

Shaping Dorset Council Programme – Gateway 2 Review

1. Introduction

The Shaping Dorset Council (SDC) programme continues to progress towards operational readiness. As per the planned timescales of the programme, an operational readiness gateway review was scheduled for completion in January/ February 2019. SWAP have been commissioned to undertake this gateway review, to provide assurance to the Chief Executive of the new Dorset Council, as well as other programme stakeholders, that the SDC programme is on track to deliver the new Dorset Council from the 1st April 2019.

Whilst clearly, the SDC programme is constrained within a set timescale, the overall objective of this gateway review has been to assess how well placed the programme is in relation to operational readiness, as well as highlighting any opportunities that we believe could be taken to enhance the programme and/ or increase the chances of programme success.

2. Agreed Scope of our Gateway Review

The scope of our work was agreed by the SDC Programme Board and Shadow Executive, and specifically looked to assess/ provide confirmation that:

- Governance bodies (Programme Board and Shadow Executive Committee) are ready to facilitate and approve implementation, and responsibilities within these governance bodies are clear
- There are management and organisational controls to manage the programme through implementation and operation, including reporting lines before and during transitional structures are implemented
- Ongoing risks and issues are being effectively managed and do not threaten implementation. Furthermore, to evaluate the
 risk of proceeding where there are any unresolved issues
- There is adequate contingency planning within the programme in relation to operational readiness
- There is a level of confidence within programme stakeholders that the planned outcomes are likely to be achieved
- There is on-going sponsorship and stakeholder support for the programme
- There is confidence that the necessary Programme resources are in place
- The scope for the Programme post April 1st adequately supports ongoing service continuity changes and transition activities
- Recommendations made in previous programme assurance reports and gateway reviews have been effectively addressed and implemented

Agreed Scope Exclusions

- Confirmation that implementation plans are still achievable; including training, communication, cutover and support as required (this aspect of the Gateway will be undertaken by AMEO, in conjunction with the Programme Team)
- Review of convergence and transformation activity planning will not form a part of the scope for this work
- Similarly, the likelihood of achievement of the overall financial savings set out in the Local Partnerships Business Case will
 not be assessed as part of this review.

It should be noted that our gateway review provides a snapshot view of progress, at a point in time and, therefore, should be seen as complementary to other internal programme oversight and scrutiny processes, and not a replacement for them.

3. <u>Methodology</u>

Our review consisted of interviews with programme stakeholders, as well as liaising with the SDC programme team for information and confirmations. In addition, a range of programme activity and documentation was reviewed.

We undertook an electronic survey of 191 officers from across the Dorset authorities involved with the SDC programme, where we asked a series of questions asking respondents their views on the programme. We also surveyed all Members of the Shadow Executive and the Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee (36 in total).

We received 92 completed staff surveys (a response rate of 48%), and 15 completed Member surveys (a response rate of 42%). Whilst clearly, results from both the staff and Member surveys cannot provide definitive evidence in relation to the extent of operational readiness, the reasonable response rate helps to form an overall picture of confidence from a representative sample of those most closely involved in the programme.



4. Delivery Confidence Assessment

The SDC Programme continues at pace in the lead up to 1st April and operational readiness. Clearly there remains a significant amount of work to complete to ensure a smooth transition into the new authority, however programme stakeholders are working hard to ensure the necessary tasks and coordination is completed to ensure a 'safe and legal' Dorset Council.

We have provided a Delivery Confidence Assessment for each area within the scope of this review (see Section 6). The full Delivery Confidence Assessment criteria has been set out in Appendix D, but from this gateway review, our assessments fell into one of the following two criteria:

Assessment	Criteria Description
	Successful delivery appears probable. However, constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery.
	Successful delivery appears feasible but important issues exist requiring management attention. These appear resolvable at this stage and, if addressed promptly, should not present overruns.

