

Swindon Borough Council

Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 12 March 2018

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices

At 6.00 p.m.

Conservative Councillors

John Haines
Timothy Swinyard (Chair)
Caryl Sydney-Smith
Vera Tomlinson
Steve Weisinger

Labour Councillors

Steve Allsopp
Des Moffatt
Robert Wright

Committee Officer: Iain Tucker, Committee Officer (01793) 463605
itucker@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

Access Arrangements - The venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you have any special requirements to enable you to attend the meeting or would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size, please contact the Committee Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2018

4. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

5. Customer Access Strategy

6. Welfare Reform & Social Inclusion (Pages 7 - 8)

7. Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges (Pages 9 - 16)

The Council Plan sets the priorities it aims to achieve for residents, this report acts as a review of current performance and progress relating to these priorities

Date of Despatch: 06 March 2018

Public Question Time - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Director of Law and Democratic Services, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance" available on the Council's Website.

(<http://www5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sched=doc&cat=13338&path=0>) or from the Committee Officer named above.

Terms of Reference

To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee as they relate to –

- The Budget Scrutiny function, at the request of the Scrutiny Committee,
- The review, scrutiny and development of policy recommendations,
- The management of performance,
- The monitoring of progress towards delivering corporate priorities, and
- The formulation of advice for the Cabinet, Council and other partners and stakeholders.
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To have specific responsibility for (but not limited to) the scrutiny of: -

- The Council's Revenue and Capital Budget,
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy,
- Strategic Projects,
- Leisure
- Corporate Customer Services

RESOURCES AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 18 JANUARY 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors Timothy Swinyard (Chair), Steve Allsopp, John Haines, Des Moffatt, Timothy Swinyard (Chair), Caryl Sydney-Smith, Steve Weisinger and Robert Wright

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Vera Tomlinson.

17. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Councillors to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered.

No such declarations were made.

18. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2017 be confirmed and signed.

19. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

20. Wichelstowe

Robert Powe, Wichelstowe Programme Manager, gave a presentation on the development at Wichelstowe. He advised that it is a joint venture with Barratt Homes, a £679m partnership to deliver circa 2750 homes on Council owned land.

He outlined the strategic objectives of the joint venture touching upon the following areas:

- Economic development
- The high quality of the development
- Sustainability
- Creation of high quality neighbourhoods
- The type of homes needed in Swindon
- A rebalancing of Swindon's housing stock
- Delivering jobs that contribute to Swindon's economic growth
- Creating an intergenerational community that supports healthy active living

He outlined the key principles of the joint venture expanding on the following areas:

- The Council are providing the land and Barratt Homes providing the infrastructure
- That the Council and Barratt jointly fund the house building
- That the Council's land value will need to be rigorously tested
- Securing Planning permissions and Section 106 agreements aligned with the

developments design codes

Following the presentation the Wichelstowe Programme Manager responded to questions and observations put by Members of the Committee on the following areas:

- A perceived trade shortage in the area
- Guarantees in the legal agreements concerning the feasibility of 15-30% affordable housing
- The factoring in of the closure of Mill Lane to the development
- Traffic congestion and the bus route on Red Post Drive
- The future of Barratt PLC Holdings and its associated groups over the course of the development

Resolved – That the Wichelstowe Programme Manager be thanked for a useful and informative presentation

21. Digital Access Strategy

Samantha Mowbray, the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications submitted a report introducing the Council's draft approach to all of Swindon's residents being able to engage with the Council as it moves more of its customer services online.

The report sought to give members of the Committee confidence that a coordinated approach to modernising customer services is in place and that this approach is being developed in conjunction with the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy which aims to ensure that all of Swindon's residents are able to access the universal services which the Council provides.

The Organisational Excellence work stream is one of four themes within the Swindon Programme. The Swindon Programme is a £30m savings programme intended to ensure that the Council is financially and operationally sustainable by March 2020.

The Director referred to a report by Get Digital which provided a digital map of Swindon. She commented that the Council had a target of 85% of its contact with customer being provided digitally.

It was noted that 85% of the Council's customers currently own a smartphone.

She outlined the barriers to digital inclusion which included skills, language, trust and not recognising the benefits. The Council will support customers to use digital services and empower them to conduct their transactions digitally by using a customer support network.

Resolved – That the report be noted and that the Committee recognises that the proposals are currently in draft form with a fuller strategy being forthcoming over the coming months.

Councillor Keith Williams, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Digitalisation and Samantha Mowbray, the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications submitted a joint report outlining a draft proposed approach to the modernisation of Customer Services which forms part of the Organisational Excellence programme.

The report sought to give members of the Committee confidence that a coordinated approach to modernising customer services is in place and that this approach is being developed in conjunction with the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy which aims to ensure that all of Swindon's residents are able to access the universal services which the Council provides.

