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CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present: Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Peter Wharf (Vice-Chairman), Graham Carr-Jones, Ray Bryan, Tony Ferrari, Laura Miller, Andrew Parry, Gary Suttle, Jill Haynes and David Walsh

Also present: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Byron Quayle, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Paul Kimber, Cllr Rob Hughes, Cllr Mike Parkes, Cllr Val Pothecary, Cllr Sarah Williams, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Kelvin Clayton, Cllr Jean Dunseith, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Stella Jones, Cllr David Morgan, Cllr Louie O'Leary, Cllr Molly Rennie, Cllr Andrew Starr, Cllr Maria Roe, Cllr Gill Taylor, Cllr David Tooke and Cllr Clare Sutton

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Steve Veevers (Corporate Director Operations, Adult Care), Bridget Betts (Environmental Advice Manager), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director of Housing, Dorset Council), Sue McGowan (Head of Travel Dorset), Jim McManus (Corporate Director - Finance and Commercial) and Karyn Punchard (Corporate Director for Place Services)

STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Dorset Council continued to operate virtual informal meetings. This decision had been made in the light of the increasing Covid-19 case rates and projected increases for August into September. It would be reviewed in Mid - September.

The Leader of the Council advised that he had decided that Cabinet meetings would also continue to be held as virtual informal meetings during this time. Where a decision was required, the appropriate Portfolio Holder would make that executive decision, taking into account the views expressed by the wider Cabinet membership.

60. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

61. **Public Participation**

There were four questions/statements from the public. These questions were read out by Matt Prosser, Chief Executive and Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director, Legal and Democratic Services) and responded to by the appropriate Portfolio Holder. A

copy of the full questions and the detailed responses are set out in Appendix 1 these minutes.

62. Questions from Councillors

There was one question from Councillor C Sutton; this along with the response is set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

63. Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan for October 2021 was received and noted.

64. Additional Procurement Forward Plan Report over £500k (2021 - 22)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy set out the report. Cabinet was advised that the Commercial & Procurement team had worked with colleagues across the Directorates to review the contracts database and establish a procurement programme for 2021-22.

Appendix 1 of the report set out additional procurement activity within the 2021-22 procurement programme for members consideration.

There were no questions from non-executive members and the Cabinet membership indicated that they were “minded to” supported for the recommendation as set out in the report.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy

- (a) To begin each of the procurement processes as set out and listed in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report of 7 September 2021.
- (b) That in each instance the further step of making any contract award be delegated to the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder, in consultation with the relevant Executive Director.

[Decision - Additional Procurement Forward Plan Report over £500k \(2021 - 22\) - Dorset Council](#)

Reason for the decision: Cabinet is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more. It is also good governance to provide Cabinet with a summary of all proposed procurement prior to them formally commencing. Planning procurements ensures:

- effective stakeholder management.
- efficient commissioning and sourcing.
- compliance with regulations and contract procedure rules; and
- best value for money is clearly defined.

65. Weymouth Station Gateway Project, Payments over £500,000

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment presented a report on the Weymouth Station Gateway Project. The aim of the project, which had been agreed and supported by the local authorities and stakeholders was to improve the station forecourt and sustainable transport links, making the area welcoming and a safer place to use and bringing economic benefit.

As an update since the report had been published, the portfolio holder advised that full funding had now been secured for the project.

Responding to questions from non-executive members, the portfolio holder and the Environment Advice Manager advised that: -

- The project team, including all stakeholders had considered the points raised.
- The land was not in the ownership of the Council
- New cycle and walkways were proposed
- The project had all partner support
- Additional bus services could be added in the future

Cabinet members were “minded to” support the report and its recommendations.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

- (a) That Dorset Council enters a contract with Hanson Contracting for delivery of the capital element of this project subject to planning consent being obtained.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder, to award the contract.

