

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	20 May 2021	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3276
TITLE:	Update on Progress against the Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 and COVID-19 Response	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Annex 1 Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 - End of Year Review		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report updates the Cabinet on progress made in delivering our Corporate Strategy and identifies key issues for its further development in the context of recovery and renewal following our response to COVID-19 throughout 2020/21.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1 Note progress on the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and the Council's response to COVID-19 during 2020/21, the details of which are highlighted in Appendix 1.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 Full Council adopted a new four-year Corporate Strategy at its meeting on 25th February 2020. The document set a new direction for the Council, reflecting the aims of the administration elected in May 2019 and providing a clear approach to the Council's activities and priorities.
- 3.2 The Corporate Strategy is the Council's overarching strategic plan. It sets out what we plan to do, how we plan to do it, and how we will measure performance over the next four years. It contains a new framework for what we will focus on and how we will work, as follows:

- 1) We have one overriding purpose - **to improve people's lives**. This brings together everything we do, from cleaning the streets to caring for our older people. It is the foundation for our strategy, and we will ensure that it drives our commitments, spending and service delivery.
- 2) We have two core policies - **tackling the climate and ecological emergency** and **giving people a bigger say**. These will shape our work.
- 3) To translate our purpose into commitments, we have identified three principles. We want to **prepare for the future, deliver for residents** and **focus on prevention**. These, in turn, help us to identify specific delivery commitments across our services.

3.3 At the same meeting, Council also adopted the **Budget for 2020/21** and Financial Outlook report, which sets out how the Corporate Strategy will be resourced.

3.4 This report brings together the key activity to delivery the Corporate Strategy throughout 2020/21 and the key elements of the COVID response. It is a follow-on report from the Council report 16th June (COVID – update report and position statement) and the Cabinet report 22nd July (Update on Corporate Strategy Progress and issues).

3.5 The Council has also had to deal with the enormous financial impacts of COVID-19, particularly the loss of income from heritage attractions and car parking as a result of the lockdown, and the wider economic impacts on tourism and the visitor and retail economy. Again, a detailed report setting out the Council's response to the financial impacts was presented to Cabinet on 2nd July 2020. The report highlighted the need to take immediate action to ensure a balanced budget in this year, deferring schemes where possible and seeking savings from staff vacancies and further efficiencies.

3.6 Members should obviously be aware that progress against the delivery of the Corporate Strategy has been hindered by the COVID pandemic and the need to reallocate resources in terms of staffing and finance away from addressing these priorities for 2020/21. However, some good progress has been made in a number of areas and these are highlighted in Annex 1. For instance:

- £2.2m in Council budget to implement the Liveable Neighbourhoods policy, agreed following public consultation, which will improve air quality and health, encourage more walking and cycling, and reduce vehicles in residential areas.
- The drive to reduce carbon emissions from buildings in Bath and North East Somerset to help tackle the climate emergency has received a boost with more than £2m of Government funding won for key projects.
- The Council committed to funding Free School Meals vouchers for Christmas 2020, February half term and Easter 2021 school holidays to make sure no child goes hungry during these times following the government's decision to stop funding free school meals during the holidays.

- Work to repair Bath’s historic Cleveland Bridge is set to start in the spring / summer of 2021 following the approval of listed building consent by Councillors. The bridge is a crucial link in the strategic road network between the A46 and A36, carrying approximately 17,000 vehicles a day.
- A new riverside park will follow a 10km stretch of the River Avon from Batheaston to Newbridge and aims to connect communities and create a high-quality route for walking and cycling, encouraging more people to explore the city in a sustainable way.
- The Council has successfully bid for £500k for its Green Homes Grant scheme to help people make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes, such as double glazing, insulation or low carbon-heating, which will support residents in need alongside the £80,000 available from the council’s Affordable Warmth Grants

3.7 A Voicebox (residents’) survey carried out last November asked residents about the impact of COVID-19 in their local area and also sought to gauge how satisfied residents are with their local area as a place to live, and the services provided by the Council. The survey received a 33% response rate with the following key results:

Satisfaction levels

87% satisfied with local area as a place to live	65% satisfied with how the Council runs things	37% satisfied the Council provides value for money
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All measures have shown an upward trend since 2018.

Impact of COVID-19:

62% The air is cleaner	72% I use my car less	74% People in my community have supported each other
59% I have been able to help people who needed it	57% I use my local shops More	55% I have known where to get help and support
42% I know my local community / neighbours much better	48% I spend more time with my family	53% I get more exercise

3.8 The Council’s highlighted response to COVID is also outlined in Annex 1, this review demonstrates how the Council has mobilised over the past 12 months to deliver its purpose of improving people’s lives in this most challenging of circumstances.

3.9 In particular, the Hub has played a crucial role. The following is a summary of the outcomes achieved since it opened on 23rd March 2020 until the end of March this year:

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
2,500 surgical masks delivered to 14 organisations	40 pharmacies received a total of 240 face visors and 120 full face visors produced by University of Bath	120 goggles delivered (40 from University of Bath and 80 from the Council)

3.10 The Council has been responsible for the administration of the Business Support Grants to local business. In the first period between May and September 2020, we processed and administered grants to **3,470** grants to businesses totalling **£42.8m**, and in the second period from November 2020 to end of the financial year, we processed grants to **2519** to businesses totalling **£27.6m**

3.11 The performance matrix designed to highlight qualitative delivery of the Strategy is currently being finalised. This will form part of the newly developed **Integrated Reporting Framework (IRF)** which will bring together aspects of performance, finance, HR and contracts into one Councilwide reporting dashboard. The database will be used to continually update members during 2021/22

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The Council has a wide range of powers which allow it to deliver the strategy adopted in February. It should be noted however that the government have introduced an extensive range of new legislation, regulations and guidance during this period, which may influence how certain aspects of our programme are delivered. The Council Strategy was subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment and it is important that equalities are actively pursued as we implement the strategy.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 A full report on the Council's approach to financial recovery was presented to Cabinet on 2nd July 2020.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 A detailed report was presented to Council in January on the councils progress in tackling the climate and ecological emergency. The current report provides an opportunity to re-emphasise how these commitments are reflected as “core policies” in delivering the Corporate Strategy, and tackling the climate and ecological emergency is also at the centre of our renewal vision.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 This report has been cleared by the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Contact person	Steve Harman, Head of Business Support and Performance Andy Thomas, Head of Strategy and Engagement
Background papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Report 16th June – COVID update report and position Statement• Cabinet report 2nd July – COVID-19 2020/21 FINANCIAL RECOVERY• Cabinet Report 22nd July – Update on Corporate Strategy progress and issues• Corporate Strategy• Case Studies
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	