



Joint Strategic Committee
11 January 2022

ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Key Decision No

Ward(s) Affected: All

“Platforms for our Places: Going Further” 6 Month Progress Report for July to December 2021

Report by the Chief Executive

1. Purpose

1.1 “Platforms for our Places: Going Further” is the Councils' ambitious strategic programme designed to help create the healthy, prosperous and well connected communities our residents and businesses have told us they want to see.

1.2 This is the update report to the Joint Strategic Committee describing the ongoing strong progress made by the Councils in achieving these commitments over the past 6 months.

1.3 The report reflects our shift from pandemic ‘response’ to ‘Autumn and Winter recovery’ and describes the continuing impact of the pandemic on our communities. Whilst progress against some of the commitments has slowed because of the pandemic, most are on track and some have accelerated.

1.4 We continue to embed the lessons we have learned from the pandemic, using these to better support our communities and advance our strategic ambitions.

1.5 Moving forward the Councils will be gathering learning from the Platforms activity in order to feed into the next strategy cycle.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note and consider the “Platforms for our Places: Going Further” 6 months progress report (July to December 2021) 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. It has been delivered largely during a period of global pandemic alongside the delivery of core services and a huge Covid support effort that has impacted on every area of the organisation. It is a testament to the commitment of all staff that such progress has been made in such conditions.

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 A: 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 |

Table B: Status Indicators and definitions

- 3.5 Table B shows how the status of projects and activities are determined. In the light of the ongoing work required to respond to the pandemic, in this report “amber” should be taken to include things that either are delayed or have not yet started. Given where we are in the strategy cycle we will be doing an internal review of these Amber / Red projects and then discussing with members whether they are appropriate to continue or if we should reconsider them.

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

4.1 The Progress Report

- 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. The ongoing progress described in this report demonstrates the ability of the Councils to respond to the complexity of differing impacts created by the pandemic, whilst maintaining a focus on the longer term commitments established in *“Platforms for our Places : Going Further”*.
- 4.2 The progress report 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.
- 4.3 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 catalytic activities that have both responded to the needs of our community and started to build increased resilience across the district and borough. A number of these activities are highlighted below and are provided in more detail in Appendix A.

- 4.4 These commitments are not “everything we do”. Whilst progressing our Platforms agenda we have continued to provide a full portfolio of universal services, including a range of ‘safety net’ activities for our communities in greatest need. Officers are actively reviewing the design of these services in light of the pandemic experience, ensuring the learning from the pandemic is captured and fully utilised across the Councils.

5. Issues for Consideration Including Delivery During a Pandemic

- 5.1 COVID-19 is an ongoing global public health emergency and its economic and social impacts continue to affect residents, communities and businesses across Adur and Worthing. No one has been left unaffected. The impact of both the initial crisis and the complexity of the recovery period is set to continue for some time, creating increased and changing demands on public services.
- 5.2 Our experience over the past 20 months continues to demonstrate how Platforms provides a strong and creative framework for the Councils to provide quality and highly responsive public services in the most challenging of circumstances. Our overall approach, characterised by agility and resilience, has proven invaluable during this period, enabling us to move further and faster, wherever this has been possible, on key commitments. The challenges faced by our communities and businesses this winter are significant and the prospect of the new Covid 19 variant adds another degree of uncertainty and difficulty for many. The scale and complexity of the challenges we face continue but they are met by the appetite of the Councils, with their communities and businesses, to respond with fortitude, speed and ambition.
- 5.3 During this period the Councils have been managing 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, homelessness, emergency community support etc). With skillful financial management and support from

the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) the Councils have managed to both keep within budget and release resources to meet need when this has been required.

5.4 Our work with communities, supported by national research, including the Marmot Review, have found that the pandemic has disproportionately affected those communities who were already experiencing significant health and wellbeing inequalities. The Councils' investment in our own data capability has enabled us to take a granular view of this national research and identify cohorts and areas which have been hardest hit by the pandemic. These groups include older people, those with pre-existing health conditions, those on low incomes and insecure employment and housing. The evidence also shows that the pandemic has also significantly affected black and minoritised communities, young people and those with disabilities. Very significant resources of £1.5 million have been secured from Central Government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) for 2021/22 to help reduce transmission and the effects of Covid 19 in these communities and progress on this investment is described in the report and appendices.

