



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee  
7 July 2020  
Agenda Item 6

Key Decision No

Ward(s) Affected: All

***“Platforms for our Places: Going Further” - Progress Report January to June 2020***

**Report by the Chief Executive**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This is the first 6 monthly report informing the Committee of the Councils progress against the commitments set out in *“Platforms for our Places : Going Further”*.
- 1.2 The Councils have been clear that *“Platforms for our Places : Going Further”* is an ambitious strategic programme designed to help create the healthy, prosperous and well connected communities that our residents wish to see.
- 1.3 The impact of Covid-19 and national policy and local needs responding to it, has inevitably had an impact on progress against some of the commitments set out in *“Platforms for our Places : Going Further”* over the last 6 months. These are specifically identified in the report. In other areas the impact of the pandemic has enabled us to develop things further and faster than might otherwise have been the case.
- 1.4 A sister paper on this agenda is *“And then ....”* which sets out a series of recovery moves by the Councils to support our communities emerging from the pandemic. They are drawn from *“Platforms for our Places : Going Further”* and identify a range of areas in which we need to catalyse or accelerate our work for the benefits of our communities.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Note and consider the 6 months progress report on the implementation of “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” over the period January to June 2020 and agree to refer this report to Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

## 3. Context

3.1 In December 2019 Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils adopted “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” as the Councils’ direction of travel for the next three years.

3.2 “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” builds on progress under the previous Platforms agenda and sets out significant ambitions, it recognises we as Councils cannot and should not do everything for everyone. Our role as Councils (as well as providing great services and vital safety nets) is to create and maintain five essential platforms upon which our communities can build happy, healthy, prosperous and connected places.

3.3 “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” identifies five platforms underpinned by a series of commitments namely:

- 1) Prosperous Places
- 2) Thriving People and Communities
- 3) Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment
- 4) Good Services and New Solutions
- 5) Leadership of Place

Platform	Commitments	Activities & Projects
Prosperous Places	10	68
Thriving People and Communities	5	23

<b>Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment</b>	10	40
<b>Good Services and New Solutions</b>	7	43
<b>Leadership of Place</b>	6	18

**Table 3.1: Five Platforms and associated commitments, activities and projects**

3.4 Progress reporting draws on the progress of the 192 projects and activities and the Councils broader activities to provide a snapshot of progress in developing the 5 identified Platforms.

<b>Status Indicators</b>	<b>Status Definitions</b>
<b>Blue</b>	Completed
<b>Green</b>	In progress: on track and on time
<b>Amber</b>	In progress: but delays anticipated or minor issues to be resolved (no apparent 'show stoppers' identified)
<b>Red</b>	Significant difficulties in implementation
<b>Grey</b>	Yet to start

**Table 3.2: Status Indicators and definitions**

3.5 Table 3.2 shows how the status of projects and activities are determined. In the light of the considerable amount of work required to respond to pandemic, in this report "amber" can be taken to include things that either are delayed or have not yet started (the red and grey categories will be used in future 6 month reports).

3.6 All previous six-monthly update reports to the Committee have also been considered by Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC).

#### **4. Issues for Consideration**

4.1 The progress report (Appendix A) provides an overview of highlights and challenges in the development of the 5 Platforms over the last (rather extraordinary) 6 months. The progress report also provides an overview of the current status (in percentage terms) of Platform commitments.

- 4.2 In evaluating the progress of these activities and projects a reasonably objective analysis has been employed, and while there can always be a debate on “how green” or “how amber” any particular project may be, the overall assessment gives a reasonably robust view of our progress.
- 4.3 It is also perhaps worth remembering that these commitments are not “everything we do”. Whilst progressing our Platforms agenda we have continued to provide a full portfolio of universal services and essential safety nets to the communities we serve. Over the last few months this has been particularly challenging, particularly where communities or sectors have been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.4 It is not intended in this covering report to comment on each and every issue flagged in the progress report. This is the first 6 months of a 3 year programme and those 6 months have been extraordinary in the life not just of these Councils, but everyone across the UK. Rather than rehearse the themes, activities and learning from the pandemic response (which are covered in a sister paper on this agenda) Appendix A speaks for itself in terms of activity. For the next 6 month review (July to December 2020) we will pick up a number of the themes that have arisen over the first 12 months of the programme for specific identification, comment and further analysis.

