

ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee
1 December 2020
Agenda Item 6

Key Decision No

Ward(s) Affected: All

“Platforms for our Places: Going Further” 6 Month Progress Report July to December 2020

Report by the Chief Executive

1. Purpose

1.1 This is the 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 the Covid-19 pandemic, has inevitably had an impact on progress against some of the commitments and these are specifically identified in the report (and the appendices). In some areas the impact of the pandemic has enabled us to develop things further and faster (for example economic interventions) than might otherwise have been the case. This report also picks up progress against the *“And Then ...”* objectives (Adur & Worthing Councils response to the easing of the first national lockdown).

2. Recommendations

2.1 Note and consider the 6 months progress report on the implementation of *“Platforms for our Places : Going Further”* and *“And Then ...”* over the period July to December 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
Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment	10	40
Good Services and New Solutions	7	43
Leadership of Place	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.

Status Indicators	Status Definitions
Blue	Completed
Green	In progress: on track and on time
Amber	In progress: but delays anticipated or minor issues to be resolved (no apparent 'show stoppers' identified)
Red	Significant difficulties in implementation
Grey	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” should 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 6 months, shaped by the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic. Where relevant it also references “*And Then ...*” activities. The strong progress reported demonstrates the ability of the Councils to respond to the complex challenges posed by the virus whilst maintaining a line of sight and high activity levels on longer term commitments established in “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*”. For each of the 5 platforms we have identified a number of activities that respond to the needs of our communities experiencing the pandemic, to build resilience and catalyse recovery action, and these are described in the progress report.

4.2 The platforms remain fundamentally strong and are proving to be a powerful framework to focus our pandemic and other activity. Most, if not all, of the commitments we set out against the 5 platforms remain valid, some of them are accelerated by the pandemic. Our overall approach, characterised by adaptivity and resilience, has proven invaluable. Indeed, in the face of the challenges, we see the opportunity to move further and faster (and several new emerging opportunities) providing a powerful catalysing energy.

- 4.3 The progress report also provides an overview of the current status (in percentage terms) of Platform commitments. In evaluating the progress of these activities and projects objective analysis has been employed and the overall assessment seeks to give a clear and accurate view of our progress.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 It is not intended in this covering report to comment on each and every issue flagged in the progress report. This is the first 12 months of a 3 year programme and these 12 months have been extraordinary in the life not just of these Councils, but across the UK.

5. Progress in the context of the Covid 19 Pandemic

- 5.1 COVID-19 has created an ongoing global public health emergency that is creating waves of social and economic consequences across the UK and indeed across the world. The pandemic (and its economic and social impacts) has caused considerable harm to individuals, communities and businesses across Adur and Worthing. The secondary impacts of recession and impact on institutions and businesses will cause after-shocks that may last for some time. At the time of drafting this report the UK has just entered its second national lockdown period.
- 5.2 Beyond the personal and community damage caused by the virus, the potential fragilities of our economy and society that the virus has exposed raise complex questions about our vulnerability in the short and medium term. As we have responded to the initial outbreak, then recovery phase and now in delivering our response to the second wave of infections and associated lockdown, we have sought to do more than just respond to immediate problems and challenges. We have instead sought to understand the crisis not simply as a public health emergency, or a consequential economic shock, instead we have seen this time as a stress test that has impacted concurrently on all public and private systems. In doing this we have identified resilience as a major theme that will genuinely assist us in getting through this period, in helping us to ‘build back better’, and in setting ourselves up to withstand any future shocks. From our experience it is clear that we need to think about resilience across many domains, allowing us to understand how key systems

can be designed so that they can better withstand future shocks. As identified in “*And Then ...*” as Councils we are not starting from scratch.

- 5.3 When “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” was approved by both Councils 12 months ago, it set a framework for activity to take us through to the end of 2022. Our experience through this extraordinarily difficult time is that the 5 platforms remain fundamentally strong and the right framework to focus our pandemic activity. The overall approach established in Platforms focused on agility, adaptivity and resilience has proved invaluable. Most, if not all, of the commitments we set out against the 5 platforms remain valid, many of which are now moving further and faster, catalysed by need, opportunity and ambition. The speed and scale of the challenges we face are unprecedented but so is the appetite of communities, businesses and elected Councillors to respond in boldness, speed and at scale.
- 5.4 The attached commitment trackers seek to summarise the progress made across the full breadth of the “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” programme. For each of the 5 platforms we have focused on the catalytic activities that we have progressed and the “recovery” of our places and communities. A number of these activities are highlighted below and in more detail in Appendix A.

6. Lessons Across the Platforms during this 6 month period

- 6.1 Whilst the following sections of this report (and perhaps more significantly the Appendix of Commitment Trackers) gives a comprehensive view, it is worth pausing to look across the Platforms at the approach of the Councils during this 6 month period.
- 6.2 In essence the Councils have sought to provide strong leadership of our places (jointly with others at times) in the midst of a public health crisis and economic and social turbulence unprecedented in recent times. As well as responding rapidly to newly emerging needs we have endeavoured not to be blown off course from the ambitious targets we have set ourselves and to adapt quickly as circumstances change. Working with partners across the system (and in the public, private and third sectors) we have consistently seen great people with good leadership using some of our existing investments (for example in technical platforms and strong relationship capital) going to extraordinary lengths to keep our places safe, healthy, prosperous and connected into the medium and longer term. Your officers have continued to move forward at pace with an ambitious agenda showing resilience and an ability to innovate that are genuinely exceptional.

- 6.3 And it should be noted that this is not just the view of myself as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, but actually a number of observers in our community (and across sectors) have also pointed to similar responses.
- 6.4 It is perhaps worth reflecting that during this 6 month period Adur & Worthing Councils have been nominated for not one but both of the significant Local Government awards for Council of the Year. We were the only District and Borough Council in the whole of the UK shortlisted in the Council of the Year category for the Municipal Journal (MJ) Awards and the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards. Whilst we won neither ... being shortlisted (and being the only District and Borough Council shortlisted) is a testimony to the work of officers and Members across our Councils and their commitment to the communities we serve.
- 6.5 Elsewhere on this JSC agenda will be papers that show some of the budget challenges that we have had to grapple with during this period. It will be seen that as at the end of Quarter 2 of this financial year underspend or breakeven is predicted for both Councils. We have worked hard to achieve this extraordinary position ... and whilst no chickens can yet be counted ... your officers are continuing to battle financial consequences of pandemic (and impact on services) as well as the pandemic itself. Capital programmes have at times been slightly delayed, however across each of the 5 Platforms considerable progress has been made.
- 6.6 And there is no complacency amongst your officers about the size of the challenge faced and the need for action over the medium and longer term. The on-going pandemic, the impact on the health, physical and mental of our communities, social and economic impacts, changes after the UK Brexits the European Union and the demands of climate change are a unique and highly challenging set of circumstances in which we operate. We have learnt much, will learn more and are clear about the areas in which we need to grow our capacity to continue to be successful.