5.5 In this next phase of the pandemic it is becoming increasingly clear that our residents and communities are experiencing additional and ongoing challenges. The ending of the Universal Credit uplift as well as the end of furlough, combined with increases in National Insurance and the cost of food and fuel, mean that some families risk shifting from coping to not coping. Increases in the National Living Wage, rising salaries and alterations in the way Universal Credit is calculated when working mean that whilst some families will be protected from these changes others will not.

Autumn and Winter recovery work is therefore a key priority for the Councils at this time, working with partners, to ensure our communities and businesses are more resilient and have what they need to thrive through the next phase of the pandemic period. Our Autumn and Winter recovery work is described in this report and presented more fully in the accompanying committee paper entitled 'Proactive interventions to support low income residents'.

5.6 Our experience is showing us that building resilience is about increasing the ability of our communities and services to respond to the unexpected, whilst also developing capacity to develop, change and improve as a result. In seeking to cultivate resilience within the workforce we are working differently, across teams to find new and more effective ways of working and helping

those most in need. This approach removes unnecessary duplication or disconnection of skills within the organisation and enables our staff to work creatively and ultimately more effectively in increasingly complex situations. Our expanding use of data and improved information gained through stronger collaboration with our communities and partners, provides both the foundation and the directional steer in this approach. This work is situated in our Good Services platform but is reflected across all platforms.

- 5.7 Amongst the pain and hardship of the pandemic there are some positive outcomes including stronger community networking and an increasingly confident community and voluntary sector. Our investment in community infrastructure and participation is starting to develop, including our work in supporting and developing food banks throughout Adur and Worthing and also in our acquisition of the Lancing Police station and its meanwhile use as a combined community / co-working hub further develops our work in this area.
- 5.8 Our focus on jobs and skills, promoting confidence in our places, and attracting investment has helped to protect, support and enable our local businesses and keep people in employment. As described below, we are for example, actively supporting a further 20 young people as part of the Kickstart programme, with 42 placements so far in total. We have, as part of this, 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 reached several major milestones on a series of significant major projects including the start of building work for Worthing Integrated Care Centre and groundwork for Southern Housing to develop 540 new homes.
- 5.9 We have also continued to benefit from investment in our technology and data science, as demonstrated in the development of our Citizen Hub and the implementation of our Proactive Programme that is helping those most at risk of not coping in our community. The new reality of our gigabit infrastructure raises the bar in terms of what can and should be achieved.
- 5.10 Our work on sustainability is amongst the best in the sector and we are well positioned to deliver a number of significant projects. Described in more detail below, the Councils were recently awarded a £5m grant from central government (BEIS) for the delivery of a UK leading district heat network scheme to connect 23 buildings using a sewer source heat pump. The Adur River project is part of a significant investment that has been made by the Councils for the protection of public open space and biodiversity. This

investment will form part of a wider Sussex Bay initiative, set to protect and transform our coastal natural environments.

6. The 5 Individual Platforms

- 6.1 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.

Platform 1 Prosperous Places

- 6.2 **Economic recovery** remains a core focus for the Councils including helping people gain the skills needed to secure employment and help local businesses recover and grow. Over the past six months we have ensured that the remaining '**Pandemic grant funding streams**' find their way swiftly to our local businesses; over £60m has been distributed to businesses across Adur and Worthing during the pandemic. In addition, our work on place continues to progress well, **renewing infrastructure, stimulating economic development and building new homes**. Our collaboration with local, regional and nation partners is driving areas of significant innovation including the potential development of local hydrogen-based solutions.
- 6.3 We know that we need to focus on **skills** to support economic recovery. Local data generated by our **data capability**, but also directly from DWP and national studies has helped us to better understand the impact of the pandemic on key groups and has informed our focus on training and skills. We have continued to develop our "**Good Work Programme**" that assists people back into work, whilst also helping to address wider wellbeing issues such as mental health, domestic violence, vulnerable housing and addiction.

We have used the **Apprenticeship Levy** to support apprenticeships across the Councils and we are actively supporting a further 20 young people as part of the Kickstart programme, with 42 placements so far in total. The **Youth Hub** has opened, focussing on helping young people to secure employment opportunities. Our **Employer Charter** seeks to maximise opportunities for development and training and we are working with our partners on 'Dare to Dream', designed to raise aspirations of young people in secondary schools, with a focus on those most at risk of disengaging, using a preventative approach.