[Decision - Weymouth Station Gateway Project, Payments over £500.000 - Dorset Council](#)

Reason for the decision: Cabinet is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500,000 or more. The Weymouth Station Gateway project has received significant funding to deliver a project. The Dorset Coast Forum team seek an assurance from Cabinet that they can pay an amount above £500,000 when this is claimed by Hanson Contracting in accordance with any limits agreed in the project delivery terms.

66. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

Cabinet considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment in respect of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The report sought support to publish a first Dorset Council Bus Service Improvement Plan in response to Government’s new National Bus Strategy (NBS) - Bus Back Better. The BSIP set out a vision and priorities for the future of bus

services in Dorset and would be a high-level bidding document used to secure capital and revenue grant funding from the Department of Transport.

There were no questions from non-executive members and Cabinet members were “minded to” support the recommendation put by the Portfolio Holder.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

- (a) To agree the scope of the outline Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) be agreed and the commitment of resources within existing budgets to take forward work to publish a first version of the BSIP by the end of October 2021, be supported.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the relevant portfolio holder, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place to approve the final version of the BSIP before it is published.

[Decision - Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\) - Dorset Council](#)

Reason for the decision: Seeking support to publish a first Dorset Council Bus Service Improvement Plan in response to Government’s new National Bus Strategy (NBS) - Bus Back Better. The BSIP sets out a vision and priorities for the future of bus services in Dorset and will be a high-level bidding document used to secure capital and revenue grant funding from the DfT.

67. Holwell Neighbourhood Plan Review

In presenting his report the Portfolio Holder for Planning advised that the neighbourhood plan review had been subject to independent examination and the examiner had recommended that the Council make (adopt) the plan with the modification specified in his report at appendix B. The examiner had concluded that there was no statutory requirement for a referendum in this instance given the limited nature of the changes proposed to the plan

There were no questions from non-executive members. Cabinet members indicated that they were “minded to” support the recommendations in the report.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Planning

- (a) That the Council makes the Holwell Neighbourhood Plan Review 2017 - 2031 (as set out in Appendix A of the report to Cabinet) part of the statutory development plan for the Holwell Neighbourhood Area.
- (b) That the Council offers its congratulations to Holwell Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in producing a successful neighbourhood plan review.

[Decision - Howell Neighbourhood Plan Review - Dorset Council](#)

Reason for the decision: To formally make the neighbourhood plan review part of the statutory development plan for the Holwell Neighbourhood Area. In addition,

to recognise the significant amount of work undertaken by Holwell Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in preparing the plan review and to congratulate the Council and Group on their success.

68. **Annual Safeguarding Board Report**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help presented the Annual pan-Dorset Safeguarding report. He highlighted areas that required work: -

- There had been an increase in the number of sudden unexpected deaths, where co-sleeping was a feature. Partners were publishing messaging regarding the dangers of this with an aim to reduce the numbers.
- There had also been an increase in occurrence across the pan-Dorset area of suicide risk and death because of suicide.
- Progress had been made in the Strengthening Service Boards.
- Covid-19 pandemic had and continued to impact the areas of Safeguarding and he
- Acknowledged the impact and rise of domestic abuse during the pandemic.
- Cllr Rennie, councillor champion for domestic abuse promoted the recently established “tool kit”

The Portfolio Holder took the opportunity to thank Anthony Douglas, the Independent Chair and Scrutineer of the pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. Anthony Douglas addressed the committee and highlighted the importance of multi-agency working and the focus on place-based safeguarding.

Members welcomed and spoke in support of the annual pan-Dorset Safeguarding report.

Noted

That the overall Annual report of the pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership be received and noted.

Reason for the decision: The report was a statutory responsibility to produce hence the endorsement of all 4 statutory partners was needed – Dorset Council, BCP Council, Dorset CCG and Dorset Constabulary

69. **Cabinet member update on policy development matter referred to an Overview Committee(s) for consideration**

Listed below was the items reported to be coming forward in the next few months.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and early help advised that several reports had been considered by People and Health Overview Committee on 2 September; these included, Birth to Settle Adulthood, Children missing out on Education and the Development of Family Hubs.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Customer Services advised that the following items were coming forward in the next few months; Customer Service Strategy and Park Home Fees Policy.

