Council Plan 2020 - 2024
Realising the full potential of our people and delivering value for money

South Gloucestershire Council

South Gloucestershire
Council
Delivering for you

COUNCIL PLAN 2020–2024

Action Plan 17

Council Plan Priority 4

Realising the full potential of our people and delivering value for money

Our commitment to you

We will demonstrate how well we deliver value for money in the services we provide and commission from others

Background

The council is a complex organisation, delivering hundreds of services to thousands of residents, most of whom will only ever personally encounter a small fraction of the services provided.

Demonstrating that the council delivers value for money so that we are accountable to our residents requires an approach that brings to life the bigger picture, ensuring our priorities, inputs and outcomes are clearly recognised and understood by local people, our staff, our partners and local businesses. Developing a stronger corporate narrative will allow us to share our vision, key messages and plans with all our stakeholders in a powerful and compelling way, using a simple, truthful story-telling technique to help people understand what we are doing, where we are going, what's important and why.

This will also help us to meaningfully join up and maximise initiatives across the council, such as the Keep it Local campaign with our VCSE partners, our social value approach and refreshing our methodology for resource allocation, which enhances our overall value for money approach.

How we will measure our success

Action	Measure of success	Delivery date
Develop a stronger corporate narrative, external story-telling and community engagement	Increasing number of residents who "feel the council keeps them informed" as measured in the budget survey	Q4 2021/22
Key VFM messages delivered via preferred communications channels (according to CACI Acorn segmentation data) to parishes and groups with lowest VFM standings.	Increasing number of residents that "feel the council provides value for money" as measured in the budget survey	Ongoing
Resume the corporate branding refresh project to ensure a more consistent approach and visibility of the council providing value for money services in the community	Increasing number of residents that "feel the council provides value for money" as measured in the budget survey	Q4 2021/22 (pending Covid-19 implications)

Key Performance Indicators	Current Performance	Target
Increasing the number of residents who "feel the council provides value for money" as measured in the budget survey	47%	50%
Increasing the number of residents who feel the council keeps them informed	48%	50%

The KPIs highlighted in yellow are those of significant public interest which will be given priority attention through the reporting process for the Council Plan.

Ensuring this Action Plan remains relevant

This Action Plan and Council Plan have been prepared at a time of significant change and uncertainty for local people, businesses, the council and the partner organisations we work with. Recognising this uncertainty, this is a 'living document', which we will continue to develop to ensure the plans and our accompanying work and targets remain relevant in response to external factors.

COUNCIL PLAN 2020–2024

Action Plan 18

Council Plan Priority 4

Realising the full potential of our people and delivering value for money

Our commitment to you

We will increase our commercial operations to generate income to support council services and use our assets for maximum benefit to our communities

Background

The council has a strong track record of managing its finances and over recent years has maintained high quality services whilst delivering over £100 million in cost savings by finding more efficient ways of doing things. We have taken an innovative, but risk managed approach, by for example:

- Transferring assets to communities where partners are best placed to deliver services, for example the Circadian Trust providing local leisure facilities,

- Investing in and supporting key growth sectors for example through our ownership of the Bristol & Bath Science Park,

- Identifying services in which we have a competitive advantage over the private sector and exploiting these commercial opportunities through our traded divisions.

Building on this strength will be crucial to enable us to deliver on the commitments and priorities of this Council Plan - and is a commitment in its own right. This pledge highlights our work to reconsider how we best use our resources and how we can continue to deliver innovation, efficiency, and productivity improvements.

Using our assets to best effect is not just about making most effective use of our buildings and finances. We will consider the full breadth of resources and influences we have and will work innovatively to maximise benefits for residents. For example:

- We have significant influencing power and will seek to harness this benefit working with our partners. We can utilise our spending power with suppliers to deliver benefits through social value in contracts.

- We must work to make best use of our green spaces, maximising opportunities to promote wellbeing.

- The Climate Emergency action plan includes focus on leadership and inspiration and this expertise should be captured as an asset. This is a new way of thinking that needs to be implemented and embedded over the plan period.