- 6.4 We have continued to focus on supporting our **town centres** and providing a safe and welcoming environment for people to return to. Adur & Worthing

Councils' pioneering investment in **gigabit ultrafast infrastructure** is progressing well, now reaching 32,000 homes, and is making the area one of the most digitally connected places in the south east.

87 local businesses, including 10 in the last period, have benefited from the Councils' **Small Business Growth Grant** and we have continued to work with the University of Chichester to promote the Coast to Capital wide **HotHouse Programme** which focuses support on financial, innovation and productivity skills for small and medium sized enterprises. A lease agreement with **AudioActive** to move former shop premises into Montague Street is now complete. AudioActive will provide a range of activities from this site, including the opportunity for young people to gain essential knowledge and skills to enhance their prospects of securing employment.

- 6.5 A new **Farmers' Market** has been introduced in Worthing and we continue to support small businesses and have extended many of our concessions into the autumn and winter seasons. The Markets in Adur, including **Shoreham Farmers Market**, continue to deliver a vibrancy to our high streets each month, whilst also providing local / independent businesses the opportunity to trade.
- 6.6 We have worked with our **Time for Worthing** partners to deliver a new website and visitor guide; and as regulations have eased, we have supported large events such as Legends in Shoreham and this year's Pride event at Worthing. We continue to support innovation in our local economies in partnership with our local employers and as part of this have co-sponsored a study with higher education and business partners to examine the prospect of a virtual production centre.
- 6.7 Place based initiatives build confidence, support our high streets, provide much needed local employment and provide new homes. We have reached significant milestones on a series of important major projects over the past 6 months. Work has begun on site to deliver the **Worthing Integrated Care Centre** and the new public realm for **Portland Road** is progressing well. A stylish temporary scheme for **Montague Place** has been developed and will inform a longer-term intervention. Design work has begun on a proposed public realm improvement for **Southwick Square** for consultation with local stakeholders.
- 6.8 Following purchase of the **police station** site in Lancing a 'meanwhile use' has been developed for the site called **Fabric**. Fabric, aims to offer community, charity and small business space in the North Road premises both

to create sustainable jobs in Lancing but also to encourage the new tenants to work together on ideas that can bring new opportunity to the village.

- 6.9 Worthing Borough Council has completed the purchase of **Teville Gate**. This is of fundamental importance to securing the regeneration of this strategically important site. While the development strategy is put together we will deliver a safer and much more welcoming environment for our communities by introducing 'meantime activities' and re-establishing pedestrian routes to the Station.
- 6.10 Following the successful completion of the £4.8m project to decontaminate **Decoy Farm** and make the site 'development ready' Worthing Borough Council has made the decision to develop the site directly and bring forward high quality employment space to help our expanding businesses and support inward investment. In Adur, Southern Housing has now completed the flood defences and groundwork necessary to support 540 new homes at **Free Wharf** in Shoreham, supported by grants from Homes England. Hyde Housing will also be starting on site shortly delivering 255 affordable homes on **Kingston Wharf** alongside Easystore's innovative **Enterprise Centre** providing storage and managed office floorspace. Following the grant of permission for 467 dwellings at **West Sompting** the developer, Persimmon Homes, will be starting on site next year building the first phase of 96 dwellings and delivering new sports pitches and open space. The **Union Place** marketing exercise has completed and the Borough Council and London & Continental Railways (LCR) are now actively engaged with potential development partners with a view to selecting a team and a procurement route to deliver this major scheme.

Platform 2: Thriving People and Communities

6. 11 The pandemic continues to be central to the work of this platform with our focus continuing to be on keeping people safe, in supporting the **recovery** process and ensuring our communities are able **thrive** in the post pandemic context. Rather than seeing the pandemic as distracting from the Thrive agenda we have actively sought to use lessons learnt to better support communities and build resilience.
- 6.12 As described above, in the coming months, with changes in benefits and rising costs of living, many families are at risk of moving from coping to not coping. **Autumn and Winter recovery** is therefore our priority, helping to ensure our communities have what they need to get through the next phase of the pandemic. Our focus is on providing good planning and delivery around:

- Identifying those at risk of not coping
- Developing stronger pathways of support for people identified as been in need through internal and partner support
- Developing a 'safety net' of provision with our partners including Money Mentors, Good Work and the Wellbeing Hub.

