



Council Plan Progress Update

**Performance &
Resources**

June 2024

Lead Member Introduction



At the forefront of our Council Plan is the need for us to delivery good quality, value for money services. It's about making the most of our assets and ensuring that we manage our finances well.

This update is the first against the Performance and Resources theme for the 2024 – 2028 Council Plan and I'm pleased that good progress is already being made against the delivery plan which was adopted in February 2024.

Some of the key highlights during this period include:-

- Commissioning Office 365 Champions Programme to support employees in using the technology and maximising productivity
- Appointing our new Health and Safety Officer for the Council to support all departments operate safely
- Working towards the publication of the Council's Accounts for 2023/24, due to be published in July 2024
- Implementing a guaranteed interview scheme for candidates with a disability, ex-forces and care-experienced young people.

Cllr Chris Edmonds

Lead Member Performance and Resources

17	Activities on track and within budget
2	Activities slightly off track but with a plan in place to bring back on track
0	Activities off track with no clear or agreed remediation plan
2	Activities not yet due to start



Performance and Resources
Progress Update June 2024

Primary Aim 1 – Implement the Councils Organisational Development Plan to support our staff

Overall Status

Action Ref PR1.1 – Implement Year 2 of the Council’s Organisational Development Plan

Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Refreshed Recruitment Approaches to tackle recruitment challenges	<p>A new recruitment website has been launched which better promotes the employment package offer. For most roles we are now seeing a good level of applications and are able to make appointments. Recruitment is however still challenging in some senior technical roles (Planning and Assets being current challenges). The Council participated in a project led by the Local Government Association to consider local government recruitment challenges. One output of this activity has been the development of a national recruitment campaign for local government.</p> <p>We have also continued to simplify our recruitment processes. Our application process is now integrated within our HR System which provides a better end-to-end recruitment through to onboarding experience.</p>	Challenges around capacity to make any designed updates to website – being addressed	<p>Review effectiveness of campaigns</p> <p>Promote the Council as an employer by highlighting our achievements</p>	On Track
Carry out Annual Staff Survey to inform our plans	<p>The staff survey carried out in October 2023 demonstrated a positive direction of travel for the Councils. A further staff survey is scheduled for Autumn 2024. We propose continuing to commission the LGA to undertake our survey to enable us to continue monitoring progress</p> <p>We also have held staff briefings during June which provide a further forum for employees to raise questions or items for consideration.</p>	None	Launch 2024 Staff Survey in the Autumn	On Track



Primary Aim 1 – Implement the Councils Organisational Development Plan to support our staff (Continued)

Action Ref PR1.1 – Implement Year 2 of the Council’s Organisational Development Plan

Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Implement a guaranteed interview scheme for care leavers, ex-forces and candidates with disabilities	<p>We have implemented a guaranteed interview scheme which enables candidates to inform us if they meet one of these criteria. Candidates still need to meet the minimum required specification.</p> <p>We now highlight available roles to care experienced young people's Personal Advisers however there has been very little interest or engagement on this.</p>		<p>Continue to promote the scheme</p> <p>Explore opportunities for engagement with care leavers to encourage them to consider local government job opportunities.</p>	On Track
Implement Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment and Plan for our workforce	<p>The Senior Leadership Team have had training on strategic equality and diversity considerations. This has been helpful in shaping our organisational thinking. We have formed a staff forum who are currently developing an outline training plan for the Council.</p>		<p>Implement training plan to be developed</p>	On Track
Promote apprenticeships to develop our own talent	<p>The Council continues to promote apprenticeships and ensure that we maximise the use of the apprenticeship levy. West Devons contribution is around £640 per month. We offer an application window to staff twice a year where they can come forward and request to access levy funding.</p> <p>Typical apprenticeships cost £3-7k for Level 2/3 and £21-27k for Level 5-7</p> <p>We currently have 2 employees undertaking apprenticeships with another 19 scheduled to commence in the next 18 months</p>	<p>If apprenticeship levy funding isn't allocated in a timely manner, the balance starts being reduced.</p>	<p>Open a further window for application of apprenticeships for existing employees</p>	On Track



Primary Aim 2 – Manage the Council’s finances well

Overall Status

Action Ref PR2.1 – Set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Work with the Rural Services Network (RSN) to lobby Government for fairer funding for rural services	Work is continuing on this issue. The Government may issue a Technical Briefing on the key aspects of the Finance Settlement by Summer 2024.		The Council will continue to work with RSN on any updates on this issue.	On Track
Respond to the Government consultation on the Finance Settlement	The Council responded to the consultation for the Finance Settlement for 2024/25 by the middle of January 2024.	Impact of the General Election on timings for announcements on the Finance Settlement and any policy changes.	The Council will respond to any further consultations that are issued over the Summer.	On Track
Regular all Member briefings on financial matters	An All Member Briefing on the Draft Budget for 2024/25 took place on 9 January 2024. The next member briefing will be scheduled for September 2024, to consider the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2025/26 onwards.	Impact of the General Election on timings for announcements on the Finance Settlement and any policy changes.	All Member Briefing to be arranged for September 2024 on the MTFS.	On Track
Carry out business consultation on Council Tax setting	This was completed for the 2024/25 financial year and in November/December 2024, this will be completed for the 2025/26 council tax setting year.		Plan and launch business consultation	Not due to start
Annual training for Members on Treasury Management	This was completed in November 2023. Further training will be arranged in November/December 2024.		Plan training for delivery in January 2025	Not due to start

