

South Gloucestershire Council

Cabinet

10 February 2023

Council Plan Progress Report (April 2022 – September 2022)

Purpose of the paper

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

Recommendation

To note and comment on the report's contents.

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 Council in October 2020. The Council Plan provides a high-level view of the Council's priorities over the four-year period and sets out the key aims of the 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 overall performance management arrangements.
4. This report is therefore focused at a high level. It is the second report to Cabinet on how delivery of the new Council Plan is progressing. As such, it 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. The report covers the six-month period April 2022 - September 2022
5. As part of our approach to reporting against Council Plan priorities, we are also developing a dashboard that will enable Cabinet to access the latest updates and performance indicators related to the different actions contained in the plan. This is a step towards providing a more interactive approach to performance reporting which will be developed further over the coming months. The nature of reports to Cabinet will therefore evolve over future periods to reflect the dynamic and complex nature of monitoring across such a range of commitments to ensure Cabinet can focus on the strategic direction of travel. Our intention is that this dashboard will be available to residents via the Council website.
6. Progress against the individual performance indicators is shown within the relevant action plan commitment within Appendix A. At this stage there are a number of indicators that are not yet able to be reported. Some of these are being developed while others are dependent on activities, e.g., Ofsted inspections, that have been impacted by the covid

pandemic, and for which recent data is not available. For those indicators that are able to be reported, an overall summary and across each of the four Council Plan priorities is 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/council-plan-2020-2024)

7. 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.

Addressing the climate emergency and closing the inequality gap

8. Significant work is being undertaken around the Cost of Living and its impacts, led by the new Head of Service for Community Development. This work will continue into the next year. A range of key partnerships, including the Health and Wellbeing Board and Local Strategic Partnership, are actively working on cost-of-living responses,
9. The work of the Financial Security group continues, with more partners joining the group. The support leaflet has been updated and was reprinted, as requests for it continue from a range of community, partner, and health organisations; an online training module was developed to support it. This group also continues oversight of the range of grants (national and local) that are available to communities, and a communications plan is in place to help more people be aware of the support and enable access to it.
10. The community conversation work is taking place and will integrate with the new Head of Community Development. Specific to Child Poverty, the insights work has been confirmed to begin in autumn 2022 to work with stakeholders and residents to better understand barriers to accessing support. This will then help the Community Development workstream and the Financial Security group.
11. Warm and Well continues to be an offer across SG, and currently have access to funding from various sources to support people in fuel poverty, on low incomes and with health conditions exacerbated by cold.
12. The Council has also established an Equality in Education (EiE) initiative which brings key stakeholders together to develop and implement an Action Plan to address inequalities across the education system. Climate change workshops are being offered to 20 more schools for the 22/23 school year. These include not only work on carbon emissions reductions and renewables but also focus on planning for the local impacts of a change climate
13. The latest available figures for area wide Co2e emissions in 2020 show an 11% drop from the previous year. Such a scale of reduction is necessary each and every year in order to meet our 2030 carbon neutrality target.
14. Year 3 the of the Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan continued to see strong delivery across over 80 actions blending both operational projects such as Individual EV charge points and the roll out of thermal imaging cameras in libraries by our Warm and Well delivery partners Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA), with longer term strategic approaches to the decarbonisation of heat and cooling using water in abandoned mines.
15. Responding to the need for retrofit and home energy advice, additional support was commissioned from SWEA in April, titled 'step up south Gloucestershire', and in Q2 directly supported 116 clients to make a total of £31,870 worth of savings, trained 24 frontline workers and ran 35 advice and drop in events.

16. Activity supporting nature's recovery continues to grow with the award of funding from the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund, strong sign up to Local Nature Action Plans and the Common Connections project starting to deliver on the ground. Over £1 million of funding for the creation of a new 'River Reserve' was secured from the Green Recovery Fund and it is hoped that this will be followed up with a further award for help in doubling tree canopy cover.
17. Progress on adapting to the now inevitable consequences of a changing climate remains a challenge both nationally and locally. Changes continue to be made with refinements to our approaches to commissioning and procurement, but it is anticipated that the publication of DEFRA's 3rd Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) earlier this year and the anticipated third National Adaptation Action Plan (NAP3), due in the new year, will provide a greater focus to the next stage of this work.
18. The Council's 'Climate Emergency Steering Group' hosted by UWE, have recently reported on our current trajectory to 2030, current estimates are that South Gloucestershire will be between 250kt – 665kt Co2e away from achieving carbon neutrality by the end of the decade. Recommendations for further actions will be incorporated into proposals for actions in year 4. (2023)
19. The UMBRELLA network launched successfully in October 2021 and currently 10 SMEs are developing their products. The network will be used to support a pilot use case to better understand the impacts of climate change. The network won the Connected Britain Industrial Innovation Award for 2022.