70. **Portfolio Holder - Lead Member(s) Update Summary**

Cllr Noc Lacey-Clarke, Cabinet Lead Member for Environment, Travel and Harbours presented a report on the Dorset Council's response to the Government's Bus Back Better – National Bus Strategy.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes at Appendix 3.

71. **Climate & Ecological Emergency Executive Advisory Panel Update**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment updated members on the work of the Climate and Ecological Emergency EAP.

- The work to de-carbonise the Council's estate was making good progress
- By the end of September, the first phase of the installation of EV car charging stations would be complete.
- An update on phase 2 would be reported to a future meeting.

In a response to a question about de-carbonising properties purchased for housing the homeless, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would respond to the question outside of the meeting.

72. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

73. **Exempt Business**

There were no exempt items of business to report.

- Appendix 1 - Public Participation**
- Appendix 2 - Councillor Questions**
- Appendix 3 - National Bus Strategy**

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.12 am

Chairman

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Cabinet of 7 September 2021

Public Questions

1. Question from Giles Watts on behalf of Dorset Climate Action Network (DorsetCAN)

Consultation for the Draft Local Plan closed on 15th March. At the Cabinet meeting on 18th May we asked when the submission and feedback from the consultation would be made publicly available. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, David Walsh, responded that “it is likely that they will all be published in July”. As of 1st September this has not yet happened. Can Cllr Walsh please update us on when the consultation documents will now be published and, given the further delays, his new timescale for revising, submitting and examining Dorset’s Local Plan.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

Officers have been working hard to process the consultation responses however given the high response rate, it is taking longer than expected. We anticipate publishing the consultation responses before the end of September.

2. Question from Mike Allen

In July I asked the Cabinet whom they expected to buy the nearly 10,000 extra dwellings planned in the draft Local Plan, extra that is over the Ministry of Housing’s projected household growth in Dorset due to population, migration and household size changes.

The Cabinet reply was that the extra housing:

“...enables for the formation of households from those who already live in Dorset where a suitable property is not available (such as young adults who live with their parents) and for those who need or wish to move to Dorset and where a suitable property is not available.”

I want to probe a little deeper please. The answer says that the extra housing will be more suitable for so-called hidden-households and for extra in-comers from other areas. One can only assume that “suitable” here means affordable. So the plan is for nearly 10,000 extra more-affordable dwellings to be built, generating extra demand as a result of their lower prices presumably.

Remembering that current population trends, projected by the Ministry and the independent ONS, do not project these households to form, there must be something in the Council’s planning that is going to cause these extra dwellings to be more affordable than expected. Either wages are planned to rise faster than house prices, or house prices are planned to fall relative to wages, or both.

Marginally, house prices rise when incomes rise, so one must assume that house prices are planned by the Council to fall relative to wages, due to some undeclared mechanism. The plan surely must quantify the actual fall in prices expected to be necessary.

Since building costs and margins cannot be expected to fall, those price falls must be found in reduced land values. Land values must be planned to fall enough to bring 10,000 new households into the housing market.

So it is this economic mechanism I want to ask about:

Please can the Cabinet explain how they expect the house price falls to occur that will enable 10,000 extra households to form in Dorset over the Plan period 2021-38?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

An increase in supply of suitable homes will enable the formation of new households. Suitable homes are homes that meet the need of a resident whether this be in terms of size, type or tenure and does not purely relate to cost. A proportion of the new homes being provided will meet the planning definition of affordable housing. The provision of a range of homes of different sizes, types and tenures will also enable existing residents to move to homes that more closely meet their needs thereby freeing up the existing dwelling stock for others.

