

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING**

Monday, 28th June, 2021

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Warrington, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Lucy Hodge, Shaun Hughes, Hal MacFie, Alastair Singleton, Sally Davis and Ruth Malloy (in place of Andrew Furse)

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Andrew Furse

#### **8 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair (Councillor Karen Warrington) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **9 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Andrew Furse had sent his apologies to the Panel. Councillor Ruth Malloy was a substitute for Councillor Furse.

#### **11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **12 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

#### **13 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING**

There were none.

#### **14 MINUTES**

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meetings (1<sup>st</sup> February and 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021) as true records and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

#### **15 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

The Chair invited Councillor Richard Samuel (Cabinet Member – Economic Development and Resources) to update the Panel on the latest within his portfolio.

Councillor Richard Samuel highlighted the following points:

- Councillor Samuel's Cabinet Member responsibilities have now been extended to cover Economic Development and Resources.
- The Outturn position for last year was very favourable to Council because there would not be any overspend. The Outturn report would be presented to the Cabinet at July meeting.
- The pressure on reserves, that the Council had been expecting, has not turned out to be the case due to significant amount of government grants coming in at different times and due to a big drop in pressure on adults and children's services. Nevertheless, the Council would still face quite a lot of pressure over the next three years. There may be a possibility for joint work with the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Panel on future spending in adult services
- The Cabinet has received high level estimates for the unexpected shortfall between income and expenditure next year which at the moment was somewhere between £11m to £12m. The Council would start to develop a more formalised process, to give, amongst other things, Parish and Town Councils more of a meaningful input as well as to this Panel.
- Capital Programme last year, as expected, slipped quite a lot. It was quite a loss as it was not possible to progress schemes due to lockdown restrictions. There was quite a shortage of suppliers, in particular in the building industry.
- The way the Council runs its commercial property would be looked at as well as the future for spending on adult services, in particular with new appointments on Directors' level. The Cabinet 'Commercial Estate Review' report in July would provide more details on property and commercial estate.
- Councillor Samuel also mentioned about Council's aspirations to invest in the range of schemes around Bath and North East Somerset to boost area's economy and employment.

The Chair thanked Councillor Samuel for an update.

Following questions and suggestions from the Panel to Councillor Samuel, these points were highlighted:

- The Corporate PDS Panel should have Economic Development within their remit.
- Ward Councillors should be encouraged to get involved and provide information from their own Wards on development opportunities, which was welcomed by Councillor Samuel. Councillor Samuel was invited to present a current list of potential development opportunities in North East Somerset.
- Regarding the £50k saving under Transport (suggested areas were gulley emptying, grit filling and drainage systems) - the Council has been affected with the shortage of HGV drivers. Nationally, there was a deficit of around 100,000 HGV drivers, and the Council would be looking into different measures to address this issue which have led to failures and breakdowns in the recycling and waste collection service.

- The Chair agreed to write a letter to Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Director of People and Policy expressing Panel's concerns on the shortage of HGV drivers in the Council.
- In terms of proposed saving of £22k for Park and Ride – the Cabinet would be addressing this issue in parking strategies and city centre security reports.
- Panel to invite to Cabinet Member Councillor Manda Rigby to provide an update with focus on WECA providing an oversight of Transport policy and what has been done for our residents.

The Chair thanked Councillor Richard Samuel for an update.

## 16 CORPORATE STRATEGY

The Chair invited Andy Thomas (Head of Strategy Engagement & Marketing) to give a presentation to the Panel (attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes).

Andy Thomas highlighted the following points in his presentation:

- Our Corporate Strategy 2020-2024
- Background
- Next Steps for Delivery
- Our Organisational Framework
- Key Issues for Strategy

Following questions and comments from the Panel, these points were highlighted:

- Members of the Panel were delighted to see that the climate and ecological emergency has been firmly embedded at the centre of Corporate Strategy. The Panel inquired about the integrated performance framework and the metrics used for measuring the targets. The Panel felt that this was critical because the Council must ensure that the right areas were measured in the right ways in order to move forward. The Panel requested to receive a report in its draft stage so that they can comment on the suggested metrics and the suggested targets or target areas.
- The Panel felt that the Strategy should have residents' engagement/communication approach. Andy Thomas replied that there has been a range of webinars by the Council where residents have been invited to participate. The Council would continue to engage with residents via webinars, face to face (once lockdown restrictions are lifted) or via hybrid meetings.
- The Panel recognised that some areas of the Corporate Strategy may have remit within other scrutiny Panels. Therefore, the Panel acknowledged that some sort of joint working with other Panels may be required.
- The Panel also suggested that the consultation on the future aims and objectives of the Corporate Strategy should not just invite residents to engage, but also Town and Parish Councils, businesses, partner organisations, and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector/volunteer organisations.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the presentation and to receive a further report on 'Corporate Strategy – operating frameworks, metrics and public engagement' at one of the future meetings of the Panel.

## 17 CUSTOMER CONTACT

The Chair invited Amanda George (Director of Business Change and Customer Services) and Tracey Long (Head of Digital & Customer Services) to give a presentation to the Panel (attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes).