## **5. And Finally**

- 5.1 Members of the Committee will note the sister paper “*And then ....*” on the agenda. This draws from “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” to identify a series of strategic plays or interventions which over the next 3-6 months our Councils should take in order to best protect, promote and help a “bounce back” across Adur and Worthing. Those identified activities are drawn from “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” but are identified for accelerating or scaling up given the emergent needs of our communities following the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **6. Engagement and Communication**

- 6.1 As outlined in the progress report (and other related [reports on this agenda](#)) engagement with our communities and partners has proved critical in realising our objectives and delivering the individual commitments outlined in “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” over

the last 6 months. This remains an important area of focus and one for continual development as we move forward.

6.2 Delivery of specific projects are communicated through the Councils' communications channels, press releases, social media etc. as appropriate.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 There are no unbudgeted financial implications in this report. Specific commitments that have capital or revenue consequences are individually assessed as part of the decision making process. The setting of the budget for both Councils for 2020/21 has been undertaken with the "*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*" commitments in mind, as will be seen from a variety of reports on capital and revenue coming to this Committee. The ongoing intention is that the activities set out in "*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*" and budget strategy become ever more closely aligned.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 There are no specific legal implications relevant to this report. The legal implications relevant to any individual commitment are reported in the usual decision making process.

### **Background Papers**

[Platforms for our Places - Going Further \(2020-2022\) : Unlocking the Power of People, Communities and our Local Geographies Report](#)

Joint Strategic Committee (Item 6) - 3rd December 2020

[Platforms for our Places : Going Further](#)

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

**1.1** Creating and enabling Prosperous Places is one of five Platforms for development in “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*”. The progress report ([Appendix A](#)) provides an overview and highlights on how the Councils are working to develop this Platform.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

2.1.1 Thriving People and Communities is one of five Platforms for development in “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*”. The progress report ([Appendix A](#)) provides an overview and highlights on how the Councils are working to develop this Platform.

2.1.2 A particular focus on several elements of “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” is how to build vital capacity within our communities and community partners to enable them to shape and lead our places, while at the same time ensuring the Councils provide a robust “safety net” for the most vulnerable.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

2.2.1 “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” objectives include building the capacity of our communities, engaging with them to find solutions that ensure that our services (and interventions) are designed to meet specific needs and address areas and issues of historic disadvantage.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

2.3.1 There are specific commitments in “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” which relate to the promotion of communities as safe places. Delivery of these commitments are in progress.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

2.4.1 Through the implementation of “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” the Councils are seeking solutions with other partners to enable our residents, communities and places to thrive.

### **3. Environmental**

- 3.1 Developing the Councils and communities role in Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment is one of five platforms for development in “*Platform for our Places : Going Further*”. The progress report ([Appendix A](#)) provides an overview and highlights on how the Councils are working to develop this platform.

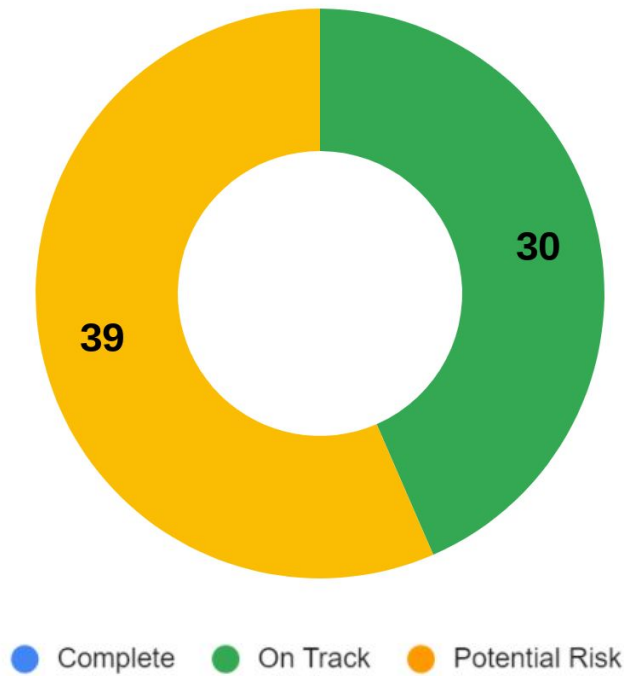
### **4. Governance**

- 4.1 This report provides Joint Strategic Committee an overview of the progress being made to implement “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*”, the Councils’ three-year plan to enable our places to thrive.