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

20. Overall, the improving trend for Ofsted inspections of South Gloucestershire schools has continued. The current inspection framework is more robust than previously and has a stronger focus on curriculum content and inclusion and good schools are maintaining their position. Schools that have been converted to academy status are improving, showing that this has had a positive impact with strengthened leadership to drive improvement.
21. Difficulties in supply and escalating cost of materials in the construction industry continue to impact on delivery of school capital projects. We are focussed on delivering a scheme for Lyde Green at the earliest opportunity. Frenchay Primary School was delayed but has now completed. Elm Park Primary school has now commenced on site and is on target to complete for September 23. Feasibility studies of all schools in the pipeline are being reviewed to ensure they are affordable and deliverable within the timeframe to meet sufficiency of places in the local area. Two out of three phases of Castle/Marlwood school project are complete/underway and third phase due to start imminently.
22. Ofsted Focused Visit on children looked after took place in September and though challenges were identified, there was good work identified, particularly in relation to our work with asylum seeking young people.
23. The new care leavers coordinator post has been filled and the postholder is leading on key priorities including Pledge conferences for staff and partners. Our commitment to Care Leavers is evident within our Local Offer, which is available to all of our Young People via the Care leaver's app. The app was relaunched last autumn.
24. An Education, Employment and Training (EET) pathway for care leavers, to include, life skills, experience opportunities, traineeships and apprenticeships has been devised.

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

25. The Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) site has had over 179k page views between April – September 2022. This is an increase of 26k views (or 17%) from the same period last year (Qs 1 & 2, 2021/22). This increasing number of page views on the IAG website over time, is the result of increased promotion and expansion of the content available the platform.
26. The Community Mental Health Framework is in the mobilisation stage. A BNSSG-wide Integrated Access Hub has been introduced using NHS 111. Additional VCSE sector support for people with Eating Disorders is being introduced. In South Gloucestershire, the focus is on introducing Integrated Personalised Care Teams for each Primary Care Network and two of five are already operational.
27. Within the People Department, the trauma informed approach is being rolled out, in partnership with Dignifi (VCSE organisation). Trauma and Recovery and Compassionate leadership training programme is currently being implemented. Work is continuing through the Ambassador network to promote trauma informed practice across the authority and there are currently around 600 multi-agency Adversity and Trauma Ambassadors across South Glos. Approx 50% Ambassadors are internal to People Department.
28. Adult and Children and Young People's Mental Health Strategies are in development. Areas of priority have been agreed for each within the respective Partnership groups.
29. The principle of revising the Town and Parish Council Charter has been agreed with the Town and Parish Council Forum (T&PCF). A working group from the T&PCF and council officers are working on revising the charter to a relationship rather than rules-based approach. This revised (and much simplified) COMPACT will provide a valuable template for the new Charter.
30. The Safeguarding communication campaign continues. Domestic abuse social media posts over the summer include 'Love is not Abusive', which show different types of abuse and victims and SG Firefighters as male victims. The reach of these posts is monitored and discussed as part of the DVA operational group agenda.
31. The 'See something, say something' which is the SG approach to Domestic Violence awareness, and the Government campaign, are regularly posted on Facebook and Tweeted. The reach of these campaigns is monitored via the Communications Subgroup of the Children's Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board. The information is also provided to residents, partners and members via Council updates.

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

32. Our progress is measured as a mix of annual indicators of condition and indicators of public perception.
33. We have continued our excellent work with enforcement with Operation Tiedown (joint operation with SGC and the Police).
34. Alongside this operation we have already had 134 potential investigations and up until September our Street Enforcement team have issued 56 FPN's 22 warning notices and have six cases going to court. The team has also been able to investigate a variety of other activities, such as fly posting, advertising vehicles for sale and abandoned vehicles.
35. September saw the start of programme of 'door knocking' in the UWE area to target the student population at the start of the academic year and raise awareness of waste and recycling facilities and procedures in an endeavour to reduce waste appear left on the streets or in incorrect receptacles. There has been some good cross-team working throughout the period including involving the Town Centre teams and are working on

reducing clutter to aid mobility and removing detritus and making sure bins are emptied regularly and in good condition.