Officers highlighted the following points in their presentation:

- Current Agenda
- How do residents contact the council?
- Contact via the website
- B&NES Fix My Street
- Fix My Street – report volumes and report status
- Customer Contact Strategy – what we know
- Customer Contact Strategy – digital first
- Customer Contact Strategy – discovery
- Customer Contact Strategy – key principles
- How can you support us?

Following questions and comments from the Panel, these points were highlighted:

- Members of the Panel queried effectiveness of Fix My Street and agreed that responses from FMS were not always 'user friendly' or detailed enough often due to complications regarding 3rd party land ownership/responsibility. Members of the Panel suggested that the Council should explain to the residents the difference between national and local versions of Fix My Street. The Panel suggested using Council's social media to explain that difference.
- Some Members of the Panel read out comments from their residents on issues around Fix My Street which were picked up by officers.
- Officers ensured the Panel that this was work in progress. Officers were aware that there was a need of cross-service joint working in some areas, for example with environmental services. Therefore, further training and coaching would be provided to staff members.
- Members of the Panel welcomed the initiative for further training and staff development with BANES Fix My Street to achieve consistency across the board in every aspect of customer services.
- Members of the Panel highlighted that customer service should be consistent across all services and departments in the Council. Some Members of the Panel suggested that customer services and response to residents vary with different departments. Members of the Panel also added that not all of the residents were digitally equipped, so there was a need for telephone access. Officers responded that residents could still call the relevant department in the Council, or call Council Connect who would then forward their query to the relevant department.

- On a question about benchmarking against other unitary authorities Tracey Long said that we were part of the Southwest user networks for customer services with good relationships with our local authorities, especially our neighbouring authorities.

The Chair thanked Amanda George and Tracey Long for the presentation.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the presentation.

## 18 EMERGING DIGITAL DATA AND TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

The Chair invited Jeff Wring (Service Director – Commercial & Governance) to give a presentation to the Panel (attached as Appendix 3 to these minutes).

Jeff Wring highlighted the following points in his presentation:

- Strategy Context
- Strategy – Vision
- Strategy – Principles
- Strategy – Priorities
- DD&T 21/22 Roadmap for Delivery of Strategy
- Next steps

Following questions and comments from the Panel, these points were highlighted:

- A lot of Council's staff were working from home and a lot of them were working from their own computers and their own telephones. It appears that there was going to be a huge investment in hardware to provide the staff with the equipment they need before starting all the other aspects of this plan. The Council has started the process of investing in a brand-new kit for its staff, and the first 300 high quality laptops have already been issued. This process for the remainder of staff would be rolling out through the remainder of this financial year.
- Members of the Panel queried if the Strategy outcomes could be quantified with KPIs to outline when certain themes were achieved. Jeff Wring replied that each one of the outcomes from the Strategy created a number of commitments or performance targets. During the next year a dashboard will be developed to be able to report on delivery of these targets which would be included in the Council's performance management framework.
- The Panel suggested that Councillors should have 24/7 support from the IT in instances when their iPads crash or if there were any connection/performance issues with Councillors' devices.
- The Panel acknowledged that the presentation mentioned agility on a couple of occasions. The Panel commented that the agility was very important but it's

extremely difficult to achieve without understanding which of the systems could be agile and which can't.

- Members of the Panel queried about technology used in the Council building (i.e. microphones in the Council Chamber, hybrid meetings, etc) in order to engage more residents in democratic process. Jeff Wring responded that there was an ongoing work with other departments on a number of issues in terms of the technology in the Council, in accordance with the list of priorities. Some of those ideas, such as hybrid meetings of the Council, were restricted due to current government legislations on holding meetings in the public.

The Chair thanked Jeff Wring for presentation.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the presentation and to receive an update report on the Digital Data and Technology Strategy at one of the future meetings next year.

## 19 PANEL WORKPLAN

It was **RESOLVED** to note the current workplan with the following additions:

- Economic Growth – November 2021
- Corporate Strategy – performance framework and metrics – September 2021
- Digital Data and Technology Strategy – June 2022
- Parking Policy – September 2021 (tbc)
- People Strategy (skills gap) – future date
- WECA Transport update – future date
- Community Contribution Fund – September 2021

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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# Bath & North East Somerset Council

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**Improving People's Lives**

Corporate Strategy Update  
Corporate PDS Panel, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021

# Our Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2024

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives





# Background

- Our Corporate Strategy sets out our focus to 2024
- Agreed by Council, alongside the budget, in February 2020
- Updated in July 2020 in response to the pandemic
- A detailed update on progress was reported to Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> May. It sets out the huge amount that has been delivered in the last year in challenging circumstances. It also summarised our pandemic response including the work of the Community Wellbeing Hub, as below:

Page 9

12,387 calls from residents requiring support	Completed 3,767 tasks to help individuals that contacted the Hub for food, medication and befriending	3,079 food, 539 emergency medication and 149 other pick-ups, i.e., utilities top up
666 food parcels delivered supporting 829 individuals	42,000 frozen meals delivered to most vulnerable	£83,806 worth of shopping completed by volunteers for B&NES residents

