October 2021 – demonstrating a reduction in residual waste of between 24% and 44% in the urban trial locations, and a reduction of between 6% and 30% in rural settings. Analysis suggests that the majority of this change accrues to the diversion of food waste from residual waste – aided by the trial of weekly food caddy collections.

71% of those surveyed thought that reducing the carbon footprint was the most important aspect to them when asked about the benefits of collecting non-recyclable waste every three weeks. Plans are progressing to roll out district wide 3 weekly collections. It is estimated that this will generate significant improvements in recycling rates and put us on track to meet national targets, as well as delivering a reduction in operational carbon emissions from council vehicles and deliver a revenue saving of up to £143k per annum.

Key objectives are now to ensure the communication plan effectively prepares and educates the public for the change in service delivery accompanied by in-person guidance and assistance for anticipated areas of challenge. Wider consideration of how we mobilise our workforce and transport to deliver services to expanding areas of housing development and population over the coming months and years will be an important area of efficiency planning.

The Litter Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2022 which asserts the importance of Education and Enforcement working hand in hand to improve public behaviours and attitudes towards litter collection and management. The new Environment and Enforcement Manager has this high on his agenda in terms of implementation.

The recruitment and retention of the workforce in this service area remains an urgent priority due to the external environment and pressures of the labour market e.g. high demand for loaders and drivers with some private firms offering an extensive range of incentives and benefits – often making direct approaches to staff while on rounds. This makes our own position challenging and the consideration for how we respond to these challenges vital.

With the Culm Garden village, various initiatives are underway; the mobility strategy seeks to identify and promote options to reduce and design-out car dependency alongside wider initiatives to reduce commuting for work and connectivity with historic Cullompton to retain the ethos of buy locally and boost the high street.

#### 6.4 Economy

The Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council together secured a portion of £5 million of funding through the 'Restoring your Railway' fund to progress plans for the re-opening of Cullompton railway station – supporting wider development initiatives within the town and the Culm Garden Village, and working in conjunction with other rail initiatives across the wider south-west network.

Work to enhance Cullompton high street have commenced and is backed by Historic England through a Heritage Action Zone. The Council was not successful in securing Levelling Up funding for the Cullompton Town Centre relief road however progress is being made to support the economic development initiatives such as the local farmers markets, and facilitating investment in many of the historic buildings making them more suitable for modern use whilst preserving them for the future.

In terms of strategic development, one of the district's most significant future development opportunities exists at Junction 27 of the M5 – where the M5 and the A361 north Devon link road intersect. The Eden project has received £250k of Community Renewal Fund monies in order to progress its outline proposals for the site – this Eden-led component having considerable scope to create a significant destination at Junction 27, creating a gateway to Devon / North Devon in a highly accessible location on the strategic highway network.

The economic development team have been promoting a campaign to shop local, 'Taste Mid Devon' seeks to encourage local producers and suppliers to interact with consumers by organising special events and local farmers markets.

Mid Devon District Council was one of 14 councils in England chosen to take part in a fully-funded pilot programme to test the Government's new National Model Design Code, the code is to give planning authorities a set of design principles to consider for new developments such as street character, building type, as well as environmental, heritage and wellbeing factors. The shortlisted councils all took part in a six-month testing programme to explore how the code could be applied in their area.

## 6.5 Community

The council has set their own local target, following the climate declaration in 2019, where the council is aiming to become carbon neutral by a more ambitious date of 2030. We have invested in specific plant at our 3 leisure centres to reduce our utility consumption (this included a biomass boiler at one of the sites). Recently, the council has secured in excess of £300k of government funding towards decarbonising our 3 leisure centres and have circa £5 million of bids at various stages of deployment to further reduce the carbon emissions from our corporate estate and our 3,000 council houses.

The Council will hold a public 'State of the District Debate' purely on the Climate Agenda on 5 April 2022. The public will be encouraged to explore topics to reduce individual and communities' carbon footprint as the council aims for Net Zero by 2030.

The council has launched a consultation on 'Plan Mid Devon' as it works towards planning the future of Mid Devon for decades to come; the current Local Plan was adopted by the Council in July 2020 and has a lifespan up to 2033. This plan helps guide multi-million pound investment across the district and provides greater certainty about where new homes, employment, schools, roads and other supporting infrastructure will be located. It will also help us regenerate our town centres and protect and enhance those parts of Mid Devon where we do not wish to see unplanned development taking place, including the open countryside and high quality landscapes. Consultation closed at the end of March 2022.