## Commitment Tracker



### Overview : last six months

Our local economy has been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and this placed an even greater emphasis on working in partnership with others to deliver our platform commitments. Our work with Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership; Greater Brighton Economic Board; the Coastal West Sussex Partnership is now firmly focussed on recovery planning; supporting sectors; helping rebuild business models and supporting people back into work.

Our response to the pandemic (and impact upon the National economy) has meant that some of our Platform commitments have had to pause. National Policy has meant at times we have needed to change direction, and do so rapidly. Over the past 3 months we have distributed over £30 million of Government backed small business grants and we have provided business rate relief, especially to those in retail, hospitality and leisure sectors where the impact has been severe. During this period we have worked very closely with partners in the Adur & Worthing Business Partnership; Worthing & Adur Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses to provide support, advice and vital information to our business community.

### Platform Highlights : last six months

**Pandemic Response** - as noted above, significant work has been undertaken to respond to the impacts of pandemic on our local economies.

**Major Developments** - Accelerated development of a number of our major projects will be essential for strong and sustained economic recovery. The Station Square scheme at Teville Gate (which includes more than 350 new homes and a hotel) secured planning permission in early March. Construction work has continued apace on the development of the new HMRC Hub at

Teville Gate, right up to suspension of work in April as a result of the pandemic. By May it was pleasing to report that construction was underway again both on this site and also at Free Wharf, Bayside, Ropetackle North and the new Sussex Yacht Club in Shoreham.

**Union Place**- our proposals for the development prepared in partnership with London & Continental Railways was submitted for planning in March. The illustrative drawings by Hawkins Brown architects show an exciting reimagining of this part of the town. At the same time we have advanced the sale of the former Adur Civic Centre main site and a planning application has reached an advanced stage of preparation.

**Fulbeck Avenue, Worthing** - BokLok's groundbreaking scheme for 152 new homes at Fulbeck Avenue using modular building techniques, was submitted for planning in January.

**Worthing Integrated Care Centre** - Plans for the new Integrated Care Centre on the Civic site in Worthing have been finalised and submitted to planning.

**Town Centre** - The town centre was already a focus and our recovery plans include fast tracking elements of our public realm programme and the provision of safe spaces in all of our centres. In April, we secured a further £650,000 of Local Growth Funding for Portland Road and Railway Approach, Worthing from Coast to Capital LEP.

Following consultation on our Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan, we have accelerated the delivery of cycle routes.

**New Homes Building** - During the past 6 months we have continued to make significant progress on delivering the supply of new homes (vital for economic prosperity). Work is underway on the major development at New Monks Farm and the final phase of the West Durrington scheme has now secured planning permission. In Adur, redevelopment of Cecil Norris House is underway and tenders now received for 55 new homes at Albion Street. Phase One of The Downview scheme in Worthing to provide 17 units of much needed temporary accommodation was completed in May and tenders have now been received for work to commence on Rowlands Road to provide another 19 units of temporary accommodation.

**Gigabit Adur & Worthing** - Following receipt of additional funding secured from Coast to Capital, work has been progressing at pace to expand the public sector scheme (creating 90 Council sites with full fibre connections across our area). Work has begun during the past 6 months by CityFibre on rolling out fibre to homes and businesses across Adur and Worthing. By early June 3,500 homes had been "passed" starting in the western area of Worthing and gradually moving eastward over the next 24 months.