# Next steps for delivery

- Preparing for the Future programme
- Further embed climate and ecological emergency...
  - ... in policy making
    - ✓ Local Plan Partial Review
    - ✓ New procurement strategy
  - ...in projects
    - ✓ Energy-efficient new homes
    - ✓ Bath Quays
    - ✓ Bath Riverline
- Liveable Neighbourhoods – “co-production” with communities
- Deliver agreed budget and prepare further balanced budget for 2022/23



# Our Organisational Framework

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives



**“My job as Chief Executive is to ensure everyone who delivers our services - whether that’s in social care, refuse collection or highways – is focused on improving people’s lives in Bath and North East Somerset”**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S INTRODUCTION TO CORPORATE STRATEGY**

Page 11  
**Chief Operating Officer- Mandy Bishop**

Service Delivery- management and delivery of council services to our residents



**Director of Sustainable Places- Sophie Broadfield**

Place Shaping/policy and regional investment – sustainable transport, regeneration and development, planning, housing



**Enabling Functions-** strategic planning and resource allocation, people and funding.

**Director of People and Policy- Cherry Bennett**



**Chief Finance Officer (\$151)- Andy Rothery**





# Key Issues for our Strategy

- **Partnership working** to deliver shared goals
  - ✓ Working with WECA to secure funding- eg for transport
  - ✓ “One Shared vision” agreed by Economic Recovery and Renewal Board
  - ✓ New Economic Development Strategy being developed to promote sustainable recovery and renewal
- **Measuring outcomes-** developing our performance framework
- **National legislation and funding** – for example, adult social care

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# Bath & North East Somerset Council

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**Improving People's Lives**

## Customer Contact Strategy

# Agenda

- Current ways customers contact the Council
- B&NES Fix My Street
- Customer Contact Strategy
  - what we know
  - digital first approach
  - discovery
  - key principles
- How can you support us?



# How do residents contact the council?



Many channels of communication - website, email, social media (Twitter, Facebook etc.) telephone or in person.

The medium of choice is often related to the vulnerability of the customer themselves or the nature of the service in question and the level of complexity or sensitivity of the subject.

Page 15



For more transactional activity (making a payment, booking, ordering something or reporting something) we encourage residents who can, to self-serve, so we can direct our resources to support those who most need our help.

Online contacts are increasing as we introduce more interactive forms (107 available) for those who wish to self-serve.



Over 2.5 million calls are taken by a variety of services including Virgin Care, Switchboard, Pensions, Council Connect, Council Tax and Benefits, Early Years, Parking, Insurance, HR recruitment, Client Finance to name a few.

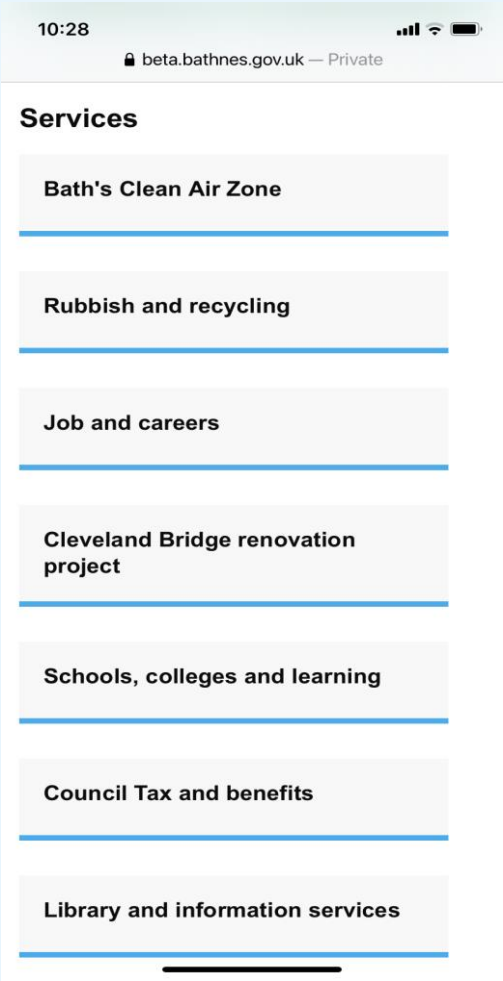
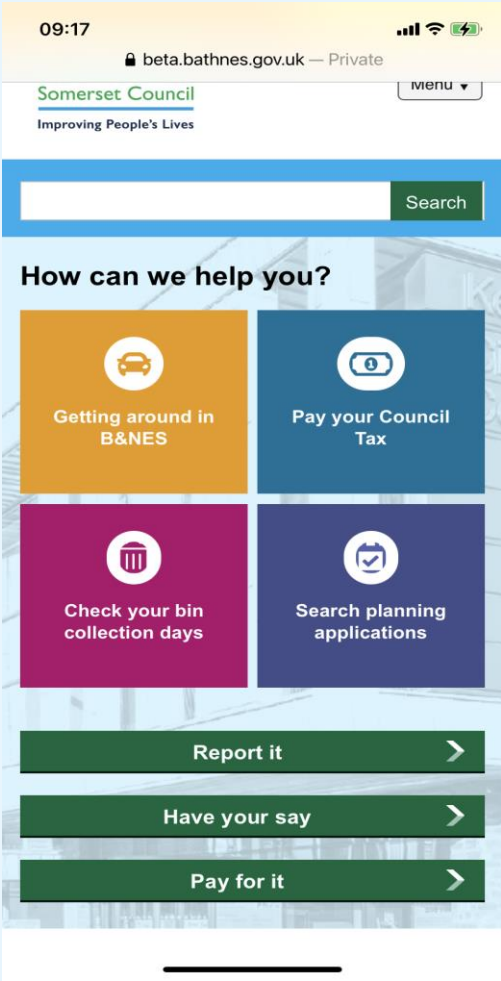
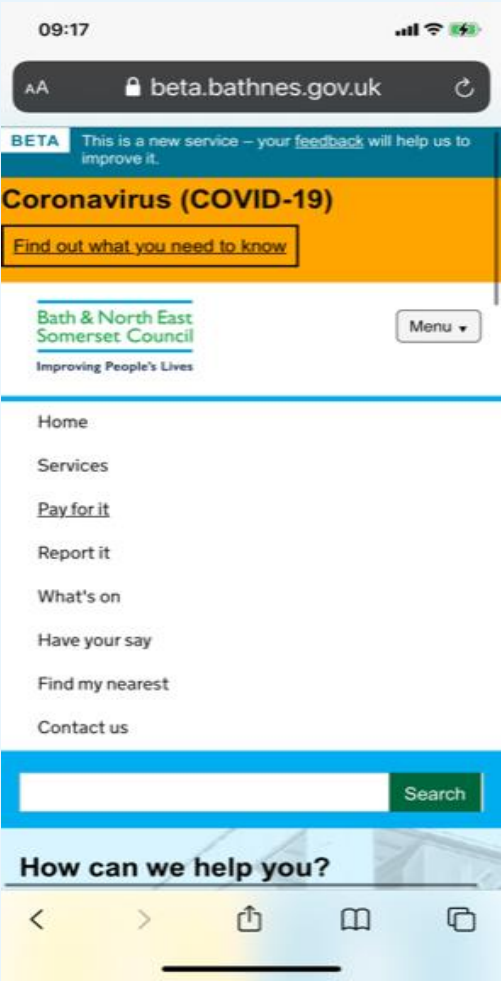
Emails and other social media contacts direct to service areas cannot be measured.