3. Question from Julie Leah

As the Environment Bill will have long term implications for Dorset, please could the council explain what they are doing to ensure that the Environmental Bill is rigorous enough to serve Dorset well and how its implementation will affect the CEES and DLP?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services

Dorset Council have been working closely with partners including Natural England and the Dorset Local Nature Partnership to put ourselves on the front foot when the Environment Bill is enacted. Among other actions, work has been undertaken to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy and to integrate the requirement for the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain into local plan policies.

From an air quality perspective, the Council has watched the development of the Bill and supported comment through the consultation. There has been concern about the range of pollutants proposed to be included and how new provisions will be resourced. The detail of specific pollutant limits is awaited, particularly in relation to small particulates.

The Council will shortly start consultation on a Local Air Quality Action Plan and detail resulting from the Act will be incorporated.

The Government published the Resources and Waste Strategy in December 2018. Through the Environment Bill, Defra are seeking powers which will allow them to make regulations to implement each of the three reforms:

- Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR) in the UK
- A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Consistency of materials collected for recycling for households and businesses in England.

These have recently been consulted on and Dorset Council provided a full and comprehensive response to each of these consultations.

4. Question from Andrew Carey

Cllr Ray Bryan has publicly stated his intention (Dorset Council Website, May 25, 2021) to: "make Dorset the greenest county in England".

The UK100 pledge says: *"We will bring our council emissions to Net Zero by 2030* and we will work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible (and by 2045* at the latest)."* Dorset Council's target dates of 2040 and 2050 fall well short of this pledge.

Wiltshire Council, Somerset County Council and Cornwall Council are among 13 county councils that have already signed the UK100 pledge (as well as many district, town and city councils). Dorset Council has not. Dorset is therefore not even among the 13 greenest counties in England. Given the urgent call for action in the IPCC's latest Climate Change report, will Dorset Council now support Cllr Bryan's aspiration and sign the UK100 pledge?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

Following an in-depth review of the options available to Dorset Council to transition to carbon neutrality, the implications for the Council, a lengthy public consultation and approval by Council the Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action plans sets a target date for Dorset Council to become Carbon Neutral of 2040. The Strategy sets out a budget for the reduction of carbon emissions by the Council with key milestones being:

2025 – 40% reduction

2030 – 71% reduction

2035 – 90% reduction

2040 – 100% reduction

Dorset Council believes the target it has set is both achievable and realistic and has made significant progress following a grant from Central Government of £19 million

to reduce carbon emissions from its built estate, the decarbonization of the power tools used in front line operations as well as the installation of additional electric charging points, a replacement programme for some its vehicle fleet and low carbon road repair methods.

As a result of the target that Dorset Council has set it is unable to sign the UK100 pledge which commits to carbon neutrality by 2030 however we will aim to have brought about a minimum of a 71% reduction in our carbon emissions and will continue to put the response to climate change at the Centre of the work of the Council.

Cabinet – 7 September 2021 Councillor Questions

Question from Cllr Clare Sutton

At Full Council on 15 July we resolved that 'a review of Dorset Council's governance [will] take place over this current term with a vote before the 2024 election.'

In light of the often-stated aim to be a member-led council, I assume this review will be carried out by a working group of councillors. Can the Leader please confirm:

- How large that group will be and how will it demonstrate political balance;
- When its membership and terms of reference will be decided;
- Whether the terms of reference will include consideration of a non-Cabinet, cross party model, which many members and Dorset residents believe would both be more democratic and make better use of our collective experience and,
- In order to meet the stated timeline, when will the Working Group report, and when will options be put to full Council?