7.0 The 5 Individual Platforms

- 7.1 Members of the Committee are referred specifically to the Appendix to this report which sets out in greater detail some of the specific highlights and challenges of the last 6 months. Officers in compiling this have attempted to be realistic about successes, challenges ... as well as having a weather eye on the future.

Platform 1 Prosperous Places

- 7.2 This is perhaps the platform that has been hardest hit by the pandemic, and with the large parts of the UK's businesses affected, the country has entered recession. Locally our hospitality leisure and culture sectors, including retail and the creative and digital sectors, have faced particular challenges. The ambition that we established in *"Platforms for Our Places: Going Further"* are more relevant than ever. In response to pandemic we have sought to undertake a range of new interventions, to underwrite risk and liability (where that support entrepreneurialism) to support micro start ups and so help local businesses to establish, thrive and grow. A key task for us during this period has been helping over 2500 businesses access £30,000,000 of support from the Central Government. We have been advising and supporting "on the ground" to help business reopen and manage the lock down(s) wherever and whenever that has been possible.
- 7.3 We have prioritised gathering good data to help us understand the impact of the pandemic. The data highlights the impact on younger people and many of our smaller businesses and this has informed our focus on training and skills. We have developed a "Good Work Programme" to assist people to develop the skills needed to get back into work and we have used the Apprenticeship Levy to support apprenticeships across the Council. We are currently underway with planning to offer over 30 Kickstart opportunities giving young people valuable work experience.
- 7.4 Our focus on jobs and skills, promoting confidence in our places to trade and attract investment, and our "wise regulation" approaches have helped ensure that businesses get the best opportunity and support to build resilience and survive. We have sought to maintain our retail and visitor economies, ensuring for example planting is well maintained and the streets are kept to the highest possible standards. We have created outdoor spaces for cafes and businesses to expand into and have sought to actively support cultural assets, vibrant markets and our other visitor attractions (including our ongoing work to secure the future of Worthing Pier's art deco Southern Pavilion). Worthing's Photo Fringe and Photo Works festivals have been running during the pandemic and through these projects we renovated the West Buildings seafront shelter and used it as an exhibition space and we also utilised empty retail spaces and built stone-filled gabions on the seafront. This resulted in six exhibition sites that we could promote as a trail, alongside the two festivals and around fifty participating photographers. Public reaction has been extremely positive - in this pandemic year, people have been delighted to see something new and different in outdoor spaces.

- 7.5 In line with the commitments set out in *“Platforms for Our Places: Going Further”* and *“And Then”* we have already made a number of property acquisitions, including the former EDF car park site in Worthing and in Lancing we are seeking to purchase the Lancing Police Station site. Our aim is to re-purpose land and buildings, together with buildings that we already own, to support the local economy and where possible offer flexible space to small businesses who need it to develop. This approach uses the data that we have to respond to the needs of micro-entrepreneurs and those entering re-employment (as well as those who need expansion space). We have reached several major milestones on a series of significant major projects. Planning permission has now been achieved for Worthing Integrated Care Centre as part of a new Civic Quarter and work is scheduled to commence on site in early 2021.
- 7.6 Reports to the last JSC set out a way forward on Teville Gate. As a specific response to on-going delays in progressing development an intervention by Worthing Borough Council is being made. The Council has taken the opportunity to provide leadership and drive the regeneration agenda on this site forward. Through a joint venture partnership with Vivid Homes (an award-winning affordable homes provider) the council will joint venture on the site enabling a development that has been stalled for decades. Under the proposal the Council and VIVID will share the development risk of delivering 100 urgently needed new homes for market sale and the construction phase of the project will provide a significant boost to the local economy. Affordable accommodation will be developed and managed by VIVID for the long term with the Council able to secure nomination rights for a proportion of new homes for people currently on our waiting list.
- 7.7 As part of its ambitious town centre regeneration programme Worthing Borough Council has also been working with LCR (the government’s placemaking and sustainable regeneration specialist) on bringing Union Place back into use. The 1.1 hectare site, which includes the former police station site, has sat largely unused for more than a decade after private companies failed to bring forward viable schemes. After stepping into purchasing the site the Council has now received outline planning permission to transform the area and creating nearly 170 homes, commercial space, hotel and expanded cinema on the derelict brownfield site.
- 7.8 During the past 6 months the Councils have continued to make significant progress on delivering the supply of new homes. 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. In addition, redevelopment of the former Adur Civic Centre site in partnership with Hyde Housing is progressing well and aims to provide over 170 units of housing plus over 1000 square meters of commercial space. Adur District Council (as part of the HRA development programme) the council has approved capital expenditure of nearly £16 million from the development budget to deliver 57 new homes in underused areas (garages) through grant funding of over £2 million and prudential borrowing of £13.7 million. In each of these projects the council has taken the initiative, established strong partnerships, developed a shared vision and done what is necessary to support existing businesses.

Platform 2: Thriving People and Communities

- 7.9 The impacts of the pandemic continue to be central to our work on the Thrive agenda with our focus continuing to be on balancing the recovery of our communities and economy from the pandemic, whilst keeping people safe.
- 7.10 Despite the challenges and some personal tragedies, the pandemic has and continues to inspire an extraordinary set of responses from residents and communities. Individuals and communities are responding with compassion and hardwork, by volunteering, community organising, running a food depot and food drops and providing support for vulnerable people.
- 7.11 The “Thrive” platform includes core strands of activity on secure housing, strengthening our food networks, making sure support measures are in place for anyone who needs to self isolate as well as launching a “Good Work” platform that is there to help people navigate the job seeking environment. The foundations established during the initial lockdown period have enabled individuals, community groups, the formal Community and Voluntary Sector, Local Authorities and other partners to respond with agility and speed.
- 7.12 Underpinning this approach has been the development of our digital infrastructure (Platform 4) where our in house Digital Team, working collaboratively with Communities and Customer Service, have built and developed our community response platform. The platform enables individuals to register for support, ranging from help with getting food to people requesting support with mental health and wellbeing and linking those people to volunteers or organisations who also registered through the portal. To date we have supported approximately 2400 individuals and registered

approximately 500 volunteers and the platform continues to evolve as the needs of our communities change.

- 7.13 Our focus on reducing homelessness continues and has made consistent progress in the last 6 months. We have worked hard to ensure the positive effects of the work undertaken through the 'Everyone In' approach during the first lockdown and we are working with a range of landlords to make similar offers of accommodation to everyone who is in need during this second lockdown period. A key part of this work has included development of our Housing First Offer (with funding support from MHCLG) and as we look at the impact of Covid we are looking for ways to introduce residents and landlords to the scheme before they are in crisis through "Opening Doors". The approach, which includes a range of incentives to sign up to the scheme, such as no commission or fees and a guaranteed rent for up to two years is transforming our ability to help families most in need.

