

TITLE	Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan Review
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 25 March 2021
WARD	None specific
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Communities, Insight and Change - Keeley Clements
LEAD MEMBER	Leader of the Council - John Halsall

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

This report sets the results of a review of the Community Vision and the state of delivery against the targets identified within Corporate Delivery Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive note the challenges and opportunities which have arisen over the course of the year and endorse the recommendation that the Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan remains appropriate and relevant.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews delivery against the commitments set out in the Corporate Delivery Plan, in the context of significant challenges to delivery over the course of the current financial year. This review is designed to help Members determine whether the Corporate Delivery Plan is still fit for purpose and sets the right direction for the council for the remaining 3 years of the plan period.

In summary:

- The majority of key commitments of the Corporate Delivery Plan (2020-24) continue to be delivered and have progressed well over the course of 2020/21 despite the challenging circumstances presented by COVID-19.
- As of Q3, performance as reflected by KPIs associated with Corporate Delivery Plan show most performance indicators are on course to achieve targets. Of the 53 indicators associated with Corporate Delivery Plan and reported Quarterly:
 - 35 (66%) indicators are green in both Q2 and Q3 and likely to be achieved
 - 11 (21%) indicators are red as of Q3 and are at risk of not being achieved (all but 3 have been directly impacted by COVID-19)
 - Approximately 13% of indicators are currently amber and could move in either direction by the end of the year
- COVID-19 has presented some significant challenges for services across the Council. Some of these are expected to be short-term and will be alleviated once factors like social distancing and other COVID-related restrictions are no longer in

place. However, others will be far reaching in terms of impact and as yet the data and intelligence to support the full extent of the impact is not known.

- There are some significant positives to be taken from this period in terms of the council achieving the vision and objectives in the Corporate Delivery Plan: for example significant progress has been made in terms of developing intelligence about our customers, communities and businesses; many aspects of partnership working have strengthened and become more efficient and effective; and the use of digital platforms has driven modernisation and innovation at an unprecedented pace. There are many examples of how agile, flexible and customer-focused ways of working have delivered great outcomes for Wokingham residents, and these present some exciting opportunities for innovation and future success.
- In terms of the challenges experienced during this financial year which are more likely to endure beyond the short term, actions to address these are already underway. Development of specific plans and strategies will address some of these, for example by continuing to develop our strategic engagement with partners, businesses, voluntary and community sector; we will strengthen our approach to tackling inequality and poverty; and will provide focused support for economic recovery through the business task force.
- Whilst some uncertainty regarding the level and extent of impacts of the pandemic remains, given the performance of the past year and actions in place to support recovery, the themes and ambitions of the Community Vision remain relevant and appropriate, and the Corporate Delivery Plan remains a relevant framework for strategy and delivery.

BACKGROUND

The Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan were adopted in February 2020 and set out the strategic priorities for the council for a 4-year period. 6 key strategic themes were established:

- Safe, Strong Communities
- Enriching Lives
- A Clean and Green Borough
- Right Homes, Right Places
- Keeping the Borough Moving
- Changing the Way We Work For You

Since then, unprecedented pressure caused by COVID-19 has impacted upon the lives of all our residents, businesses and council services. We have been continuously responding to changes caused by the waves of the pandemic, lockdown restrictions and social distancing rules. We have supported our residents, particularly those who are vulnerable and businesses, always seeking to maintain critical and universal services.

This report reviews delivery against the commitments set out in the Corporate Delivery Plan in the context of these challenges, to enable Members to establish whether the Plan continues to be fit for purpose and sets the right direction for the council for the coming years.

CURRENT SITUATION

Review of delivery against Corporate Delivery Plan commitments

- Most key commitments of the Corporate Delivery Plan (2020-24) continue to be delivered and have progressed well over the course of 2020/21 despite the challenging circumstances presented by COVID-19.
- All Directorates have taken a pragmatic approach to managing the impact of the pandemic on local public services, challenging themselves and staff across our organisation to rapidly adapt to new and agile ways of working. As an example, between April and July 2020, over 200 FTE hours were redeployed to support COVID-19 priorities.
- As of Q3, performance as reflected by KPIs associated with the Council Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan show most performance indicators are on course to achieve targets. Of the 53 indicators associated with Corporate Delivery Plan and reported Quarterly:
 - 35 (66%) indicators are green in both Q2 and Q3 and likely to be achieved
 - 11 (21%) indicators are red as of Q3 and are at risk of not being achieved (all but 3 are identified as being impacted directly by COVID-19)
 - Remaining 10 (approx. 13%) indicators are amber and could move in either direction by the end of the year
 - In Q3 the majority of red indicators relate to Enriching Lives (RA3 and RA4 leisure centre usage and activity uptake, RA5d and RA5a applicants supported into settled accommodation and homeless preventions; CIC5,

visits to Libraries CS4 EHCP assessments completed within 20wks of referral) and Safe and Strong Communities (AS7 people receiving long term care subject to a review; AS3, people 65+ who received reablement after leaving hospital and remained at home 91 days later and CS1, % of children subject to a child protection plan for second or subsequent time in 24mths)

The council's first year working to the corporate delivery plan has demonstrated that the plan was robust, even in light of unexpected events such as Covid-19. Below are some examples of how the organisation has been able to effectively respond and develop its approach. Through the continued adoption of the corporate delivery plan, the Council will embed good practice and learning linked to the COVID-19 Recovery strategy.

