

AUDIT COMMITTEE
DATE: 7 JUNE 2022

PERFORMANCE AND RISK OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2021/22

Cabinet Leader Cllr Bob Deed
Responsible Officers Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People,
Governance & Waste
Nicola Cuskeran, Interim Corporate Performance and
Improvement Manager

Reason for Report: To provide Members with an annual review of the Council's performance against the corporate plan, local service targets for 2021/2022 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee reviews the Performance Indicators and Risks that are outlined in this report and feeds back any areas of concern.

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

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 more focused 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.

Risk Assessment: If performance is not monitored we may fail to meet our corporate and service targets or to take appropriate corrective action where necessary. If key business risks are not identified and monitored they cannot be mitigated effectively.

Equality Impact Assessment: Customer feedback can help the council identify any groups of people who may potentially be experiencing a less satisfactory level of service when compared 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.

Climate Impact Assessment: A number of performance indicators are either directly or indirectly related to our corporate ambition to reduce carbon emissions. Monitoring the performance of these can help evaluate the impact of Council interventions as well as guide future decisions on spend and investment.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a year end analysis of the overall performance position for the period of 2021/2022.
- 1.2 As outlined in the reports to the Cabinet throughout the year, the pandemic led to a step change being taken to ensure effective service delivery was maintained through staff working remotely and the use of digital platforms. In December 2021 ICT services increased the bandwidth (in computing terms is the maximum rate of data transfer) doubling the existing speed of connection and made some changes to the firewall to improve performance. As of April 2022 ICT services have rolled out 3CX telephony system to support and aid remote working and improve the customer experience by being able to converse with officers.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 In terms of the priorities for the coming year, the Cabinet will be focused on embedding a recovery from the pandemic, whilst ensuring that delivery against the corporate plan is maintained and improved.
- 1.5 A mid-point review of the Corporate Plan has been published and was presented at Cabinet on 5 April 2022. The report will also be presented to Audit committee on 7 June 2022, Cabinet and the Policy Development Groups (PDG's) during June 2022.

2.0 Environment Appendix 1

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

- 2.1 A trial of three weekly residual waste collection in parts of the District took place between July and October 2021. This demonstrated 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. This informed the decision taken by the Cabinet in February 2022 to commence 3 weekly collections as standard practice from late September 2022.
- 2.2 Encouragement was drawn from a survey carried out with affected residents after the trial where 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. A communication and soft enforcement plan will be presented to all members on the 14 June 2022 will emphasise the importance of each household directly contributing to the District reducing its carbon footprint and achieving carbon zero net status through greater reusing, reducing and recycling of waste.
- 2.3 Household recycling rates in Mid Devon for 2021/2022 was 53.4% which was better than the target. The total of residual waste collected was slightly above the target at 364.5Kg per household.

- 2.4 The number of households who pay for their garden waste to be collected at the kerbside increased by 229 customers. The percentage of missed refuse and organic waste collections reported was slightly above target at 0.02%.
- 2.5 The revised Public Spaces Protection (Dog Control) Order (PSPO) was reviewed and a public consultation took place. The Environment PDG recommended the fixed penalty for breaches of the PSPO would be set at the maximum of £100 and the Cabinet approved the recommendation.

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

- 2.6 Through the Devon Solar Together initiative, the number of solar panels installed is 253 (this succeeded the pre-set target of 250).
- 2.7 All 5 Council-owned locations for 10 fast charger points under the Deletti scheme were approved and the lead partner Devon County Council has prepared for procurement with installations taking place during 2022. The total usage of electric car charging was well above the target (2,300) at 4,639.

Aim – Encourage retro-fitting of measures to reduce energy use in buildings.

- 2.8 The Council's Property Services team has carried out improvement works at all 3 leisure sites. The measures will mean that over the life of the assets, CO2 emissions will be cut by 520 tonnes, with an annual reduction of around £40,000 - £50,000 in electricity charges, as well as reduced maintenance costs.

Aim - Encourage new housing and commercial developments to be 'exemplars' in terms of increasing biodiversity and reducing carbon use.

- 2.9 The Council's planned modular housing development in Cullompton has been shortlisted for four awards in the South West's Construction Excellence Awards. This is being delivered in partnership with innovative modular house builder Zed Pods Ltd. The zero carbon homes are set to be installed on a council-owned site on the St Andrew's estate in Cullompton and, once completed, will be an exemplar social housing scheme.

