



Report of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance

Cabinet – 17 December 2020

Quarter 1 2020/21 Performance Monitoring.

Purpose:	To report corporate performance for Q1 2020/21.
Policy Framework:	<i>Delivering a Successful & Sustainable Swansea Corporate Plan 2020/22</i> <i>Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future</i>
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The performance results are noted and reviewed to help inform executive decisions on resource allocation and, where relevant, corrective actions to manage and improve performance and efficiency in delivering national and local priorities.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the performance results for Q1 2020/21 delivering the Council's Well-being Objectives (priorities) described in the Corporate Plan 2020/22 *Delivering a Successful & Sustainable Swansea*.
- 1.2 The outturn presented in the performance tables (Appendix A) incorporates an overview of performance that needs to be considered alongside the current financial situation of the Council.
- 1.3 The financial resources required to achieve the specified performance levels in 2020/21 have been provided in the approved budget. As part of the work on *Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the future* there will be an increased focus on understanding the level of activity and outcomes that are achieved for the budget allocated so that choices can be made about relative priorities.

2.0 Performance and Improvement: impact from COVID-19

- 2.1 The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has brought huge challenges and changes to the Council, its services and workforce. The Council has never undertaken such change in such a short timescale and in such challenging circumstances. A number of non-essential services were suspended in order to redeploy resources to areas where they were most needed.
- 2.2 This inevitably has had a significant impact on the usual areas of performance across the council and that is why performance indicators have not been set for 2020/21. This should also be considered when comparing performance to previous years.
- 2.3 This has been an unprecedented year and the Council's response to the pandemic, whilst not reflected in the established performance indicators in this report, has been extraordinary.
- 2.4 In summary, since March 2020 the Council has transformed the way it works to manage the impact of the pandemic. Thousands of staff were successfully mobilised to work remotely and/or from home within a matter of weeks. This took a massive effort from our ICT team to provide the necessary changes enabling staff and councillors to have full network links at their preferred location.
- 2.5 Other changes include:
- Supporting the Welsh Government's Shielding Programme by setting a new call centre and providing daily support to thousands of vulnerable people.
 - Focusing social services care on the most vulnerable, re-opening a care home and supporting the private care sector.
 - Overseeing the planning and construction of the Bay Field Hospital on Fabian Way.
 - Remodelling schools into care settings for key workers' children.
 - Providing meals to care settings and delivering free school meals.
 - Providing food banks across the city and county.
 - Providing financial support in excess of £100 million to thousands of businesses.
 - Setting up a Track, Trace and Protect function and providing community testing centres.
 - Preparing for mass vaccination in our communities.
- 2.6 Therefore, these Quarter One results should be taken in this wider context and these achievements should be noted
- 2.7 For the sake of this report and given the issues set out above, performance is judged using the results measured by Corporate Plan performance indicators and is usually compared to agreed targets.

Targets for 2020/21 have not been set due to the ongoing impact from COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns and other preventative and reactive measures.

- 2.8 The impact on the performance indicators from COVID-19 can also be seen where this occurs by comparing the results of performance indicators against the results from the same period last year where comparison is possible.
- 2.9 The Q1 outturn shows that **26 out of 50 (52%)** comparable Corporate Plan performance indicators showed improvement or stayed the same compared to Q1 2019/20.
- 2.10 Of the total of 55 PI's reported during Q1, 36 (65%) had a comment added. Of the 36 comments, 29 (80%) referred to the impact from COVID-19 on performance.
- 2.11 The performance indicators are assessed each year to ensure that they remain appropriate; although the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown disrupted this process during 2020/21 and interrupted preparations underway for 2021/22. The indicators and how the Council can better measure strategic directions and our priorities will be reviewed as soon as allowed by the progress of the pandemic.
- 2.12 The performance tables in Appendix A set out an overview of performance for each Corporate Plan priority provided by Directors and Heads of Service who are the responsible leads; these overviews set the performance data within their proper context and can be found in para 4.0.