36. We have completed several roads maintenance programmes, targeting 83 sites for a variety of resurfacing and cleansing work, treating 88 sites despite the pressure of inflation on materials costs.
37. A new IT system (ALLOY) has been introduced, which enables more efficient and effective use of data to manage potholes and other defects.
38. We are continuing to update 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. We have to date completed upgrades we had planned for Cadbury Heath and Warmley, however Oldland is currently outstanding from this year's programme, and these are planned to be installed before March 2023. We are planning further upgrades in the future, and this will include Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury.
39. Works began on the new slip road into the Mangotsfield Sort It Centre in September. The slip road will divert traffic heading to the sort it centre away from Carsons road and is due to be completed by the end of February.
40. The review of the planning service has continued despite on-going uncertainty regarding the national policy framework. A Peer Review was undertaken in May 2022, and a delivery plan will take forward the recommendations. The strong recovery in the speed of determining planning applications has continued over this period.
41. A new Local plan Delivery Programme has been brought forward and at a local level, 2 further Neighbourhood Plans (for Kingswood and Yate) were approved.
42. Progress with the Housing Strategy remained on track following a period of stakeholder consultation over the Summer.

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

43. Activities since the last report include the wider roll-out of Value For Money signage next to road schemes and delivering video and other content linked to these core council services via social media and other communications channels. This includes content on resurfacing/pothole filling at a local level, graffiti removal and interviews with frontline staff from StreetCare and Suez. Over the summer months, this content had a combined audience reach of almost 60,000. This approach to content is both more watchable (the number of video minutes watched has increased by 50% over this period) and more engaging (with engagement activity, likes and shares, increasing by 60%) than some of our more traditional content. Sentiment analysis has shown that this content helped to increase social media positivity in comments from 2% at the start of the activity to 24% by the end of the summer. Focusing on the hard work of individual members of staff, who are well known in the communities they serve, is also another rich vein that helps to bring a more human face to the council.
44. Good progress has been made on implementing the Asset Management Plan and developing out council owned land and assets working through joint ventures to deliver housing and associated infrastructure. The Social Value Target Operating Model (TOM) has now been rolled out and is embedded in day-to-day procurement activity. Work through Integra continues to support Education outcomes alongside maintaining community meals.
45. Good progress across a number of projects has been made in the last reporting period. We have released new Revenues & Benefits online services, with further initiatives planned through to the end of the financial year.

46. The first agents are live on the new Strategic Customer Contact Platform.
47. The social care self-service portal for professionals to use when referring to Integrated Children's Services within the council and send related review documentation is at pilot phase with 10 schools. Full roll out to all schools is expected by the end of the school year.
48. The Workforce Equality Action Plan (WEAP) is being delivered. The employee survey (Sept 2022) included the seven questions we are using to track progress against our workforce equalities ambition statement. Responses to these seven questions form an Inclusion Index that we will track and report progress against. The Inclusion Index will be calculated in every employee survey cycle with the next one being in Spring 2023. Overall the survey is very positive. Of note is a positive baseline Inclusion Index. 72% of respondents would recommend the council as an employer and 80% of staff feel they are making a difference through their work. Our staff report that managers are doing an excellent job in supporting them and staff feel they are trusted. There are areas to focus improvement on, including the lived experience of our staff declaring a disability which is not as positive as we want.
49. Service areas continue to monitor recruitment and retention schemes put in place to support the challenges of social care recruitment, notably within Children's Services. A significant programme to enable international recruitment has been planned over Q1 and Q2 and the council has successfully recruited overseas social workers to join our Children's services teams.
50. 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.
51. The Workforce development offer continues to be predominantly on-line which provides greatest flexibility for staff to continue to access core CPD learning options and role-related development opportunities. Our focus is on refreshing our leadership and management offer including clear expectations of managers.
52. Our workforce change activity and employee relations activity remains focused on having an effective workforce, skilled and flexible. We have published a Hybrid Working policy to support workforce flexibility. Our teams are investing in the preparatory work to support a new ERP (finance & HR system) to provide tools and processes for more effective people management.

Consultation

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

Equalities Considerations

54. 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

55. 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

56. 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

57. 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

58. 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

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

Risks, mitigations and opportunities

60. 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

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

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