Platform 3: Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

- 7.14 Whilst Covid 19 had created a public health, economic and financial crisis the climate crisis has not gone away. To this end the councils have continued apace with our *"Platforms for Our Places : Going Further"* and associated climate change, green space and biodiversity conservation actions. Through a number of energy, waste reduction and biodiversity initiatives the councils are successfully working towards its ambition of being a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030.
- 7.15 Supporting this agenda has been the establishment of our Climate Assembly where 45 residents have been meeting online to listen to evidence on sustainability issues, to deliberate possible responses and then make recommendations that will go to the councils in early 2021. Engagement with the local community on actions to be added to the Sustainable AW framework, will take place following the Assembly so that all community-led actions are brought together into one shared plan.
- 7.16 The purchase of New Salts Farm from the Hyde Group by Adur District Council achieves a number of objectives. Firstly, it maintains the 70 acres of land as a much needed greenspace for local communities and contributes toward our objectives for ecological protection by dedicating the site for the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, enhancing biodiversity, and contributing to Carbon Neutrality. A companion project is the purchase of Pad Farm, located north of the A27 on the western bank of the

River Adur. This 43 acre site forms part of the Adur Estuary and is a key strategic green space between Shoreham and Lancing. The aim is to secure the land as green space for future generations, and explore the potential for estuarine habitat regeneration working with partners including the Environment Agency and the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust.

7.17 During the pandemic, work has been accelerating to develop a project pipeline to decarbonise the councils' estate and offset residual emissions. A bid focusing on renewable electricity, insulation and renewable heating for example is being prepared for submission to the government's £1bn Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. If successful, then projects starting early in 2021/22 would reduce emissions by up to 300 tonnes and further develop the councils' ability to deliver successful energy projects, including:

- The Worthing Civic Quarter Heat Network
- A possible solar farm development
- Rooftop solar PV installation on corporate buildings
- Replacing gas heating systems with renewable heating systems (heat pump based systems)
- Insulation, energy efficiency and air-tightness works
- Plans to switch council fleet and rental cars to full electric vehicles over time
- The establishment of a local marine and estuarine reserve restoring kelp habitats and improving local fishing stock.

7.18 Our partners, Community Works, have been working in partnership with community and voluntary sector organisations and the Councils to develop an Adur and Worthing Food Partnership. Initially the focus of this has been ensuring access to emergency food during Covid. Having secured funding from the National Lottery, they have recruited a Development Officer to progress this and develop into wider areas including food growing and discussions around sustainable food systems.

7.19 Pandemic has disrupted transport systems and modes. An experiment led by West Sussex County Council to support and develop cycling through the implementation of 'pop-up cycle lanes' has been less successful and is perhaps an example where ambition and pace have failed to respond appropriately to community need at this time. The Councils remain determined to proceed with a widely supported and well thought through project contained in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Platform 4: Good Services and New Solutions

- 7.20 The Councils have been and will continue to manage a period of significant financial uncertainty, with planning assumptions set at the beginning of the year needing near constant revision and updating. In financial terms there have been significant challenges in terms of income (e.g. car parking and other fees) and expenditure (for example homelesses, leisure, emergency community support etc.). With prudent and robust financial management (and support from MHCLG) the Councils have managed to both stabilise the in year budget and release resources where required for pandemic response.
- 7.21 An effective communication channel during the pandemic has been our new website (www.adur-worthing.gov.uk) where the Covid web pages have drawn many thousands of views, guiding people to advice, information and support including our community and business support schemes. This emphasises the importance of our website as a communication channel which has been designed to GOV.UK standards. We have updated and streamlined our content and made the site easier to navigate. Users have been engaged throughout the development to test the functionality and the site is compliant with the latest accessibility standards.
- 7.22 As this 6 month period has progressed the in-house Digital Team team has proved adept at working collaboratively in the digital space to build and adapt community responses. This work has enabled residents to register for support (from help with getting food to people requesting support with mental health and wellbeing needs ... and linking people to volunteers or organisations through the portal). To date we have supported 2400 individuals and registered some 500 volunteers and the platform continues to evolve as the needs of our communities change over time. We have recently adapted it to administer the Government's Self Isolation Support Grant (as well as over the last few days two new "second lockdown" Business Grant Schemes). As referenced elsewhere in the report the Platform has also been used to offer the new Employment Support Package as well.
- 7.23 A significant outcome from the pandemic has been the ability of Councils to work differently and we are keen to avoid going back to an 'old normal' that no longer serves our Communities. A key feature of this new way of public service delivery is the ability of our staff to work remotely. We are exploring the impact and opportunities of this for the Councils going forward with regard to our office accommodation, our property estates and our service design. Lockdowns have required our customer service centres in Portland House and the Shoreham Centre to close for walk-ins at a time when vulnerable

people need us the most. In response to this we have established an appointment system, usually following a telephone triage, for people who have no alternative but to see us face to face. The triage means that customers come prepared with any paperwork they need and the relevant team member, often a Housing Officer, is available to assist them. This has eliminated wasted journeys for customers or long waits to be seen by someone. It has resulted in a quicker, safer and more effective process for the customers and for our staff.

- 7.24 To enable this work and release the potential of our staff, our learning offer has continued apace, upskilling and developing staff to gain the skills needed to develop as 21st century public servants leaders. We have adapted to the pressing needs of our people over the past six months through our learning offer, providing resilience training, Mental Health First Aid training and management learning sets focusing on leading remote teams.

Platform 5: Leadership of Place

- 7.25 In *“Platforms for our Places: Going Further”* and *“And Then ...”* we set out a range of place based leadership activities that, in the current context, we are seeking to actively develop further and faster. Our regional and national reputation as an innovator, as being ‘open for business’, as agencies that deliver and as places that are responsive and resilient to change are bringing forward exciting partnerships and opportunities. In advocating for, intervention in, organising around, leading across, facilitating in complexity, brokering in complexity and representing our communities through challenging times ... the quality and nature of our relationships and partnerships with other civic institutions has proven critical. Whether it is business, housing providers, NHS or other health providers, other Councils, Community and Voluntary Sectors, communities and neighbourhoods themselves ... broadly the system has stepped up and responded remarkably well.
- 7.26 As part of this work we fast tracked our place brand a “Time for Worthing” that has responded to the pandemic by shifting efforts to support both periods of recovery and lock down with the last couple of months seeing attention drawn back to inward investment with a “Find Your Balance” campaign (aiming to attract the London investment market), SiteMatch 360 virtual event and commissions to support future inward investment tactics and upgraded the inward investments element of the website.