3.0 Other considerations

- 3.1 When making comparisons between previous quarters in 2019/20, the following should be considered:
 - 3.1.1 The nature and number of some performance indicators (PIs) may have changed between these two periods and therefore direct comparisons may not always be appropriate.
 - 3.1.2 The results do not always account for changes in resources and workload during that period (although details can be seen in the numerator and denominator information and in the comments column of the data tables attached to this report).
 - 3.1.3 There may be changes to the numerator and denominator information that may affect the trends by showing a decline while the volume of work has increased.
 - 3.1.4 None of the corporate priorities can be seen in isolation from each other. Each priority both affects and is affected by the others. For example,

Improving Education and Skills is both important to our efforts to tackle poverty and improve the economy. For this reason, many of the performance indicators allocated to measuring one priority can also be used to show progress meeting other priorities.

4.0 Context: Overviews of Performance in Q1 2020/21

4.0.1 The following overviews provided by responsible departments describe the context to the performance meeting the Council's key objectives as at Q1 2020/21.

4.1 Safeguarding people from harm

4.1.1 There has been an obvious and expected impact of Covid on the delivery of health and care services. Supporting individuals to stay safe and well during a global health pandemic has become more complex both because their needs have changed and our ability to meet those needs has been more restricted. Staff across health and care have responded magnificently and therefore the detrimental impact on performance has probably been less marked than we might have expected. However this will become more challenging as the year progresses and particularly as we move into Winter.

4.2 Improving education & skills

4.2.1 Attendance in schools remains to be a key priority despite the impact of Covid-19 on statutory education. The effects on children and young people's wellbeing in not attending school during the spring and summer terms in schools is significant. Support and encouragement to families in returning to schools will be a key approach during the new academic year.

4.2.2 The statutory assessment process, from start to finish, for children and young people who require additional learning provision was impacted by Covid-19. However, the transformation within the support for additional learning needs area is gathering pace. As a result, early identification and support is provided to ensure that children and young people's needs are being met. As the new additional learning needs and educational tribunal Act 2018 changes begin, the focus will shift towards even more efficient ways of ensuring learner needs are met.

4.3 Transforming our economy and infrastructure

4.3.1 Performance indicators this quarter show a mixed picture owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and this largely reflects the impact that risk mitigation measures have had on our delivery. However, despite these impacts, our major regeneration priorities continue to make substantial progress on site. Swansea Central Phase 1 works have made significant visible progress with superstructure steelwork erected. The Swansea Central Phase 2 design & viability work, including the potential for a public sector

hub, has also made good progress. The procurement of the strategic sites marketing opportunity was re-designed, to take account of the Covid restrictions on events. The Kingsway infrastructure project works suffered delays owing to the crisis, but work resumed with rapid progress on site. Planning permission for the Kingsway Employment Hub building was awarded and procurement commenced.

- 4.3.2 A draft post-Covid economic recovery plan was produced with partners and will be reported to cabinet for future consideration. In addition, during the crisis, resources were mobilised to support businesses and individuals with financial aid support as part of the government's Covid response funding programme. This also included rent-relief support provided by the council to avoid business failures and redundancies wherever possible.
- 4.3.3 During this quarter Cultural Services deployed staff from across the service teams to support the vulnerable, shielding, families in need, refugees, homeless and essential workers. Advice and guidance was developed for the sector partners, helping them secure grants, understand the implications of guidance and lockdown and to develop Covid-secure ways of operating for the future. Reaching out to some of the most vulnerable people included bespoke online gallery tours for those with anxieties, web-based art classes and befriending phone calls for older people, activity packs with online resources for distribution with foodbank parcels, and online heritage talks for older audiences.
- 4.3.4 Maintaining social networks and introducing new community and civic partners to each other, this included podcasts to introduce local area coordinators to their communities and to introduce business, voluntary and creative freelancers to each other, the promotion of new talent with the Swansea Music Hub and attracting blood donors through the use of the city's art collection. Families were helped to home school, providing hundreds of online suggestions for arts activities, workshops, performances and quizzes, and providing route maps with a Dylan Thomas theme to make local exercise more interesting. An international profile for Swansea was maintained, via new tourism campaigns, participation in virtual conferences and seminars, and using online gallery talks on the theme of the Wales-India relationship to attract hundreds of participants from around the world. They were introduced with live welcoming views of the city.
- 4.3.5 A large number of Cultural Service staff were deployed to delivering community support during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting the voluntary sector; shielding residents; homeless and vulnerable. Officers from all across the Service were mobilised to this effort, from establishing food distribution centres, sourcing sponsorship for supplies, staffing the new shielding helpline and supporting Area Coordination, to assisting organisations and services to close down, or operate safely. For example, whilst all events ceased, and the Airshow was delivered 'virtually', the Events team supported queue management