Staff across the council rapidly adapted to agile ways of working, for example during April and July 2020 alone, over 200 FTE hours were redeployed to support Covid-19 priorities, this supported the need to respond quickly to the emerging needs of the Borough whilst maintaining critical core services.

During this period, information and intelligence about local businesses, communities and the needs of our most vulnerable residents was significantly enhanced. This presents potential future benefits for intelligence-led planning and delivery, and more effective community engagement. For example, the rapid fire rollout of welfare calls to the most vulnerable in the Borough was achieved through partnership working with the VCS, a better use of data and an agile response to the needs of residents.

In addition, there has been strengthened engagement with strategic partners (e.g. Health & GPs), local businesses and the voluntary and community sector which will help build on the foundations for effective partnership working into the future.

The drive towards greater uptake of digitally provided services has helped to accelerate the pace of modernisation and innovation in services across the council; addressed "digital exclusion" (e.g. reaching older and more vulnerable groups through technology); provide opportunities for channel shift; and innovative, more efficient means of service delivery and customer engagement. For example, a digital inclusion project has commenced in conjunction with the VCS, supporting the provision of laptops and tablets to those most in need.

Council tax and business rates collection has remained good, however the financial settlement in 2022-23, which may well need to reflect impact of COVID-19 on public finances, as well as any implications from Brexit, is unknown at this stage and may present challenges in resourcing future delivery.

Additional Actions to Address Challenges and Realise Emerging Opportunities

In addition to the work officers across the Council are undertaking to ensure the Corporate Delivery Plan is successfully delivered, there are several additional initiatives underway to address current and likely future challenges, and realise emerging opportunities:

- A Draft Equality Plan (2021-25) will set out priorities to embed the LGA framework for equality and embed the Race at Work Charter
- Strengthening the approach to poverty and inequality, including health inequalities
- Support for economic recovery through the business task force linked to the corporate recovery programme

- Strengthened engagement with strategic partners, businesses and voluntary and community sector will continue across several areas of service delivery

CONCLUSION

- COVID-19 has resulted in devastating consequences for a number of residents and businesses within the Borough. It has also presented several significant challenges for services across the Council. Some of the Council challenges are expected to be short-term and will be alleviated once factors like social distancing and other COVID-related restrictions are no longer in place. Performance against KPIs will continue to be monitored closely to ensure that delivery is on track and that any issues are identified in a timely manner and addressed.
- There are some significant positives to be taken from this period in terms of the Council achieving the Community Vision and objectives in the Corporate Delivery Plan: for example, significant progress has been made in terms of developing intelligence about our customers, communities and businesses; many aspects of partnership working have strengthened and become more efficient and effective; and the use of digital platforms has driven modernisation and innovation at an unprecedented pace. There are many examples of how agile, flexible and customer-focussed ways of working have delivered great outcomes for Wokingham residents, and these present some exciting opportunities for innovation and future success.
- Some uncertainty and challenges remain at this time – for example the extent of impact on vulnerable groups, and uncertainty in terms of future financial settlements provide some challenges in terms of future planning. However, there is consensus that the themes and ambitions of the Corporate Delivery Plan remain relevant and appropriate.
- Due to the Council's continued need to respond to the changing circumstances of COVID-19, this risk monitored to ensure any impact on the Corporate Delivery plan is understood and measured.
- In terms of the challenges experienced during this financial year which are more likely to endure beyond the short term, actions to address these are already underway. Development of specific plans and strategies will address some of these, for example by continuing to develop our strategic engagement with partners, businesses, voluntary and community sector; we will strengthen our approach to tackling inequality and poverty; and will provide focused support for economic recovery through the business task force.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Funding will be in line with the MTFP	n/a	n/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Funding will be in line with the MTFP	n/a	n/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Funding will be in line with the MTFP	n/a	n/a

Other Financial Information

Financial impacts are considered as part of the Council's budget setting process through the MTFP. Where requirement for additional resource is identified through specific projects this will be addressed through the budget setting process.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

The corporate plan sets out the Council's approach to equality and due regard has been had to the public sector equality duty through the development of the plan and is recognised within the plan. All individual actions associated with the plan will also have due regard to the public sector equality duty throughout their development.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*

The corporate plan sets out the council's strategic direction with regard to climate emergency and as set out in the report, the plan remains sound, and there are no adverse impacts identified on delivery of commitments relating to climate emergency at this time.

List of Background Papers

None

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