- 7.27 Relationships with and leadership and influence of a range of partnerships has proven invaluable. This has perhaps been most evident in relating to the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB), Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership (LEP), 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. As part of the GBEB we have helped shape the board's Covid sustainable recovery plan and a part of the LEP we are actively engaging with the "Building back Stronger, Smarter and Greener" plan. At a regional level the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) 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 rapid and comprehensive support on homelessness, for example "Everyone In" described above.
- 7.28 Our strong and evolving partnership work with Community Works and the third sector more generally has been described in some detail for Platform 2 above. The quality of relationship with our communities, ranging from tiny community groups, to faith centres and all the way up to large third sector housing providers has been transformed by the pandemic. We have developed better relationships and our experience of closer working and deeper trust means we are able to work more effectively, specifically we understand one another better and we are more open to experimentation, creativity and shared learning. Maintaining and developing this improved way of working will be critical if we are to support those in need now and prevent further disadvantage and inequality from taking root in our communities in the future. Key to this and as described in platform 2, is better relationships with our diverse communities, supported by improved civic data and associated tech infrastructure that supports community voice and enables better participation and engagement. As part of this work we are seeking to explore the possibility of participative and deliberative democratic decision-making in ways that respect and develop these new relationships, and opportunities.

8. Engagement and Communication

- 8.1 As outlined in the progress report, 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 12 months. This remains an important area of focus and one for continual development as we move forward.

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

9. Financial Implications

9.1 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 and built into the Councils capital and revenue budgets

9.2 The revenue and capital budget reports elsewhere on the agenda demonstrate the Councils commitment to funding the initiatives contained within "*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*". The ongoing intention is that the activities set out in "*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*" and budget strategy become ever more closely aligned.

10. Legal Implications

10.1 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](#)

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

[And Then: Bouncing back in post pandemic Adur and Worthing](#)

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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 The council is subject to the general equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The council’s legal duties (Equality Act 2010) have shaped the development of the plan, for example, “*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 and inequality.

2.2.3 Our experience of working with communities during the pandemic has deepened our relationships with diverse and often marginalised groups and we are seeking to actively capitalise on these new ways of working and new relationships to better understand and respond to those most in need. Areas of investment identified in the plan, as well as other decisions relating to implementation of the plan, will require additional equality impact assessment.

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.

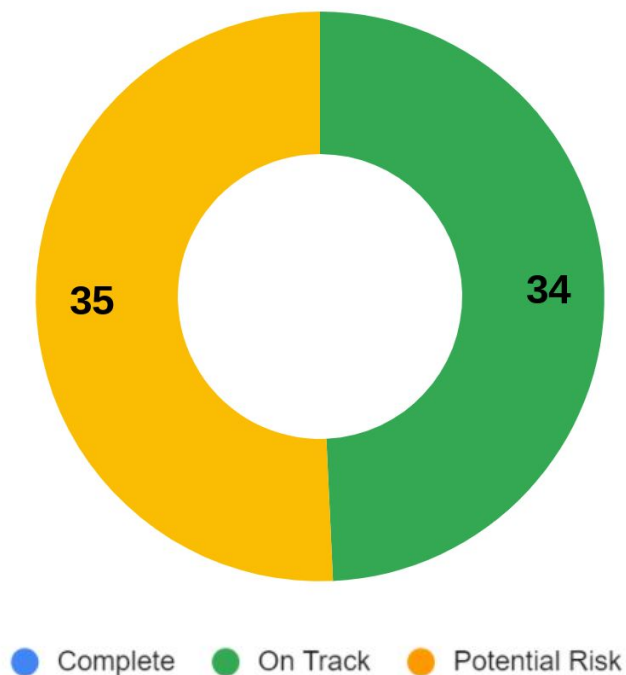
4. Governance

- 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.

Appendix 1: The Commitment Trackers

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

Commitment Tracker



Overview : last six months

Our response to the Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened our relationships with businesses and highlighted the importance of working in partnership to deliver our Platform commitments. Over the past 6 months, we have played a significant role in developing recovery plans with our Coast to Capital; Greater Brighton; and Coastal West Sussex partners.

We have continued to steward grant funding to the business sector (over £30 million in total) and we have been advising ‘on the ground’ to help businesses to re-open whenever that has been possible. To help create the right conditions for recovery, we have sought to ensure that our town centres remain open for business and encourage people to feel safe to return.

Work to install gigabit fibre has continued over the last six months, with 17,500 homes now passed, and consumer products expecting to launch early in the new year. The £25m commercial investment from Cityfibre will see over 60,000 homes and businesses connected in the next 2 years.

We have prioritised gathering good data to help us understand the likely impact of the pandemic and respond accordingly. The data highlights the impact on younger people and many of our smaller businesses and this has led to a particular focus on access to skills and training opportunities.

Platform Highlights : last six months

In line with our “*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*” ambitions (and our recovery plans set out in “*And Then ...*”) we have already made a number of property acquisitions, including the former EDF car park site in Worthing and

the former Police Station in Lancing. Our aim is to re-purpose land and buildings, together with buildings that we already own, to support the local economy and offer **flexible space** to small businesses to develop. This approach responds to the needs of our micro-entrepreneurs and people re-entering employment who need space to 'try out'. We are using a former shop (Dorothy Perkins) in Worthing town centre to provide space for Audio Active (a charity focussing on young people's skills to become involved in the music industry and use of new technology) and this will provide a major boost to our Platform commitment to grow the local **music economy**.

56 local businesses have benefited from the councils' **Small Business Growth Grant** and we have been working directly with the University of Chichester to promote the Coast to Capital wide **Hot House Programme** which focuses support on financial, innovation and productivity skills for small and medium sized enterprises. We have developed a **Good Work Programme** to assist people to develop the skills needed to get back into work; we have used the **Apprenticeship Levy** to support apprenticeships across the Council and we are in the planning stages of offering over 30 **Kickstart** opportunities for young people.

Our plans for a creative and digital hub at **Colonnade House** have reached an advanced stage; detailed designs have been prepared to complement a full business plan. The new project will provide additional space for start-up and expanding businesses with a digital focus.

Gigabit connectivity : City Fibre, our contractors, have been building out the ultrafast broadband network. Dark fibre is now in the ground passing

approximately 19,000 homes in Worthing and in the next month or so three new Internet Service Providers will offer services to "light" the fibre direct to residential and commercial customers. This will be the first public offer and demonstrate how significant gigabit connectivity can be. Senior officers have been negotiating with CityFibre to flex their build programme to encourage earlier builds into town centre areas where the rapid introduction of fibre can support strong regeneration and alternative use of both public realm and redundant retail spaces.

We have reached significant milestones on a series of important major projects. Planning permission has now been achieved for the ground breaking **Worthing Integrated Care Centre** as part of a new **Civic Quarter** and work is scheduled to commence on site in earnest early in the new year. The 700 dwellings at West Durrington are nearing completion and permission has been granted for the second phase which will involve the construction of a further 240 homes.

