



Council Services

Thematic Progress Update

June 2022

Lead Member Introduction

This report is the first thematic update report on the progress we are making against our Better Lives for All Council Services theme.

Since adopting our Corporate Strategy in September 2021, we have made significant progress against the actions set out in our plan.

Some of the highlights from year 1 (2021/22) of our Delivery Plan include:

- ✓ Customer orientated processes for the Energy Support payments and Ukrainian Refugee Host Payments to ensure financial assistance reaches customers
- ✓ Delivered a balanced budget for 2022/23
- ✓ Consultation & Engagement on key Council priorities such as the Homelessness Strategy and Totnes Skate park consultation
- ✓ Progressed service reviews in DM, Revenues & Benefits, the Contact Centre, Legal, and Assets on which we continue to build in accordance with improvement plans
- ✓ Annual objective setting process under way and performance management structure in place

Each action has a number of activities and the following table sets out the progress against those specific activities.

Activities on Track	Activities slightly off track but plan in place	Activities at risk of not completing as agreed	Activities not yet due to start
5	2	0	0

Over the coming pages, we set out more in-depth updated for each action and subsequent activities.

Cllr Nicky Hopwood

Cllr Nicky Hopwood

Executive Lead for Service Delivery

Cllr Keith Baldry

Cllr Keith Baldry

Executive Lead for Commissioned Services



Cllr Nicky Hopwood
Lead Member for delivering quality Council services (Internal)



Cllr Keith Baldry
Lead Member for delivering quality Council services (Commissioned)



QS1.1 - Implementing IT Systems that make it easy for customers to access Council Services including:-

- **Implementing a system which enables a single view of the customer**
- **Improving Access to Management Information**
- **Launching and improved website to make it easier for our customers to access council services**
- **Achieving a £70,000 ongoing reduction to costs as a result of more efficient IT systems**

Key Highlights

- Continuing progress in delivering Liberty Create processes giving direct, easier and faster access to services for the customer. There are now over 100 live processes including the new Energy Support payments and the Ukrainian Refugee Host Payment process, ensuring that those supporting refugees get financial assistance quickly and easily every month.
- We are on track with the new website for spring 2023 and we are testing it over the next few weeks
- We have started the roll out of Office365 across the organisation which will make on-line meetings easier
- Difficulties continue with the back office systems for Environmental Health and Planning which we are striving to address with the supplier through regular dialogues

Key Risks / Issues

- The delivery of a solution for connecting Liberty Create (the processes) with other back office systems has been delayed due to commitments on other priorities, but we do have a plan as to how this can be resolved and this is now back on track
- We are working with our supplier to resolve continuing difficulties with the back office system for Environmental Health and Planning but there is a significant risk that the costs of the planning system may increase, and the issues are causing a delay in the implementation of improvements identified in the service reviews discussed below
- Resolution of these difficulties may impact on progress of the new website.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Although reliant on the risks/issues identified above, plans for the next 6 months include:

- Moving Revenues & Benefits processes into Liberty Create to drive significant efficiency savings and delivery improvements to the Customer (avoiding duplication and resolving issues at the first point of contact)
- Creating a Legal Case Management system to give better access to and oversight of cases
- Implementing a new mobile solution for Locality Officers
- Complete the introduction of Office365 to officers and members

Overall Rating

Amber - off track but plan in place to bring back on track

Action QS1.2 Develop a strategy setting out how our customers can access our services in the future, be that face to face, online or on the phone

Key Highlights

This action has been carried forward from 2021/22 due to increased demand on Council services during the final quarter of the year (additional business grants / Covid cases increase among staff etc). We are pleased however that good progress is now being made with:

- A draft Customer Access Strategy (the Customer Experience) to be considered by Members' next month
- A Contact Centre review has been carried out and current progress has been reported to Members through the Executive



Key Risks / Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent approach to access to services • Putting the customer first and making a difference to the Customer 	
Looking ahead to the next 6 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Customer Experience Strategy by Members • Develop the Customer Journeys that inform the strategy • Implement the Contact Centre Review improvement plan and evidence improvements 	
Overall Rating	Amber - off track but plan in place to bring back on track