## Challenges

Whilst a number of the old challenges remain ... the challenges of a post-pandemic economic landscape and its impact on our communities inevitably come front and centre. In a separate document "And then ...." our "response" plays are set out so will not be rehearsed again here, they are in



# Prosperous Places

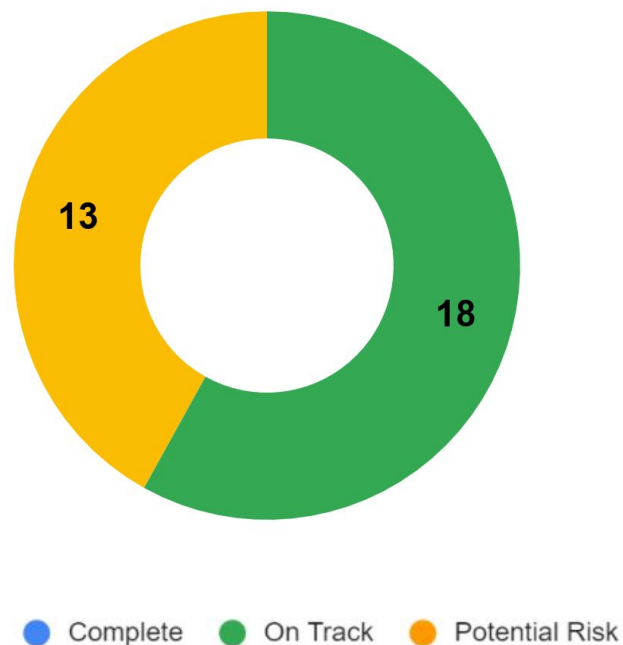
essence drawn from existing Platform commitments but with changes of direction or acceleration of pace.

Our Platform commitments to working in partnership to support local people and businesses to get ready for the “new economy” have taken on a greater urgency. We are now working with our partners to assist those who may have lost their jobs and businesses who may need to explore new business models. Our interventions are likely to include working alongside businesses to promote access to new markets, supporting people to reskill to find new jobs, supporting likely growth in micro-entrepreneurialism and working to support employers, businesses and education providers to make better use of apprenticeships to help particularly young people entering the job market.

Understandably perhaps, some work has paused on the Local Plans for both Adur and Worthing with members of the Planning Team being reassigned to other roles to cope with the pandemic activity. HMG has placed an emphasis on supporting economy through effective and timely land use planning and it is important to note that despite an increase in the number of planning applications received, performance in determining applications remains strong.



## Commitment Tracker



### Overview : last six months

For this platform a considerable amount of energy and work over the last 6 months has inevitably gone into supporting the community response to the pandemic. From the earliest notification at a national level communities across Adur and Worthing have mobilised themselves and needed varying degrees of support and intervention in order to provide consistent and effective support for the most vulnerable. This activity is covered in detail on another item on the agenda so will not be rehearsed at length here.

Despite considerable time and resources being drawn to pandemic, we have continued to make progress on a number of significant agendas as set out below.

### Platform Highlights : last six months

**Influencing and Leadership Across Place** - We have continued to provide a platform for leadership, for example around young people. A successful event was held in March: “Young People First, A Prevention Approach”, convening 115 local and national participants together to understand local needs and contexts for young people and to set out a strong shared ambition. This focussed on outcomes around wellbeing and reducing violence. Following a short pause during Covid-19, we are now accelerating this work through our Safer Communities Partnership, which includes securing new resources (including £42,000 from the Violent Reduction Unit) and partner commitment to testing our innovative approaches in mobilising a whole community response and delivering targeted mentoring for year 6 pupils to assist with their transitions.

In response to the at times fragmented approach to young people and mental

# Thriving People and Communities

health support, we have been acting as a Systems Leader to develop and deliver a new service and approach. "Find it Out Plus", delivered by the YMCA youth charity has started to provide open and holistic access for young people aged 11-25 (around wellbeing and community mental health issues). During Covid-19 this service has adapted its offer to an online and telephone service.

**Homelessness** - We have continued to make progress in tackling homelessness. We had seen numbers of those in temporary accommodation and emergency accommodation at more manageable levels (at least up until Covid-19 pandemic began) and our numbers of those sleeping rough had reduced to a single figure and been recognised as strong progress by MHCLG.

During Covid-19 (like many other Authorities) we have seen a steep rise in numbers and the demand for emergency and temporary accommodation rising sharply (in the main for single people). We have responded rapidly to the Government's directive of "Everyone In" ensuring that no one was left on the streets during this pandemic, securing additional emergency accommodation for those finding themselves homeless during that period. The work has been highly challenging and your officers have developed an exemplary (temporary) model providing a strong coherent approach, including supporting and managing some of the most vulnerable individuals with some highly complex needs. Our focus now is on the urgent development of a "move on" approach and establishing a Housing First Model for people rough sleeping with no other housing options.

