

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2022
Subject:	Council Plan Performance Tracker and Covid-19 Recovery Plan Tracker 2021/22 (Qtr2)
Report of:	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Lead:	Chief Executive
Lead Members:	Leader of the Council
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

At Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2022, consideration was given to 2021/22, quarter two performance management and Covid-19 recovery plan information. The observations made by the Committee can be found below in section 2.1. The supporting documents presented at the Committee can be found in Appendix 1.

Recommendation:

To receive and respond to the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the quarter two performance management and recovery information.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference require it to review and scrutinise the decisions and performance of the council and its Committees. The outcome of each quarterly review is then reported to Executive Committee.

Resource Implications:

None directly associated with this report other than to note that a number of actions have been impacted by the Council's response to Covid-19.

Legal Implications:

None directly associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications:

If delivery of the Council's priorities is not effectively monitored, then the council cannot identify where it is performing strongly or where improvement in performance is necessary. The impact of Covid-19 has been commented upon in relation to a number of Council Plan actions. A separate corporate recovery plan has been developed to assist in risk identification and risk management in relation to Covid-19 and the Council's responsibilities in relation to recovery.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Performance management information is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. The outcome of each quarterly review is then reported to Executive Committee.

Environmental Implications:

None directly associated with this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Council Plan (2020-24) was approved by Council on 28 January 2020. The approved plan included four existing priorities i.e. finance and resources, economic growth, housing and communities and customer first plus the approval of two new priorities i.e. garden communities and sustainable environment. Supporting the priorities is a set of objectives and actions. Progress in delivering the objectives and actions are reported through a Council Plan Performance Tracker. The tracker is a combined document which also includes a set of key performance indicators. As in previous years, to ensure the plan remains a 'live' document, all actions are reviewed annually and where appropriate they are refreshed. The refreshed plan was approved by Council on 20 October 2021.
- 1.2** Since the approval of the Council Plan, the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that resources have been prioritised and deployed to support staff, residents, businesses and communities whilst maintaining core service delivery. Whilst Covid-19 continues to present the Council with significant challenges, a corporate Covid-19 recovery plan has been established to address those challenges. The plan has been designed around the six priorities of the council plan. Despite Covid-19 the strategic priorities of the council remain the same. Similar to the council plan, the recovery plan has a number of objectives and actions. The recovery plan was approved by Executive Committee on 5 August 2020. A recovery plan tracker has been created to monitor progress in delivering those objectives and actions. Similar to the Council Plan, the Recovery Plan actions have also been refreshed.
- 1.3** Given the synergies of the two tracker documents, they are reported together. For example, given that resources have been deployed in response to the pandemic, this will inevitably mean that some of the actions within the council plan will not have progressed as intended. It could also mean that those actions remain undeliverable as prioritisation is given to actions within the recovery plan.
- 1.4** Key financial information is also reported at the same time, so Members have a rounded view of overall performance information. This includes the revenue budget summary statement, capital monitoring statement and the reserves position summary.

2.0 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.1 At Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2022, consideration was given to the second quarter's performance management and recovery information for the 2021/22 financial year.

A summary of the questions raised at its meeting can be found below:

Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Response from officers
Performance tracker- priority: Economic Growth	
<p>P70 – Objective 2 – Action c) Publish the Infrastructure Funding Statement – A Member noted that the target date had been revised to December 2021 and he asked whether this had been achieved.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services confirmed the Infrastructure Funding Statement had been published in accordance with the deadline.</p>
Performance tracker priority: Housing and Communities	
<p>P75 – Objective 1 – Action a) Work with partners to undertake the required review of the Joint Core Strategy – A Member noted that Deloitte UK had now been appointed to help review the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) timetable and asked who had approved the funding and the scope of the work.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services explained that Deloitte UK had been commissioned to assist with the JCS following the resignation of the JCS Manager in July. Deloitte's role was to act as the programme manager and to advise the Council on a common timetable for the three JCS authorities and the resources required to deliver it. She reminded Members that the JCS was adopted in December 2017 and had been due to be immediately reviewed so there were a number of technical issues which needed to be addressed. The three authorities had gone out to consultation on its issues and options document but, due to a number of factors including COVID-19, things had not progressed as quickly as hoped. There had been several planning policy changes since the original JCS was adopted, as well as enactment of the Environment Bill in November 2021; this represented a substantial material change in circumstances and meant that a more complete review would need to be undertaken to take account of the national changes to the planning policy framework and the new legislation. Deloitte had produced a draft programme which Officers were now considering to ensure it was robust and that it could be delivered within budget and this would be taken to the JCS Member Liaison Group at the end of January and the Planning Policy Reference Panel in February. In terms of funding, all three authorities, plus Gloucestershire County Council, contributed to the JCS budget and approximately £87,000 had been approved for the work commissioned to Deloitte, some of which was via staff savings as two staff previously funded through the JCS budget were no longer in</p>

	<p>post. It had been agreed that if the funding set aside was insufficient, each Council would put forward the additional money required for the work to be undertaken.</p> <p>In response to a query as to whether Members should be concerned about the delay in the review, the Head of Development Services advised that, whilst nobody wanted to see this delayed, it was intended to deliver a very detailed draft plan at the Regulation 18 stage - as opposed to a high level plan which was also an option at that stage - in order to shorten the timetable at the Regulation 19 stage the work was effectively being frontloaded in order to move more quickly going forward. It was to be borne in mind that there were a number of variables which could impact the timetable but she provided assurance there was a plan, resources were being put in place to deliver the review and there was a strong commitment from the three authorities to progress – with the expertise brought by Deloitte, which had experience of examinations around the country, she was confident there would be a robust strategy to move forward and hit all of the necessary requirements so Members should not be worried.</p>
<p>P81 – Objective 3 – Action a) Work with partners, infrastructure providers and developers to progress the delivery of key sites – A Member noted that the update for Brockworth did not mention sports provision and he assumed that these facilities were coming forward on developments in other areas.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services explained that this action did not go into that level of detail, rather it looked at the strategic allocations within the Joint Core Strategy and gave an update in relation to planning applications which had been submitted, approved etc. to give Members an idea of the overall trajectory. She indicated that she would be happy to discuss this with the Member further outside of the meeting.</p>
<p>Performance tracker KPI's priority: Housing and Communities</p>	
<p>P84 – KPI 14 – Total new affordable housing properties – A Member asked whether there were any sub-targets in terms of the affordable housing type as the number of social rented properties seemed low compared to the other categories.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services confirmed that social rent had not been identified as a priority through the strategic housing assessment until last year when it had been found that 86% of affordable housing properties should be social rent. On that basis, there would be a much higher focus on that tenure between now and April with the intention to achieve 100% affordable rent developments where possible.</p>
<p>P85-88 – KPIs 16-22 – A Member noted there were several unhappy faces pertaining to the planning KPIs and, given there was now an action plan in place for the Development Management service, he asked when</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services explained that, unfortunately, there were no quick fixes as there were a range of issues to address. As Members were aware, there had been staffing issues within the Development Management team but consultancy support and agency planners had been contracted to assist with the backlog of planning applications. Officers were looking into the various processes to</p>