Council Connect and the Switchboard calls are handled by the same team but together they only represent a small percentage of the overall calls. Contact involves taking payments, giving advice, making bookings and signposting.

Libraries Information Advice Centres and Bath One Stop Shop offer face to face mediated support to take payments, provide welfare support, issue blue badges, advice about benefits, debts and homelessness.

# Contact via the website





# B&NES Fix My Street

The main system used to record reported environmental issues is **B&NES Fix My Street**

- Using a single system gives transparency for both residents and Councillors
- Provides a corporate view of the success stories or issues and gives us the ability to challenge our services to make service improvements to improve the customer experience
- Anyone reporting an issue can see if it has already been reported and the progress of previous reports
- Since B&NES FMS went live the percentage of people using it has risen from 39% in 2018 to 75% in 2021
- But: responses from FMS are not always 'user friendly' or detailed enough often due to complications regarding 3<sup>rd</sup> party land ownership/responsibility
- Further discovery work & user feedback needs to be undertaken
- Investment in further development and system changes from feeder systems is required
- Proactive communications/social media posts will help highlight benefits, celebrate successes and encourage usage

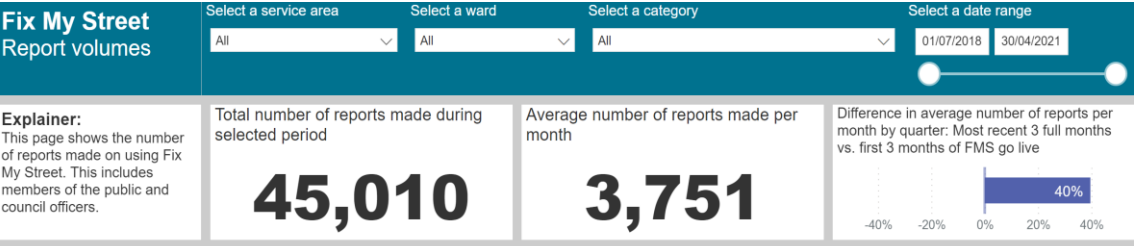
**Report a problem**  
**Roads, pavements, and parks**

Enter a location in Bath and North East Somerset:  
e.g. 'BA1 1JQ' or 'Lansdown Grove'