6.13 Our multidisciplinary **Proactive Programme** is the cornerstone of this approach and is progressing well having, by the end of October, engaged 164 residents. The approach uses the **LIFT platform** to identify households with low financial resilience and our Customer Service team members then telephone these households to explore ways of increasing household income, reducing household debt and also addressing issues such as depression, anxiety and loneliness that often accompany financial exclusion. For some residents, support is offered at the first point of contact (our customer services team) but for others, they are "introduced" (referred) to other council teams for further assistance. The work of the **OneStop "Money Coaches"** programme has been fundamental in supporting the Proactive Project and supporting the community more widely. During the period July - Oct 2021 there have been 311 complex referrals (Adur Cases 125 - Worthing Cases 186) that have led to an approximate increase of income for the referrals of £205,459.

6.14 We have spent time over this period working with **local food groups** to support and enable their work. Working with Community Works, the A&W Food Group has been meeting regularly, providing a space to better understand food system issues. We have used our **COMF grant** to provide direct funding to these groups, enabling them to better engage with their users, to develop shared food storage facilities and when necessary, to purchase food for families in crisis. Learning and data from this work will be used to help co design processes that deliver a more sustainable and effective food and antipoverty system.

6.15 Our focus on reducing **rough sleeping and homelessness** continues and has made consistent progress in the last 6 months despite the challenges of meeting increased demand and need. 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 offers of accommodation to everyone who is in need. A key part of this work has included the development of our **Housing First approach** and associated support offer (with funding support from DLUHC). This approach includes our **"Opening Doors"** scheme which has delivered 75 lets, with 14 further properties in the pipeline as well as accommodation via the Rough

Sleeper Accommodation Programme. Opening Doors, which includes a range of incentives (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.

6.16 The wider community safety, health and wellbeing work being undertaken through this platform is extensive. During this period we have completed and signed off our new **Health and Wellbeing Strategy** 'HealthyAW' and its associated Delivery Plan. The strategy sets out our approach to working with and enabling our communities to thrive, focusing on health inequities across the following three priorities:

- **Priority 1** - To improve health and wellbeing for all, focusing on our communities with the poorest health and wellbeing.
- **Priority 2** - To create places, spaces, and environments that are sustainable and promote and enable good health and wellbeing
- **Priority 3** - To promote stronger community resilience in our communities and our workforce

6.17 During the Autumn / Winter recovery period the HealthyAW delivery plan has focused on providing health and wellbeing support for our communities through a number of activities and services:

- **Going Local** - Between July to September the service received 325 new referrals for support and this is a 13% increase in demand compared to preceding quarter. During this period the service has seen a rise in the complexity of cases (linked to mental health and social isolation) and increases in safeguarding concerns.
- **Wellbeing Hubs** - During this period the Councils have seen a 49% increase in referrals compared to the previous period, with Wellbeing Advisors currently working with 229 people across Adur and Worthing. The initial reasons for referral remain weight management and eating healthier. Underlying issues of a more complex nature however often present, including mental health needs, feelings of isolation, money worries and bereavement.
- **Alcohol Wellbeing Advisor** - During this period the service has received 25 referrals which is an increase of 75% compared to the previous period. We are beginning to notice a number of people who have relapsed, some after having managed their alcohol use for many years. Again this can likely be attributed to the impact of the Covid pandemic on people's lives.

Platform 3: Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

- 6.18 The realities of the **climate emergency** have not gone away during the Covid 19 pandemic and the Councils have therefore continued apace with their Platform 3 priorities. Through a number of energy, waste reduction and biodiversity initiatives the Councils are successfully working towards their ambition of being Carbon Neutral by 2030. **The Environment Act** received Royal Assent in November and provides the Councils with a number of significant opportunities to progress these ambitions, with particular reference to biodiversity, waste reduction and recycling.
- 6.19 Our community engagement work around sustainability has continued during the last six months, building on the success of the **Climate Assembly**. The community section of the **SustainableAW climate and nature plan** was, for example, completed following engagement with over 200 organisations. The Climate Action AW campaign, which ran alongside **COP26**, helped showcase many local business and community projects as well as council activity.
- 6.20 During the pandemic, work has been accelerating to develop a project pipeline to help **decarbonise** the Councils' estate and offset residual emissions. In the past 6 months we have secured **Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding** to deliver £2m of capital projects identified as part of the **Carbon Neutral Plan** work with Technical Services and Adur Homes. Projects include triple glazing and insulation at Worthing Civic Quarter, solar PV arrays at multiple sites, ground and air source heat pumps at Shadwells Court, Tollbridge House and the Shoreham Centre. A feasibility study for a 3MW **solar farm** at Dale Road is planned to commence in the next few months. The Councils were recently awarded a £5m grant from central government (BEIS) for the delivery of the **Worthing Heat Network**, a UK leading district heat network scheme to connect 23 buildings including the NHS, Councils and the police in Worthing centre using a sewer source heat pump.
- 6.21 Under the WSCC **EV network** 31 sites are being put forward for installation of new EV charge points. An Installer was awarded in early Nov (Connected Kerb) and the first charge points are likely to be installed in Adur and Worthing in Spring 2022. Workplace charge points have been installed at Commerce Way for new EV vans. There are plans to provide EV charge points at Worthing Civic Quarter in the newbuild MSCP where council rental fleet will be parked and can then be switched from hybrid to full EV. The Waste Team is exploring opportunities for Hydrogen fuel for transport and freight vehicles across the Greater Brighton area.
- 6.22 The Councils' land acquisitions for nature restoration and community green