Action QS1.3 – Ask our residents, businesses and partners for their views when developing plans for the area so they can inform our decision making by:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a forward plan of Consultation and Engagement activities - Include details of consultation and engagement activity as a specific section within the Councils Annual Report 	
Key Highlights	
<p>Since adopting the Better Lives for All Strategy there have been a number of consultation and engagement activities undertaken including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Strategy Consultation • Totnes Borough Park skate park consultation • Engagement with our residents, businesses and Town and Parish Councils over plans for tree planting and biodiversity on Council land <p>The Communications team are currently working with officers (and then Lead Members) to develop a forward plan of consultation, engagement and communication activities for the coming 12 months, aligned to each of the Better Lives for All themes.</p> <p>As a boost to our efforts to ensure our consultation and engagement activities are effective, we are pleased that the Council (with Plymouth City and West Devon) have been awarded Government funding to implement a map based consultation and engagement portal which will enable us to enhance our online engagement presence.</p>	
Key Risks / Issues	
Government funding for the online engagement portal is for two years. If it is successful we may wish to consider continuing with the arrangement and would need to identify budget.	
Looking ahead to the next 6 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise our 12 month consultation and engagement activities programme with Lead Member input • Ensure our teams have a presence at key events across the District to engage with our residents • Go Live with the new consultation and engagement portal 	
Overall Rating	Green (On track)

Action QS1.4 – Carry out a resident’s satisfaction survey so that we know how we’re doing and can compare our performance to other local authorities.	
Key Highlights	
<p>This action has carried forward from 2021/22. There has been slippage in agreeing the framework and developing the plan for the residents’ satisfaction survey; however there is still time to achieve delivery of the survey by the end of this calendar year (the adopted plan says by the end of November 2022).</p>	



It is important to note that the main focus of the residents' satisfaction survey will be around South Hams as a place to live and work (which differs from the Institute of Customer Service survey that focuses on our processes and services). This insight is incredibly important as we look to deliver future year's delivery plans for the Better Lives for All Strategy.

Key Risks / Issues

Capacity to deliver the survey could be challenging as we look to deliver on the Councils' core services.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Agree a plan and the questions for the Residents Satisfaction engagement with Lead Member
- Consultation for the Survey from the end of September (6 weeks)
- Results to Executive December 2022

Overall Rating **Green – on track**

Action QS1.5 – Set a balanced budget annually

Key Highlights

A balanced budget for SHDC for 2022-23 was approved at Council on 10th February 2022

Key Risks / Issues

- Cost of Living crisis
- Inflation provisions to be updated for the next iteration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Pay award assumptions to be updated for the next iteration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Regular quarterly budget monitoring to reported to the Executive on a quarterly basis
- Lobbying for a longer term Government financial settlement

Overall Rating **GREEN – On Track**

Action QS1.6 – Review our service areas to ensure that our customers get the best possible service by;

Analysing key service performance

Adopting a Planning Service Improvement Plan

Carrying out a review of revenues and benefits and;

Identifying other areas for reviews in order to improve the customer experience

Key Highlights

We have made good progress on service reviews in DM, Revenues & Benefits, Legal, Contact Centre and Assets

Key Risks / Issues

- Ensuring that consistent progress continues in accordance with the agreed Improvement plans so that improvements make a difference to the Customer

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Implementing the new DM structure to ensure improved delivery to the customers
- A fully resourced legal team to support the organisation in delivering its priorities



- A new Head of Revenues and Benefits to deliver on the Improvement Plan
- Investment in the Contact Service to support consistent and easy access to Council services, and evidencing the outcomes from the Contact Centre review

Overall Rating **GREEN – On Track**

Action QS1.7 Manage and support our employees to deliver a good outcomes for our residents and businesses by;
Implementing an annual objective setting processes for staff
Implementing a new system for recording objectives
Carry out a staff satisfaction survey

Key Highlights

- Annual objective setting process underway and a new Performance Management System that captures objectives and records ‘check-in’ discussions between managers and staff will be implemented using the new HR and Payroll system over the Summer
- All staff briefings have been carried out to thank staff, to re-empathise Customer Focus, core service quality and effective management.
- Carry out a Staff Survey over the summer now that the current round of Staff briefings have taken place

Key Risks / Issues

- Embedding the new Performance Management and Appraisal system

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Implement new Line Managers’ Development Pathway to support key managers to be more effective leaders and managers
- Develop and implement an action plan based on the findings of the Staff Survey

Overall Rating **GREEN – On Track**

This update will be considered at South Hams District Council Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on 21st April 2022 at 2pm. Watch live on  [YouTube https://www.youtube.com/user/southhamsCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/user/southhamsCouncil)