<p>improvements would start to be reflected in the performance tracker.</p>	<p>ensure they were efficient but, as set out in the report to the Executive Committee in November, it would be 12-24 months before the service was turned around; notwithstanding this, she hoped the performance figures would start to improve within the next six months.</p> <p>The Member was disappointed that it would take such a long period of time before any improvement would be seen given that the performance had been poor for a considerable time already. He was particularly concerned that the Planning Committee had recently been required to consider two applications which were subject to non-determination appeals as this put the Council on the backfoot. The Head of Development Services reiterated that there were many different issues to be addressed, for instance, Members would be aware of the proposal to amend the Planning Scheme of Delegation which had not been supported by Council. She felt it was important that the timescale for delivery of the action plan was realistic and she would not like to promise Members something which could not be delivered.</p>
<p>P87 – KPI 20 – Investigate category B* cases within five working days – A Member noted that enforcement investigations were slipping quite rapidly and she asked if that was due to staffing issues or whether it was a low priority.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services provided assurance that enforcement was a high priority; however, the team did focus on category A and B cases as those caused the most harm. A member of the team had been appointed to a senior post leaving a vacancy which she was pleased to report had recently been recruited to with the new Officer starting later that week; she hoped there would be improvement moving forward with a fully established team.</p>
<p>Performance tracker KPI'S- priority: Customer First</p>	
<p>P99 – KPI 36 – Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests answered on time – A Member noted that 127 requests had been received in quarter two, 106 of which had been responded to within the 20 working days deadline; this meant that around 17% had not been answered within that timescale and he asked if there was a common reason for this, whether every request would receive a response and if there was a final deadline for response.</p>	<p>The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that all FOI requests would receive a response; unfortunately, due to competing priorities, it was not always possible to meet the 20 working day deadline. The figures are reported to Management Team on a quarterly basis. Whilst there was no common reason for a delay in response, requests could be complex and, although it was possible to ask for an extension of time, that was not always done on a timely basis. He felt that 17% was not a concerning figure – the aim was certainly to achieve more but he reiterated that all requests would receive a response even if it was after the 20 working day target. The Member asked whether the customer was given an indication as to when a response could be expected if it was likely to be after the 20 working day target and the Head of Corporate Services confirmed that should be the case and a new timescale should be provided. He indicated that he would be happy to circulate a breakdown of the FOI requests received across each service area and those</p>

	which had not been answered in time.
P99 – KPI 37 – Percentage of formal complaints answered on time – A Member was heartened to see the number of complaints had reduced over the year compared to the previous year which showed that the introduction of the Comments, Compliments and Concerns system was working.	The Head of Corporate Services agreed with this sentiment. It meant that customers were able to give feedback without making a formal complaint; provided services responded in a timely manner, this could prevent formal complaints from coming forward.
Performance tracker- priority: Sustainable Environment	
P103 – Objective 1 – Action a) Deliver the Public Service Centre’s low carbon heating and solar PV systems – A Member asked when the solar canopy in the Council Office’s rear car park would commence bearing in mind that the project was expected to be complete by May 2022.	The Head of Finance and Asset Management advised that Officers would shortly be going out to tender for a supplier and installation of the solar canopy. An application for planning permission had been submitted the previous week so it was hoped that work would commence on site in March. Whilst it was necessary to wait for the outcome of the tender before this could move forward, he was confident that the scheme would be delivered between March and May and would be a great contribution towards the Council’s carbon reduction ambitions.
P106 – Objective 3 – Action a) Take a robust approach towards fly-tipping and other environmental crimes – A Member noted that the public consultation on the Public Space Protection Order had been due to go live in December and run until February 2022 but he did not remember receiving notification that it had commenced.	The Head of Community Services undertook to check with the Environmental Health Manager and send a link to Members if the consultation had commenced.
P109 – Objective 4 – Action c) Establish and publish a local list of non-designated heritage assets in the borough – A Member asked for clarification on the significance of any assets added to the local list; the criteria for being included; and who would comprise the panel that would approve the list.	The Head of Development Services advised that the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) set out the local listing criteria. The advantage of being included on the list was the asset would be seen as important within the locality; however, in terms of planning applications, this did not carry the same statutory weight as a national listed building. The panel had not yet been established but she believed it would be Officer-led; she undertook to find out the details and update Members following the meeting. A Member noted that the Heritage Engagement Officer had been appointed on a temporary contract and he asked what happened if the Officer left before the end of that contract as the revised target date for this action was June. The Head of Development Services advised that the Officer had originally been contracted until March but that had been extended until June in order to take account of the work which