Moving forward, this approach will need to be front and centre to the way we invest and spend available resources, considering how we can deliver greatest value for residents over both the short and long term.

We will continue to take a risk-managed approach to investment, purchasing land and assets where we can deliver strong commercial returns and/or accelerate opportunities to regenerate and enhance our existing communities and deliver infrastructure for residents.

We follow a robust cycle of continuous review and improvement to ensure commercial implications are considered for all council activities and to ensure these support our wider strategic priorities. We must strengthen our entrepreneurial culture across the

organisation and promote and support existing traded services within Integra and StreetCare.

Finally, we will increase our focus on cash management. We will support and encourage residents and businesses to pay promptly for statutory taxes and for services they receive from the council, by engaging with them early, providing effective billing and payment systems, and providing appropriate support for those facing financial difficulties.

CLOSING THE INEQUALITY GAP – ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY – DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY

How we will measure our success

Action	Measure of success	Delivery date
Develop a long-term financial strategy aligned with Council Plan priorities	Balanced MTFP	February 2023
Implement the Asset Management Plan to ensure optimum service delivery for residents and businesses and maximise income and regeneration opportunities	Effectively managed operational property to meet our current needs and to be responsive to future demands for change and investment. Land and buildings used to maximise income and to stimulate development and growth to benefit our communities. •	December 2020 Plan agreed
Use the Property & Land Investment Strategy to drive commercial and regeneration investments	Outcomes of the Strategy delivered, and assets invested helping to deliver council plan priorities.	March 2022
Support the Climate Declaration through the use of council property assets and resources.	• Delivering Climate Emergency Action Plan	March 2024
Use procurement activity to drive commercial, social and environmental value	Social value outcomes directly contributing to council priorities	March 2022
Develop processes and reporting to drive Full Cost Recovery for income generating services	Income generating services delivered on Full Cost Recovery basis unless otherwise agreed.	March 2022
Support businesses and residents to pay promptly and efficiently for services and taxes	High collection rates, reduced bad debts, reduced enforced activity, majority of income collected within payment terms, reduced aged debt	March 2022
Work across all Divisions and Departments to promote and Champion the services of Integra	Optimise the Integra Service in meeting internal delivery that might otherwise require external commissioning	ongoing

Key Performance Indicators	Current Performance	Target
In year spending contained within approved budgets (spend as a percentage of budget <= 100%)	As per Revenue Monitor reports	<= 100%
Percentage of contracts awarded over £75k that have included Social Value in the tender process.	n/a	100%
Annual performance of the Commercial Investment Portfolio	n/a	1%
Operating costs/m2 of the back-office estate – CIPFA indicator	To be developed with final definition	Above mid quartile
Annual electricity and gas usage carbon emissions for main Council buildings, offset by avoided emissions due to Council generation – under development	To be developed	To be developed

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Action Plan 19

Council Plan Priority 4

Realising the full potential of our people and delivering value for money

Our commitment to you

We will work as one council providing staff with the skills, tools and support to perform at their best, promote equality of opportunity for all and live our values

Background

We can't provide high quality council services without a talented team to deliver them. Recruiting, developing and motivating a skilled and productive workforce who role model our values is fundamental to the achievement of our Council Plan commitments.

The council has approximately 3,300 centrally employed staff and approximately 3,500 staff locally based in our maintained schools. They perform a diverse range of roles including social care, maintenance of roads and public spaces, library services, catering and cleaning and a number of professional disciplines within our corporate team.

Given the breadth of what we do, we take a service-led approach to workforce planning and training to ensure staff are skilled to perform at their best. We have good relationships with trade union colleagues and our staff equality groups are important stakeholders in delivering our equalities ambitions, which starts with our workforce.

We have made significant strides forward over the last few years to improve our employment offer, focusing on our 'hard to recruit' posts to attract and retain the talent needed to deliver council priorities. Our apprentice strategy is key to this. We have sought to maximise the use of the apprentice levy to attract young people into the council and enable existing staff to develop their skills to meet future skill requirements. We are proud to have recruited some of our Care Leavers into apprenticeship roles through our scheme.

