

<b>Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at meeting held on 9 March 2021</b>	
<b>Council Plan</b>	
<b>Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>Response from officers</b>
<b>Performance tracker- priority: Finance and Resources</b>	
Objective 3b) Approve a new planned maintenance programme – a Member questioned what this was and whether the Council had a current plan until the new plan was in place.	The Head of Finance and Asset Management advised that the planned maintenance programme covered all major assets of the Council. There was already an Asset Management Plan in place but the Council did not have a detailed 20 year maintenance programme which was what was being worked on. The management and maintenance of assets was going well, e.g. update of the offices / heating system, but a detailed plan was required.
<b>Performance Tracker – Priority: Economic Growth</b>	
Objective 4c) Celebrate with partners the significance of 2021 for Tewkesbury – a Member queried whether Officers had any insight into whether it was expected that the £25,000 the Council had put into the project would be spent.	In response, the Community and Economic Development Manager expected that the Steering Group anticipated using the funding and proposals would be provided by the project team shortly. It was anticipated that more events would be held towards the end of the year in accordance with the roadmap out of lockdown.
<b>Performance Tracker – Priority: Housing and Communities</b>	
Objective 1c) Develop a work programme with landlords to ensure residents have a supply of rented properties to meet their needs – a Member questioned what was happening with this as the target date had been amended six times already and had now been amended again.	In response, the Head of Community Services confirmed that this had been a countywide project and the ‘goal posts’ had been shifted a number of times. However, he was now confident that the summary report from the pilot would be available for the Committee’s consideration in June.

<p>Objective 1d) Carry out housing needs assessments to deliver affordable housing in rural areas – a Member questioned whether the completion time for the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) survey work was at risk due to staff illness. He indicated that there was pressure for housing in the Borough and the more options that were available the better.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services advised that work on the housing needs surveys had been put on hold due to sickness at GRCC; however, the Council had been in contact and GRCC had identified someone else to undertake the work and it was hoped the housing needs assessments could be done quite quickly so the final end date would not slip; he would update Members on this in the usual way through the Council Plan performance tracker.</p>
<p>Objective 3b) – Through the development process, work with communities to deliver the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 – a Member noted that a workshop had been held in October which had been well received by Parishes and, as attendance had been limited to one or two representatives from each Parish, she questioned whether another workshop was planned.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services explained that Parishes had indicated they had found the session useful so she was happy to arrange another session in October this year. In response to a suggestion that Borough Councillors would also find the information of interest, she confirmed that a session would also be organised for them.</p>
<p><b>Performance Tracker – Priority: Customer first</b></p>	
<p>Objective 1a) Continue to improve the proactive homelessness prevention programme – a Member noted that this action had been deferred and questioned how long it would be deferred for.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services indicated that he was not aware any homelessness prevention work had stopped so he may need to reconsider the wording in the comment; he would provide an update to the Committee following the meeting.</p>
<p>Objective 2b) Implement an online offering for the licensing service – a Member queried why the current software was not being used for the project.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services explained that the current system was used for Environmental Health and Licensing but the 'add on' needed to get the service online was quite clunky and not very user-friendly. As the Council was currently in the process of implementing a new digital platform it was felt using that instead would be more effective. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that the Business Transformation team was looking at the online licensing project as a priority in the new financial year and there would be cost savings from not buying in additional elements to the Idox system. In response to a query regarding whether</p>

	<p>Members were used to test new online systems, the Head of Corporate Services advised that the Council's Citizens Panel was used for that purpose which had been incredibly helpful in terms of feedback. He indicated that he was keen to raise the profile of the Business Transformation team and undertook to set up an information session for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members to understand what the team was doing.</p>
<p><b>Performance Tracker- Priority: Garden Communities</b></p>	
<p>Objective 1d) Deliver the first phase of the 'bridge project', in line with the funding requirements – a Member queried whether an overrun of costs was likely on this project.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services explained that there had been some further information sought on a number of technical issues in respect of the planning application which had caused a slight delay – those had now been resolved and the application would be considered by the Planning Committee on 16 March. In terms of the costs, the Chief Executive advised that the project was still within both the cost and timescale envelope. The next big milestone was the Planning Committee's consideration of the planning application after which the Garden Town team would be able to provide a briefing note for all Members on what was happening with the project.</p>
<p><b>Performance Tracker – Priority: Sustainable environment</b></p>	
<p>Objective 3b) – Working with Gloucestershire Waste and Resources Partnership to encourage recycling and reduce plastic waste – a Member questioned why this action had a smiley face when the plastics recycling awareness campaign had not yet commenced.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services advised that some additional narrative was required in the comments column to show that the plastics campaign was only one element of the action and there were actually a number of campaigns ongoing which was why the action was shown as a smiley face.</p>