spaces are among the most innovative interventions made in the UK by any local authority. These acquisitions include the purchase of **Shepherds Mead, Pad Farm and New Salts Farm**. Our associated work with the Environment Agency, the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, Surrey Wildlife Trust, South Downs National Park and Sussex Wildlife Trust is progressing well, ensuring these sites are preserved for the purposes of enhancing and protecting biodiversity, improving community access and contributing to carbon neutrality. **The Adur River Project** (Pad Farm and New Salts Farm) has passed the Expression of Interest stage for funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and community engagement is progressing well for Shepherds Mead nature restoration projects.

- 6.23 Responding to the Climate Assembly recommendation, Adur & Worthing Councils have continued to work with partners to drive forward the restoration and management of the kelp forest and other “blue” habitats. This work is being progressed through our **Sussex Bay Initiative**, which aims to bring partners together, and build the funding and governance infrastructure needed to make a real impact. Restoration of these habitats will create significant opportunities for our coastal communities in terms of new local jobs in fishing, aquaculture, recreation and tourism under the compelling identity of Sussex Bay, the blue counterpart to the South Downs. The project also offers significant opportunities for the Councils and their partners to offset their Carbon emissions as kelp and estuarine habitats are able to take up and store significant amounts of carbon. The project is working with DEFRA and many local partners, and has for example recently engaged the **Worthing small boat fishing community** in developing plans for the future of sustainable fishing locally. Work is also progressing with the **Arun to Adur Farmers Group** regarding use of seaweed as fertilizer for soil improvement to tackle the wash up of kelp from winter storms.
- 6.24 The Councils have continued to work with Ricardo, Shoreham Port and the Greater Brighton Economic Board and the newly established **Hydrogen Sussex Group**. The group is backing projects seeking to use the fuel, particularly in transport and heating systems and also helps position Greater Brighton as a centre of innovation and production. The **Solar Together Sussex** (STS) scheme, supported by Councils across Sussex, including Adur and Worthing Councils, continues to progress well and is in its second phase. STS is a group buying scheme that enables residents to install high-quality, roof-mounted solar panels and battery systems at competitive prices. During the first round almost 50 households installed either solar PV and/or battery storage. During the second round over 400 households in A&W registered interest to have PV and/or battery storage installed in their homes.

6.25 **The Environment Act** sets out a number of significant changes to refuse and recycling and officers will actively engage with forthcoming guidance on the new requirements. In the meantime we are progressing in a number of areas that should enable us to respond well to the new requirements of the Act. Our **recycling rate** has continued to rise year on year, with figures from April - October 2021 showing a further 3.16% point increase in Adur and a 5.24% point increase in Worthing, compared to the same period in 2020-2021. The **commercial food waste service** was launched in October initially serving a small number of customers on a trial basis. The trial has gone very well helping commercial customers manage their waste more sustainably and reduce costs. A more high profile campaign is now being launched to offer this service more widely.

Platform 4: Good Services and New Solutions

6.26 The Councils have continued to manage a period of **significant financial uncertainty**, with planning assumptions requiring ongoing revision and updating. As described above, both income (e.g. car parking and other fees) and expenditure (for example, homelessness, emergency community support etc) remain areas of ongoing challenge. With **skilled financial management** and support from DLUHC, the Councils in 2020/21 have managed to keep within budget and release resources where required. Work is ongoing to ensure the Councils can sustain this position without additional funding from DLUHC going forward.

