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| Item No. 5. | Classification: Open | Date: 22 March 2021 | Meeting Name: Overview & Scrutiny Committee |
| Title: | | Borough Plan Performance Challenge Update | |
| Ward(s) affected: | | All | |
| Cabinet Member: | | Cllr Rebecca Lury, Finance, Business & Jobs | |

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. On 25 November 2020, Council Assembly approved a refresh of the Council Plan 2018-2022, now known as the Borough Plan ([Item 6.1](#)).
2. The Borough Plan represents Southwark Council's overarching primary objectives and sets out the programme of work that the council will achieve over the period 2020-21 to 2021-22.
3. On 22 December 2020, The Leader of the Council approved the [Borough Plan Performance Schedules](#), which set out the various measures, and milestones against which progress towards each commitment would be recorded.
4. The Annual Borough Plan Performance Report will continue to be published after Q4, including end of year commentary and quarterly datasets, where appropriate.
5. This note is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a range of key performance indicators following Q3, focused on those that have been impacted by disruption resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated consequences of lockdown and social distancing restrictions.
6. COVID-19 has had a severe and wide-ranging impact on the council and its ability to deliver services to residents over the past year. Whilst time and resources have rightly been diverted to support the pandemic, this has had an impact on the ability to deliver on every measure within the Borough Plan.
7. As a result, key areas have been prioritised to bring them back in line with the original delivery timescales, although we also expect a number of areas where the ongoing impact of the pandemic over the coming months will further inhibit the ability of departments to remain solely focused on Borough Plan commitments.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Finance & Governance (FG)

8. Collection rates, in particular council tax and tenant rent collection have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and we are unlikely to reach target collection rates by the end of Q4. Similarly, business rates and regeneration income have been impacted, though we expect to see a recovery in these collection rates as the UK unlocks over the coming months.
9. The Council also suspended enforcement actions for a period, which has impacted on collection rates. Similarly, there has been a significant increase in new claims for Council Tax Relief (CTR) which, in Q2, stabilised at 3 times the number of new claims we would normally see each month.

Environment & Leisure (EL)

10. Work to tackle the climate emergency continues apace. Technical work on carbon scenarios has been completed demonstrating carbon impact of different actions, which will form the basis of the Council's carbon baselining. As part of the action plan development, further baselining work will take place. We expect this to be complete by the year end enabling us to set year on year reduction targets in Q1 of 2021/22. Throughout Q2 and Q3, the department have conducted comprehensive engagement and launched a formal consultation of the strategy which closes in Q4. The publication of the strategy has been slightly delayed, and will now be published in Q1 of 2021/22.
11. Both waste collections (EL4.1) and recycling rates (EL9.1) have been impacted by lower staff attendance as a result of COVID-19. This has led to deployment of crews not familiar to particular rounds, which has affected quality of work. The position in Q4 to date has worsened due to impact of second peak. Veolia has offered a new management structure to avoid this in future. We are currently seeking data from across London to understand how the performance in this period within Southwark compares to the rest of London, but we know from initial reports that disruption has been seen across South London.
12. Indicators relating to leisure have been difficult to measure during the pandemic in light of the nationwide restrictions that have applied over the previous months. Whilst free swim and gym remained in operation during the period when leisure centres were able to operate, they were unable to provide swimming lessons (HE6.3) due to social distancing rules.

13. The Council however has remained committed to outdoor physical activities, and whilst resources within the department have focused on pandemic support over the last months, the department are confident in exceeding the 2021/22 target to bring this programme back in-line with expectations.

Housing & Modernisation (HM)

14. Delivery of new council homes is a flagship commitment of this Borough Plan and continues to be among the highest priorities, despite being impacted by lockdown restrictions. We have seen timelines for completions and starts on site (HA1.1, HA1.2) elongated owing to contractor's staff being furloughed and social distancing restrictions on construction sites.
15. This has meant increased delays in both administration of projects (for example in tendering processes) and in terms of construction itself. We are seeing on average an increase of 20% in timescales once on site. However, while there is slippage, we expect that our end of year target will be met in Q2 of the next financial year.
16. In relation to the overall commitment to have 2,500 new council homes either completed or on site by 2022, we are currently forecasting to exceed this target, provided we are able to meet current timelines on procurement, consultation and planning processes.
17. While the delivery of new council homes is crucial, we are also focused on ensuring the reduction of empty properties, to ensure that housing stock across the borough is effectively utilised (HA3). Additional empty council homes have been brought back into use to support homeless people. This includes 36 units in Churchyard Row and 79 flats on the Ledbury Estate meaning that our target will be exceeded (HA3.5).
18. Our indicators in relation to empty properties in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) have been impacted due to lockdown restrictions in terms of letting new properties, providing building surveys and meetings with potential landlords looking to bring properties back into use, but a number of approaches and discussions have been able to take place virtually. The publication of the Empty Homes Action Plan at February Cabinet paves the way for further progress on our empty homes audit as we move out of lockdown.
19. The Borough Plan is also clear in its commitment to bring forward low waste, low energy new council homes (CE8). While indicators related to the draft strategy and assessment of design standards in relation to our own housing stock (CE8.1, CE8.2) remain in progress, two net zero-carbon (NZC) pilot developments have been delayed. However, two sites

have been identified and a new timeline for these schemes is being produced. Furthermore, we can announce that we have secured a Tariff Guarantee from the Renewable Heat Incentive for our three green energy heat pump projects on estates in the borough. This secures a favourable tariff rate for us with a projected value of £19m grant income over the lifetime of the project, subject to technical performance metrics.