5. <u>Headline Conclusions</u>

The overall headline conclusions of our gateway review were as follows:

- Our work on this review has indicated that governance bodies (Programme Board and Shadow Executive Committee) are
 ready to approve implementation in the lead up to 1st April. In addition to this, there is a good level of confidence that
 the appropriate resources are in place to facilitate and approve implementation, with responsibilities clear. Risk and issue
 management has been developed, with confidence that programme risks are being appropriately managed.
- Management and organisational controls to manage the programme through implementation and operation have been developed and are largely operating effectively. As per our previous gateway report, we have identified several areas where reporting/ oversight could be improved to enhance assurance that implementation plans will deliver for Day 1. However, we appreciate that with the fast-paced nature of the SDC programme, the risk appetite in relation to certain aspects of control/ oversight is likely to be higher.
- The responses from our survey of officers involved in the SDC programme demonstrated a generally positive level of confidence that the programme will be able to deliver a safe and legal Council, that current plans would deliver a seamless service from 1st April, and that officers were confident in relation to their own respective responsibilities. Across all other officer responses, there was generally a positive level of confidence (*see Appendix B for full details*).
- Similarly, the responses from our survey of Members demonstrated broadly positive levels of confidence in relation to the SDC programme being able to deliver a safe and legal Council on the 1st April, along with the confidence that significant potential risks are being adequately managed. Across all other Member responses, there was generally a positive level of confidence (see Appendix C for full details).
- Work requirements for the period 1st April to 31st October 2019 which are emerging from the SDC programme have begun to be defined and agreed. This work will need to continue in order to confirm, scope and prioritise this work. This will likely need to include a range of non-critical Day 1 programme tasks where timescales may have slipped.
- Based on our assessment of the progress in implementing the recommendations of earlier programme assurance reports, there are a number of areas that we believe require further work/ enhancement (see Appendix A for further details).
- A key aspect of this gateway review (and operational readiness in general), will rest on whether implementation plans are still achievable. As highlighted in our scope exclusion section above, this aspect of the work is primarily being undertaken by AMEO in conjunction with the Programme Team, and therefore this report should be read in conjunction with the findings of that work.



6. Delivery Confidence Assessments and Findings

Below are the key areas of our review, along with the individual assessments and respective key findings:

Assessment	Gateway Review Area
	Governance bodies (Programme Board and Shadow Executive Committee) are ready to facilitate and approve implementation, and responsibilities within these governance bodies are clear
	review has indicated that governance bodies (Programme Board and Shadow Executive Committee) are mplementation in the lead up to 1 st April.
decisions are flag However, our test not included withi Whilst these deci	mme Board decisions required before the 1 st April, whilst there is no formal mechanism to ensure that all ged, a forward planner is maintained for the Programme Board which schedules decisions as required. ng identified nine decisions recorded on the decisions log as requiring a decision prior to 1 st April that were n the forward plan; for example, within the HR decision log - 'sign off of Dorset Council TUPE measures'. sions may have been added to the forward planner at a later stage, we have recommended a cross-to ensure that necessary decisions are planned in/ scheduled where possible.
have been approp	nbers demonstrated a relatively strong level of confidence that key decisions required in run up to 1 st April riately scheduled for resolution (<i>see Appendix C, Q.7</i>). Furthermore, our survey of officers indicated a strong t with regards to clarity in their role for operational readiness (<i>see Appendix B, Q.3</i>)
	vious SWAP assurance reports, there is now more established and embedded programme governance luding clear sponsorship, responsibilities and reporting lines of the programme.
Assessment	Gateway Review Area
	There are management and organisational controls to manage the programme through implementation and operation, including reporting lines before and during transitional structures are implemented
	nance arrangements have continued to become more established and embedded, helping to develop a agement and organisational controls to manage the programme through to implementation and operation.

This includes regular programme highlight reports, risk & exception reports, and regular reporting to/oversight from Members The introduction of 'Agile' daily stand-up meetings within the programme team has enhanced communication and cross-

workstream awareness, as well as acting as a clear and effective visual of tasks completed, in progress, and still to do.

Monitoring of implementation plans and programme milestones is undertaken via the respective Theme Boards. Ongoing oversight of plans is undertaken by project managers and through the daily stand-up meetings. A more detailed 'deep dive' review has recently been undertaken by the Project Management Office (PMO) which has identified a range of gaps and tasks still to be completed in relation to the plans.