Southern Housing has made considerable progress on the flood defences and groundwork necessary to support 540 new homes at **Free Wharf** in Shoreham, supported by grants from Homes England. Cala homes have begun construction of the first phase of 600 new homes at **New Monks Farm**; and 120 new homes being delivered by Hyde Housing at **Ropetackle North** have entered the final phase. Hyde Housing has also secured planning permission for 255 homes and a new storage and enterprise centre at Kingston Wharf and will be shortly submitting an application for the redevelopment of Adur District Council's former Civic Centre site.

The developer and landowner for **Station Square, Teville Gate** has faced a significant challenge to implement the scheme that secured planning permission earlier this year. We have moved swiftly to form a Joint Venture with Vivid Homes to deliver a new scheme that will provide more affordable homes on this strategically important site.

The **Boklok** scheme at **Fulbeck Avenue** scheme to deliver 150 high quality modular homes secured planning permission in October and work will begin on site early in the new year. This is a market 'disruptor' providing a new route into home ownership for people on average salaries.

Work has begun in earnest on the decontamination of **Decoy Farm** and the project is on track to complete this stage by April next year (in parallel we are seeking a development partner to deliver new space for businesses on this site). Our partnership project with London & Continental Railways at **Union Place** has secured planning permission for this bold and innovative project and the teams will now work together on securing a development partner to transform this whole area. Work on developing the **Worthing Local Plan** has now reached an advanced stage prior to consultation in the new year (as seen elsewhere on this JSC agenda).

Our focus on **investing in town centres** has included taking direct responsibility for project management of the **Portland Road** public realm scheme in Worthing, which is now on track to start in the new year. We have successfully re-opened our street markets in a safe manner to support businesses and residents. Our partnership work with West Sussex County Council has seen work begin on a public realm scheme for **Railway**

Approach that is compatible with the new **HMRC Digital Hub** which has now reached the stage of internal fit out. Following a successful "design lab" exercise, a provider for Citizen WiFi will be selected in January, with free public WiFi expected to start rolling out in the spring.

We have signed contracts to develop 27 new homes on 2 sites in Worthing at Rowlands Road and a second phase at the former Downview Public House. In Adur we have agreed and contracts are due to be signed to deliver a further 55 homes at Albion Street, Southwick. We have also negotiated and agreed to purchase the former Lancing Police Station with plans being worked on to ensure this site's development helps to kickstart wider development and regeneration in the village. The consultants and contractors used in these projects have overwhelmingly been sourced from local SME's with over 85% of input coming from local businesses.

In the last 6 months we adopted the first joint Asset Management Plan (June JSC) since the Council commenced joint working, and have established the Corporate Landlord Group to improve the management of our buildings, deliver savings and a better coordination across our assets.

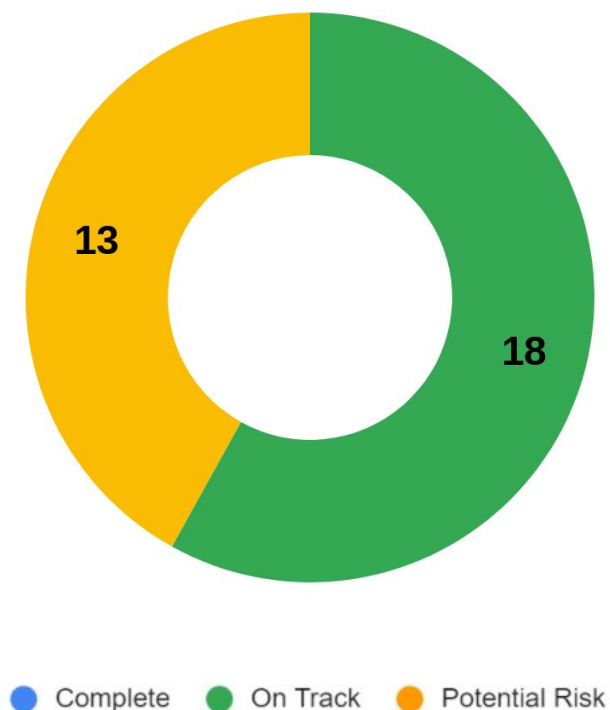
We have identified sites for Solar PV - Dale Road feasibility ongoing and worked to identify suitable acquisitions in relation to our sustainability agenda including rewilding, identifying circa 200 acres across Adur and Worthing through the leased estate and through acquisitions in the market.

Challenges -

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.

Supporting the local economy through effective and timely land use planning remains important and performance in determining applications will need to remain strong. Work has progressed on a new Local Plan for Worthing and will be important to maintain.

Commitment Tracker



Overview : last six months

The impacts of the pandemic continue to be central to our work on the Thrive agenda with our focus as Councils, balancing the recovery of our communities and economy from the pandemic whilst keeping people safe and thriving. The “Thrive” platform is central to this work and the last 3 months have seen continued activity around secure housing, strengthening our food networks, making sure support measures are in place for anyone who needs to self isolate as well as launching “a new work platform” that is there to help people navigate the complex job seeking environment. Rather than seeing the pandemic as distracting from the Thrive agenda we have been focusing our work on this agenda to support communities and build resilience through this difficult period.

Platform Highlights : last three months

Influencing and Leadership Across Place - We have used the principles of contextual safeguarding across Council teams and supporting other West Sussex Districts and Boroughs to roll out the Peer Group Conference approach we devised at Adur & Worthing. We are also sharing our work as a lower tier authority with the National Contextual Safeguarding Network.

Our work to establish a food partnership across Adur and Worthing connects different parts of the system and has created new connections and opportunities.

We have commissioned research, using our council tax and housing data, to help us better understand how to anticipate the impact of the changing Covid support measure (such as furlough) in order to better target earlier interventions for vulnerable groups.

Homelessness - We have continued to make progress in tackling homelessness and continue to see positive effects of the work that was undertaken during 'Everyone In' in the first lockdown. We were ultimately able to make offers of accommodation to everyone who we housed temporarily during that period.

Our work over the summer has been to ensure that we are able to support our street community over the winter as many of the usual winter options will not be possible because of Covid. During this period we have been successful in our bid for MHCLG funding which will provide additional support to rough sleepers and those housed during 'Everyone In', 49 of which have already been moved on into suitable accommodation. The funding will help us enhance our Opening Doors offer for single people, provide accommodation over the winter for rough sleepers and leases that will 'test' tenancy management skills and enable us to move people on into sustainable housing options. We are working with West Sussex County Council to provide additional dual diagnosis support which will enhance development of our local housing first pilots as well as further supporting our work with our homeless community.

Housing Strategy 2020/2023 - We have seen progress in our ambitions to build within both Adur and Worthing with the second phase of the Downview development in Worthing breaking ground and the progression of the small sites build programme in Adur. Work has commenced on the Housing Development strategy - the next deliverable within our housing work.