The Organisational Excellence work stream is one of four themes within the Swindon Programme. The Swindon Programme is a £30m savings programme intended to ensure that the Council is financially and operationally sustainable by March 2020.

The report notes that by 2020 customer services will have removed all unnecessary face to face and phone contact by providing clear information on the Council's website to either enable customers to do things for themselves; signposting customers to other external services; or correctly routing them to the right services within the Council

At the meeting, Karen McMahon, the Head of Customer and Business Services advised that there were now 68 processes using the customer portal. She explained that channel shift needed to be undertaken in conjunction with the 'right first time' approach to service delivery, in order to reduce failure demand from the outset. She commented there was already a natural shift from customers physically visiting the Council to using smart digital services and in future the team would introduce other communication methods such as WebChat. She noted that 17000 customers had signed up to the digital portal.

The Committee discussed the average response time to customer comments and the barriers to using digital services, including social phobias, confidence and lacking the necessary digital skills.

Resolved – That the report be noted and the Committee recognises that the proposals are currently in draft form with more detailed proposals being forthcoming the next few months.

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Welfare Reform & Social Inclusion

Resources & Overview Scrutiny

Date: 12th March 2018

Author:	Head of Revenues & Benefits & Social Inclusion & Enterprise Manager
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To provide an update on Welfare Reform and how the Council is supporting Swindon residents through the changes to welfare benefits.
- 1.2 An update on the Assistance provided by Social Inclusion.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the update and feedback on the assistance being provided.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Welfare Reform Act was passed in 2012 and introduced a number of changes. These include the Social Sector under-occupancy Housing Benefit reduction, Council Tax Benefit changes, the Benefit Cap and Universal Credits.
- 3.2 Updates and training have been provided to the Individuals that were known to be impacted, Housing & other Social Landlords officers and Social Care and Advice Agency staff prior to the introduction of the changes and awareness of the support available was given at the time.
- 3.3 The Support Available Currently:
 - 3.3.1. Discretionary Housing Payments. The Council has a budget of £507,000 in 2017/18 and £492,000 in 2018/19 in order to provide short-term assistance to those with a shortfall between their rent and Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing support element. If required the Council has also obtained permission from Central Government to use HRA funds in order to provide further help to its own tenants with such shortfalls.
 - 3.3.2. A permanent appointment of Social Inclusion and Enterprise Manager has been made, using savings from the Local welfare Assistance fund. Expenditure on the Swindon Emergency Assistance Fund has reduced significantly, as result of prioritising awards to those in most need and referring those that need budgeting and debt advice to Citizens Advice. The Social Inclusion and Enterprise Manager is involved in:

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Andy Stevens (01793) 464607 anstevens@swindon.gov.uk

Welfare Reform & Social Inclusion

Resources & Overview Scrutiny

Date: 12th March 2018

- 3.3.3. Publicising and encouraging residents to join Credit Union. Now acting as an advisor to the board of Wiltshire Savings & Loans (WSL) and is assisting with the merger of WSL and Steam Ahead credit union. The Chief Executive of Bristol Credit Union has also been invited to review the new business plan. A new collection point has been set up in Penhill and work to have another in Highworth and other areas being undertaken. A Save as You Earn scheme has been introduced for Swindon Borough Council employees
- 3.3.4 Promoting the work of the National Illegal Money Lending Team ('Stop Loan Sharks'). Encouraging Referrals to this Team and use of their funding as a financial incentive for individuals to join the credit unions.
- 3.3.5 Working with Council's Affordable Warmth co-ordinator action has been taken on fuel poverty. Swindon Energy Matters switching site has been established and promoted to help residents transfer their energy suppliers and reduce the number of people on more expensive tariffs.
- 3.3.6 The Appointment of two 'Money Mentors' working with Citizens Advice continues until September 2018 at least. They are helping more residents who need debt or budgeting advice, particularly those impacted by the latest Welfare Reforms.
- 3.3.7 Working with the Council's commissioners and the Department of Works and Pensions set up a new process for managing vulnerable clients with drug and alcohol challenges in order to minimise the possibility of benefit sanctions and homelessness.
- 3.3.8 Run quarterly Financial Inclusion Seminars and updated the Council's Benefits webpages.
- 3.3.9 Commenced working with local partners and Social Enterprises in order to start a Social Enterprise Network that can try and assist each other, help new enterprises and possibly co-ordinate assistance.
- 3.3.10 Using Department Works and Pensions funding Universal Credit Claimants can be with provided one to one appointments for those needing help to make their claims online at the Central library and with Citizens Advice for Personal Budgeting appointments.
- 3.3.11 The Council's Revenues Team continue to provide assistance to those having difficulty paying their Council Tax. Amending the 'recovery routines' and trying to phone residents prior to issuing summonses (pledge 24).