Our testing of Implementation Plans demonstrated that on the whole the tasks required for Day 1 are accurately reflected, but whilst some of the previously highlighted inconsistencies around priority levels/ target dates have been addressed, a significant number of inconsistencies still remain, most notably for those Implementation Plans within the People Theme. We have made a recommendation to strengthen the programme oversight controls in this area.

Similarly, our testing of the reporting/ oversight of programme milestones has identified that whilst a summary of the key theme milestones are included in the programme highlight reports, not all milestones are included; specifically we identified milestones that had missed their deadline, which were not included in highlight reports, as well as milestones that had missed their deadline but were coded as Amber (further work required) as opposed to Red (high concerns/ missed deadline). We have therefore made a number of recommendations to enhance the management controls in these areas.

In relation to reporting lines before and during transitional structures are implemented, new Dorset Council Senior Leadership Team directors will immediately join the programme board. As 1st April approaches the programme board is likely to merge into a Dorset Council corporate change/ programme board, however the exact arrangements have yet to be confirmed. Similarly, specific arrangements for reporting lines for the existing workforce post 1st April within the transitional structure will need to be clarified.



Assessment Gateway Review Area	
	Ongoing risks and issues are being effectively managed and do not threaten implementation. Furthermore, to evaluate the risk of proceeding where there are any unresolved issues
presented to the Progr contained within progr review specific risks a identified, would be to	angements within the programme are developed and include regular risks and exception reports ramme Board. These include all high impact, and high overall risks. Risk and issue information is also ramme highlight reports. Risk management discussions at workstream boards also offer the chance to nd any mitigating action in more detail. As part of our review, one minor area for enhancement o ensure that the risk overview summary contained within the SharePoint risk management page breakdown and profile of risks.

Our survey of officers demonstrated a reasonable high level of confidence that all potential risks within services/ workstreams were being adequately managed at an appropriate level (*see Appendix B, Q.8*). Similarly, our survey of Members indicated a comparable level of confidence (*see Appendix C, Q.8*).

Work on dependencies has progressed since our Gateway 1 review, with dependencies re-categorised and plans updated. Plans are co-ordinated by one person in the programme team and a report on critical dependencies has been reviewed by the programme board. Dependencies are also discussed and clarified where necessary at the programme stand-up meetings. We have made a recommendation to re-visit critical dependencies in the lead up to 1st April to confirm those requiring action.

In relation to any unresolved programme issues, these would also be covered in the stand-up meetings, where a dedicated section of programme 'blockers' is captured. As part of our review, we were not made aware of any major, unresolved programme issues that would pose a risk to operational readiness. This was supported in our survey of officers and Members, where no concerns were raised in the open comments in relation to specific unresolved issues or programme blockers.

Assessment Gateway Review Area	
	There is adequate contingency planning within the programme in relation to operational readiness
contingency or back up	involved in the SDC programme demonstrated a reasonable high level of confidence that adequate a arrangements were in place, in relation to services/workstreams in the case of unforeseen problems 1 st April (<i>see Appendix B, Q.7</i>).
	ew Senior Leadership Team starting/ due to start shortly, this will also provide some time for handover/ ties, to assist with contingency.

Views from the open question in officer survey highlighted a degree of concern/level of uncertainty that once the consultation for the transitional structure had begun, there was likely to have an impact on focus in relation to operational readiness. This will likely increase the risk with regards to contingency planning and supports the need for effective communications throughout this period.



Assessment	Gateway Review Area
	There is a level of confidence within programme stakeholders that the planned outcomes are likely to be achieved

Our survey of officers demonstrated that there was relatively strong agreement in the SDC Programme being able to deliver a safe and legal Council from 1st April (see Appendix B, Q.1).

This was further supported by officer survey responses, that indicated reasonable confidence that all potential risks within Service/ Workstream plans are being adequately managed (*see Appendix B, Q.8*), confidence that Service/ Workstreams had appropriately communicated all dependencies to the appropriate level (*see Appendix B, Q.9*), and clarity in relation to reciprocal reliance on other Service/ Workstreams for dependencies (*see Appendix B, Q.10*).