and access issues for essential services, as well as drawing on suppliers for temporary infrastructure like fencing and portaloos for essential services and major schemes such as the Field Hospital. Others maintained services such as sports and physical activity in schools, and providing information, advice and guidance to local groups and organisations, helping them access grants and other support from national and government bodies. By participating in national working groups, forums and networks, we were able to facilitate significant awards to the cultural, tourism and leisure sector in the city, including for our own council run facilities, as well as influence new guidance and frameworks for operating in a future 'Covid secure' way.

- 4.3.6 A successful collaboration with Education colleagues and external partners is working to secure significant improvements to leisure facilities at Cefn Hengoed School. Also continued support, discussion and legal work was undertaken to support partners' sustainability, ensure the future delivery of services post-lockdown, including with Freedom Leisure, Parkwood, RNLI and Wales National Pool.
- 4.3.7 During lockdown, the arts and cultural service teams also developed new ways to access the services through online and virtual activities, including writing projects, poetry and arts workshops, forums, talks and presentations, podcasts, exhibitions and films. As part of our participation and continued engagement with Agenda 21; culture in sustainable cities, we entered into the Rome Charter for culture, which entailed a commitment to sharing our knowledge and ways of working to support culture during and post Covid19 restrictions. Our projects, including online writing, were included as examples of good practice in the charter, and our successes - with others from 50 countries - were discussed in an online event that shared learning experiences, arranged by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). This is a global network of cities and governments, bringing together the collective knowledge of participant cities, which is now being developed for presentation at a UCLG international seminar this September. The theme is cultural rights and we have developed this theme around our work to promote diversity within our cultural sector; resulting in a Pledge that has formed the basis of our work to address and support the Black Lives Matter campaign and subsequent Council Motion to support the principles of equal opportunities and representation.
- 4.3.8 As with the rest of our leisure and cultural portfolio and partnerships, the tourism and hospitality industry went into lockdown during this period. It was and continues to be one of the hardest hit areas of the economy, losing out on promoting Easter, May bank holidays and half term, usually vital trading periods and the precursor to the summer season. The Tourism team refocused and repurposed its main priorities and channels of communication with the sector to support the sector and business community by keeping them well informed of funding and grant aid opportunities and also their responsibilities as businesses to abide by the evolving Covid regulations and guidance as outlined by the Welsh and

UK governments. They supported individual businesses, with accessing support, correlated and collated all the relevant information for distribution in a weekly newsletter to tourism businesses along with the Tourism Industry webpages, and businesses told us that they found this approach invaluable. Campaigns continued to be delivered, keeping our profile high, but communicating the key message that we are not able to offer a business as usual experience. This included the 'Visit Swansea Bay Later' digital campaign, including social media and video, to run alongside the #StayHome #StaySafe #ProtectOurNhs and #SaveLives messaging, and the Visit Wales. Later' campaign. Previous visitors were encouraged to act as ambassadors for the destination in sharing their own images and positive experiences of the destination and we shared the message that we are looking forward to welcoming them again once restrictions are lifted; keeping Swansea Bay front-of-mind.