Our continued work on Systems Leadership across our places has involved us delivering sessions to the NHS Local Community Network partners to develop wellbeing work. We had paused the work on systems leadership evaluation with the National Leadership Centre, but will start this again

shortly and aim to have completed the project by early autumn of this year.

**Housing Strategy 2020/2023** - We engaged our partners and communities to produce our new Housing Strategy: "Enabling Residents to thrive in their own homes," which builds on the progress made and sets out a strategic ambition to create the conditions for people to have a home and to thrive in their communities

We continue to work with other Districts and Boroughs to provide good housing support for those that are vulnerable. The commissioning of a floating support service to support those in accommodation at risk of losing their homes was delayed due to Covid-19 but will now continue. A joint protocol agreed with other Districts and Boroughs and WSCC for preventing homelessness amongst 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers has now been agreed.

**Opening Doors Scheme** - Since its official launch in June 2019, Opening Doors (working direct with private landlords) has continued to grow and we now have a portfolio of in excess of 35 properties. As well as improving the lives of many vulnerable people in the community, as of May 2020 it has saved in excess of £400,000 compared with the costs of bed and breakfast emergency placements that otherwise would have been incurred. It has also played a significant role in the Councils' response to the Covid-19 pandemic by assisting a number of households to secure good quality accommodation. In April 2020, the government announced an increase in the Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile of the market and this, together with the greater benefits of the scheme, should make it even more attractive to landlords compared with the risks of letting through other channels.

**Stronger Participative and Resilient Communities** - Our place based work on Covid-19 community response has provided a strong new model, supporting 1,800 people vulnerable as a result of the pandemic and mobilising over 500 volunteers to work alongside Council officers, partners and existing community organisations. The skills and expertise within our Communities and Wellbeing Team (supported by other officers across the Councils) our partners, volunteers, mutual aid groups in community have been invaluable in reacting to the pandemic. We have established a food depot (from which many hundreds of food parcels have been delivered to those in emergency need) and have been working closely with food banks to support their sustainability moving forward. We have supported scores of people with help around digital access (The Good Things Foundation has donated 10 tablets for people to feel less isolated). We have seen during Covid-19 greater levels of anxiety about moving into work, therefore our focus has been on supporting people around confidence and building resilience.

**Community Safety** - We have been continuing our work on support and enforcement across our places and during the period have been using our powers under the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 to issue 2 Community Protection Warnings to tackle unacceptable behaviour that has detrimental impact on communities. We are working closely with the Police to provide evidence on 2 Partial Closure Orders.

**Health and Wellbeing at all Stages of Life** - Our OneStop Junctions have been running in community venues, using 29 volunteers to deliver over 2,000 interventions. In addition we have supported 250 unemployed people to support confidence and readiness for work.

During the same period we have supported over a 100 people with specific money issues, using Money Mentors (themselves providing over 300 individual

interventions).

**Going Local** - In the period January to March there were nearly 300 referrals to the service (a considerable increase from the same period in the previous year) from over 15 GP surgeries across Adur and Worthing. In December, two new Social Prescribers joined, bringing the team up to 4 with the additional housing expertise being provided by Citizens Advice. The main referral issues continue to be housing, money, wellbeing, mental health and loneliness. We are due to recruit additional people into the team and have extended the housing support element (which has proved invaluable) until at least January 2021.

**Activities Strategy** - The Adur and Worthing Activities Strategy is in the final stages of development and was presented to key partners at a workshop in February. Our support partner Intelligent Health has been drawing together the key data to inform our work which had been intended to be ready by June 2020 ... the pandemic has meant that we have had to push this back to later in the year. Similarly our ambition to train up to 10% of our front line staff as dementia champions has been put on hold during Covid but will recommence in the autumn.

**Community and Voluntary Sector** - We have completed the retendering of our infrastructure support contract, which has been awarded to Community Works. Our new approach to corporate volunteering within the Councils has continued to be rolled out and we work to encourage an uptake and increase in volunteering amongst our staff. We have seen an increase in staff numbers volunteering from around 11% in 2018/19 to 14% in 2019/20. Given what we know already about our staff response to pandemic, this is likely to have increased over the last 3 months alone.

