

Cabinet

18 January 2022

Council Plan: Performance Report October-December 2021

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Haynes, Corporate Development and Transformation

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: M Prosser, Chief Executive

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation: That cabinet:

- i. Note progress against the council plan for the period October-December 2021.

Reason for Recommendation: To ensure progress towards the Council Plan is monitored.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report provides an update on performance for the period October-December 2021 (quarter 3). Since performance was last reported in June 2021, the council's performance measures have been made publicly available as part of the work undertaken by the two scrutiny committees. They can be found at:

- [People and Health Scrutiny Dashboard](#)
- [Place and Resources Scrutiny Dashboard](#)

- 1.2. Given the significant amount of performance information now in the public domain, this report aims to provide a higher-level, more qualitative approach to reporting the council's performance against its priorities.
- 1.3. In October 2021, an updated council plan was agreed by Cabinet (attached at appendix 1). The update focussed primarily on reflecting lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, and also provided an opportunity to provide updates on the transformation and climate and ecological emergency programmes.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1. The quarter 3 financial management report is elsewhere on this agenda.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

- 3.1. Two of the five Council Plan priorities relate to the well-being and health agenda: strong, healthy communities and staying safe and well. Updates are provided against both of these priorities.

4. Climate Implications

- 4.1. As part of the review of the council plan, climate and ecology is now one of the council's six main priorities. A summary of progress is provided below. The climate and ecological emergency strategy can be found [here](#).

5. Other Implications

- 5.1. None.

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1. Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 7.1. An EqIA of the Council Plan was agreed by Cabinet on 28 January 2020.

8. Appendices

- i. Dorset Council Plan (updated October 2021)

9. Background papers

- i. Dorset Council Plan - Cabinet, 5 October 2021
- ii. Dorset Council Plan: Quarter 4 Performance Update - Cabinet, 22 June 2021

10. Headlines against council priorities – October-December 2021

Economic growth

- Dorset Council, together with BCP Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), has set up a new pan-Dorset Skills Commission to look at ways of tackling skills shortages in the county.
- Work began on just under £1million of improvement works for the Weymouth Gateway project to improve the area around the train station.
- There's been further development at the Dorset Innovation Park (Dorset's only Enterprise Zone).
- Cabinet approved a revised 'Commercial Strategy for Commissioning and Procurement', which contains a commitment to maximise the Dorset pound and promote local economic growth.
- Dorset Council was awarded £20,000 towards developing a pilot training programme for fibre engineers and help boost broadband provision in the county.
- The council provided six days of free parking over the festive season to encourage residents to shop locally and support high streets.

Unique environment

- Dorset Council reached a key milestone of 60% of household waste being recycled and composted. Figures published in December by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs showed Dorset Council is ranked in the top ten councils with the highest household waste recycling rates in England for 2020/21. We are the eighth best performing council in England, and third top performing unitary council.
- A draft action plan focussed on air quality was published in the autumn, outlining the measures the council will take to improve air quality across Dorset between 2022 and 2027.
- The council supported the Queen's Green Canopy in November, a new national initiative that encourages people across the UK to plant trees to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

- In November the council launched a public consultation asking residents for their views on tackling anti-social behaviour. Proposals include measures to address wild camping and to prevent wildfires.

Suitable housing

- The new housing register went live, to prioritise and allocate social housing across the County. This was a major re-registration process and launch of a new and user-friendly system.
- 12 modular housing units were opened in Weymouth in September to provide temporary accommodation for rough sleepers, as part of a joint project between Dorset Council and The Bus Shelter Dorset charity.
- New and suitable housing remains a significant challenge. The numbers of families in B&B increased in November due to the reduced number of vacancies in temporary accommodation and the difficulties in accessing affordable accommodation in the private rented and social sectors. There are also some young adult care leavers (currently three) in bed and breakfast accommodation, and significant work is being done by Housing and Children's Services to find suitable accommodation.
- There continues to be good progress with the local Housing Association Registered Providers building new affordable homes across the County. We exceeded last year's target of 300 and are already close to that number, and target, three quarters into this financial year. These are new homes for people on our housing register and who have been homeless and contribute to us being able to meet our housing obligations as an Authority.

Strong, healthy communities

- Following the Ofsted inspection in September, Children's Services were judged as 'good' with 'outstanding leadership'.
- The council launched Targeted Youth Workers who provide young people with the right support in the right place at the right time.
- There were a number of developments to increase provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Dorset, as part of the council's £37.5 million investment:
 - The new Coombe House School near Shaftesbury is progressing well with recruitment of the teaching staff and work to the fabric of the building. The new school will provide 280 places for local children.
 - A new special free school for Weymouth & Portland was announced as part of a collaboration between the council, the Department for Education and the Minerva Academy. The new

school will provide up to 75 places for children and young people aged 14-19 years with SEND, and is expected to be open in the autumn of 2023.

- A proposal to expand Beaucroft school in Wimborne was approved by Cabinet, which will create an additional 80 places for children and young people.
- The council launched the Weymouth Art Trail.
- The council launched its 'Let's Talk Libraries' consultation.
- The council secured £380,000 for projects to help women and girls in Weymouth in particular to feel safer on the streets, which was part of the government's Safer Streets Fund.
- Despite considerable effort by the council and local MPs, the council was not successful in its bid to government for much-needed 'Levelling Up' funding for Weymouth and Portland. Weymouth and Portland is the least socially mobile area in the country, and councillors continue to work with Dorset's MPs to lobby government for access to national funding streams.

Staying safe and well

- COVID continued to have a significant impact on health and care services, exacerbated by a limited availability of care and difficulties in recruiting to key roles in both adults and children's care services. Extensive work is underway to improve recruitment and retention.
- The council worked with health partners to help tackle NHS waiting lists by creating space for rapid access clinics in the council-owned South Walks House, in Dorchester. The council is also negotiating a 20 year lease of the South Walks House building to the NHS.
- The council launched a public consultation about its draft domestic abuse strategy in November, asking residents and partner organisations to have their say on how it can be tackled.

Climate and ecology

- The council's carbon emissions reduced by around 17% from 2020/21, well in excess of the 8% year on year target to reach carbon neutral by 2040.
 - Great progress was made with the decarbonisation of council buildings, using the £19 million funding secured from Government.

- The pandemic has fundamentally changed the way council employees travel. Council employee travel has reduced by 60% which, as one of the biggest employers in the county, is a significant change
- Energy use in council buildings has shown a 21% reduction between 2019/20 and 2020/21
- The rangers, grounds teams and arboriculture teams are now all using battery powered frontline tools, powered by our own solar panels.
- In October, as part of the review of the Council Plan, climate and ecology became one of six main priorities for the council.

11. Equality, diversity and inclusion

11.1 Work to progress equality, diversity and inclusion continued, including:

- Roll-out of new employee networks.
- New employee allies and champions.
- Additional support for volunteering and voluntary and community organisations.

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Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.