

Cabinet

19 November 2024

Draft Council Plan 2024-2029

For Recommendation to Council

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader of the Council, Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Executive Director:

M Prosser, Chief Executive

Report Author: Jen Lewis

Job Title: Head of Strategic Communication and Engagement

Tel:

Email: Jennifer.lewis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Brief Summary:

It is important that Dorset Council is clear in its articulation of its priorities, so that the residents of Dorset, our partners and colleagues who work throughout the organisation have a clear understanding of what this authority is aiming to deliver. The Council Plan is the key strategic business plan for the council. It sets out the council's vision, values and strategic priorities for the period of the current administration. The Council Plan is the document that will provide visible accountability for performance, risk management and will shape how the council adapts to a changing world during the next five years. It sets the 'golden thread' for the work of colleagues to ensure that we are delivering against the priorities of the administration.

Please find the updated draft Council Plan 2024-2029 at Appendix 1.

The Council Plan has been developed based on the current administration's manifesto, as well as feedback from residents and partner organisations. The plan is underpinned by a 'PESTLE' analysis (looking at Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental data and trends) which examined the changing environment in which the council operates now and in future.

The proposed priorities were tested with residents and other stakeholders through the Big Conversation engagement activity over the summer. Feedback from this engagement has been used to help shape the Council Plan and ensure it meets resident expectations. Please see the Big Conversation report at Appendix 2. Additionally, the council undertakes a residents survey every two years, and key findings from the most recent survey (winter 2023) have also been incorporated into the current draft of the Council Plan.

The draft Council Plan was reviewed by members of the Joint Overview Committee on 29 October. Members made a number of recommendations for changes to the draft for Cabinet to consider: these are set out at Appendix 4. It is proposed that the following changes be made to the updated draft as a result:

Provide high quality housing

- Stronger focus on improving the quality of housing by working with landlords on private rented sector
- Adding the word 'affordable' to the title of the housing priority
- More on housing support for key public sector roles like teachers, NHS, social workers

Grow our economy

- Change tourism target measure: instead of increasing number of visitors to Dorset, focus on increasing quality of tourism - higher visitor spend.

Communities for all

- add in target measures for:
 - improving educational attainment
 - more internships and apprenticeships for young people
 - corporate parenting
 - a joined-up model of locality working
 - speeding up hospital discharge and enabling people to live independently at home
 - 'age-friendly' Dorset
- Seek fairer funding for Dorset schools

Climate and nature

- Add item on working with water companies to address pollution of rivers and sea
- Strengthen the content on supporting communities/towns and parishes with adapting to climate change, especially flooding (but also wildfire, drought, etc)

Recommendation:

Cabinet to consider the recommendations from Joint Overview Committee (held on 29 October) as changes to the draft Council Plan.

Cabinet to consider and recommend the updated draft Council Plan 2024-29 for adoption by Full Council on 5 December.

Reason for Recommendation:

Incorporation of some of the recommendations of Joint Overview Committee ensures cross-party input into the Council Plan. The Council Plan sets out what the council aims to deliver between 2024-29. It will inform what resources are required for delivery, the outputs and outcomes that are anticipated and other contributory factors (such as actions by partner organisations, risks, resource assumptions etc). The Council Plan sets out the headline target measures by which performance will be monitored and reported on.

a) Report

- 1.1 The Council Plan 2024-2029 sets out the future Dorset we want to see, and the council's role within that. It outlines the vision and strategic priorities, setting the council's direction for the next 5 years.
- 1.2 Dorset is rich in natural beauty, history, and community spirit, with a stunning and diverse natural environment. 85% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to the national average of 75%. However, Dorset faces some significant and complex challenges such as the climate and nature emergency, scarcity of affordable housing, poor economic growth, health inequalities, and a lack of social mobility.
- 1.3 These are challenges affecting the whole country and require significant investment and support from central government. Dorset Council and its partners have an equally important role to play in addressing them and improving the lives and wellbeing of residents. Dorset Council has a vital role in shaping the future for the people and place of Dorset over the next 10, 20 and 50 years. The Council Plan sets out what we want to achieve in the next 5 years, but with an eye to the longer-term horizon.
- 1.4 Following discussions with Cabinet members, the council's proposed new vision statement is: "Working together to create a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable Dorset for current and future generations".

- 1.5 Guiding this vision are the underlying principles of 'Partnership' and 'Prevention' which will run through everything the council does. The council can achieve more working with others and, through prevention, can avoid crisis.
- 1.6 The four strategic priorities in the Council Plan address the key issues facing Dorset. The four priorities are:
 - a) Provide affordable and high-quality housing
 - b) Grow our economy
 - c) Communities for all
 - d) Respond to the climate and nature crisis

Each priority is cross-cutting and will involve collaborative cross-council and partnership working.

- 1.7 The Council Plan (draft at Appendix 1) sets out the strategic approach to delivering each of these priorities, the key activity that this will involve, and headline target measures for how performance will be monitored. Some activity can be delivered directly by the council and with partners, and some activity involves influencing others to act, including central government.
- 1.8 Dorset Council provides around 450 services to 380,000 residents. As a unitary council, the council has a wide range of statutory duties which are legal obligations set out in various Acts of Parliament. These duties ensure that we provide essential services and support to our communities. It is taken as given in the Council Plan that these duties will continue to be delivered.
- 1.9 Dorset Council also has partnership arrangements and commitments with important strategic implications such as our role within the Integrated Care System. These strategic partnership obligations have been factored into the development of the new Council Plan.
- 1.10 The Council Plan is the council's highest-level strategic document. There will be a 'golden thread' running from the Council Plan through all planning across the council to ensure that effort and resource is aligned to achieving the vision and strategic priorities.
 - a) The next level of detail on planning and delivery is held in the principal strategies (such the Climate Strategy, the Local Nature

Recovery Strategy, the Housing Strategy, the forthcoming Economic Growth strategy, the developing Local Plan, etc.) and in the enabling strategies (such as the Medium Term Financial Plan, the Strategic Asset Management Plan, the Customer strategy, the People and Culture strategy, and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy.)