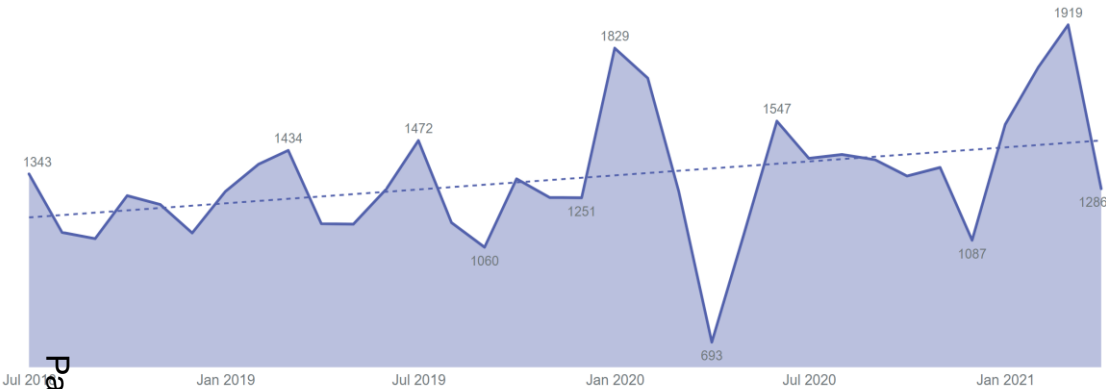
↶ Use my current location

[Report other issues or make enquiries](#)

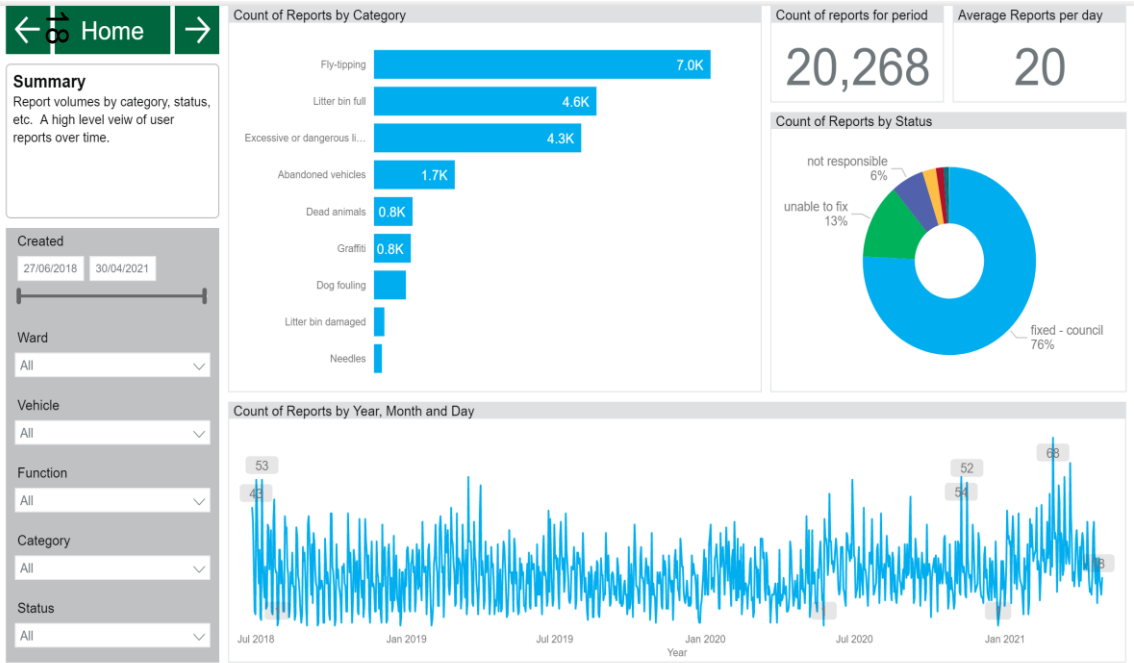
Report emergencies on 01225 39 40 41 (option 9).



Total number of reports by month



Page 18



Count of Reports by Year, Month and Day

53

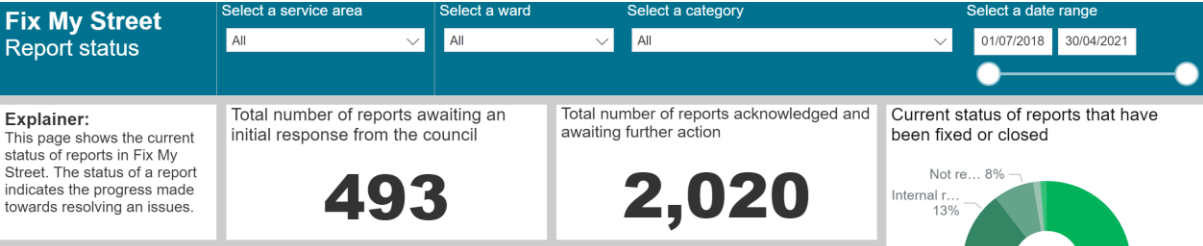
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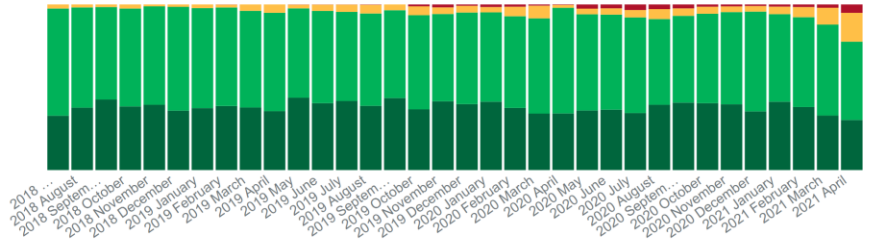
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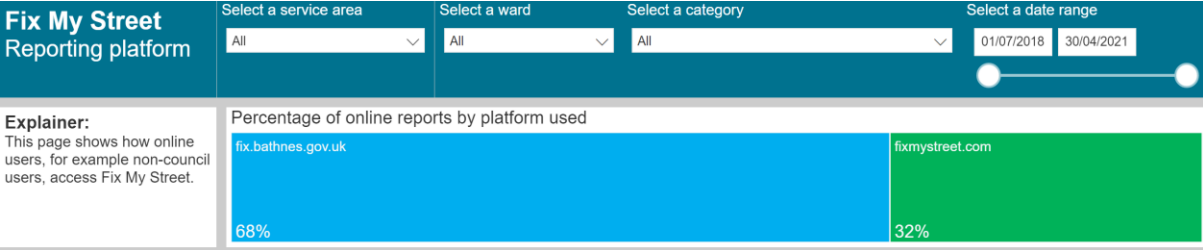
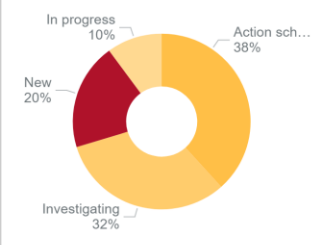
Current status of all reports