<b>Key Performance Indicator – Priority: Sustainable environment</b>	
<p>KPI 32 – Number of reported enviro-crimes – a Member noted that fly tips had increased from 248 in 2019/20 to 395 currently. She questioned whether there was anymore the Council could do to minimise flytipping. She also advised that she was surprised to see incidents of dog fouling had decreased given the current issues residents in her area were facing and she queried whether this was because the Environmental Health team was working on different issues.</p>	<p>In response, the Head of Community Services advised that flytipping was on the rise across the country. The Council was tackling it as part of a countywide partnership to educate people about handling their waste responsibly. In addition, the Council had had a successful prosecution in the last couple of weeks which had been publicised in the press to show that robust action was taken against such crimes. All of that information was placed on the 'Tewkesbury Waste Aware' website which detailed the prosecutions undertaken, and the fixed penalty notices issued, over the last year or two and the Head of Community Services undertook to provide the link to that website following the meeting. In terms of dog fouling, this was about whether people were reporting instances of dog fouling rather than the Environmental Health team not dealing with dog fouling. The Environmental Health team had been working on COVID-19 matters consistently in the last 12 months but it was hoped they would be able to start working more on other areas in the next three to four months.</p>
<p>KPI 33 – Percentage of waste recycled or composted – a Member noted that contamination had been a real issue and he questioned whether it remained a problem.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services advised that unfortunately two or three bins may contaminate a whole load of 15-20 tonnes. There were still high rejection levels at Avonmouth but this was a problem faced across the country at the moment. Used nappies in the recycling were a recent problem and education campaigns were being put together. The Waste Contracts Manager confirmed that waste management was quite challenging at the moment. Tonnages of all waste streams had increased and this inevitably led to higher rates of contamination – information was due to be circulated shortly which sought to remind residents what should go where with particular emphasis on the different types of plastics and what residents should do with</p>

	the plastic that the Council's collection did not accept. The Head of Community Services indicated that there was always a need to look at recycling figures alongside residual waste as that was what really needed to be lower. Officers were working on a plan to reduce residual waste.
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<b>Recovery Plan</b>	
<b>Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>Response from officers</b>
<b>Priority: Finance and Resources</b>	
Action – Refocus c) Produce a new six-monthly internal audit plan and review the whole suite of internal audit recommendations to determine if recommendations remain relevant and timescales for implementation remain feasible – a Member questioned what was meant by 'some form of internal audit activity was expected in April 2021'.	In response the Head of Corporate Services confirmed that at least one of the internal audit team would be returning to internal audit work from 1 April 2021.
<b>Priority: Economic Growth</b>	
Action – Refocus d) – Work closely with partners, businesses and groups to enable the safe and successful reopening of high streets and retail centres – a Member questioned what plans the Council had going forward to ensure safe reopening; he noted that there were a number of measures in place at the moment, such as bollards, floor stickers and sanitiser stations, that had not worked very well to date and questioned whether the Council intended to proactively make changes to address those issues before the high street reopened fully.	The Head of Development Services advised that Officers were working hard to support the reopening of the high street and a company had been commissioned to work on the campaign with positive messaging and physical measures. A briefing with the local Members for Tewkesbury, Winchcombe and Bishop's Cleeve was to be organised so everyone was aware of what was being put into place. 12 April was the date being worked to when non-essential shops could reopen and Officers were conscious that some people would not have really been out into a town centre for a year so it was imperative that confidence was built to encourage people to 'shop local and shop safe'. It was hoped the fact that the towns in the Borough were smaller would encourage people to feel safer to visit. Weekly messages would be pushed out to communities about being safe and to indicate what businesses were doing to help people feel safe as part of the 'lets spring back' campaign. In response to a Member's concerns about the safety of the bollards in Tewkesbury high street as they were often moved from where they should be, the Head of Development Services confirmed

Appendix 1

	<p>that the physical measures in the high streets would be reviewed and Environmental Health Officers were working with businesses on COVID safety and addressing the issues such as those raised. The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that the overall message at the moment remained to stay at home so, whilst the high streets were open for essential services, there were not very many people using them but the measures currently in place were ensuring those people were safe. In terms of the 'lets spring back' campaign, a Member asked that thought be given to using paid advertising on social media etc. to target people rather than relying on them to access the Council's digital platforms. The Head of Development Services confirmed that one of the reasons for engaging the publicity company was to ensure the right messages were getting to all age ranges of residents.</p>
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