- b) Beneath this, the golden thread runs through the operational service plans, which should be reviewed and updated annually.
- c) Finally, each individual employee's objectives should reflect their contribution to the achievement of the vision and priorities.

2.1 The council's transformation programme has a critical role to play in ensuring the council can deliver its vision and priorities. This includes establishing and embedding a different operating model, using new technologies to streamline operations, introducing more efficient and effective business processes, and cultural change so that employees embrace new ways of working and thinking.

3. Financial Implications

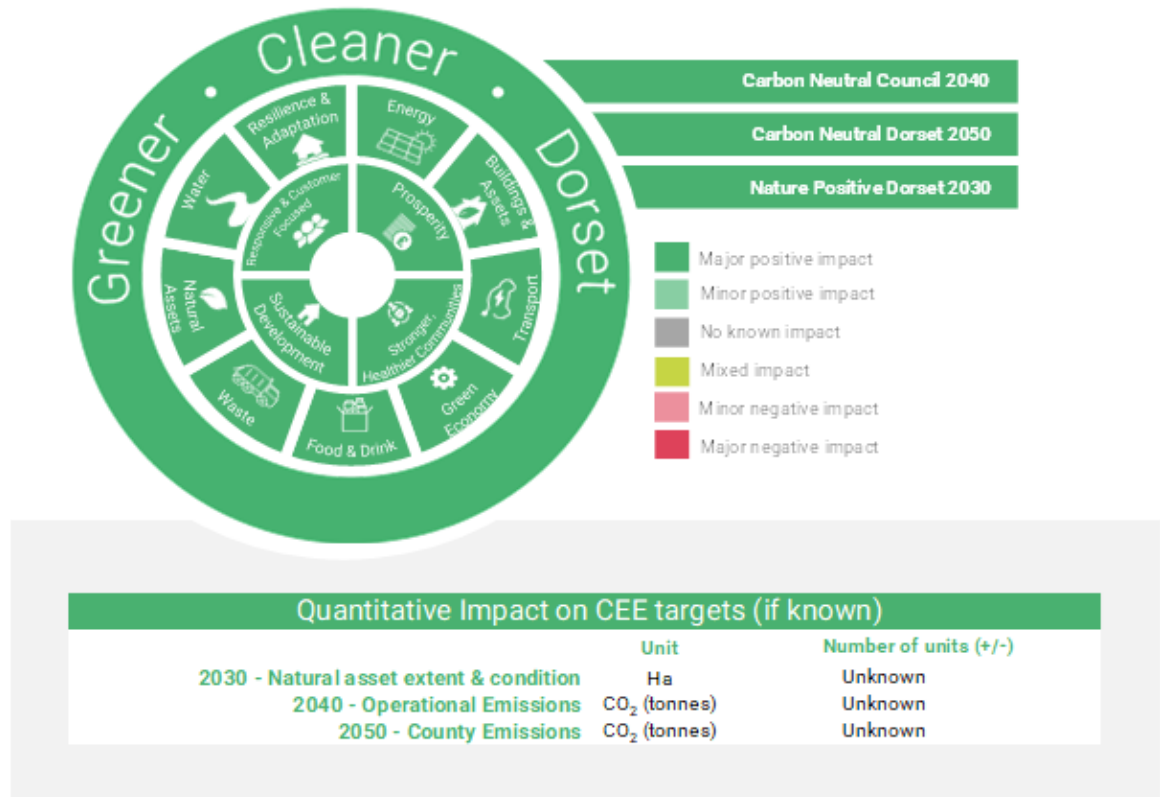
The resources required to deliver the four strategic priorities are being quantified and form part of the 2025-6 budget setting process as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

4. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

The draft Council Plan entails significant positive environmental benefits, owing to its incorporating 'Responding to the climate and nature crisis' as one of the council's four key priorities; as well as its broader recognition of sustainable development and housing quality, green economy within the other priorities. Recognition of the climate and nature crises are therefore at the heart of the plan, and it fully incorporates the three pillars of decarbonisation, nature recovery and adaptation.

It not only expedites our net zero targets, but also determines a set of more domain-specific targets (across energy, transport, waste and nature) which represent a significant advance on our current climate and nature strategy – as well as committing to a set of actions relevant to each domain of the climate wheel. In setting a golden thread that will inform other principal and enabling plans and strategies, this plan will be

significant in strengthening our leadership and operational alignment with climate and nature imperatives.



5. Well-being and Health Implications

Another of the four strategic priorities in the new Council Plan is 'Communities for all' which sets out the role of the council in improving population health and wellbeing, aligned to the council's role within the Integrated Care Partnership and other partnerships.

6. Other Implications

N/A

7. Risk Assessment

- a. HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

Please find the EQIA for the Council Plan attached as Appendix 3.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update draft Council Plan

Appendix 2 – Big Conversation report

Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – recommended changes to the draft Council Plan from Joint Overview Committee, as discussed at the meeting on 29 October 2024.

10. Report Sign Off

- 9.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)