

South Gloucestershire Council

Cabinet

10 July 2023

Council Plan Progress Report (October 2022 – March 2023)

Purpose of the paper

To provide Cabinet with an update on progress against the Council Plan.

Recommendation

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Note and comment on the report's contents.
- ii) Agree to commence work on the next Council Plan covering the period 2024 – 2028 as set out in para 7.

Policy

1. The responsibility for cross-cutting strategic issues such as progress against the Council Plan is part of the remit of Cabinet.

Background

2. The Council Plan 2020-2024 was approved by the previous Council in October 2020. The Council Plan is the document that has provided a high-level view of the priorities over the four year term of the Council, setting out the key aims of the Council in this time. These were grouped by the previous Council under four priority headings:
 - Priority 1: Creating the best start in life for our children and young people.
 - Priority 2: Identifying and supporting those most in need and helping people to help themselves.
 - Priority 3: Promoting sustainable inclusive communities, infrastructure, and growth.
 - Priority 4: Realising the full potential of our people and delivering value for money.
3. Each priority is underpinned by a series of commitments set out in detailed action plans. These include a range of key tasks and performance indicators. Detailed progress against each of these action plans is reviewed regularly as part of the Council's performance management arrangements, mostly prior to the recent election.
4. This report is therefore focused at a high level and looks backward at what was achieved in the six-month period October 2022 – March 2023 under the previous Council. The report provides a summary of progress against each of the four priorities with further detail across the 20 action plans included within the Appendix A for information. Currently, two further reports are scheduled to Cabinet on delivery of the Council Plan 2020-24.
5. Progress against the individual performance indicators is also shown within the relevant action plan commitment within Appendix A, with an overall summary and across each of the four Council Plan priorities shown in Appendix B. Both Appendix A and Appendix B can be found on our public website which includes details of the Council Plan, the commitments and progress reports.

[Council Plan 2020 – 2024 | BETA - South Gloucestershire Council \(southglos.gov.uk\)](https://www.southglos.gov.uk)

6. As this report and the detail provided within the appendices provides a comprehensive overview of progress across the council, it will also be used as the basis for reporting to the Council's Scrutiny Commission.
7. The new partnership administration has identified a range of priorities <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/static/8cd9df7b0abe5d6650864796e40cc5ad/Signed-Adminstration-Agreement-May-2023.pdf> that will feed into the development process for the delivery plan for the new Council elected in May 2023. This plan will cover the period 2024 – 2028 and will be developed over the coming months with a strong emphasis on engagement and partnership working, and with a focus on tackling the climate and nature emergencies and helping residents with the Cost-of-Living crisis. The new Cabinet has also indicated a desire to improve reporting processes, to provide greater transparency and accessibility of information related to the priority work the Council is now doing.

Addressing the climate emergency and closing the inequality gap

8. The Financial Security group continues to meet, acting as a partnership to understand and deliver on relevant actions linked to cost of living and financial inequality. Funding was secured through the Prevention Fund to continue the Financial Security co-ordinator role for a further two years; the post now sits in the Community Development team.
9. The Council's Climate Emergency Response was independently rated as being in the top 10 in the UK last year and this year's results will be out soon after a recent assessment.
10. In this reporting period, this spirit of innovation has seen the working up and roll out of the Climate and Nature Emergency Decision Wheel which was officially operational from April. As we go into the new civic year and reports work their way through to Cabinet and Council, we will see for the first time a fresh set of environmental and social metrics formally applied to decision making. As part of the roll-out, consideration will be given to how amalgamated reports (such as this Council Plan report) can best utilise the decision wheel as well.
11. A 'data led' study of 89 properties informed our heat decarbonisation and long-term strategy report. The report proposes a costed strategy to improve thermal performance of existing buildings by reducing (fossil fuel reliant) heat and electricity demand by increasing on-site renewable energy generation. The team are working on a Decarbonisation Strategy Plan that will outline the steps that need to be achieved in order to deliver decarbonisation across the corporate estate.
12. Milage claims have increased from their COVID period low but remain lower than the pre-COVID period. We continue to promote electric vehicles for business journeys as an alternative to fossil fuel business mileage. Hybrid meetings are encouraged where operationally appropriate.

Priority 1: Creating the best start in life for our children and young people.