3.0 Homes Appendix 2

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

- 3.0 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. This new approach has created a multi-disciplinary Housing Strategy Delivery team.

- 3.1 Our Housing Strategy sets out a clear direction, for the next five years, to offer more housing with more choice by developing new homes and improving existing homes and communities. There is a particular focus on affordable and social rent properties alongside a strong commitment to having low-carbon, accessible and adaptable homes. This means we can support our most vulnerable residents to access and maintain good quality housing which meets their needs. This will help our hamlets, villages and towns to be sustainable in the longer term and contribute to the district's prosperity and wellbeing.
- 3.2 The percentage of emergency repairs to our tenants properties completed on time met its target of 100%. The percentage of urgent repairs completed on time was above the target (95%) at 99.3%. The percentage of routine repairs completed on time was above the target (95%) at 98.8%.
- 3.3 During the last year the council has commissioned contracts following approval of our planning applications for 3 homes in Tiverton, 6 modular carbon-zero homes in Cullompton, 8 modular carbon-zero homes in Tiverton and the projects are currently being commissioned. In the next few weeks a major planning application submission for 70 homes on land at Post Hill Tiverton will become part of Mid Devon's housing stock.

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

- 3.4 During 2021-2022 a total of 54 empty homes were brought back into use while in 2020-2021 the total of empty homes reintroduced was 101. The combined total exceeds the target of 72 homes each year (155 compared to the target of 144).

4.0 Economy Appendix 3

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 organisations and communities.

- 4.1 The Minister of State for Transport has discussed the importance of regional connectivity as proposals to reopen a station in Cullompton gather momentum. The importance of regional connectivity and the role that railways play in terms of connecting people and places, people in their communities, people and jobs and opportunities.
- 4.2 During the last year the District Council launched two rounds of Love Your Town Centre funding. Both rounds received bids from local businesses, town councils or organisations across Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton, with proposals to generate and support the town centres economic recovery. The scheme has proved vital this year, providing funding for quick-win projects and supporting footfall return to the town centres, which has been welcomed by community groups.

- 4.3 Over the last year the Cullompton High Street Heritage Action Zone has achieved:
- Higher Bullring Public Realm Enhancement scheme - concept design work is underway following the appointment of consultants last autumn, in partnership with Devon County Council and Historic England.
 - The Cultural Consortium 'Creative Cullompton' were successful in their bid to Historic England and awarded a grant of £90,000 to support local cultural and historic activities in the town centre as part of the High Street Heritage project.
 - The updated Cullompton Conservation Area Appraisal (CAMP) has been completed.
 - The Building Grants Scheme is progressing and the High Street Heritage Officer is working with owners of various properties to develop eligible projects for funding. Properties have been identified following a Condition Survey and the preparation of a Building Priority list.

Aim – Work with developers to secure our ambitious plans for the J27 'Devon Gateway' development site

- 4.4 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 which include using Junction 27 to create a gateway to Devon / North Devon in a highly accessible location on the strategic highway network.
- 4.5 The Council was one of the first to go live nationally across the UK and first in Devon and Somerset with applications on the 12 March 2022 for the Council Tax Energy Scheme, payments could not be made until on or after 01 April 2022 as per Government guidance. As at 16 May 2022 the Council has paid out a total of £3,505m to eligible Mid Devon households this is 84% of the total budget.
- 4.6 Mid Devon have issued millions of pounds of assistance in business rate grants over the past 2 years.
- 4.7 The Benefits Service delivered the test & trace scheme where £500 was paid out to more vulnerable people when they had to isolate.
- 4.8 The community response to support the 74 Asylum Seekers, accommodated at Tiverton Hotel, as part of the Government's Initial Asylum Seekers Accommodation has concluded.
- 4.9 The government has launched the 'Homes for Ukraine Scheme' to support the refugees seeking a safe home in our communities whilst fleeing from the war in the Ukraine. Team Devon are working closely together to deliver a wraparound package of support (access to benefits; health services; education; wellbeing).
- 5.0 **Community Appendix 4**

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

- 5.1 There was an increase in the number of Health Referral Initiatives across our Leisure centres last year. Conversations have taken place at a regional level through the Active Devon group, supported by Sport England, to ensure a consistent approach to this element of the Leisure provision.