Response from the Leader of the Council

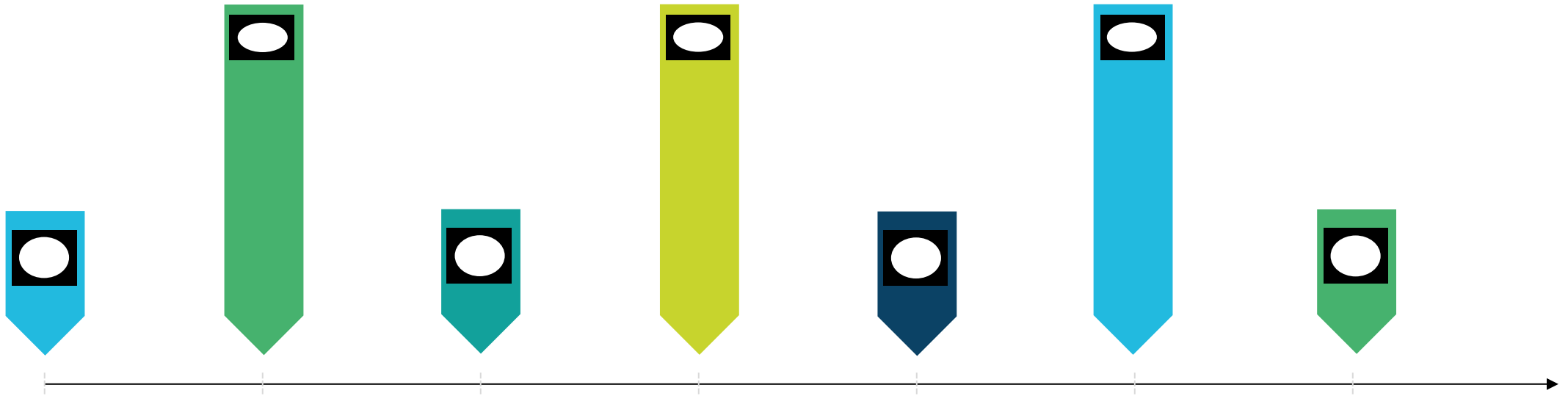
Thank you for your question, which is in four parts.

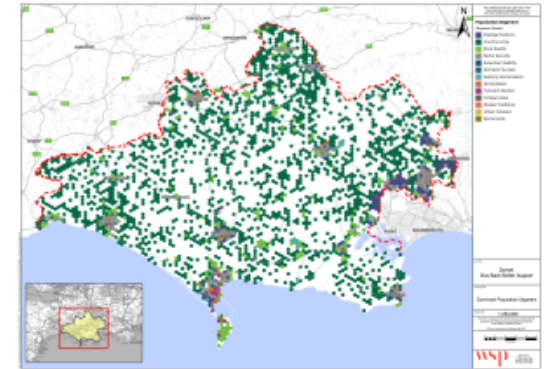
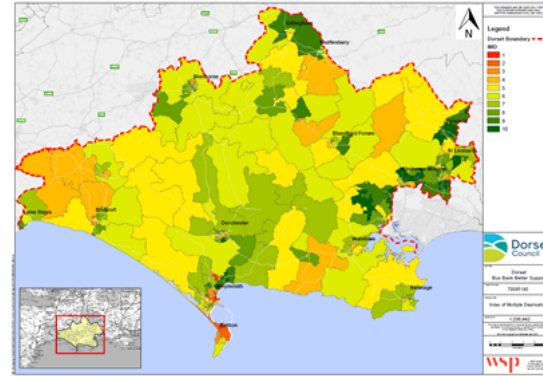
- The Governance Review Executive Advisory Panel will be made up of 11 Members, this being the minimum number required to achieve political balance.
- I have written to Group Leaders seeking nominations and have received two of the three to date.
- Terms of Reference and a Work Programme will be discussed and agreed at the first meeting of the Governance Advisory Group. The Group will be chaired by the Leader of Council as governance is included in his portfolio of responsibilities. The majority of members will be non-cabinet and will be cross-party and politically balanced as stated above.
- The timetable of key milestones leading up to a final decision, in accordance with the resolution agreed at Full Council on the 15 July 2021, has been sent to Group Leaders and will be made available to all members following agreement by the Governance Review EAP.