Work is well underway for 17 new Council homes at the former Cecil Norris House in Shoreham with completion expected in Summer 2021. A

programme to build 56 new Council homes on redundant garage sites has been agreed and planning applications progressing at pace.

Opening Doors Scheme - Opening doors continues to attract new landlords and grow. As we look at the impact of Covid and the worsening economic situation we are looking for ways to introduce residents and landlords to the scheme before they are in crisis.

Stronger Participative and Resilient Communities - We continue to work with and support our community response network and over this period have been looking to transition this to a more self-managed peer support approach. We continue to support vulnerable people in our community and at the time of writing have supported 2355 people and continue to support 426 of these. Our Community Response approach will continue to ensure that we are able to support people through the second lockdown.

Community Safety - We have hosted training for 12 managers across Housing and Wellbeing to look at developing trauma informed services - adapting our policies and procedures to make our services more accessible to those most frequently excluded from services.

We have instigated the Mentoring in school project for Year 6 children transitioning to High School and we have hosted Co-production sessions for young people to contribute to a new community resource to raise awareness of violence and exploitation.

Health and Wellbeing at all Stages of Life - We have been focusing on the topic of "Work" as we see the impact of Covid. Combining both work

Thriving People and Communities

and skills our new Work App is designed to help people manage their own journey through the complicated employment landscape.

We have worked swiftly to create a digital pathway to enable people who need to self isolate to apply for self isolation payments. This is an important part of our Covid response and we are now seeing a regular flow of people accessing this service.

Going Local - In the period July to September there were some 256 referrals to the service (a considerable increase from the same period in the previous year) from over 16 GP surgeries across Adur and Worthing.

OneStop Junction - During July to September there have been 64 Money referrals, which has led to approx increase of income of £90K overall. Also 52 employment referrals were received with 6 people being offered full time employment . We have donated and/or loaned out over 35 digital devices to provide access to the internet for involvement with local democracy, providing access to educational opportunities and preventing isolation of vulnerable residents.

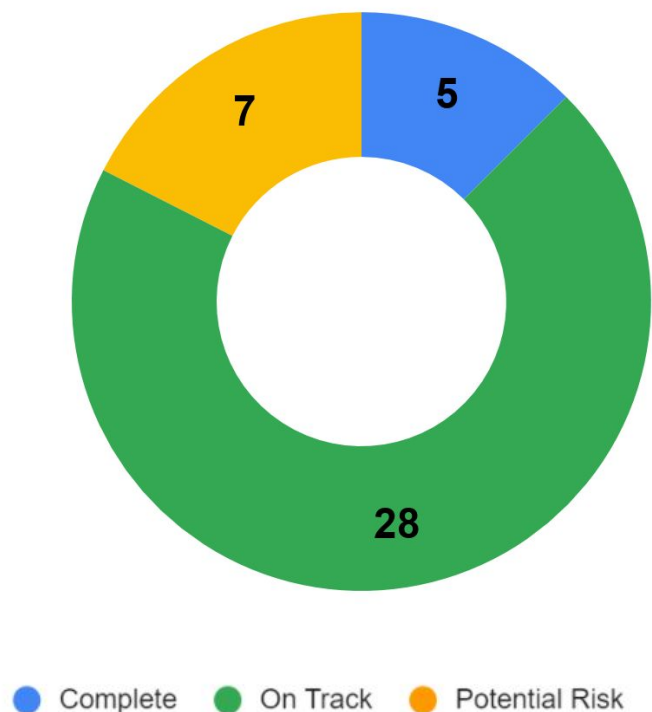
Activities Strategy - We have been continually adapting our approach to activity to respond to the pandemic and also the changing landscape of leisure in Adur and Worthing with the closure of the Adur leisure facilities. Looking to the winter, we will be providing support and guidance to help people to stay safe and active with an emphasis on outdoor activities and the link between physical and mental health.

Community and Voluntary Sector - Community Works continue to have

a strong impact in how we support and work with our community and voluntary centre. One area of major focus has been the commissioning and set up of a food partnership across Adur and Worthing that connects our food bank network with providers and other parts of the food system. This approach is designed as a “whole system” intervention and gives a platform to connect across all aspects of food, from growing to provision to distribution.

Progress with our community centres is still hampered by Covid but we have been making progress on securing a tenant for Eastbrook Manor Community Centre and making progress on the new West Durrington Community Centre.

Commitment Tracker



Overview : Last six months

Significant progress has been made over the last six months on the climate change and natural environment agendas. The Councils have been successful in taking forward work in three key strands: resident/community engagement, carbon neutral 2030 work, and the development of major green/blue infrastructure initiatives.

A strong team has been established to deliver on our carbon reduction programme, solar investments, food partnership and other community work, as well as major green and blue infrastructure schemes. The Councils are providing vital strategic leadership to local partners, and the significant recent purchases by Adur District Council to secure green space have been widely recognised as interventions of generational significance.

Platform Highlights : last six months

- As previously reported the **Zero 2030** conference in March saw over 300 attendees including 125 organisations gather to learn from a wide range of speakers and develop ideas for local action. More importantly a strong network of organisations across our communities has been created to work collectively on new propositions. The success of the event has been recognised with an award from CPRE. Subsequently the Councils have set up a **Climate Assembly** to further deepen resident engagement and help strengthen community innovation and commitment to the agenda. Between September to December, 45 residents are meeting online to listen to evidence, deliberate and then make recommendations that will go to the councils in early 2021.

Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

- The councils recently reported a 13% reduction in carbon emissions for 2019/20. The newly established carbon reduction team will drive a programme of works to **decarbonise our buildings and fleet** as a critical part of meeting our carbon neutral 2030 target. High quality bids to Central Government funds have been submitted, including rooftop solar schemes, insulation and heating system projects. If successful, the projects and feasibility studies starting early in 2021/22 would reduce emissions by up to 300 tonnes and further develop the Councils' ability to deliver successful energy schemes.
- Working alongside Prairie Gardens we are exploring our park landscape to enhance and enable a pollinator landscape and lower water usage across our portfolio. This will not only support the halt of the pollinator colony collapse but will also support connectivity of our landscapes as a whole. The planting designs work towards reducing the intensive peat and water management needed for seasonal bedding displays, resulting in less natural resources to manage these striking displays. Prairie planting that will be used is also more resistant to extremes in climate enabling us to plan for sustainability of planting schemes within our landscape as our climate adapts around us.
- Since the introduction of an alternate weekly collection strategy last year the Councils have seen an average increase in recycling of just under 6% overall, and general refuse has been cut by approximately 1,700 tonnes when compared with levels from the same period last year. This is a remarkable feat considering the fact that Councils across the country have seen, on average, an increase in residual waste in the home of 20% during Covid.
- A major project to develop a Heat Network at the Worthing Civic Centre site is being progressed which aims to supply heat to council buildings, the library, courts and the new Worthing Integrated Care Centre. Subject to viability work currently underway, a **sewer source heat network** could also serve Union Place, Teville Gate, Worthing Hospital and other sites in the area.
- A full review of **solar investment opportunities** has been undertaken and an investment strategy developed. Subject to full business cases this is expected to deliver proposals for roof mounted solar on council buildings, a 3MW solar farm locally and further large commercial solar investments.
- Adur & Worthing Councils have entered into a contract with WSCC for the provision of **electric vehicle charging points** across our areas. We are currently working on a Network Plan for this project where we will establish the number of points, their location and the phasing of their introduction. This work will establish a proliferation of charge points delivered in Adur & Worthing on street and in council car parks over the next 7-10 years.
- The Councils have acted directly to **secure green space for future generations**. Adur Council purchased the 70 acre New Salts Farm, with the prospect of a further 43 acre land purchase subject to decision at December JSC. The aim is to restore habitats and involve communities through partnership work with Sussex Wildlife Trust, Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust and other local partners. This JSC agenda contains recommendations for a further significant land acquisition adjacent to the Adur river at Pad Farm.
- Strategic work is underway by the councils in support of two major habitat restoration schemes with partners: **Adur Estuary and Sussex Kelp**.

Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

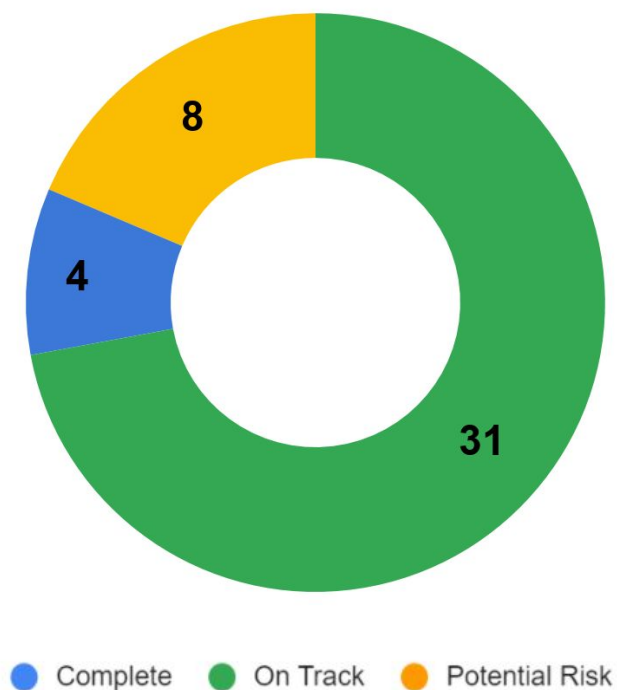
The councils have commissioned initial specialist studies to help chart the path to funding and delivery, and these reports have been recognised by several national bodies as “the most comprehensive of their kind”.

- Community Works has been working in partnership with community and voluntary sector organisations and the councils to develop an **Adur and Worthing Food Partnership**. Initially the focus of this has been around ensuring access to emergency food during Covid. Having secured funding from the National Lottery, they have recruited a Development Officer to progress this and develop into wider areas including food growing and discussions around sustainable food systems.

Platform Challenges: last six months

- The WSCC led **SmartHubs** programme is a large, complex programme of work, part funded by Innovate UK. There have been challenges in developing detailed, viable propositions for several work packages including those Adur & Worthing have been involved in. Consequently, Adur & Worthing are exploring alternative routes to important outcomes including solar carports and developing low carbon solutions for Adur Homes social housing.
- There is a need to review in more detail the **sustainability opportunities that may be available across the Councils’ land assets**. Initial review work has been undertaken, but further work is required to develop consistently strong propositions.

Commitment Tracker



Overview : last six months

The last six months have seen the councils' digital capability come to the fore, with a seamless switch to **remote working** and a series of **covid response Apps** built by the in-house team at remarkable speed. Central Government (MHCLG) and the Local Government Association recognised the speed and quality of our response, with the councils' work showcased in a number of best practice forums.

Our customer services team have responded strongly, underpinning the community response, shifting to appointment based alternatives to "walk-ins" and making highly effective **proactive calls** to residents identified as vulnerable.

The high levels of **adaptability** across all Council teams is testament to ongoing **leadership and team development work** which has continued and adapted over the last six months, through a range of virtual forums being created to support and develop staff, such as our "Leadership Lab".

Of course the Councils have been managing in a period of significant financial uncertainty, and the finance team have provided **consistent and effective financial management and modelling** to enable the Councils' Leadership Team to steer a difficult course through some rapidly changing financial scenarios. Elsewhere on this JSC agenda both Councils are projecting breakeven or better positions for the end of the financial year (as at Q2) in a year of extraordinary financial challenge and turbulence.

Good Services and New Solutions

Platform Highlights : last six months

Digital Enabling of Covid Community Response - Our digital approach has really paid dividends during Covid. Within days our in house Digital Team team, working collaboratively with Communities and Customer Service, built our community response platform. The platform enabled individuals to register for support, ranging from help with getting food to people requesting support with mental health and wellbeing and linking those people to volunteers or organisations who also registered through the app. To date we have supported 2319 individuals and registered 495 volunteers and the platform continues to evolve as the needs of our communities change. We have recently adapted it to administer the Government's Self Isolation Support Grant. The same technology was built to use our Application to administer government support grants for businesses and to build our new platform offering employment support.

Staying accessible to customers during lockdown - Covid Lockdown forced us to shut our customer service centres in Portland House and the Shoreham Centre for walk-ins at a time when some vulnerable people need us the most. Within days we established an appointments system, usually following a telephone triage, for people who have no alternative but to see us face to face. The triage means that customers come prepared with any paperwork they need and the relevant team member, often a Housing Officer is available in person to assist them. This has eliminated wasted journeys for

customers or long waits to be seen. It has resulted in a quicker, safer and more effective process for the customers and for our staff.

Proactive Customer Outreach The Customer Service Team have created capacity to make proactive outbound calls to customers, e.g. those who have fallen into council tax arrears. These calls were really welcomed by customers, who commented that they felt "the council cared". As a result of the exercise 455 customers were made aware of their eligibility for council tax support and 347 had the bills reprofiled. In addition the calls generated £145,000 worth of incoming payments across both Councils. The proactive work means we need to send out and process fewer reminder letters. We continue to focus on ensuring we remain accessible to individuals who may not have support networks or access to telephone or online channels.