## 7.0 **Peer Review**

7.1 The council has recently participated in a peer challenge review under the auspices of the Local Government Association's sector-led improvement process. These reviews are an established tool that supports councils across

the country to drive improvements and efficiency in specific areas, including finance, communications, health and wellbeing, equalities, housing, planning etc.

- 7.2 These reviews are undertaken typically every 4-5 years and the council had its previous review back in early 2017. The peer team included experienced officers and members spending significant time with us to identify and address issues and challenge progress across themes including local priorities and outcomes, organisational and place leadership, governance and culture, financial planning and management and capacity for improvement.
- 7.3 This peer-led process acts as a critical friend providing feedback on how the council is performing and delivering for its communities. As a follow up to the time spent on site the council will receive a comprehensive report and recommendations which will be shared widely in order to encourage participation in opportunities for improvement.

## **8.0 Challenges**

- 8.1 The lifting of all remaining covid restrictions on 24 March 2022 could impact our service delivery; the government has removed the legal requirement for self-isolation and free testing. The focus on prevention moves to individuals and communities, and the Council has seen an increase in the number of cases both across its workforce and across Devon as a whole. The emergence of new variants will be a significant factor in determining the future path of the virus.
- 8.2 Employers across the public and private sectors continue to face growing skills shortages due to what has widely been described as a perfect storm of pressures arising from the pandemic, a change in employment priorities for many people, a reduction in foreign labour arising from Brexit, and a resultant fiercely competitive jobs market, so it's more important than ever to try and retain existing talent. Mid Devon District Council's turnover figure for 2021/2022 is approximately 20%.
- 8.3 Like many councils, our largest cost is manifested in our workforce through whom council services are delivered. We have recently experienced severe difficulties in recruiting officers in several service areas. This has led to temporary engagement of agency workers at much greater cost which is unsustainable in the long term. It is also likely to be exacerbated in the coming months as inflationary (cost of living) pressures force people to seek better paying jobs, with local government unlikely to be able to offer the same rises in salary as other sectors (and all sectors unlikely to be able to offer salaries that keep pace with inflation).
- 8.4 The council continues to face a number of challenges in the way it is funded, how it is able to manage demand for services and demographic pressures, and how it responds to policy and legislative changes. At the same time, new technology and ways of working represent opportunities to transform our business processes and systems, to work in more modern and productive ways.
- 8.5 The council began a Parish Review (formally known as a Community Governance Review) in November 2021, and the first public consultation

finished on 28 February 2022. The review is taking into consideration a number of options, for example looking at the number parishes, creating, merging, altering or grouping parishes and the number of parish / town councillors to improve the effectiveness and convenience of local government at the most local level. Any changes as a result of the review will come into effect for 2023 all out elections.

- 8.6 The challenges of unknown or unplanned tasks or priorities continues to ensure that the deployment of council resources is more reactive than we would like. The most recent example being that of government asking councils to process and deliver the £150 council tax rebate for Band D and below households; this rebate is to assist with the energy costs crisis.
- 8.7 A further challenge over the coming months is likely to be the work required to support and assist with the Ukrainian refugee crisis under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Team Devon authorities have pledged to work together to support Ukrainian refugees seeking sanctuary in the UK, albeit it remains unclear quite how significant these demands on resources could be. This is in addition to the work that continues on supporting other refugees and asylum seekers under previous national schemes.
- 8.8 Finally on the challenges, we are currently working through the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay 'county deal' devolution conversation with government to understand where there is potential to secure meaningful devolved powers, funding, influence and control closer to the democratic decision-making in Devon. This is the subject of a separate report being brought to Cabinet, however it represents an additional new workstream that may be of significant benefit to the people of Devon.