6.27 With new internal service design expertise in place, work to design our new customer relationship management system '**Citizen Hub**' is underway. Designed to enable joint working across teams and track outcomes for those receiving support, Citizen Hub will be expanded over time to enable tracking of customer experience end to end, across multiple services using our low code platform and the exciting new features available in a newly upgraded platform.

Our **Customer Service** team has continued to deliver excellent levels of service throughout this period, embracing the opportunity to proactively support the most vulnerable, making calls out to help customers facing financial or housing difficulties, and referring them on to further support from housing, wellbeing or third party support services. The Customer Service team has, as part of this approach, led the **Proactive work** described in Platform 2. The team has now been able to identify financial and wellbeing impacts as a result of this work through the LIFT platform. Of those residents

that have engaged with us, we can see that more are moving into “coping” and out of “not coping”.

- 6.28 Through our **Good Services programme**, the Councils are taking the lessons from the Proactive project and other new ways of working, to improve service delivery right across the council. This work includes a focus on **encouraging collaboration with communities** and partners, the collection and better use of data, more effective use of digital solutions and multidisciplinary working when addressing complex, cross cutting issues. To support this work and release the potential of our staff, our **learning offer** has continued to develop at speed, adapting to the challenges faced and ambitions sought by the two Councils. Areas of training include the provision of resilience training, Mental Health First Aid training, equality and diversity training and management learning sets focusing on leading remote teams.

Support for our leaders is key to the success of this approach and includes focused leadership support for the **Organisational Leadership Team** and additional quarterly training for around 80 senior managers. The second cohort of the **Leadership Lab**, providing intensive development support to 14 of our most talented leaders, was completed in November.

- 6.29 **WorkspacesAW** is another of our modernisation programmes, helping the Councils to apply learning from the pandemic and deliver necessary and helpful changes to the way in which we operate. WorkspacesAW will for example deliver different kinds of office space (meeting rooms, quiet spaces, collaboration spaces) while supporting home working and making a blended model of working the norm. Our **staff travel policy** being developed in parallel is encouraging staff to shift modes of transport, securing reduced commuting and business miles and potentially helping reduce carbon emissions.
- 6.30 Our work to deliver best practice in procurement continues with a pilot programme exploring the opportunities presented by the **procurement green paper**. This has identified a number of procurements where greater emphasis will be placed on the opportunities to drive social and environmental value.

Platform 5: Leadership of Place

- 6.31 In *“Platforms for our Places: Going Further”* and *“And Then ...”* we set out a range of leadership activities that, in the current context, we are seeking to

actively develop further and faster. Our reputation as a place of innovation and as being 'open for business' continues to bring forward exciting opportunities for collaboration and development.

- 6.32 In this next phase of the pandemic we know our residents and communities are experiencing another set of challenges. Autumn and Winter recovery work is therefore a key priority for the Councils, working with partners, to ensure our communities and businesses have what they need to thrive through the next phase of the pandemic.
- 6.33 The Councils continue to maintain and develop a diverse and ever increasing set of **partnerships** including housing partners, the community and voluntary sector, the NHS, Police and Community Safety organisations. Our relationships with other Districts and Boroughs continue to be positive and we are keen to further cultivate these for example through strategic work including Sussex Bay. Our work with **West Sussex County Council** in many areas is also progressing well and will need to develop further if we are to successfully implement the many opportunities and challenges we share, including the **Environment Act, Health and Social Care reform** and the relocation of **Afghan Refugees**.
- 6.34 We have been working with the **Sussex Police** and our community safety partners on the development and agreement of the new **Safer Communities Strategy** which was signed off by the Joint Strategic Committee in October 2021. Work is now being undertaken to develop the Delivery Plan which will be focused on a number of priorities, including reducing the harm caused by serious, organised and acquisitive crime; better support for minoritised communities; and actions that tackle violence against women and girls.
- 6.35 We continue to **develop relationships** with our communities seeking to develop closer working and deeper trust, especially with our diverse and often excluded communities. Maintaining and developing these relationships is 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. Our relationship with the local **Community and Voluntary Sector** continues to develop and mature. With funding from the **Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)** we have been able to further support the local food partnership and other mutual aid groups in Adur and Worthing. We have also begun to further develop our **Asset Based Community Development** practice to improve and strengthen our work with communities, including improved engagement with **minoritised ethnic community** partners and organisations.