13. During the period 1 October 2022 – 31 March 2023 21 schools in the district have received new Ofsted Inspection reports and been rated Good or Outstanding. The improving trend has continued and currently 88.5% of all schools are judged Good or Outstanding. As of March 2023, 96% of Primary, 86% of secondary, 83% of special and 100% of all through schools are judged to be Good or Outstanding.
14. Our second Mental Health Support Team (MHST) started in January 2023 to support targeted local schools to improve the Mental Health of their school population. Staff have been receiving training and are allocated to the Filton/Patchway area, through four primary schools from May.
15. There has been a significant improvement in timeliness of plans finalised in 20-week timescale between November and March, which has been reported to the DfE.

16. Capital investment projects in local schools, including new builds, expansions, refurbishment, and other improvements, are also progressing. This includes work to create additional places in local special schools across various areas of need. However, progress in some areas has been impacted by difficulties in supply chains and the escalating cost of materials and it has been necessary to review delivery timelines for individual projects, including those at the Lyde Green Schools, though pre-construction work continues there. Feasibility studies for a number of new priority projects (Abbeywood expansion and special school expansions) are also underway.
17. During this reporting period, we have responded to the decision of Athelstan Trust to propose ending the Service Level Agreement for the Access Centre at Chipping Sodbury, when the SLA is due to be renewed in 2024. The current position is that the Trust have agreed to reconsider their decision and are working with officers to find ways to maintain the provision.
18. Development of the new SEND Strategy 2023-2028 is progressing well, with significant level of engagement from children and young people and parent and carers so that the draft strategy is ready for member consideration for wider public consultation in June-July with target launch September/October.
19. In January Ofsted/CQC published the new inspection framework for SEND and therefore the Inclusion and SEND team have been heavily focussed on raising awareness and ensuring readiness for Inspection.

Priority 2: Identifying and supporting those most in need and helping people to help themselves.

20. The number of page views on new information, advice and guidance (IAG) web platform continue to grow over next 12 months. The site has had over 256k page views between October 2022 – March 2023. This is an increase of 90k views (or 54%) from the same period in the previous year (Qs 3 & 4 2021/22).
21. The Prevention Programme was approved and includes a community clinics project. Community Clinics will offer clinical care in local, non-clinical venues (which could be a community hub or other public or community space), targeting specific interventions according to the need identified by local population data.
22. The Locality Partnership (LP) is currently developing the model around chronic disease prevention. Engagement is ongoing but all six Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are interested. The model will be Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE)-owned but with strong PCN/practice engagement. The LP is working through how it will engage with VCSE partners and the timescales for an expression of interest process.
23. The Early Help Community Networks (EHCN) have continued to develop networks and partnership working across the five EHCN clusters. In the most recent survey of members 79% of respondents said they found the networks useful, with some of the benefits reported including signposting, relationship building, and identifying local need. All the EHCN grant funding was allocated before the end of the 22/23 financial year with some fantastic examples of how that money has impacted the local community.
24. The £2m prevention programme was approved by the Executive Member for PH&EO in November 2022. The programme focuses on four key priority themes, within which there are projects to provide both immediate and longer-term impact for local people and how we work together as a local system: The themes are:
 - Start Well
 - Live Well
 - Age Well
 - Community in Action.

25. The Prevention Programme includes funds to extend the Village Agent (VA) project. VAs help isolated people gain access to high quality information and services and coordinate informal networking and support mechanisms, enabling older people to feel more secure, remain independent in their own homes for longer and need less interventions and interactions with the NHS or social care.
26. Numbers of Early Help Assessments and Plans (EHAPs) continue to rise and has done incrementally and consistently over the last 6 months, meaning that more families are receiving early help from early help partners and the Council's preventative services.

Priority 3: Promoting sustainable inclusive communities, infrastructure, and growth.

27. Street enforcement is considered to have had a successful twelve months after going live early in 2022. We have seen positive changes and impacts on our high streets and green spaces. In summary for the past year, we have seen:
 - Behavioural change in people using our High Streets leading to improved awareness of the impact of littering. This in turn is adding to the sense of our High Street locations being a nicer place to frequent.
 - Audits for our High Street locations are showing sustained improvement scores in their cleanliness.
 - An improvement in some of our green spaces from less dog fouling alongside better engagement and education for dog owners/walkers.
 - A move towards traders in some locations taking greater responsibility for cleaning outside their premises.
 - 64 Fixed Penalty Notices (58 for littering).
28. We are continuing to upgrade our bin stock with larger capacity bins. Larger bins mean we need to empty them less frequently and this creates capacity with staff to be more responsive to other areas needing litter picks and detritus clearance, it also removes the manual handling risk to staff, as the bins are emptied with a hydraulic lift.
29. The slip road into Mangotsfield recycling centre has been completed. Following monitoring activity some work to be completed to improve on site signage.
30. Work on the second phase, which includes the development of a waste vehicle depot located next to the Mangotsfield recycling centre is progressing. Once planning approval is received it is intended that site remediation and vegetation clearance will commence from Nov 2023.
31. The year has culminated with significant success in bidding for funding, winning and moving into delivery in some exciting areas of innovation including the co-mingling of food waste with grass arisings to generate biogas (£2 Million), further investigations into mine water heating (approximately £1 million), land acquisition for a major nature reserve and tree planting (£2.2 million). Funding for highway related works is increasingly focused on investments to achieve emission reductions whilst improving connectivity with the potential to build on the schemes from City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) 1 as we start to develop proposals for CRSTS 2.