New Website - Our Covid related web pages drew almost 190,000 views between March and November 2020, guiding people to advice, information and support including our community support and our business support schemes. It highlights the importance of our website as a communication channel, which is why we launched the first phase of our new site in December 2020. The new site has been designed to GOV.UK standards which will feel familiar to anyone who has used a government website. We have updated and streamlined our content and made the site easier and friendlier to navigate. Users have been engaged throughout the development to test the functionality

Good Services and New Solutions

and the site is compliant with the latest accessibility standards. Work on the second phase to update remaining web pages is now underway. The work has been largely done in-house, at a fraction of the cost of outsourcing the project to an external agency.

Learning and development - our learning offer has continued apace, upskilling and developing staff, with courses shifting online wherever possible. Our “Leadership College” is a valued quarterly gathering which supports our leaders to gain the skills needed to develop as 21st century public servants leaders. We are becoming adept at both focusing on the learning ‘fundamentals’ - GDPR, management skills, safeguarding - alongside shaping our future leaders, through the Leadership Lab development programme. In addition, we have adapted to the pressing needs of our people over the past six months through our learning offer, providing resilience training, Mental Health First Aid training and management learning sets focusing on leading remote teams.

Service Design apprenticeship - the Service Design Apprenticeship has received national attention with articles in the MJ and invitations to present at international conferences. We are leading the development of this course, engaging with service designers from across industry (public, private and third sector) to create a programme of study which prepares service designers not just for the reality of today but for the future of this occupation.

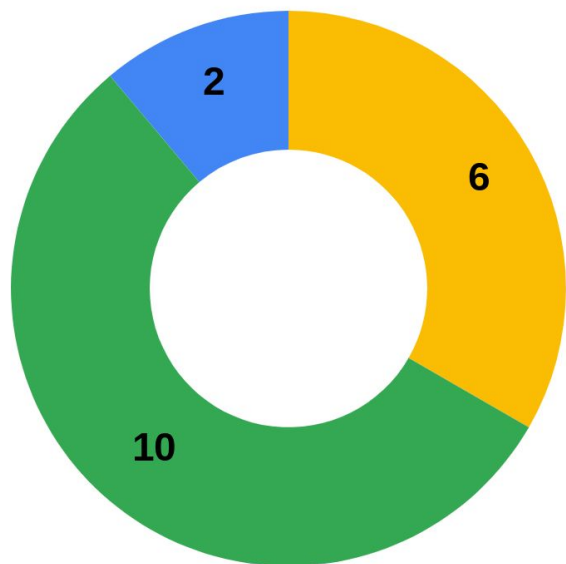
Platform Challenges : last six months

Whilst significant progress has been made in our revenue and benefits service during covid, for example with a major reduction in printing and checking activities, the key transformation activity, implementing greater **digital self service** (online forms) has been delayed. This is not due to covid, but due to the development of a more significant transition strategy which will see the whole system move to the cloud, a much larger and more complex project. Negotiations with the supplier have been complex, but the programme is now progressing with full migration planned following annual billing in spring/summer 2021.

Whilst several other digital projects have progressed very effectively during the covid period, for example a new environmental health system and the financial management system (and the new website) there has not been sufficient capacity to progress the new asset management system as planned. This project will be started in the new year and will address the shared needs of multiple teams involved in **asset management**, based on the successful build of a solution for the Estates team.

There is also a need to make faster progress with our data dashboard work, and work is underway to accelerate our **data development**, including identifying the need for greater resources in this essential area to lead the agenda.

Commitment Tracker



● Complete ● On Track ● Potential Risk

Overview : last six months

As set out elsewhere the last six months has predominantly been about managing public health, economic and social turbulence whilst not taking our eye off our leadership of place and being able to adapt quickly and taking new opportunities arising.

By the view of most observers we have done well so far in progressing these agendas. A significant comprehensive and challenging response to the public health crisis, to the economic and social consequences of national and local policy lockdowns, as well as seeking to work within constrained budgets have not been easy. That said as we view our approach at the end of 2020 officers and Members can be proud of the way that Adur & Worthing Councils have “stepped up”.

And it should not be ignored that this year Adur & Worthing Councils have been nominated for not one but both of the major national awards in the category of “Council of the Year”. In both the Municipal Journal (MJ) Awards and the Local Government Chronicle (LGC Awards) we were the only District and Borough to be nominated across the country for these prestigious titles. We did not win, but making the shortlist was a significant achievement and one which Members and officers should hold considerable pride in.

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. These relationships over the last 9 months have never been more called upon or proven more effective. In responding to the pandemic

we have relied upon strong relationships, individual and organisational goodwill to further the health, wellbeing and long term prosperity 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, the Community and Voluntary Sectors, communities and neighbourhoods have all proved critical. Examples of where those relationships have borne valuable fruit can be found across all four the preceding Platform reports.

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 real problems over the medium term, has meant some change of focus over the short term). As we anticipated in “And Then ...” the pandemic and the implications of it have created new opportunities to play roles in leading our communities. Whether intervening in commercial sites, accelerating gigabit build out, supporting rapidly developing new community infrastructure, taking steps in the sustainability agenda. Officers and Members have worked well together to seize the opportunities as identified.

Platform Highlights : last six months

Place Brand - “Time for Worthing” launched in February, despite the challenges of the last 6 months, a Management Board has been established with a business plan and budget approved. The Board is made up of a strong cross-section of the investment, business, creative and community sectors. During lockdown “Time for Worthing” shifted efforts to support the response and, more so, the easing of lockdown restrictions. The last couple of months has seen the attention drawn back to inward investment with a “Find Your Balance” campaign (aiming to capture the London market), SiteMatch 360 virtual event and commissions to support future inward investment tactics and upgraded website. The desirability of the UK for international inward investment after 1st January 2021 is still unknown. We are clear, however, that we will be upping our game to make our places even more desirable to such investment when identified.

Community and Voluntary Sector - Our work with the local Community and Voluntary Sector has progressed well and has been essential in responses to the pandemic. In the community and with the formal Voluntary Sector, the voice of our places at the local level has been heard, self organisation has taken place. Of particular note has been the work done by our food banks and providers and our Mutual Aid Groups and we continue to work closely with them where we are needed.

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

Leadership of Place

updates and interventions with Central Government have at times proved helpful (at other times less so and challenging). Housing partners have worked skillfully together 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 economic and social consequences of the lockdown. It is encouraging to see how well partners have worked together on this and the clear commitment to continue this approach into the future however challenging that future may be.

Districts & Boroughs and West Sussex County Council - Relationships with other Districts and Boroughs have been important. Work on some things with West Sussex County Council (especially public health and community responses) are 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. With the arrival of the pandemic we employed much of our learning in the initial response phase to support aspects such as the distribution of food and in designing and implementing a community response. Over the past 9 months we have focussed on supporting West Sussex County Council, the lead authority for public health, to ensure that vulnerable people in our communities are supported as we entered the second phase of ‘lockdown’. All Directors and Heads of Service have now undertaken two bespoke training events designed to help frame our response to delivering council services and supporting our communities during subsequent phases of the pandemic.