## **9.0 Business Transformation Update**

- 9.1 During the past two years there has been a significant programme of transformation taking place across our services which have looked at how we deliver our services, how we have developed our customer focused processes and systems, and how we have been meeting customer expectations and accessibility needs throughout the pandemic.
- 9.2 Appendix C outlines the achievements that various services have made during the past two years whilst dealing with a range of new challenges and finding innovative ways to deliver essential services.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

- 10.1 In conclusion, good progress has been made against many of the objectives identified in the current Corporate Plan. A key element of any plan review is to ensure it remains relevant, current, and continues to identify the key priorities.
- 10.2 In addition to considering the information contained within this report, members are asked to consider whether the proposed actions as projected/anticipated are adequate and appropriate to address concerns and improve performance to the desired level. Or, alternatively, to provide a steer on delivery priorities for the remaining two year period so that officers can bring back an updated corporate



plan for review to give clarity on delivery objectives over the remaining life of this corporate plan.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Corporate Plan 2020-24 (hyperlinked)

Appendix B - The Corporate Plan Gap Analysis

Appendix C - Business Transformation and Improvement Activity – Corporate Plan  
2020-2024

## **Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2020-24**

[Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#)

## Appendix B - Corporate Plan Gap Analysis

Corporate Plan 2020-2024 Aims with limited data available or without progress/mitigation tracking via KPIs (SPAR)

Portfolio	Aim	Deliverable in next 2 years?		Comments/updates/mitigation
		YES	NO	
<b>Climate Change</b>	1 Facilitate networking across volunteer and community groups to spread knowledge, expertise and awareness on climate issues	✓		Actively engaging with groups and individuals on work ranging from the Sustainable Mid Devon website (events, resource map, etc), to tree planting at the Tiverton Community Orchard, to public art ideas.  The 2022 State of the District Debate. Groups and networks e.g. Exeter Community Energy, CAG Devon, Blackdown Hills Transition, Sustainable Bradninch, Sustainable Crediton, Sustainable Tiverton, Uffculme Green Team.
	2 Promote sustainable farming practices in partnership with local farmers, District and County Councils; including research into best practice re better soil management and animal husbandry	✓		Research begun - calls and correspondence with local farmers, growers, land owners / managers, advisors.  Initial report due soon to Environment PDG, work expected to expand; albeit the MDDC role is likely best promotional of good practices and facilitative of existing networks and services rather than to develop and implement.
	3 Use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level (district heating, energy use, recycling/re-use systems etc)	✓		Strategic partnership opportunities to be identified. Neighbourhood Plans being developed in many areas; presents some opportunities.  A Sustainability Strategy is being developed for the Culm Garden Village.  MDDC housing being retrofitted with insulation and low-carbon tech to improve sustainability and affordability of energy consumption. MDDC new housing projects seek to achieve and set high standards, e.g. modular homes with Net Zero annual energy performance; looking into designs such as Passivhaus.  Private development is harder to influence, but action through the LPA and other council services/communications can make people aware of opportunities and encourage a shift towards more sustainable living.
	4 Enable communities to deliver their own projects to reduce carbon emissions	✓		Climate and Biodiversity fund is a priority in the Climate Strategy. Proposal included in the Budget Options for Climate Investment report to Environment PDG 11 Jan 2022.
<b>Environment</b>	5 Consider promoting the designation of the Exe Valley as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)		✓	Preliminary research project could be devised to understand the scope and scale of the challenge, albeit early estimates suggested a timeframe of many years and a cost in excess of £250k.  No budget or resource has been identified for this work and it is not currently being progressed.
<b>Homes</b>	6 Lobby to see the abolition of the 'Right-to-Buy' or the devolvement of discounting powers to individual local housing authorities	✓		Opportunities are being taken to lobby government for positive change via operational/technical routes (service-led) and through strategic influencing routes such as MPs and the emerging county deal conversation. However, as a flagship government policy it is unlikely that radical change is on the cards; we are probably realistically aiming for greater local influence on parameters and variables rather than the policy concept itself.
<b>Economy</b>	7 Use car park pricing mechanism to effectively balance the needs of vehicular access with those of reducing car use.		✓	Cross-cutting between economy, community, climate change - so this work needs to be coordinated with the other travel / transport / sustainable community aims.  Until travel patterns (re)stabilise in the wake of the pandemic, it is unclear how much pricing policy levers are needed to influence a change / reduction in car use.
	8 Work with developers and DCC to deliver strategic cycle routes between settlements and key destinations		✓	This is a transport authority function, but opportunities will be taken to try and influence transport policy and planning priorities where possible in order to encourage active travel and healthier travel options.
	9 Promote the development of the farming economy and local food production	✓		The Economic Development team has been working on a 'Taste Mid Devon' initiative to promote the farming economic and local food production. Opportunity exists to develop this initiative further – once the team returns to full strength in light of other community priorities.
	Working in partnership with farmers to develop		✓	No budget or resource has been identified for this work and it is not currently being progressed.