Beyond our apprenticeship scheme, the council has a strong track record in the continuous professional development of its regulated workforces and more widely for developing staff to perform at their best. We offer many of our internal training courses to external workforces and have a member development plan which supports our Councillors to be effective in their role with residents.

The Covid emergency has presented challenges for our colleagues, but we have supported them through adversity.

- We have rolled out technology to enable our workforce to work and collaborate more effectively away from council buildings and without the need for unnecessary travel.

- Backing up our commitment to the Time to Change Mental Health Pledge, we have added to our range of wellbeing resources and support packages and will continue to develop our offering to ensure we can protect and care for our staff as they in turn support the most vulnerable in society.

- We have rapidly developed our virtual and online training, enabling staff to access learning wherever they are working from. We will continue to review our blend of learning to keep it accessible to staff, particularly those based in the community.

Looking ahead, the Covid-19 emergency presents an opportunity to reflect on the sort of employer we want to be and we have continued conversations with colleagues about what they needed to enable them to do their best for residents every day.

- We will maintain and build on those new ways of working which have worked well and learn from what has been less effective
- We will explore with staff what combinations of home and building-based work are most effective in allowing them to perform their roles most effectively
- Acknowledging that change is a constant and supporting staff through that change is a business-critical issue, we will put employee wellbeing and equality at the heart of everything we do.

How we will measure our success

Action	Measure of success	Delivery date
Attract, develop and retain a skilled and effective workforce. This includes measures to make work more flexible for roles that can be delivered in different ways creating benefits for employees and the council.	Reduction in work related travel to support climate emergency Reduction in agency spend covering permanent vacancies Staff tell us they have had a minimum of two conversations focused on performance and development – measured through employee survey Staff turnover (inc target % tbc) Use of apprentice levy measured by number of apprenticeships	Annual targets and improvements
Co-produce and deliver with staff equalities groups a Workforce Equality Plan	Staff tell us they understand and identify with our Equality value (measured through employee survey) Workforce distribution reflects the community it serves (ONS comparison used in equalities in employment report)	2021
Co-produce and deliver with staff groups an Employee Wellbeing Strategy	Staff tell us they value and use wellbeing resources (measured through employee survey) Absence targets achieved Time to Change Pledge standard maintained	2021

Promote staff productivity tools and user adoption/training to enable new ways of working	Increase in number of users actively using digital collaboration tools and technology to realise more efficient ways of working (benchmarking survey results)	4 year ambition – annual milestones
Attract, develop and retain a skilled and effective workforce. This includes measures to make work more flexible for roles that can be delivered in different ways creating benefits for employees and the council.	Reduction in work related travel to support climate emergency Reduction in agency spend covering permanent vacancies Staff tell us they have had a minimum of two conversations focused on performance and development – measured through employee survey Staff turnover (inc target % tbc) Use of apprentice levy measured by number of apprenticeships	Annual improvements

Key Performance Indicators	Current Performance	Target
Absence rate comparable to or better than benchmarks	8.17 days absence per FTE central and schools staff	Absence rate <local government rate =/< CIPD benchmark for public sector/large organisations
Staff Satisfaction Survey	Measured bi-annually	Improvement on previous

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Action Plan 20

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Council Plan Priority 4

Realising the full potential of our people and delivering value for money

Our commitment to you

We will develop our digital infrastructure to support residents and staff in day-to-day life

Background

The Council's Digital South Glos Programme has provided investment to enable services to be provided digitally to residents and staff. Our digital account has been set up and a number of services are accessible digitally to residents, with a roadmap of future services planned to go live. Our investment in core infrastructure means that staff can work flexibly and remotely, providing benefits to both the organisation and staff and proving invaluable as a business continuity measure in maintaining service delivery through Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

We have also invested in rolling out fibre broadband services to rural communities, with our take up being the highest in the South West region and in the top ten nationally. The council has signed the Local Digital Declaration and was one of just 11 successful bids for funding under the Local Digital Covid-19 Challenge.