6.36 We are developing our **Good Work** approach as part of our autumn winter recovery programme, seeking to develop opportunities for those most impacted by COVID-19 - this includes work opportunities for young people, those who are disabled, over 50s and our minoritised ethnic communities. The programme uniquely undertakes this work through an integrated approach to wellbeing, skill development and employment support. Officers have just secured £66,000 for a **OneStop Employment Youth Hub** to work in partnership with DWP to support 200 young people (16-24 year olds) who are claiming Universal Credit and who are struggling to find work, and who have additional issues that may prevent them accessing employment. A physical venue is being sourced in Worthing Town Centre to **co-locate DWP** and Council officers to create opportunities for building stronger professional relationships between our two organisations.

7. Engagement and Communication

7.1 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 18 months. This remains an important area of focus and one for continual development as we move forward.

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

8. Financial Implications

8.1 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

8.2 The relevant revenue and capital budget reports 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.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides all local authorities with the power to take any steps which are likely to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area and residents. It also places a duty on authorities to develop a community strategy, together with other local bodies, for this purpose, and is a strategy that also contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK
- 9.2 There are no further 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](#)

[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 Councils' 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.

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.

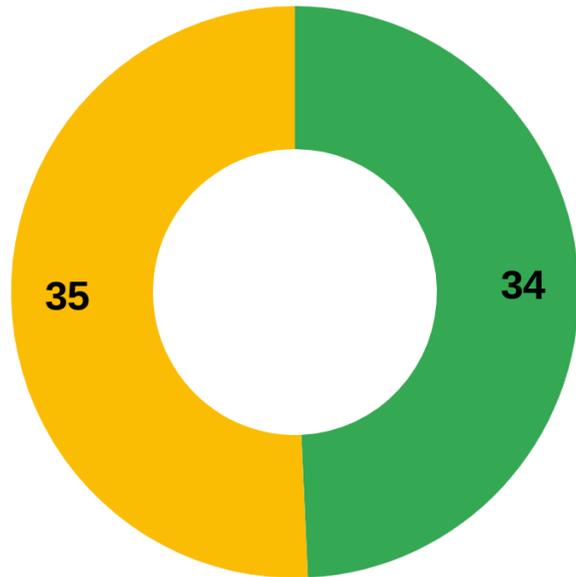
4. Governance

- 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



● Blue (complete) ● Green (On track) ● Amber (some issues) ● Red (significant issues)

Overview : last six months

Overview : last six months

Economic recovery remains the core focus and in particular, helping people gain the skills needed to secure employment and help our local businesses recover and grow. Over the past six months we have ensured that the remaining 'Pandemic grant funding streams' (over £60 million) find their way swiftly to our local businesses. In addition our work on place continues to progress well, renewing infrastructure, stimulating economic development and building new homes.

Platform Highlights :

Employment, Skills and Wellbeing

Our **Good Work Programme** is designed to assist people to develop the skills they need to get back into work as part of the wider recovery. We have used the Apprenticeship Levy to support apprenticeships across the Councils and we are actively supporting a further 20 young people as part of the Kickstart programme, with 42 placements so far in total.

The **Youth Hub** has opened, focussing on helping young people to secure employment opportunities. Our **Employer Charter** seeks to maximise opportunities for development and training and we are working with our partners on '**Dare to Dream**', designed to raise aspirations of young people in secondary schools, with a focus on those most at risk of disengaging using a preventative approach.

A lease agreement with **AudioActive** to move former shop premises into Montague Street is now complete. AudioActive will provide a range of activities from this site, including the opportunity for young people to gain essential knowledge and skills to enhance their prospects of securing employment.

Supporting Local Business and Innovation

Through our work with the Adur & Worthing Business Partnership we have co-sponsored the successful **Better Business Show** and the Annual **Business Awards**.

We have continued to focus on supporting our town centres and providing a safe and welcoming environment for people to return to. The **gigabit fibre programme** continues to make good progress now reaching 32,000 homes.

87 local businesses, including 10 in the last period, have benefited from the councils' **Small Business Growth Grant** and we have continued to work 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.

A new **Farmers' Market** has been introduced in Worthing and we continue to support. The Markets in Adur, including Shoreham Farmers Market, continue to deliver a vibrancy to our high streets each month, whilst also providing local / independent businesses the opportunity to trade. To support small businesses, we have extended many of our concessions into the autumn and winter seasons. We have worked with our **Time for Worthing**

partners to deliver a new website and visitor guide; and as regulations have eased, we have supported large events such as Legends in Shoreham and this year's Pride event at Worthing.