Our survey of Members also demonstrated relatively strong confidence in the SDC Programme delivering a safe and legal Council by the 1st April (*see Appendix C, Q.1*).

Assessment	Gateway Review Area	
	There is on-going sponsorship and stakeholder support for the programme	
Our survey demonstrated that in the majority of questions, there appears to be ongoing stakeholder support and reasonably good confidence in relation to the programme (see Appendix B & C for a full list of questions and results of the survey).		
In particular, this was highlighted in staff reflecting reasonable confidence that they understood the current status of the SDC Programme and the issues involved, as well as reflecting strong agreement that they were clear about their own role in terms of operational readiness.		
Our survey of Members also indicated relatively strong agreement in relation to feeling adequately informed about the programme, including any issues encountered, to enable contribution to the political decision-making process.		

Assessment	Gateway Review Area	
	There is confidence that the necessary Programme resources are in place	
deployed on the program reasonable officer con	Our survey of officers demonstrated reasonable confidence that the necessary skills, experience and resources are being deployed on the programme to enable service delivery from the 1st April (<i>see Appendix B, Q.4</i>). Furthermore, there was reasonable officer confidence that adequate contingency or back up arrangements were in place in the case of unforeseen problems arising (<i>see Appendix B, Q.7</i>).	
	n Members demonstrated a similar level of confidence in relation to the necessary skills, experience eployed on the programme to enable service delivery from 1st April (<i>see Appendix C, Q.5</i>).	
Clearly with the recent communications regarding transitional structures, there will be an increased risk of reduced engagement from key staff, as well as the possibility of staff leaving prior to 1 st April. The risk of potentially reduced resources to call on from the respective authorities will need to be actively managed, and is likely to feature as an increasing programme risk in the lead up to 1 st April.		



Assessment	Gateway Review Area
	The scope for the Programme post 1 st April adequately supports ongoing service continuity changes and transition activities

Work on clarifying the requirements for the period 1st April to 31st October, based on the issues which are emerging from the SDC programme has begun to be developed. This work will continue to be formalised to provide further clarity and structure.

Specific projects to be included within this phase of the programme will need to be confirmed, scoped and prioritised. This is likely to need to include a range of non-critical Day 1 programme tasks where timescales may have slipped or were not fully defined/ included in scope.

Assessment	Gateway Review Area
Recommendations made in previous programme assurance reports and gateway reviews h been effectively addressed and implemented	
•	we assessed whether actions had been taken to implement the recommendations from our Gateway 1 any other assurance sources/ recommendations have not been assessed).
A summary of our follow up of previous recommendations has been included in Appendix A below. Whilst action has been taken against each of the areas, we feel like there is further work that could be completed to improve the governance and control over certain areas highlighted.	

7. <u>Recommendations</u>

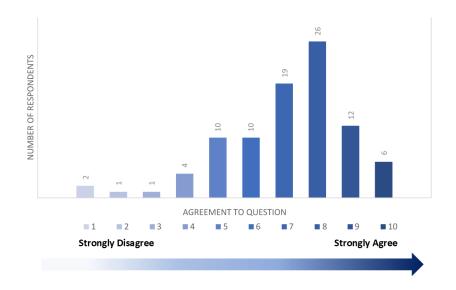
- Following the recent 'deep dive' into the implementation plans undertaken by the Project Management Office (PMO), there is a need to complete any gaps or inconsistencies identified as part of this work. As plans evolve and change prior to 1st April there is a need to ensure that this review work continues on an ongoing basis
- There is a need to develop a methodology for the PMO to maintain an effective oversight of all service/workstream implementation plans
- A sense check of milestones included in the Programme Board Highlight Report should be undertaken to ensure that all key milestones are included, with a focus on those milestones where the deadline has been missed
- A protocol should be adopted for coding of milestone progress to ensure consistency across all Themes, including the coding of milestones that have missed their deadline. In addition, there is a need to ensure that the overall RAG status of the Theme Board accurately reflects the overall position of the milestone planner
- A formal mechanism for ensuring that all appropriate decisions are included in the forward plan of the Programme Board should be established. In addition, a review of the decisions log should be undertaken to ensure that all Day 1 critical decisions are included in the forward plan prior to 1st April.
- A further review of the current status of the critical dependencies is required in order to confirm those still requiring
 actions and to ensure inclusion in service/workstream implementation plans and Programme Board forward plan where
 decisions are still required
- There is a need to review previous recommendations where audit testing has identified gaps in order to confirm the necessary action required for implementation
- Plans need to be further developed for the work required in the period 1st April to 31st October which are emerging from the SDC programme; including consideration of the non-critical Day 1 programme tasks that may have either slipped or were not fully defined/ included in scope