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

Resources and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee 12th March 2018

Author: Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications

Wards: All Wards

Parishes Affected: All Parishes

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The report is gives details of the progress being made towards the Council's Vision , Priorities and Pledges

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 The Council Plan 2016-2020 sets out the vision for Swindon and the priorities it aims to achieve for residents. In order to deliver the Council's Vision, the Council has identified four Priorities and 30 pledges.

Progress with the Council Vision is publicly available on the Council website at <https://www.swindon.gov.uk/vision>. It is updated quarterly with additional performance data and a narrative on progress made or challenges faced.

The progress for each Goal is tracked and rated according to the progress achieved as 'On Track, Achieved Goal, Measuring or Needs Improvement'. Performance is also published on the Corporate Scorecard which is available for Members and Senior Officers.

Review of Council Priorities

- 3.2 Priority One – Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

Resources and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee 12th March 2018

Pledges in Priority One cover aspects of infrastructure including high speed broadband, housing, energy, transport and regeneration. Good infrastructure is important in order to attract new businesses, retain existing ones and meet the needs of a growing town.

Current progress suggests that the Council is on track to deliver eleven of the thirteen pledges that contribute the Priority One. The Council has successfully completed two of these Pledges by completing the regeneration of Sussex Square and the Town Centre Health Centre. Other regeneration projects such as town centre pedestrian routes and brown field sites are on track for a successful completion.

There have been delays in the Kimmerfields Development. This has impacted on the further regeneration of the area, road network and the provision of a new bus station. A revised plan to build on the existing regeneration is due to go to Cabinet in July 2018

The Council is on track to deliver its Pledges relating to the provision of Superfast Broadband and solar arrays. Pledges relating to the New Eastern Villages and Wichelstowe are also currently on track.

In terms of current housing, the Council is on track to meet the Decent Homes Standard and to improve the quality of rented properties.

The Pledges and Goals in Priority One, along with current progress can be seen in the appendices.

3.3 Priority Two – Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places

Pledges in Priority Two address improving education, attainment and employment. High quality education and good levels of skills are vital components of the Council's Vision to be one of the UK's most successful economies.

Current progress suggests that the Council are on track in its Pledge relating to the economy and investment. GVA and employment rates are above target and there has been an increase in the number of jobs and business rates collected. Work remains to be done relating to businesses employing apprentices within the borough.

There are current challenges in the Pledges relating to education. The Council is on track to deliver the required number of schools in line with its population and experiences good performance relating to early education and primary school settings. However, Swindon is underperforming in relation to school and Higher

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

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Education attainment. The Swindon Challenge and development of a Higher Education Strategy have been put in place to address these issues.

The Pledges and Goals in Priority Two, along with current progress can be seen in the appendices.

3.4 Priority Three – Ensure clean and safe streets and improve public spaces and local culture

Pledges in Priority Three track progress focus on ensuring that public spaces are well maintained and safe as well as developing cultural and leisure provision within the Borough.

Progress in delivering the Pledges in Priority Three is good. Three of the four Pledges on track. There have been improvements made to the cleanliness of local areas. Progress is being made in developing new leisure and cultural activities in Swindon. The Council has worked with the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust to submit a bid for a new museum to the Heritage and Lottery Fund. A new agreement has been signed to develop a leisure complex at North Star. The Council has also seen an increase in visitors to its museums and there is a higher than average amount of people using green space within the Borough.

There have been challenges in the rejuvenation of the Mechanics Institute and Corn Exchange however recent developments include external funding and land agreements. These mean that options and plans can now be developed to progress these goals.

Crime and road deaths / injuries remain a challenge within Swindon. Violent crime has risen dramatically since 2012 and although starting to show a decline, it is significantly higher than previously experienced. The number of people killed and seriously injured is also much higher than the target. A programme of schemes to address this is due to go to Cabinet in March.

The Pledges and Goals in Priority Three, along with current progress can be seen in the appendices.

3.5 Priority Four – Help people to help themselves while always protecting the most vulnerable children and adults

Pledges in Priority Four track progress focus on ensuring that children are safe from harm, adults are supported to live independent lives and improve the wellbeing of the population of Swindon.

Progress in delivering Priority Four is generally good. Four of the seven pledges are on target. The close partnership with the CCG continues and there have

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

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been significant improvements in the performance of delayed bed days attributable to adult social care. Swindon is also performing above target in relation to its Troubled Families. The number of children receiving a second child protection plan is lower than the national average.

Care leavers in Swindon are more likely to go on to education training or employment compared to the national average and those with learning difficulties going into employment are also higher than the national average. There are performance issues relating to children in care (foster, adoption or with family/friend) where performance is 10% lower than targeted. A Service Improvement Plan is in place to increase fostering households.