- 4.3.9 For the first quarter of 2020/21, delivery across all areas of the WHQS programme shrank compared to trends from previous years due to the impact of COVID lockdown. Key areas of delivery such as roof renewal resulted in 53 completed properties which represents around 46% of the normal programme (based on a 5 year average of 1st qtr. delivery). Kitchen and bathroom renewal in this period saw a major drop compared with previous years with only 37 kitchens and 33 bathrooms signed off as fully complete and in both cases representing only 10% of normal delivery expectations.
- 4.3.10 Whilst limited the Council has been able to install innovative smoke and carbon dioxide detectors into 148 homes. The system is able to remotely report normal operation, activations, faults and detector head removals allowing the Housing Service to confirm systems are operational and also when there has been an activation or when a repair is needed. The planned refurbishment to high-rise blocks at Croft Street has been able to continue with the design and the development of the specification. The majority of surveys were complete prior to the end of March 2020 allowing architects to continue with their preparations and it is anticipated that the scheme design will be complete later in the year. Overall, spend was down from previous years and achieved only £2.8m for the first quarter against an average of £6.3m for the same quarter in previous years. Whilst the difference in spend is £3.5m the momentum since lockdown measures were eased, has not recovered to levels achieved prior to March 2020 and it is expected that overall spend will be less than originally expected. However, major efforts are being made to ensure programmes continue in some capacity, ensuring tenants remain safe in their homes and that they continue to have the opportunity to receive improvements to their homes albeit on a different time line than originally expected.
- 4.3.11 As part of the commitment to develop 1000 new homes, the council has completed the development at Parc Yr Helyg of 16 energy efficient homes, and work is progressing at pace on a second phase of 18 new homes at Colliers Way Phase 2. Work is also underway on a further 25

new homes in Clase. All these schemes were awarded Innovative Housing programme funding. As a response to the Covid crisis, the Council has also been successful in securing Phase 2 homelessness funding to support Local Authorities to provide additional accommodation. This has enabled a new scheme of 8 units to be developed in Uplands, which will include 4 MMC pods, and 4 1 bedroom flats. 2 additional new build schemes are also being brought forward to provide a further 18 units, and 20 acquisitions of 1 bedroom flats in the city is also underway.

- 4.3.12 The council is also developing a framework to develop Housing and Council fund sites in partnership with developers and it is hoped that this framework will be launched in the new year. The conversion of a former social services building in West Cross is nearing completion and will be available for letting in the next month. The property has been converted into a 4 bedroom adapted home and a 3 bedroom home. A former community centre in Rhodfa'r Brain is in the process of being converted back into family accommodation. Most designs are complete and planning permission is currently being sought. The aim is to have the properties ready for letting early in the new financial year 2021/22.

4.4 *Tackling Poverty*

- 4.4.1 Due to the impact of Covid 19 there has been significant increase in Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims and this has impacted on the average processing times, which has seen an increase compared to last year. Covid 19 has impacted on the number of people gaining employment through employability support, there was a 19% reduction compared to this time last year, but despite the challenging circumstances, 70 people were supported into work.

- 4.4.2 The lockdown measures restricted the amount of employability training and accredited qualifications that were able to be offered this quarter, although delivery was adapted where possible, to online provision and 86 qualifications were achieved. During this quarter the steps taken to Tackle Poverty have continued, with increased partnership working to tackle homelessness, address food poverty through supporting the significant expansion of community food provision and increased support with financial and digital exclusion.

4.5 *Transformation & future Council development*

- 4.5.1 Covid 19 and lockdown priorities dominated qtr 1. Resources across the Council were diverted onto Covid-19 related duties therefore work on the Corporate Priorities reduced. That said, activities were still in line with the overall Corporate Plan and in some cases fast-tracked existing projects, e.g. those around digital developments as evidenced in the Cust 2b indicator. Financial progress was reported to Cabinet in the Q1 report.