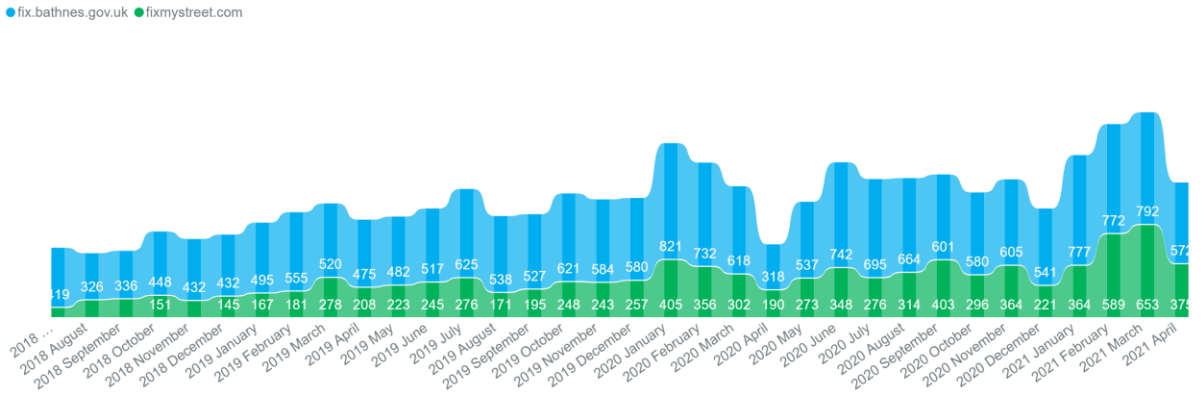
Current status of all reports by date they were created