Details have been included as an attachment to my email to Group Leaders dated 1 September, but in answer to the question a report setting out options will be made at Full Council in September 23. This will enable the Constitution to be redrafted and approved prior to the May 2024 election should the decision be to move to a committee based governance model.

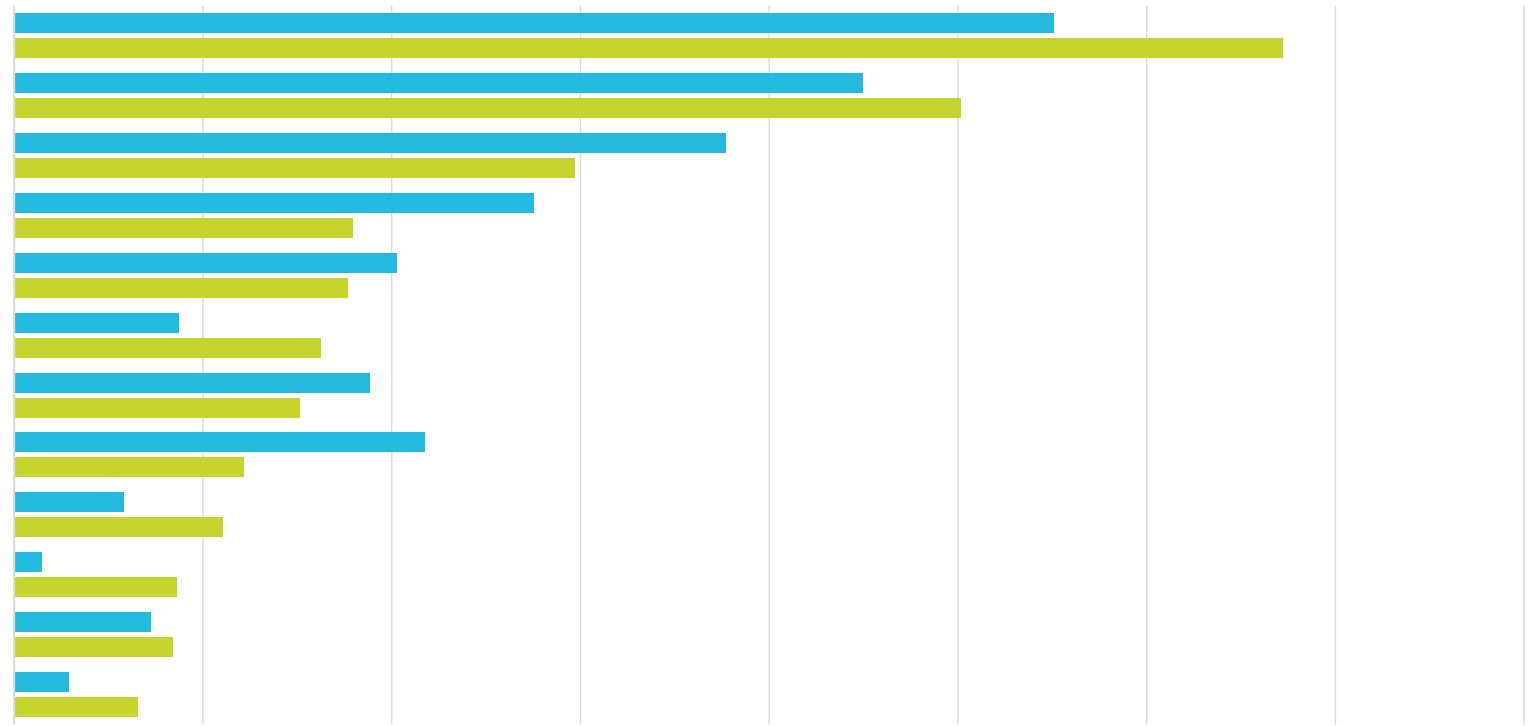
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