	<p>needed to be done to achieve the publication of the local list which was not a quick or straightforward process. The consultation on the SPD would finish at the end of January and she was confident that resources were in place to address any comments that were received and make any revisions by the end of March.</p>
<p>Performance tracker KPI's- priority: Sustainable Environment</p>	
<p>P109 – KPI 38 – Number of reported enviro-crimes – A Member noted that fly-tipping complaints had reduced by 30% and asked if there was any indication as to why that had happened.</p>	<p>The Head of Community Services welcomed the reduction but, unfortunately, there was no specific reason for it; he would like to think it could be attributed to the good work that had been done to publicise successful prosecutions.</p> <p>A Member drew attention to Appendix 3 to the report which set out the quarter two budget report and she noted that item 3 stated that there had been a significant increase in fly-tipping which Ubico predicted would be £11,000 over budget which contradicted the KPI. In response, the Head of Community Services advised there had certainly been an increase in fly-tipping as that was one of the biggest concerns in the borough; however, he assumed there had been a reduction in some enviro-crimes, such as abandoned vehicles, which was offsetting that within the figures – this was something he would need to check following the meeting and he would update Members accordingly.</p> <p>A Member felt it would be helpful to know the cost of clearing up the various enviro-crimes if that information could be easily broken down and the Head of Community Services undertook to provide this.</p> <p>In connection with fly-tipping, a Member expressed the view that the requirement to book a slot online to visit the Household Recycling Centre at Wingmoor Farm was making it more difficult for people to dispose of their waste, for instance, it was not possible to make a same-day appointment. He recognised this may not deter those who were responsible for fly-tipping but he was aware that other local authority areas had removed the requirement for online bookings so he presumed Gloucestershire could do the same. The Head of Community Services understood that Gloucestershire County Council was happy with the online booking system and this was supported by feedback from residents so he believed it was likely to be a permanent structure; nevertheless, he would be happy to pass these comments directly to the County Council. The Chief Executive felt it was unlikely that the people who were responsible for fly-tipping intended to dispose of their waste at one of the Household Recycling Centres in any case; fly-tipping often comprised commercial waste and/or rubbish which required payment for disposal so the perpetrators found it more convenient to fly-tip.</p>

COVID-19 Recovery Tracker Priority: Economic Growth	
<p>P116 – Action – Recover b) Develop a bid to host a Department of Work and Pensions Youth Hub within the Tewkesbury Growth Hub – A Member noted that the target date had been revised to December 2021 and he asked whether this had been achieved.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services confirmed that a draft bid had been produced and was now being finalised.</p>
<p>P117 - Action – Rebuild b) Develop and deliver the Welcome Back Fund action plan – A Member sought clarification as to how much money had been spent and what it had been spent on; there was little evidence in Bishop’s Cleeve to demonstrate what the fund had achieved.</p>	<p>The Head of Development Services explained there were two tranches of money the first of which was approximately £84,000, some of which had been spent on campaigns to communicate with residents and businesses. Officers had been working with the three Parishes which were eligible for the second tranche of funding – Bishop’s Cleeve Parish Council, Tewkesbury Town Council and Winchcombe Town Council – to put together a list of ideas as to how the money could be spent. It was her understanding that Officers were now in detailed discussion about which options to take forward and she undertook to ask the Economic and Community Development Manager to circulate an agreed list to Members.</p> <p>In response to a query as to whether local Members could have any input as to where the money was spent, the Head of Development Services understood that Officers had met with relevant Ward Members in September/October to obtain their initial ideas as expenditure had to be approved under certain categories; however, she would need to check the details of this and report back to Members following the meeting.</p>

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 None.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Council Plan 2020-24.
Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Plan 2020.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None directly.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None directly.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 Linked to individual Council Plan and Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Plan actions.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Linked to individual Council Plan and Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Plan actions.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 Council Plan 2020-24 approved by Council 28 January 2020.

Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Plan 2020 approved by Executive Committee 8 August 2020.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices:
1 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee report of Q2 2021/2022 Council Plan, recovery plan and financial performance information.