In terms of health, smoking prevalence in the Borough is below the national average. Excess weight is an issue at primary and secondary age where it is currently slightly higher than the national average. However, adults in Swindon are more likely to be physically active.

Annual review for clients are carers varies. The Council is currently on track to exceed its target of reviewing carers but is not predicted to meet its target for client reviews.

The Council is on track to meet its target for collecting council tax and council tax support claims are falling however it is not predicted to reduce the annual bailiff referrals compared to the number of house.

The Pledges and Goals in Priority Four, along with current progress can be seen in the appendices.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 N/A

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The cost of delivering the Pledges and Priorities is covered within existing budgets.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 Legal and Human Rights implications were taken into account when preparing this report. It is considered that the report's recommendations are compatible with Convention Rights.

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

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All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no other implications at this time.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) was undertaken as this report will not lead to any service changes. However, all actions to achieve the Pledges follow an appropriate DIA in accordance with the Council's agreed DIA framework

Risk Management

- 5.5 Risk management assessments take place on actions to achieve the Pledges in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Framework

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Priority 1 Progress

Pledge	Pledge Wording	Rating
1	Deliver the Government standard Superfast Broadband coverage to all commercial and domestic premises in the Borough by 2017.	On Track
2	Construct solar arrays on Council-owned land at Common Farm, Chapel Farm and a solar noise barrier along roads including the M4 at Wichelstowe.	On Track
3	Demolish the obsolete Carlton Street and Wyvern car parks and use the space for regeneration.	Needs Improvement
4	Make the case to Government to invest in a Thamesdown Drive extension and surrounding road	On Track

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

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	improvements.	
5	Replace the current Health Centre in the town centre with a new and improved facility.	Achieved Goal
6	Establish effective and appealing pedestrian links from the Town Centre to North Star and enhance Wellington Street as a prime thoroughfare for the town.	On Track
7	Build new affordable homes including 200 new council homes and 66 units through the Affordable Housing Development programme at sites including the Hawthorns, the Royal British Legion site in Penhill, Townsend House in Old Town and the Former Refuge in Park South.	On Track
8	Complete the redevelopment of Sussex Square.	Achieved Goal
9	Develop Council-owned brownfield sites at Oakfield, and other sites as they become available, for housing.	On Track
10	As part of the town's regeneration: Re-develop the former Aspen House site / Granville Street area, to extend on the successful Regent Circus development. Make Havelock Square an attractive, safe open space to complement local shops	On Track- Havelock Square is achieved
11	Replace the current bus station with a new and modern facility	Needs Improvement
12	Improve the town centre road network to pave the way for the Kimmerfields development.	Needs Improvement
13	Improve highway linkages to the Eastern Villages, particularly around the White Hart roundabout.	On Track
14	With Barratt Homes we will build up to 3,500 homes in Wichelstowe including the development of a district	On Track

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

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	centre.	
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8.2 Priority 2 Progress

Pledge	Pledge Wording	Rating
15	In addition to the two new Free secondary schools, build one secondary and 12 primary schools to meet the needs of our increasing population.	On Track
16	Improve the reputation and image of Swindon to attract inward investment.	On Track
17	Improve educational attainment, in particular at ages 16-19 so we are above the average in England within five years.	Needs Improvement
18	Increase the number of businesses employing young people as an apprentice from 15% to 20% (an additional 280).	Needs Improvement
19	Secure a range of options to access Higher Education in Swindon.	Needs Improvement

8.3 Priority 3 Progress

Pledge	Pledge Wording	Rating
20	Find new ways to engage communities and neighbourhoods to increase the cleanliness of their local areas.	On Track
21	Secure a new Museum and Art Gallery that can showcase the high quality art and exhibits that we possess.	On Track

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges

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22	Support the development of the new regional leisure destination at North Star.	On Track
23	Secure a sustainable future for the Mechanics Institute. Support the redevelopment of the Corn Exchange.	Needs Improvement

8.4 Priority 4 Progress

Pledge	Pledge Wording	Rating
24	Provide early support for people in debt so that we significantly reduce the need to use bailiffs to recover Council Tax and other debts.	Needs Improvement
25	Deliver a borough-wide approach to increase the impact of volunteering, enabling more people to be active citizens in their communities.	Needs Improvement
26	Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and GP surgeries to help people with long term health and social care needs to manage their health effectively with support from community groups and multi-disciplinary teams	On Track
27	Ensure that more people and their carers' are supported to live as independently as possible and reduce the length of time people need to spend in residential care.	On Track
28	Increase the number of foster carers in Swindon so that every 'child looked after' who should be, is placed in their home borough.	Needs Improvement
29	Work with all of the 1270 families in Swindon who are in most need of support by 2020 in phase 2 of the Troubled Families Programme.	On Track
30	Reduce smoking prevalence to less than the England average.	On Track

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.