Gateway 2 Review – Progress in implementing the recommendations of earlier programme assurance reports

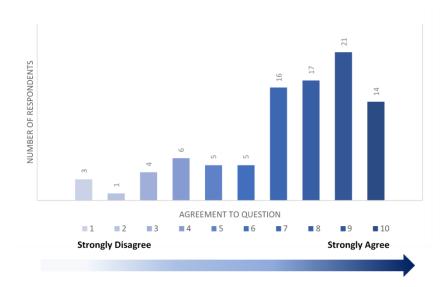
Previous Recommendations	SWAP Progress Assessment – January 2019
Check back over Priority levels/ target dates contained within implementation plans to ensure they accurately reflect the tasks required for day 1	Ongoing monitoring of plans is undertaken by project managers and through the daily stand-up meetings. A more detailed 'deep dive' review has recently been undertaken by the PMO which has identified a range of gaps and tasks still to be completed in relation to the plans.
	Our follow up testing of Implementation Plans demonstrated that on the whole they do reflect the tasks required for Day 1, but whilst some of the previously highlighted inconsistencies around priority levels/ target dates have been addressed, a significant number of inconsistencies still remain, most notably for those Implementation Plans within the People Theme.
Confirm the agreed milestones for operational readiness for each Theme/ Workstream, as well as ensuring/ checking that these accurately reflect a summary of the key tasks within each Theme/ Workstream	It was confirmed by the PMO that milestone charts were all submitted/ confirmed by the end of November 2018. Our testing of the current Milestone Plans confirmed that they accurately reflect the summary of key tasks for each of the Themes. However, the coding of items on the Corporate Milestone Plan is not consistent with the other Milestone Plans in terms of their status. Therefore it is difficult to determine whether those items that have passed their deadline are complete or not. It was also noted that a number of milestones for the People Theme had missed their deadline but were coded as Amber (further work required) as opposed to Red (high concerns/ missed deadline).
Finalise the work on dependencies, ensuring that all necessary dependencies are captured and agreed, as well as ensuring that these dependencies are clearly communicated/ accessible to programme stakeholders	Work on dependencies has progressed since our Gateway 1 review, with dependencies re-categorised and plans updated. Plans are co-ordinated by one person in the programme team and a report on critical dependencies has been reviewed by the programme board. The Dependencies Log demonstrates the data cleansing exercise that has been carried out to capture all dependencies and on the whole, these map across to the respective Implementation Plans. However, our testing identified some inconsistencies with regards to incorrect reference numbers being used. Although the officer responsible for the
	Dependencies Log liaises closely with the Project Managers, it is understood that not all dependencies have a corresponding entry in Implementation Plans due to the fluid nature of the Implementation Plans.
Capture all decisions needed, ensuring that these are programmed into the forward plan or a mechanism for ensuring that these will be picked up at the appropriate time	The Programme Board now maintains a forward plan which clearly shows key decisions that are required between now and go-live. To support this, there is programme resource dedicated to fortnightly review of the decisions register, checking workstream plans for the decisions forward plan and scheduling in to the appropriate Programme Board.
	However, our testing identified some anomalies with this process, for example, a number of key HR decisions such as TUPE measures, car loans to staff and staff car parking (which is showing as overdue on the Place Milestone Planner) were found not to be scheduled on the Programme Board forward plan.