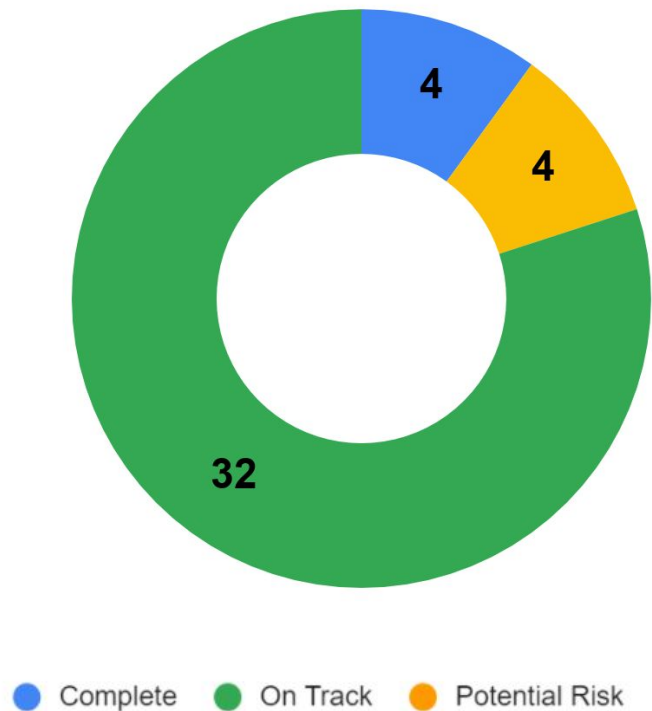
# Thriving People and Communities

We had been making progress on our community centres but again some of this work has been paused during Covid-19 and will now be receiving renewed focus. This includes work on securing a tenant for Eastbrook Manor Centre and making progress on the new West Durrington Community Centre.



# Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

## Commitment Tracker



### Overview : Last six months

Despite the impact of the pandemic work has continued apace both with officers and community organisations to further the “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” objectives.

### Platform Highlights : last six months

**Carbon Neutral Plan** - The Councils’ Carbon Neutral Plan published in December 2019 has provided a challenging but clear roadmap to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. New posts of Carbon Reduction Manager and Carbon Project Manager have been recruited and will support the transition of the councils’ energy systems and vehicle fleets. Work is also progressing to secure specialist mechanical and electrical engineering services alongside our technical services team, establishing the right resources to drive forward the large programme of work outlined in the Carbon Neutral Plan.

**Smart Hubs Programme and Heat Network** - The Councils are progressing exciting opportunities within the £32m Smart Hubs programme including solar/battery carports at 5 locations, an air source heat pump trial in Adur Homes, and hydrogen fuel infrastructure opportunities. A separate project to explore viability of a heat network for the Worthing Civic Quarter is also underway.

**Offsetting** - The Carbon Neutral Plan also outlined the critical role of offsetting, and our specialist consultants AECOM have been helping us chart the development path. The work identifies the need for a significant investment programme in renewable energy as well as the need to develop major carbon sequestration projects on land and potentially sea.

# Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

**Rewilding** - Work is progressing between Parks and Estates teams to assess land areas for rewilding, plan for biodiversity improvements and improve woodland management.

**Zero 2030 Community Conference** - The Councils provide leadership on climate change for the area, and provided support to the Zero 2030 community conference in March 2020, attended by over 300 people, with 125 organisations represented. Work commissioned by the Councils to outline the area-wide carbon reduction challenge was presented at Zero 2030, and provided a clear view of the significant challenges in domestic, commercial and transport sectors. Very strong levels of community support were evident at the Conference.