Priority 4: Realising the full potential of our people and delivering value for money.

32. The impact of high inflation and the cost-of-living crisis had stark impact on the Council's finances over the course of 2022/23 and looking into future financial years. Details of these impacts have been covered in various reports to Cabinet over the last 9 months. With inflation hitting 10.1% and the Local Government pay offer for 2022/23 averaging 5.88% at £1,925 per FTE, it was not possible to contain such cost increases with the delivery of ongoing efficiencies as has been achieved over several years. As such officers developed changes to service level options to be presented to Cabinet in December and consulted

upon publicly leading through to the setting of the 2023/24 budget in February 2023 alongside receiving the Local Government Finance Settlement in December. Scrutiny Commission were engaged through this process and a balanced budget for the next 3 years was agreed in February 2023 with a retained deficit of around £5m in 2026/27, predicated on the delivery of a £40m savings programme over the next 4 years.

33. Good progress continues to be made on implementing the Asset Management Plan and imbedding the Corporate Landlord model.
34. The Council's energy contract has been let for the period to March 2024 using certified renewable sources. The Social Value Target Operating Model (TOM) is fully in place within day-to-day procurement activity.
35. Service areas continue to monitor specific recruitment and retention schemes which were put in place to support the challenges of social care recruitment, notably within Children's Services. A significant programme of work to enable international recruitment has been delivered and the council has successfully recruited overseas social workers to join our Children's services teams. We continue to support both the long-established Children's Social Care Recruitment & Retention Board and the more recently established Adult Social Care Recruitment & Retention Board, working with the service areas on actions which improve our career offer and workforce capacity.
36. We continue to actively promote Apprenticeships across the council as part of our 'grow your own' recruitment and retention strategy. We are working with local businesses to passport any unused levy to benefit the local economy and grow the skills of our local workforce. We have shared £147,000 of our unused levy with local Small to Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) businesses and this offer continues to be well received within the community. We have focussed on those organisations within health and social care but have also offered to support other organisations including a small but established plumbing company and a craft bakery.

Consultation

37. Officers across all departments have been involved in providing information, from which the basis of this report has been compiled.

Equalities Considerations

38. There are no direct equalities issues arising from this report itself as it is a position statement for the Council. Detailed performance and progress information regarding protected characteristic groups is reported on a regular basis by services and is managed as an integral part of day-to-day service arrangements.

Financial, legal and human resources implications

39. There are no direct financial, legal or human resources implications arising from this report.

(John McCormack, Service Director, Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer) 01454 865980)

(Nina Philippidis, Service Director, Finance & Chief Financial Officer (S.151) 01454 865140)

(Claire Kerswill, Service Director, Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development – 01454 866348)

Environmental Implications

40. This report reflects the actions undertaken to begin the process of integrated action on the Climate and Nature Emergency throughout the work of the council over the last reporting

period. It identifies the extent to which this is being achieved, and further actions to achieve the council's ambitions in this regard.

(Lucy Rees, Senior Environmental Policy & Climate Change Officer – 01454 862224)

Social Implications

41. The report covers the Council Plan which addresses many social implications for our residents and communities, of particular note is the cross-cutting ambition to reduce the inequality gap in our communities. All action plans seek to support this aim and therefore positive progress against them is essential for delivery, with progress across all areas needing to be considered in that context and corrective actions taken where necessary.
(Mark Pullin, Service Director, Community Development – 01454 868480)

Economic Implications

42. There are no direct economic implications identified through the recommendation within this report.
(Ian Steele, Business Development and Digital Connectivity Manager - 01454 868202)

Privacy Impact Assessment

43. There are no privacy implications arising from this report.

Risks, mitigations and opportunities

44. There are no direct risks arising from this report. However, progress against the Council Plan has a direct bearing on the achievement of the Council's priorities. It is therefore important that we regularly monitor and report progress, taking action where necessary.

Reasons for Decision

45. As Cabinet has overall responsibility for the Council Plan it is important that Cabinet is able to review and comment on progress.

Author

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