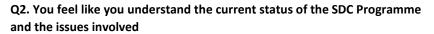
Ensure service implementation plans are revisited where necessary to fully capture information required, such as relevant policies, or details of implementation costs	As above, a detailed 'deep dive' review of implementation plans has recently been undertaken by the PMO which has identified a range of gaps and tasks still to be completed. Audit attended two of the daily stand-up meetings and at both meetings, reference was made to the need to ensure that the implementation plans are reviewed and to develop a process that will allow the PMO enhanced oversight of all the implementation plans.
Re-visit/ re-confirm the previous programme assumptions to ensure that these remain relevant and stakeholders are still committed to delivering these within their service implementation plans	It was confirmed by the PMO, that assumptions would be validated via progress updates, as well as at the daily stand-up meetings. As the 1 st April approaches, some of the key assumptions may need to be re-confirmed to provide assurance in relation to operational readiness.
Determine how milestones/ service implementation plans will be managed and monitored going forwards	Milestones/ service implementation plans are monitored through programme board highlight reports and review at programme board meetings. This is supplemented by the daily stand-up meetings that help to track progress. Our testing of the reporting/ oversight of milestone plans has identified that whilst a summary of the key theme milestones are included in the programme highlight reports, not all milestones are included; specifically we identified milestones that had missed their deadline, which were not included in highlight reports.

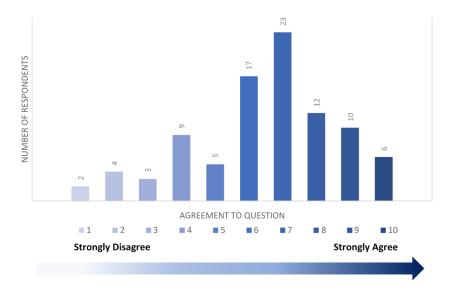
Q1. You are confident that the Shaping Dorset Council (SDC) programme will be able to deliver a safe and legal Council from 1st April



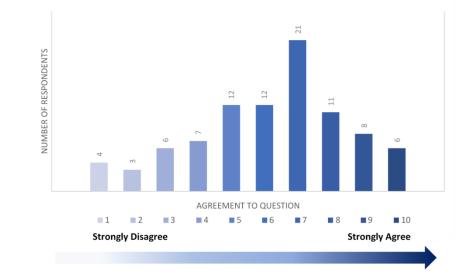
Q3. You are clear about your own role in terms of operational readiness





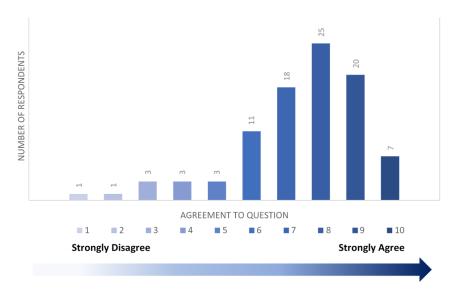


Q4. You feel like the necessary skills, experience and resources are being deployed on the programme to enable service delivery from the 1st April

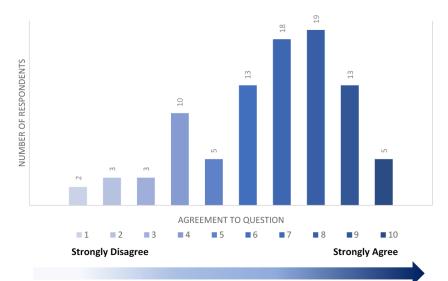


Gateway 2 Review – Staff Survey Results

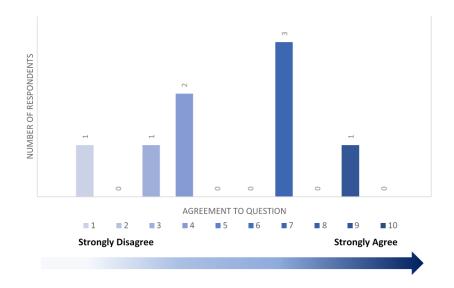
Q5. Your Service / Workstreams Implementation plan (or one you have been involved in) is able to deliver a seamless service to the public from the 1st April