Current status of reports that are open



Total number of online reports by platform used

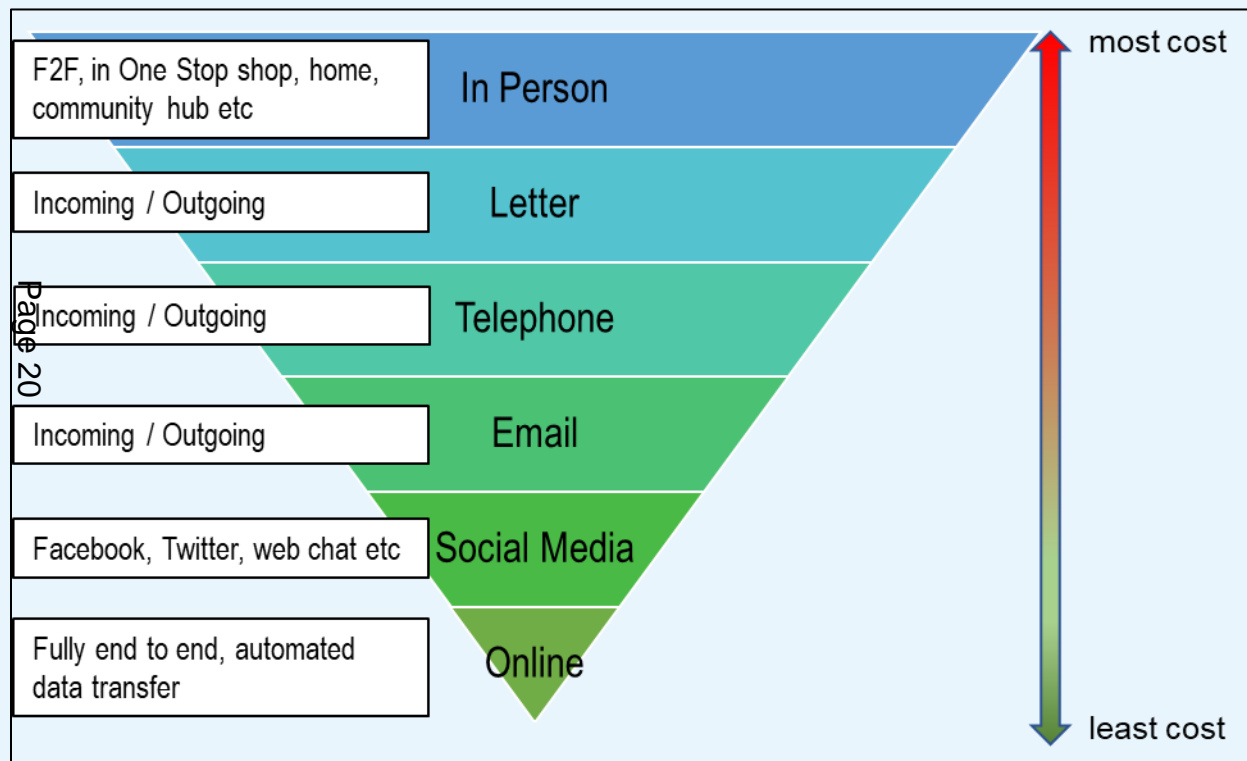


# Customer Contact Strategy – what we know

- Customer expectations, demands and habits have changed, as well as due to Covid
- Major developments in technology and an increase in its use - 96% of households have access to the internet and 87% shopped online in the last 12 months (ONS).
- Our customers are increasingly using online methods to contact their bank, utilities, retailers, including outside of normal office hours
- Page 19 Alot of our customers could be persuaded to change the way they contact us, *if we provide the right options for them to do so.*
- Our more vulnerable residents or those with complex needs are always likely to require support (face to face or telephone assistance). We must actively encourage those customers who can do so to self-serve to free up our resource to focus where it is needed.
- We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint as much as possible. Encouraging the use of online contacts, will mean less need for staff or customers to travel to/from our offices and reduce the use of paper channels.



# Customer Contact Strategy – digital first



We need to adopt a digital first approach.

However, simply moving everything to online / self-serve channels is not the answer.

There are different levels of digital ability in B&NES along with varying degrees of connectivity in rural locations.

Where enquiries are complex, particularly those of a sensitive or personal nature, more intervention is likely to be required.

As a result we will always offer a telephone and face to face service.

# Customer Contact Strategy – discovery

To identify the most appropriate channel for a service or customer group, we must understand our customers, the services they are requesting and any constraints, taking account of:

- Who our customers are, what they need, their use of different channels
- How, when, where, and to whom contact is made for services, the level of sensitivity and complexity.
- Baseline our current volumes, types, levels of demand
- What technology is available now and what is emerging.
- External factors, including partner organisations, political imperatives, legislation / regulation.
- How to ensure accessibility and digital inclusion.



# Customer Contact Strategy – key principles

- Make access to services available through appropriate and effective contact channels.
- Have corporate customer service standards across the whole organisation.
- Ensure information provided across all contact channels is consistent, accurate, up to date.
- Be transparent about what we can / can't do, ensure customers understand next steps.
- Reduce repeat contacts by dealing with customer requests fully at first interaction.
- Work internally and with partners to provide a “joined up” approach to fulfilling customer's requests, reducing the need for multiple contacts.
- Encourage greater use of the most cost-efficient contact channels through deliberate and targeted promotional activities.
- Not discriminate against any group or individuals through limiting the choice of contact channels available.
- Work consistently to improve the effectiveness of all the channels; regularly reviewing options for different provision or new technologies.



# How can you support us?

- Work together to produce this strategy
- Feedback to us the experiences of residents
- Sign post / coach residents about the right way to contact the Council
- Support the streamlining of ways to contact the Council
- Support continuous improvement and the digital first approach whilst maintaining accessibility and digital inclusion
- Use the Councillor resolution service so we highlight learning needs and areas for improvement



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# Bath & North East Somerset Council

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**Improving People's Lives**



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# Bath & North East Somerset Council

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**Improving People's Lives**

Digital, Data & Technology Strategy  
June 2021

# Strategy Context

- Covid-19 fundamentally changed our workforce operating model overnight
- Council needed to think differently about the way we work and this accelerated opportunities to increase flexibilities and the pace to deliver
- Also recognised the vital interdependency in how digital, data and technology underpins majority of Council service provision
- Significant dependencies on Customer Access and Data Management
- Support from SOCITM Advisory Service (external challenge) including benchmarking against other local authority strategies
- Engagement and initial feedback from key senior service managers
- Ensured links to Corporate Priorities and reference to Renewal Vision
- Draft has been prepared and further consultation in progress (high level outline detailed in following slides)

# Strategy – Vision

**The Strategy is built on three integrated elements –  
Digital, Data & Technology, i.e. not just IT**

**Our Overall Vision is that –**

***‘We will build digital connectivity, based on intelligent data and the right technology to improve outcomes and opportunity for our residents, visitors, businesses and workforce’***

# Strategy – Principles

- » **PRINCIPLES – These overlay our overall approach**
- » **Focussing on user needs and building digital capability for all**
- » **Building sustainability into all technology development and improvements**
- » **Engaging and collaborating with a diverse range of staff, users and partners**
- » **Driving secure and intelligent data management into our technology and systems**

# Strategy - Priorities

*‘We will build digital connectivity, based on intelligent data and the right technology to improve outcomes and opportunity for our residents, visitors, businesses and workforce’*