4.5.2 Key areas delivered in Q1 relating to Covid-19 included:

- Facilitated relief payments to residents and businesses.
- Some staff were redeployed into helping deliver food banks and food parcels for vulnerable or shielding residents.
- Established a 20 seat helpline contact centre for those residents shielding so they could access support services. This included ensuring the helpline staff could work from home.
- The agile working programme had already enabled many staff to work from home. Connectivity was further enhanced during lockdown.
- Launched a domestic abuse virtual agent to support those experiencing increased abuse during lockdown.
- An application was developed so parents could continue to access Free Schools Meal payments.
- 97 new public web pages were built, populated and updated daily by the web team. Much of the content was written from scratch, including 'school's out' content for families. Most popular pages include Coronavirus help for businesses, benefits information and local food supplier pages. Over 500,000 page views across lockdown.
- Support for those Council services needing to move completely online.
- Support delivered in enabling new care home sites.
- Developed processes and enabled technology for large remote meetings via TEAMS. Teams use increased by 550% and email use increased just under 45% during lockdown. Use of collaboration tools like SharePoint increased 43%.
- Delivered a solution and support for live public council meetings.
- Live broadcast for the opening of the Nightingale field hospital.
- Delivered a solution and support for Social Services for job interviews to be held remotely.
- Supported Building Services in the sourcing and supply of PPE.
- Used the gov.notify functionality during the crisis to communicate with residents and staff.
- Engaged in extensive regional and national partnership working on digital solutions to support frontline workers.
- Delivering the requirements of TTP, establishing the teams and communicating digital aspects of the national TTP system locally and regionally.

4.6 *Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity*

4.6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted how important it is for people to have good quality environments within which to live, work and relax. The first quarter of 20/21 has seen a significant increase in access to recreational and greenspace areas, and far greater local appreciation of what the wonderful range of parks, nature reserves, beaches and landscapes of the County have to offer. This increased access has resulted in capacity issues and conflict between users at some locations, and highlighted areas with significant potential but which are currently being underutilised, such as the 350ha Clyne Country Park. It has also

highlighted how ease of access and proximity to quality greenspace is lacking in some areas and the need to reduce such inequalities must continue to be prioritised.

- 4.6.2 Local biodiversity has had the opportunity to thrive as a result of fewer journeys being undertaken and increased walking and cycling has provided wider health and wellbeing benefits. Projects that seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint have not been affected by the pandemic with on-site operations continuing, such as the preparation and implementation of environmental enhancement schemes for Council housing estates as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme, tree and wildflower planting, control of invasive species, etc.
- 4.6.3 The Council has also successfully bid for additional capital funding for improvements to public rights of way, Clyne Country Park, as well as Nature Reserves at Swansea Vale and Bishops Wood, Caswell and these works have already commenced. Additional capital and maintenance funding has also been provided for tree planting which is being focused on school grounds and parks around the city. Whilst within the city centre structural landscape work has continued to create a new sense of place along and around the Kingsway.
- 4.6.4 Trees on private property have become a particular focus of attention during lockdown with an increase in garden improvement projects resulting in a threefold increase in the number of applications for works to protected trees. A review of the public consultation responses to the City Centre Green Infrastructure Strategy has also been completed with a view to adoption by the final quarter. However, training, educational and environmental events for the public and schoolchildren, such as Seashore Safaris and trips to local nature reserves, have had to be put on hold.
- 4.6.5 Draft Supplementary Planning guidance has been prepared for public consultation on Development and Biodiversity; Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands on Development Sites; as well as a revised Gower AONB Design Guide. These documents provide guidance on how the relevant policies of the Council's Local Development Plan should be applied in order to ensure development within Swansea maintains and enhances the County's biodiversity and delivers long term ecosystem resilience. This is in line with the Council's duties under Part 1, Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and the Resilient Wales Goal of the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015.

5.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

- 5.2 This report has no direct equality and engagement implications itself although the data reported may form part of the information that leads to a service screening for and undertaking an EIA as required.

6.0 Well-being of Future Generations

- 6.1 The performance indicators in this report are part of the way in which the Council measures and reports progress meeting its Well-being Objectives as described in the Corporate Plan.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 In the current and anticipated financial environment further discussion and consideration will be required around priorities and target setting for performance improvement as part of *Sustainable Swansea – fit for the future*.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A Q1 2020/21 Performance Monitoring Report