

South Gloucestershire Council

Cabinet

7 February 2022

Council Plan Progress Report (April to September 2021)

Purpose of the paper

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

Recommendation

2. To note and comment on the report's contents.

Policy

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

Background

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 to September 2021
7. 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.

8. 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 here: [Council Plan Progress Report Appendices](#).
9. 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

10. These overarching themes are baked into the Action Plans that are delivering on the objectives set out in the Council Plan. As such, details of our progress in tackling these issues can be found throughout this report within the updates on each of the four priorities. Highlights over the last reporting period include:
11. The Race Equality Task Force has developed an action plan for delivery in the new academic year, which will help us target interventions to improve the experience and outcomes of different community groups so that the benefits of the best start in life for young people can be shared equally.
12. New school buildings for Frenchay and Elm Park are on track to deliver better learning environments for students and their surroundings, from September 2022 and 2023 respectively, having been designed to help us achieve our climate targets by being carbon neutral.
13. In addition to sharing information directly with families in need of financial and other support, which for many has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, we have worked with partner agencies and organisations to increase understanding and awareness among Practitioners of financial inequalities, so that more of those in need can be identified and provided with help.
14. A successful South Gloucestershire Business show was delivered at the Science Park in the run up to COP26, which featured a strong Climate Change theme and presentations and workshops from local employers, academic institutions, and consultancies from the environment sector. While the speed of reduction has slowed, we continue to make progress in reducing the energy consumption and carbon emissions from Council operations and plan for further utilisation of low carbon technologies for council assets and renewable energy provision. In terms of the Council's own CO2 emissions (during lockdown) for 2020/21 which have just been reported, these show an 8% drop on the previous year.

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

15. Building on the progress reported in the last monitor, we are rolling out the South Glos Way Toolkit, which provides resources and training to all practitioners across the local authority so that we can develop and delivery consistent, highly effective, inclusive practice across the local area, with an initial focus on support for special educational needs.
16. We want children, young people and school leaders to help us shape our services and work is underway with them to review the On-line Pupil Survey so that it provides relevant and specific feedback relating to equality and wellbeing in education. Young Ambassadors have been engaged in the Equality in Education Initiative and the Youth Board is also providing specific and relevant feedback to inform strategy, focus and direction of travel.

17. A toolkit has been developed and launched for all early years practitioners as part of the Virtual Learning environment for Early Years settings to spread best practice approaches to transition into reception.
18. Interventions are being developed to help move households away from receiving and depending on charitable food from foodbanks so they can access low cost, affordable healthy food e.g., Patchway Food Club. We have worked with the Bristol Bears Community Foundation to raise the profile of free school meals and encourage those eligible to access them.
19. Additional funding has been allocated to increase capacity in the fostering service and we will be focusing on recruitment of carers.

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

20. We have completed the Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) content review and produced a Continuous Improvement Plan, which we are now implementing. The site has had over 83k page views between July – September this is an increase of 13k views from Q1 of 2021/22.
21. A 'Citizen Portal' is being used, which allows settings to amend/update their details including the types of placements they offer, enhancing the search results and quality of information on the IAG site for residents.
22. A new action has been included in this plan to support the most vulnerable adults to maintain and promote their independence. We will work with colleagues across the Council so that people can easily access information about healthy ageing; actions they can take and where to go for further information and support in their community.
23. Joint working over the summer and autumn with regional Local Authorities (LAs) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to promote the range of support available to empower people to live independently led to a feature on BBC Points West about Celestine House and a family story about the use of TEC (Technology Assisted Care).

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

24. We have been successful in securing a share of £540 million from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), which will deliver a range of public transport and walking and cycling schemes over the next five years.
25. The Envirocrime team has two additional officers who are helping work through reported cases of fly tipping. There have been hundreds of lines of enquiry to follow up and the team are steadily progressing cases through to Police and Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) interview for a number of the investigations. This should progress on to more prosecutions over the coming months.
26. We have now delivered 34 electric vehicle (EV) charging points installed in 10 different locations across South Gloucestershire, with a further eight bays due to be installed in Cribbs Causeway in the new year. Charging bays have been implemented in Marshfield, Frampton Cotterell, Kingswood, and Thornbury. Work continues to develop an EV strategy to help define the role of the council in supporting our residents transition to electric vehicles.
27. Delivery of the Local Plan Delivery Programme (LDPD) continues to be on track. A suite of new/revised Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) is progressing, with a further 5 adopted in April and two further SPDs formally adopted 2nd October. Topics covered are: Green Infrastructure, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, Trees on Development Sites,

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

28. Activities since the last Cabinet report include rolling-out signage highlighting road improvement works and the £174m investment in roads across the district. We have also increased the range and frequency of content on our corporate news channels to raise the profile of our core 'focus' services and value for money. These include features on: a study carried out by the Future Highways Research Group which concluded that the services delivered by the Council's StreetCare team provide value for money; the behind-the-scenes work involved in sweeping streets for leaf litter in autumn; new equipment that will help us save costs on delivering core services; the budget consultation focus on achieving value for money as part of our plans.
29. We are creating a new mechanism to collect residents' views on value for money that is separate from the lengthy budget consultation. This aligns with our work on community conversations and will help us increase survey participation, including gathering feedback from a wider range of residents across different protected characteristics.
30. We have seen a positive increase in the number of residents who feel that the Council keeps them informed, largely due to the significant impact of the regular e-newsletter to residents. With 78,000 subscribers reaching approximately 65% of households, this is now a core element of our communications channel mix.
31. Our Workforce Equality Action Plan 2021-24 is at final draft stage. This has been drafted with support from the staff network equalities group and Equality and Diversity Action Team. Our staff are helping us shape the steps we will take to ensure equalities within the council, as we are working with partner organisations in our Community Conversations work to shape improved relationships and even more effective working with them.
32. We are also working closely with staff groups and service areas that are facing recruitment challenges to identify the key drivers that help us retain as well as to attract the staff that will help us achieve our aims.

Consultation

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

Equalities Considerations

34. 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

35. There are no direct financial, legal or human resources implications arising from this report.
(John McCormack, Head of Legal, Governance and Democratic Services 01454 865980)
(Nina Philippidis, Head of Financial Services - 01454 865140)
(Claire Kerswill, Head of Human Resources - 01454 866348)

Environmental Implications

36. 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

37. 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, Community Services Manager – 01454 868480)

Economic Implications

38. 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

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

Risks, mitigations and opportunities

40. 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

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

Author

David Wilkin, Director of Corporate Resources - 01454 865001

Departmental contact

Andrew McLaughlin, Head of Strategy & Innovation - 07514 622 175