Children's & Adults Services (CAS)

20. Services across CAS have been impacted owing to the priority response to the pandemic and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in this context.
21. Our commitment to support 100% of children and young people with mental health needs (GSL2) was helped by the opening of The Nest, our open access service in the borough, and was challenging by school closures as mental health support in schools is a key feature of our approach. Need has increased and pressure on the NHS intensified across the year. However, the re-opening of schools will help us to reach more children and young people and we will strengthen our approach with in-reach into schools by The Nest as restrictions are eased and schools and services return to normal.
22. Some work towards 100% inclusion in schools (GSL3) had to be paused due to school closures. However, work is underway to re-start meetings with Head Teachers, and the officer-member working group at the earliest opportunity.
23. Work on adult mental health services (HE2) has been a challenge this year with the ability to supply support to residents in the community via the Southwark Wellbeing Hub restricted by lockdown. The hub continued to offer an adapted service delivery in light of the restrictions but face-to-face support was postponed including 1-1, groups, drop-in & pop up delivery. However, if a client's needs deem an in-person meeting to be necessary then this is arranged by exception in accordance with their COVID-19 risk assessment. As restrictions ease, additional support will be provided to residents and the wide range of services provided by the Southwark Wellbeing Hub will be re-established.
24. Our commitment to open two new nursing care homes (HE9) presents a mixed picture. While the first is due to complete construction on time in December 2021, the second has been delayed by lockdown. There will be a Cabinet report in June that will update on the strategy moving forward.
25. Around adult learning and associated qualifications (ST7), enrolment has been down over the past year. This is a result of the uncertainty and

social distancing measures that have been put in place. The team have a plan to increase enrolments in Q4.

Chief Executive's (CEX)

26. The pandemic has impacted upon a number of our commitments related to the local economy, jobs and skills.
27. Our work to support residents into jobs (GIE2) has hit significant hurdles during the pandemic, with the job market deteriorating across the board and unemployment levels rising. COVID-19 continues to have a huge impact on the labour market and on the council's ability to support residents into employment. For most of the pandemic, support has been restricted to virtual and online to ensure client and staff safety, and even higher than normal levels of pastoral support as clients have faced significant challenges as a result of the impact of COVID-19. Despite this, in Q3, 223 residents were supported into employment across council programmes, but there is a high likelihood we will not meet this year's target. As part of the Southwark Works review, work is underway to forecast the likely number of jobs starts that can be delivered.
28. Despite the devastating nature of the pandemic and the challenges this has caused, 593 residents have been supported into work in total over the three quarters April-Dec 2020. The positive impact services like Southwark Works have made on the lives of many during this period should be recognised.
29. Similarly, the pandemic continues to have a huge impact on the creation of apprenticeships and internships (GIE6). 120 young people participated in virtual internships, in recognition of the necessary shift to homeworking. Despite the impact of COVID-19, 345 apprenticeships and paid internships have been created to date in 2020/21.
30. The Southwark Essential Digital Skills Group has continued to offer a forum to address common digital skills Issues raised by the pandemic and has supported the development of a skills package for the Community Calling device sharing scheme (ST7.6, ST7.7, ST7.8). The return of stricter restrictions further delayed a public 'launch' of the framework. However, in practice the framework is well established with a wide partnership group and is into the delivery phase.
31. Construction delays related to the pandemic have set back our commitment to secure a new LGBTQ+ cultural space (ST13). However, the department have met with the LGBTQ+ Network and intend to have meetings with other stakeholders in Q4. Site developer, Native Land, will bring forward an early marketing programme for early next year. This is still something to celebrate since Southwark is the first council in the

country to secure such a space and the GLA intend to use our MOU as an example of best practice.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|---|--|--|
| Council Assembly 25/11/20 Agenda item 6.1: Refresh of the Council Plan 2018-2022 | 160 Tooley Street PO Box 64529 London SE1P 5LX | Joseph.brown@southwark.gov.uk |
| http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=6773&Ver=4 | | |
| IDM: Council Plan 2018-2022 Performance Schedules (2020) | 160 Tooley Street PO Box 64529 London SE1P 5LX | Joseph.brown@southwark.gov.uk |
| http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7250 | | |

AUDIT TRAIL

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| Cabinet Member | Councillor Rebecca Lury, Finance, Business & Jobs |
| Lead Officer | Duncan Whitfield, Strategic Director, Finance & Governance |
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| Version | Final |
| Dated | 11 March 2021 |