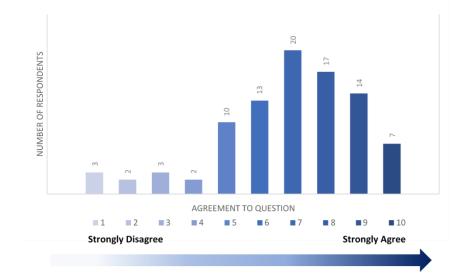
Q7. You are confident that you have adequate contingency or back up arrangements in place for your Service/Workstream area in case of unforeseen problems arising between now and 1 April



Q6. You feel like the reason for your Service/ Workstream being unable to deliver a seamless service on 1st April is because the Service/ Workstream Implementation Plan is not on track in terms of timescales?



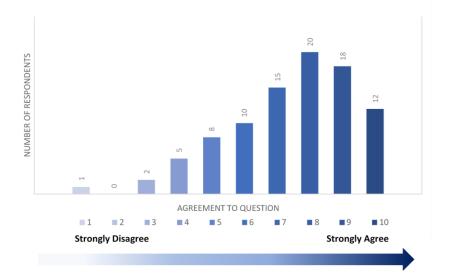
Q8. You are confident that all potential risks within your Service/ Workstream are being adequately managed at an appropriate level



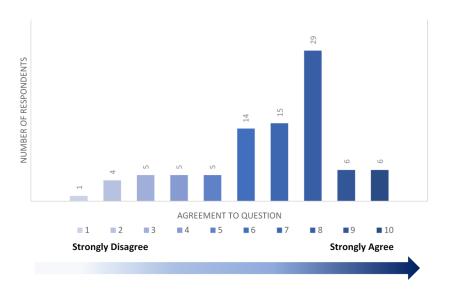
Unrestricted

Gateway 2 Review – Staff Survey Results

Q9. You are confident that your Service/ Workstream has communicated all dependencies to the appropriate level

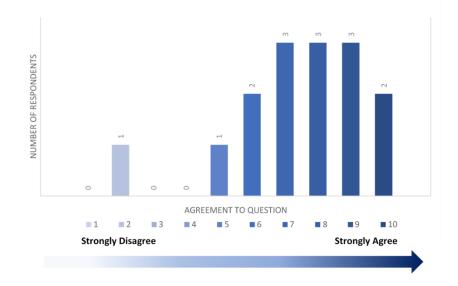


Q10. You are clear where other Services/ Workstreams are reliant on your Service/ Workstream for dependencies

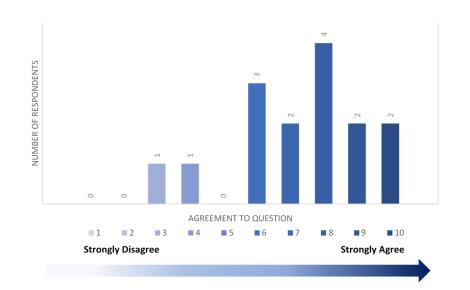


Gateway 2 Review – Member Survey Results

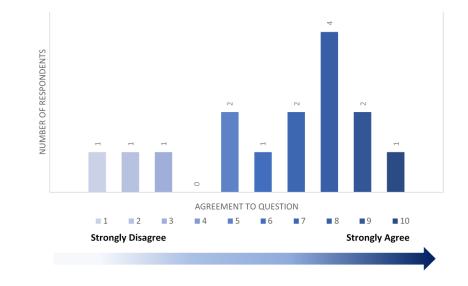
Q1. You are confident that the Shaping Dorset Council (SDC) programme will be able to deliver a safe and legal Council on the 1st April



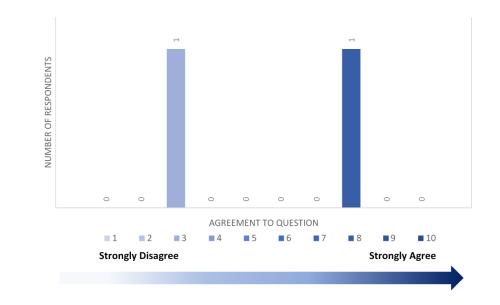
Q3. You feel knowledgeable and informed about your key Dorset Council service areas of responsibility