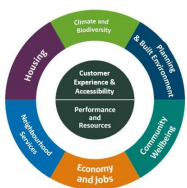


Primary Aim 2 – Manage the Council’s finances well (continued)

Action Ref PR2.2				
Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Maintain a high standard judgement from our external auditors on their Annual Audit report	The Council has a track record of high standard judgements which have recently been highlighted by the LA Peer Challenge.		Receive judgement from our External auditors on 2023/24 Accounts	On Track
Continue to make improvements in internal audit assessments	The Council has recently implemented an Internal Audit Recommendations tracker to monitor progress against its internal Audits. Good progress continues to be made and the majority of Internal Audits are receiving assessment of ‘Reasonable Assurance’ or higher		Continued focus and an update to Audit & Governance on Progress	On Track
Work with Devon Audit partnership to decide priority of internal audit resource for the coming year	An Audit Plan has been developed and was considered by Audit and Governance Committee at their meeting on 19 th March 2024. For the first time the plan has set out focus areas for the next 4-years which is a positive step forward.		Delivery of planned Audits	On Track

“West Devon Borough Council has an excellent track record for sound financial stewardship and leadership”

LGA Peer Challenge – March 2024



Performance and Resources
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Primary Aim 3 – Guarantee efficiency in service delivery by managing performance

Overall Status

Action Ref PR3.1 Identify further areas for service reviews to make sure our teams provide good quality service

Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Carry out a Localities and Frontline Services Review	Service reviews for Grounds Maintenance, Localities and Property Services have all commenced.		Development of recommendations to improve the services and deliver efficiencies.	On Track
Ensure our KPI's reflect our Council Plan and the needs of our communities – launching updated KPI's from April 2024	An initial draft of the proposed KPI's was considered by Overview and Scrutiny at their meeting on 23 rd April 2024. It was agreed that a Task and Finish be formed to further consider them before agreement. T&F meeting was held on 28 th May with revised KPI for consideration at the meeting on	Risk that the committee do not support the revised KPIs	Continued reporting and enhancement of KPI data	Slightly off track

Action Ref PR3.2 Develop and implement systems that support our staff to deliver the best services for our residents

Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Maximise the IT systems currently in use	The Planning system implementation has gone well with the focus now on implementing the Land Charges modules		Go-live of the Land Charges module	On Track
Develop the resilience of our IT systems	A large focus currently on ensuring we continue to build on the resilience of our IT systems. We have commissioned a 'Digital Champions' programme to ensure our employees can maximise the benefits of more resilient technology (Office365).	We continue to see cyber attacks on public sector organisations.	Roll out trial office 365 project in Operations and Dem Services. Cyber Security briefing for A&G Committee	On Track
Secure Council resilience for emergency planning, business continuity and Health & Safety	The Council continues to focus on developing its plans around emergency planning, business continuity and has recently recruited a dedicated resource to support us with Health and Safety.		Continued emergency planning effort as we approach winter	On Track



Primary Aim 3 – Guarantee efficiency in service delivery by managing performance (continued)

Action Ref PR3.3 – Develop and implement a sustainable procurement strategy to secure value for money and support local businesses				
Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Update our procurement strategy to guarantee greater emphasis on reducing climate impact of the Council supply chain and to increase social value	The Council continues to await further guidance from Government on the Procurement regulations which will be effective from October 2024 (confirmation received that the General Election will not impact this date).	There is a risk that there will be delays to guidance on the new Procurement Act which could delay delivery of the strategy.	Commence development and adoption of a new procurement strategy for the Council.	On Track
Commission updated spend analysis and supply chain analysis to inform future strategies and plans	This will form part of delivery of our strategy.		Obtain spend analysis data	On track

Primary Aim 4 – Council buildings and land that meet our future needs

Overall Status

Action Ref PR4.1 Prepare an asset management strategy to set out how we will maximise the use of our assets				
Deliverable	Highlights	Key Risks / Issues	Next 6 months	Status Rating
Agree an Asset Management Strategy and develop a delivery plan	<p>Work to undertake a refresh of the Council's Asset Management Strategy is delayed by the recruitment process of the Head of Land and Property role.</p> <p>The Council's investment properties are managed according to the Regeneration and Investment Policy, which remains current and was last reviewed by the Council in March 2022. A report to the Regeneration and Investment committee to provide an update on the portfolio is planned in July 2024.</p>		Continued work to progress strategy	Slightly off track