Portfolio	Aim	Deliverable in next 2 years?	Comments/updates/mitigation
10	and grow markets on the principle of reducing carbon emissions and sustainability		
11	Facilitate the creation of exciting new commercial opportunities within strategic developments at Culm Garden Village and Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension	✓	Work is underway to consider how commercial development could come forwards in conjunction with the development of the new garden village at Culm and how development can also support the existing town centre in Cullompton.  Discussions are also underway in relation to Tiverton EUE in terms of both community assets and employment opportunities.
12	Promote zero carbon exemplar sites within commercial settings	✓	The Council continues to support carbon exemplar sites within the commercial settings.
13	Work with local stakeholders to initiate delivery of the new garden village at Culm	✓	Culm Garden Village has a comprehensive governance arrangements which facilitates the involvement of key stakeholders – allowing them to participate in shaping the future community and support delivery.
<b>Planning</b> 14	Work with developers to secure our ambitious plans for J27 'Devon Gateway' development site	✓	Work is underway to engage landowners in relation to development at Junction 27. It will be necessary to reflect on plans for the development in light of the effects of covid-19 – but this work will be undertaken in the coming months.
<b>Community</b> 15	Work with education providers to secure appropriate post-16 provision within the district to minimise the need to commute out for A/T level studies	✓	Work is underway to consider skills provision within the district and what interventions could be supported or promoted to support improvement or retention within the district. Early conversations around localised skills development funding is taking place as part of the devolution conversation i.e. devolving decision making a funding on skills development.
16	Work with the NHS and other health bodies to promote use of our leisure centres	✓	Leisure has been working with local GP surgeries in order to identify Covid safe systems for the provision of elements of NHS referrals during the pandemic. This conversation has also been taking place at a regional level through the Active Devon group, supported by Sport England, to ensure a consistent approach to this important although non-statutory element of the Leisure provision. Our efforts to increase the number of Referrals is on-going.
17	Lobby DCC and others to introduce 20 mph speed limits where children play, and take opportunities to pilot car-free days/routes	✓	Would need agreement from members on specific locations to target for 20mph zones or decisions on days for traffic to be restricted. No work is yet taking place on this.
18	Promote new approaches to Rural Transport in partnership with Town and Parish Councils through the deployment of emerging technologies	✓	There may be some locations where MDDC can do more by facilitating opportunities for transport hubs in larger settlements (Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton) by considering what interventions could be delivered as we develop and deliver against masterplans for these towns. However, rural transport provision remains the responsibility of the transport authority.
19	Work with County, Town and Parish Councils to identify safer walking journeys to school	✓	We will participate as part of the consultation on safer routes to schools projects and programmes (or their equivalents) as appropriate.
20	Work with Parish and Town councils to promote the development and retention of parks and play areas across the district	✓	Work on this continues and talks with Town and Parish Councils are on-going.
<b>Corporate</b> 21	Produce business plans for the creation of a commercial Economic Development function perhaps in partnership with other agencies	✓	This concept has not been revisited since it was last considered (2018/19?) and with priorities in the economic development team this is unlikely to be taken forward in the near future.

## Appendix C

### Business Transformation and Improvement Activity – Corporate Plan 2020-2024 Mid Point Assessment

#### Revenues

- Provision of Citizen Access portal enabling 24/7 access to account information and ability for customers to self-serve such as, apply for discounts, moves in and out of district, apply for Council Tax Reduction, set-up Direct Debits
- Pilot of Revenues Information Service role with a view to improving customer resolution at first point of contact “there and then” service
- Service restructure and cross-training of staff to improve resilience and responsiveness
- Creation of Customer Welfare Officer

#### Planning

- Management changes to address perceived failures and service review in progress (planning performance now among the best in the south west for delegated decisions)
- Increased enforcement resources to address outstanding issues
- S106 - relocation of resource and responsibility to revenues - improving recovery and oversight

#### HR

- Improved quality and return rate of Appraisal/Personal Development Review through online portal.
- Successful introduction of Evolve project, commencing with revised staff competency measure that were recorded in online portal.
- Mobile/hybrid contract clause negotiated and agreed with Union in new staff contract to allow it to become a permanent fixture.
- Independent and online external staff survey instigated which gave comparative sector results on leadership, communication, development and wellbeing.
- New HR structure brought in including the introduction of an HR Service Desk that can provide instant advice and information to customers and employees.
- New Union Recognition agreed with the Union to prioritise meaningful consultation on all relevant employment issues.