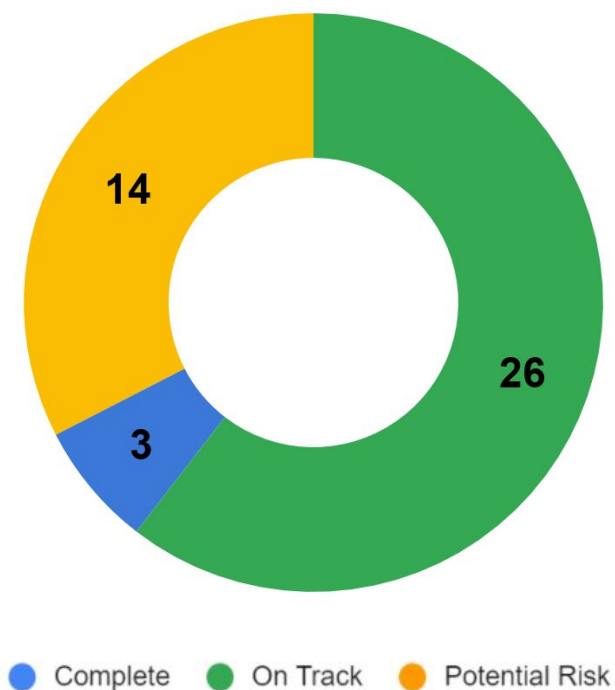
**Climate Assembly** - A Climate Assembly is planned to start in the autumn (with a slight delay caused by the pandemic) providing the opportunity for representative resident and community engagement in developing local initiatives to tackle climate change and protect the natural environment.

**Food Partnership** - Work is already underway to develop a food partnership, and the councils are working together with Community Works and local food banks, which will build on a successful workshop with local food producers held in late 2019.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Procurement** - In June 2020 the Joint Strategic Committee approved plans to participate in the West Sussex Electric Vehicle Charging procurement, which will see EV charging points installed across our areas under a concession contract managed by the County Council.

# Good Services and New Solutions

## Commitment Tracker



### Overview : last six months

The Councils' **response to the Coronavirus crisis** included a rapid and large scale move to remote working which was highly successful. It also required the rapid creation of **several sophisticated digital services** using our low code platform. The Community Response App has allowed vulnerable people requiring support to easily request help, and volunteers to register. A digital service for grant applications for small businesses, hospitality and leisure organisations was also created, helping process financial support to businesses quickly and efficiently. Our Councils were also among the first in the country to launch fully remote Council meetings, and have been featured in case studies by the Local Government Association and MHCLG.

Our Customer Services, Housing and Revenues and Benefits and planning teams among others seamlessly transitioned to **remote working, maintaining good service levels** to customers. The "Effortless" customer services group has been able to continue with the design of enhanced CRM (customer relationship management) features on our platform, which includes an appointment booking service for face to face interviews following a positive experience of implementing these during the lockdown period. Our capacity to collect and analyse data has increased in recent weeks, with important insights gained about the most vulnerable in our communities.

### Platform Highlights : last six months

In addition to the vast amount of time and energy that has gone into rapidly responding to the pandemic:-

# Good Services and New Solutions

**Web Site** - Work to develop a new website was paused for a short time due to pandemic work but remains on track for delivery December 2020. The improved **digital garden waste service** has been delivered, and has supported a recent increase in take up of the service. A strong portfolio of other digital projects remain on track.

**Customer Service** - A group of leaders and managers meet regularly to develop new initiatives to improve our customer service using our “Good Services” standard. Dedicated work on improving accessibility to services is underway.

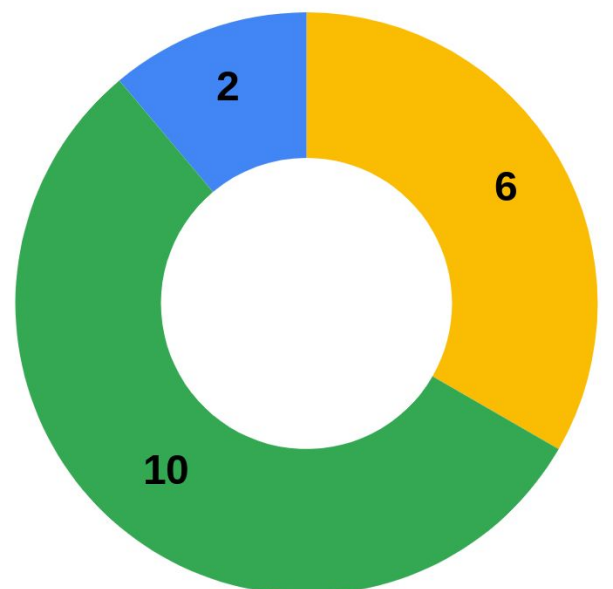
**Commercial Strategy & Procurement Strategy** - A draft commercial strategy has been produced and is on track for completion in June. This is being developed in light of the significant impact of Coronavirus on many of our income generating services. Our procurement strategy is currently under review and will place renewed emphasis on financials, sustainability and social value. We remain on track to deliver £200k in procurement savings this year.