Q2. You feel like you are adequately informed about the programme, including any issues encountered, to enable you to contribute to the political decision-making process

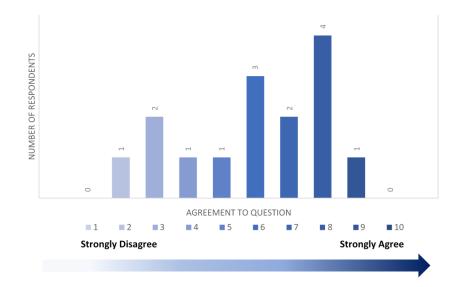


Q4. You have taken action to improve your knowledge in these areas

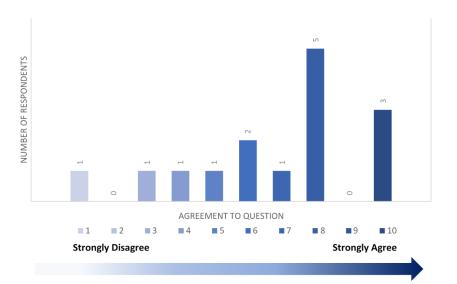


Gateway 2 Review – Member Survey Results

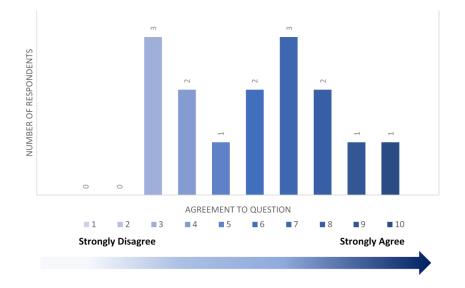
Q5. You feel like the necessary skills, experience and resources are being deployed on the programme to enable service delivery from 1st April



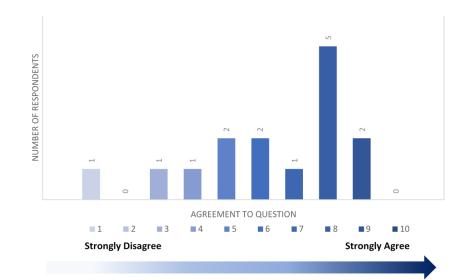
Q7. You are confident that key decisions required in run up to 1st April have been appropriately scheduled for resolution



Q6. You are confident in the programme's ability to deliver a seamless service to the public from 1st April



Q8. You feel like you are being adequately informed that all significant potential risks are being adequately managed





Gateway 2 Review – Delivery Confidence Assessment Criteria

APPENDIX D

Assessment	Criteria Description
	Successful delivery of the programme to time, quality and cost appears highly likely and there are no notable outstanding issues at this stage that appear to threaten delivery.
	Successful delivery appears probable. However, constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery.
	Successful delivery appears feasible but important issues exist requiring management attention. These appear resolvable at this stage and, if addressed promptly, should not present overruns.
	Successful delivery of the programme is in doubt with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed, and establish whether resolution is feasible.
	Successful delivery of the programme appears to be unachievable. There are major issues which at this stage do not appear to be manageable or resolvable. The programme may need to be redefined and the impacts of non-delivery in certain areas assessed.

SWAP's Delivery Confidence Assessments in Sections 4. and 6. above reflect:

- Evidence of specific programme issues or risks that threaten delivery to time and/or quality, and jeopardise the delivery of successful outcomes
- Results from the programme survey coordinated (92 completed staff surveys returned out of a total of 191, representing a response rate of 48%, and 15 completed Member surveys returned out of a total of 36, representing a response rate of 42%.)
- SWAP's professional judgement of the likelihood of the programme succeeding if there is no definitively clear evidence either way

When providing our Delivery Confidence Assessments, SWAP has not considered every scenario that might affect the programme's progress and outcomes, but has looked to reasonably extrapolate from the programme's past progress, current status and documented plans as to whether a successful outcome will be achieved.