#### ICT

- Restructure completed
- Skills and resource analysis - resulting in additional training and resources procured
- Review of ageing network infrastructure and replacement project underway
- Improved and improving system/data backups for resilience
- Support of hybrid working and mobilisation of workforce
- Identification of additional communication tools and work programme devised
- Provision of accessible websites and content, including Climate and infrastructure projects

#### Customer Services

- Increased scanning at post opening
- Removal of waste calendars with online (and downloadable/printable) alternatives
- Increased outsourcing of correspondence printing

- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Enabling working from home
- Implementation of appointment based visits
- Facilitating changing/identified business needs with staff secondments and flexing resources e.g. Customer Welfare, Revenues Information Officer and various Grant work during pandemic.

### **Waste/Street Scene**

- Pilot of 3 weekly waste collections gauged through online feedback portal to assess resident views.
- Recycling rates assessed and reported using national Waste data flow tool. This is then available for viewing to the general public.
- Online transport portal used to collect key documents from drivers including car insurance and other information.
- Update current software in relation to vehicle tracking to improve efficiencies in relation to performance and environment targets.
- Review of some enforcement practice arising from different cases undertaken e.g. abandoned vehicles and future practice to be strengthened led by the Environment and Enforcement Manager.
- Review of Transport practice e.g. future use of electric vehicles to be led on by new Transport Manager working with Environment Officer.

### **Property**

- Multi-Storey Car Park refurbishment
- Migration of play areas to parishes
- CCTV Policy and procedures
- Capital asset/S106 spend improvements by regular stakeholder engagement (Capital Strategy Asset Group meetings)
- Revised Capital Strategy Asset Management Plan 2021-2025
- Recruitment of a Climate & Sustainability Specialist with Policy and Action Plan been costed
- Securing circa £3.1 Million from the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) fund
- Merging front of house duties to the property services caretaker function for improved value for money
- Support Housing Revenue Accounts on the provision of additional homes via construction and the purchase of ex Right To Buy properties
- Providing draft plans and options for moving to mobile, agile/hybrid ways of working
- Corporate Health and Safety work on Corporate risk assessments for different ways of working during the pandemic

### **Housing**

- Review of business against new Social Housing White Paper (SHWP) and regulatory framework
- Creation of a single Mid Devon Housing service and combined tenant support team across tenancy and building functions
- Restructure and amalgamation of teams improving knowledge and resilience, new roles in response to SHWP especially regarding decarbonisation, safety, tenant engagement, policy resource and complaints management

- On-going revision and streamlining of policy framework to align with Regulator of Social Housing core standards and emerging new Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- E-lettings
- Revision and significant update to Housing Strategy – working across Planning, Public Health, Sustainability and Asset Management functions
- Innovative, zero-carbon modular social-housing solutions including new St Andrews scheme and 5-year development programme

### **Public Health**

- New 'Report it' and 'Noise' apps for complainants regarding nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour activity
- Restructure and relocation of Housing Needs into the team
- Developing joint Private Sector Housing and Homelessness working at strategy and delivery level
- The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard project - must not renew existing tenancies or grant new tenancies if the building has less than the minimum energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of E unless the landlord registers an exemption. For Districts, this applies to private sector residential rental properties and our regulation of housing standards in that sector.
- Covid response lead role externally including new ways of working with businesses, guidance and support via Better Business for All/HotSW working
- Contain Outbreak Management Fund: funding utilisation to support Covid outbreak mgt and enforcement including project and dedicated officer resource
- Review and restructure of technical business support into dedicated areas with improved service request triage and case management

### **Leisure**

- Business adaptation to the on-going changes with the pandemic
- Top level management restructure to create Operations Manager post
- Wider restructure underway for the whole service

### **Finance and Procurement**

- Supported the payments of Covid-19 Support Grants to businesses
- One of the first Councils in the country to publish draft accounts
- Unqualified Accounts
- Balanced the budget – no reductions in service levels
- Successfully implemented software update
- Joined the Devon Procurement Partnership
- Worked fully remotely for 2 years
- Successfully claimed over £2m from Governments Income Compensation Scheme for 2020/21
- Cross training of Exchequer staff
- Team members passed various professional exams