Looking ahead, we must continue to invest in technology and in the technical skills of our staff. We must work collaboratively across the council to understand how technology can be used to allow colleagues to do their jobs more effectively and we should seek incremental improvements as well as large scale transformational changes enabled through technology.

We will make further investments in delivering digitally enabled services so that local people can engage with us at a time that suits them. At the same time, we recognise the need to ensure services remain accessible to those who are not online.

We will continue to work to establish South Gloucestershire as an innovation hub, through initiatives such as the UMBRELLA digital testbed and we will seek to achieve 100% broadband coverage for our residents.

Our core finance and HR business systems need to be replaced and this represents an opportunity to deliver further efficiencies. We will also develop our use of data and analytics to support residents, improve services and gain insight into how we can improve how we work and what we do, ensuring we work within legal and data security guidelines.

We have developed a Digital Inclusion Strategy to support those customers who would like to get online, but aren't currently; either because they lack the skills, access to equipment or broadband. We estimate that around 10% of South Gloucestershire's population are offline, with the highest proportions aged over 75 or disabled. We are also aware of customers who are classed as "being online" but sometimes lack both confidence and capability and would like to be able to undertake more interactions online or access more online services to allow them to participate more fully in society.

During 2019 we undertook comprehensive research with these customer groups to better understand how we can support them. We deliver regular "drop-in sessions" to

provide support or access and have increased the number of self-service PC's in our One Stop Shops and provide WiFi in our libraries and buildings.

How we will measure our success

Action	Measure of success	Delivery date
Convene a Digital Exclusion Task and Finish Group through the Scrutiny Commission to gain a clear understanding of the needs and difficulties experienced by those without access to online services and explore the further opportunities to facilitate access.	Reduce the percentage of the population excluded from our digital services (noting this is not a reported KPI as measuring is currently challenging)	Convene before end of 2020
Increase the number of high-quality digital self-services available for customers to use at a time that suits them, not just in council business hours	Residents, business and partners choose to use digital services over alternatives, so that the vast majority of interactions with the council (75% or higher, excluding planned casework) take the form of online self-service And of those, 75% or higher, can be completed successfully, unaided, first time, and be rated good or excellent	June 2023
Implement superfast broadband infrastructure to support the needs of our residents, business and partners.	Within available funding, work towards Government's broadband target 100% full-fibre/ Gigabit-broadband infrastructure by 2025	2025
Deliver secure, fit for purpose equipment and line of business systems for council staff, to enable self-serve, workflow and facilitate more flexible and collaborative ways of working	Through the delivery of the agreed roadmap in-line with strategic and architectural principles, staff have the equipment, software and line of business systems they need to deliver outcomes. Technology is an aid, not a frustration	December 2023
Implement a more strategic, cross-council view of data to support customer interactions, working within legal and data security guidelines.	Enhanced, cross-council, strategic use of data realising better decisions due to more accurate and accessible Management Information (MI) and achieving a greater insight into our customers' needs.	March 2022
Establish South Gloucestershire as an innovation area, through initiatives such as the UMBRELLA digital testbed and the driverless cars programme	Deliver the UMBRELLA research and development network joining the Bristol & Bath Science Park to University of West of England, Bristol Robotics Labs and Future Space.	2023

Key Performance Indicators	Current Performance	Target
Percentage of interactions with the council (excluding planned casework) that take the form of online self-service, can be completed successfully unaided, first time and are rated good or excellent	To be developed	75%
Increase in the percentage (%) of superfast fibre broadband homes passed	98%	99.9%
Increased number of transactional processes available via self-service (Digital KPI A) (% of processes, quarterly)	New measure	75%
Migration of contact from mediated channels to self-service channels (Digital KPI B) (% change, yearly)	New measure	10%
Reduction in cost of average customer contact (Digital KPI C) (% decrease, yearly)	New measure	To be developed

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