**Corporate Landlord** - The development of a Corporate Landlord model to review all of our property assets against our objectives is underway. Progress is also being made with considering our accommodation needs as an employer post Covid-19 considering amongst other things our occupation of depots and offices.

**Leadership College and Leadership Lab** - Development of our leaders remains a crucial priority and our regular Leadership College has been successful in convening over 100 leaders to share and learn together.

Directors have successfully continued with large scale ‘meetup’ gatherings using remote technology, and team meetings and I-I's continue using video conferencing. Senior Leaders receive coaching where needed and the Leadership Lab - supporting new leaders to develop - is preparing for a second cohort in the Autumn.

## Commitment Tracker



● Complete ● On Track ● Potential Risk

### Overview : last six months

In “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” we highlight the need for **strong relationships** within the wider family of civic local governance within Adur & Worthing (and our various institutions of place) and to the regional and national levels. In hindsight these relationships over the last few months have never been more called upon or proven more effective. In dealing with the pandemic over the last 3 months our places have relied upon relationships, individual and organisational goodwill to further the health and wellbeing of our communities.

In **advocating** for intervention, organising, leading, facilitating, brokering and representing our communities through challenging times the quality and nature of our relationships and partnerships has taken centre stage. Partnerships with business, housing providers, health providers, other Local Authorities, with the Community and Voluntary Sectors have all proved critical.

Inevitably some of the activities that we have in play have either been put on hold or have been rapidly repurposed to support pandemic activity. Others have yet to start (and whilst that does not cause considerable problems over the medium term, has meant a skewing of focus over the short term).

### Platform Highlights : last six months

**Place Brand** - “Time for Worthing” launched in February (and in the light of the post pandemic landscape will now need to be re-energised in order to compete for essential inward investment and funder attention).

**Community and Voluntary Sector** - Our work with the local Community and Voluntary Sector has progressed and has been essential in responses to the pandemic. In community and with formal Voluntary Sector, the voice of our places at the local level has been heard, self organisation has taken place. We and our formal Community and Voluntary Sector partners have learnt much from this (some things have worked well, others have proved more “clunky” and will need further time and attention) with many useful lessons learnt.

**Critical Relationships** - Critical relationships have been valuable with the Greater Brighton Economic Board, West Sussex County Council, other District and Borough Councils, housing partners, various NHS and Economic bodies as well as the Police and Community Safety organisations. At a regional level the Local Resilience Forum has brought together a variety of local players to deal with the pandemic response at a Sussex wide level. Daily updates and interventions with Central Government have at times proved helpful. Housing partners have worked extremely well with us to provide a rapid and comprehensive support on homelessness. The “Everyone In” call from MHCLG to house the homeless at the early stages of lockdown was heeded (and in the space of 72 hours 90% of homeless people were housed). Broader issues, not surprisingly, have arisen around homelessness, family breakdown and the consequences of the lockdown. This is clearly an on-going situation that will be monitored carefully and targeted from both the supply and demand side. It is encouraging to see how well partners have worked together on this.

**Districts & Boroughs and West Sussex County Council** - Relationships with other Districts and Boroughs have been important and work on certain issues (for example cycling) with West Sussex County Council appear to be progressing well.

**Emergency Planning and Civil Contingency Work** - In “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” we had expressly referenced the importance of Emergency Planning and Civil Contingency work. On the 28th February senior officers in the Council took part in a half-day Emergency Planning and Civil Contingency training on pandemics. This gave the opportunity for leaders to do real time learning and to consider how responses might need to be framed, accelerated and scaled and provided considerable benefits as we came into the “real thing”. Close working across Sussex on Emergency Planning and Civil Contingency have been helpful. And at times have been tested. It is fair to say that much of our Civil Contingency and Emergency Planning processes and work is framed around “one-off” significant events. A pandemic, which of course can cover the whole of an area over the medium and longer term, may require different types of approaches and different types of skills. Considerable learning has taken place which will prove fruitful for the future.