Aim – Encourage communities to deliver their own projects to reduce carbon emissions

- 5.2 The State of the District Debate this year returned and was on the subject of the Climate Change Agenda. A number of topic specialists provided valuable insights, speaking on themes such as energy advice for our homes, impacts on farming and successful green projects that are taking place within the district. The debate was well received and Members will be considering what was discussed and will look at ways to work with communities to address the issues raised.

Aim - Promote new, more integrated approaches to promoting good health and healthier living especially in the context of planned new developments.

- 5.3 The Council consulted on the Plan Mid Devon 2023 – 2043 Issues Paper between 31st January and 28th March 2022, involving both on-line and face to face public engagement events. This is the first stage in preparing the new Local Plan, in which views have been invited about what the new Local Plan will include and how Mid Devon should be planned for in the future. Consultation responses are currently being considered and work is now progressing across a range of technical evidence that will be used to help inform the preparation of a Draft Policies and Site Options Report that will be consulted on in mid-2023.

Aim – Promote community involvement in Council activity

- 5.4 The number of complaints received during 2021/2022 was 404 and the percentage of complaints resolved within the timescales of 10 to 12 weeks was 91%, slightly above target.

6.0 Corporate Appendix 5

- 6.1 The Planning KPIs are all on target or better than target. Considering the relatively undiminished volume of applications, this is a significant success.
- 6.2 The Building Control service has exceeded their performance targets relating to the assessment of full plans and applications examined within 3 weeks.
- 6.3 The response rate to FOI requests answered on time was 98% against 100% for the previous two years.

- 6.4 The Council's own industrial units had 98% occupancy rates at the end of the year.
- 6.5 Collection rates for Council tax in the financial year of 2021/2022 had a target of 96% with the team securing a rate of 96.69%.
- 6.6 NNDR rates (Business Rates) in the financial year of 2021/2022 had a target of 96% with the team securing a rate of 98.62%. The service has worked very hard to secure a 1.5% increase on the pre-set target.
- 6.7 In 2021/2022 an average of 7.47 days per fte were lost due to sickness absence which is an increase compared to 5.80 days in 2020/2021. There were fewer formal restrictions during the autumn and winter months of 2021/22 which led to increased amounts of sickness and COVID related infection amongst the workforce.

Despite these pressures all services were maintained during this difficult period including the collection of all waste and recycling despite a third of the workforce having COVID-19 in the last quarter of 21/22.

- 6.8 An independent staff survey was carried out in the autumn of 2021 to assess staff feedback on key components of their employment experience and to compile an all staff action plan which was presented to Scrutiny in April 2022. All local authorities including Mid Devon have a considerable challenge as we emerge from the pandemic and face the current cost of living crisis to recruit and retain our most vital asset; our people.

7.0 Risk

Some risk scores have increased due to the Covid 19 pandemic especially as regards financing, homelessness and the economic outlook.

- 7.1 The Corporate risk register is regularly reviewed by both the Corporate Management Team and Leadership Team and updated as required.
- 7.2 Risk reports to committees include strategic risks with a current rating of 10 or more in accordance with the Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy. (Appendix 6)
- 7.3 Operational risk assessments are job specific and flow through to safe systems of work. These risks go to the Health and Safety Committee biannually with escalation to committees where serious concerns are raised.
- 7.4 Like all local authorities the council is facing the challenge of increased turnover and high level of vacancies. Part of this challenge is down to wage stagnation due to current levels of inflation vastly outstripping the cost of living rise that local authorities cannot afford to make. Talks are being conducted nationally across the regions on what can be achieved to address the situation.

- 7.5 There is a risk of the 'Homes for Ukraine scheme' failing should the host relationship breakdown and re-matching is not an option. Where refugees cannot afford to pay for private accommodation the council has a Homelessness Duty.
- 7.6 There is a risk around safeguarding vulnerable individuals and children who may fall outside of the 'Homes for Ukraine scheme' by not having their needs met and /or refugees being vulnerable to exploitation.

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 That the Committee reviews the performance indicators and risks that are outlined in this report and feeds back any areas of concern.

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Circulation of the Report: Leadership Team and Leader of the Council