1. Provide Accessible Services to residents, businesses & visitors

4. Provide an infrastructure that is agile, secure & connected

2. Enable our Staff with the right technology, tools and training

5. Build Digital Capability & Innovation across the organisation & our community

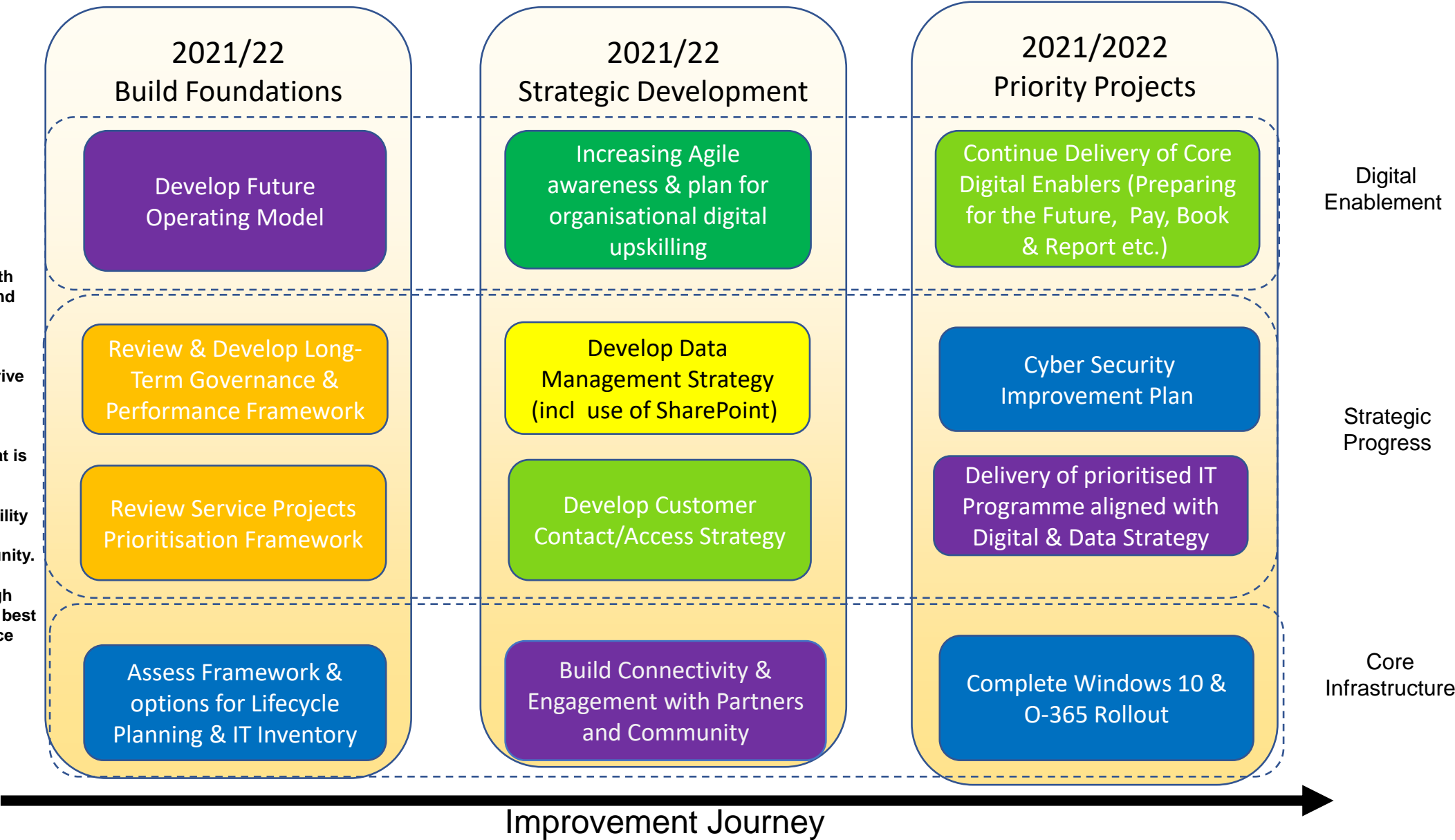
3. Be an evidence led organisation using Data to drive transparent decision making

6. Deliver Value through Consistent standards, best practice & Good Governance

*Our 6 Priorities -*

# DD&T 21/22 Roadmap for Delivery of Strategy

- Theme 1: Provide accessible services to our residents, businesses and visitors
- Theme 2: Enable our staff with the right technology, tools and training
- Theme 3: Be an evidence led organisation using data to drive transparent decision making
- Theme 4: Provide a data and technology infrastructure that is agile, secure and connected
- Theme 5: Build Digital capability and Innovation across the organisation and our community.
- Theme 6: Deliver VFM through use of consistent standards, best practice and good governance



## Next steps

- Final consultation and engagement to gain alignment, feedback & sign-off
- Adoption & Implementation in 2021/22 will have a focus on –
  - Refreshing Customer Access Strategy
  - Creation of Data Management Strategy
  - Options for Future Operating Model
  - Review of Investment planning
- Grateful for feedback from Scrutiny

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