We continue to support innovation in our local economies in partnership with our local employers. We have co-sponsored a study with higher education and business partners to examine the prospect of a **virtual production centre** and we have strengthened our partnerships with business and public agencies around potential **hydrogen-based solutions**.

Development of Place

Work has begun on site to deliver the **Worthing Integrated Care Centre**.

The Examination in Public into the **Worthing Local Plan** has been completed – a major milestone in guiding the future development of the town; and work has already begun on a Review of the **Adur Local Plan** which is of equal significance to the District.

Following purchase of the police station site in Lancing a 'meanwhile use' has been developed for the site whilst a planning application is developed. Refurbishment work is coming to completion with the launch of **Fabric Lancing** now imminent. The Fabric concept is based on a collaboration with the private sector to provide co-working space along with active community space, supporting the sustainable economic, social and cultural growth of Lancing.

Worthing Borough Council has **completed the purchase of Teville Gate**. This is of fundamental importance to securing the regeneration of this strategically important site. While the development strategy is put together

we will deliver a safer and much more welcoming environment for our communities by introducing ‘meantime activities’ and re-establishing pedestrian routes to the Station.

Investment in our **town centres and seafront** is vital for recovery. The new public realm for **Portland Road** is progressing in line with the programme and has seen dark fibre infrastructure installed. A stylish temporary scheme for **Montague Place** has been developed and will inform a longer-term intervention. Design work has begun on a proposed public realm improvement for **Southwick Square** for consultation with local stakeholders. In the meantime, we have continued to focus Welcome Back funding toward updating street furniture and improving local parades.

Developer led-schemes are underway at the former **Beales** building and permissions have been granted for other residential conversion and or redevelopment schemes above existing shop units including at Poundland, HMV and Mothercare bringing residents into the heart of the town.

Following the successful completion of the £4.8m project to decontaminate **Decoy Farm** and make the site ‘development ready’ the Borough Council has made the decision to develop out the site directly and bring forward high quality employment space to help our expanding businesses and support inward investment. As part of this approach we are actively exploring the concept of a ‘net zero business park’.

Southern Housing has now completed the flood defences and groundwork necessary to support 540 new homes at **Free Wharf** in Shoreham, supported by grants from Homes England. Enabling works have now progressed on Stage I which will deliver 137 affordable housing units on the

A259 frontage at Free Wharf and work is imminent on the site at **The Mannings** with the redevelopment of the existing flats with 73 new affordable units.

Hyde Housing will also be starting on site shortly delivering 255 affordable homes on **Kingston Wharf** alongside Easystore's innovative Enterprise Centre providing storage and managed office floorspace.

Following the grant of permission for 467 dwellings at **West Sompting** the developer, Persimmon Homes will be starting on site next year building the first phase of 96 dwellings and delivering new sports pitches and open space.

The Port Authority continues to expand its offer to provide a range of new business floorspace opportunities following the success of the light industrial units built at **Lady Bee Marina** and permission has been granted for 22 commercial units to be known as Riverside Studios built adjacent to the Schooner public house.

Cala homes have completed 120 homes at **New Monks Farm**; and the riverside **Pumping Station** is complete and operational; and planning permission has been secured for a fourth arm for the new roundabout on the A27. Work has begun on the new roundabout, using £5.7m of Local Growth funding secured via Coast to Capital. The application for the detailed design and layout of the 25,000 square metres of commercial floorspace at **Shoreham Airport** has been submitted and will be considered early in the new year by the Planning Committee.

Ropetackle North in Shoreham is complete and most of the new homes are now occupied.

Prosperous Places

The **Union Place** marketing exercise has completed and the Borough Council and London & Continental Railways (LCR) are now actively engaged with potential development partners with a view to selecting a team and a procurement route to deliver this major scheme.

Work is on site at **Fulbeck Avenue** where Boklok will deliver 150 high quality modular homes; both affordable and market homes matched to reflect local incomes.

An application by St William for 203 dwellings at the **Gas Works site** is due to be considered by Worthing Planning Committee in December. Bellway Homes have also purchased the HMRC site and are expecting to submit a detailed application for 287 dwellings and a care home on the **Barrington Road former HMRC site**.

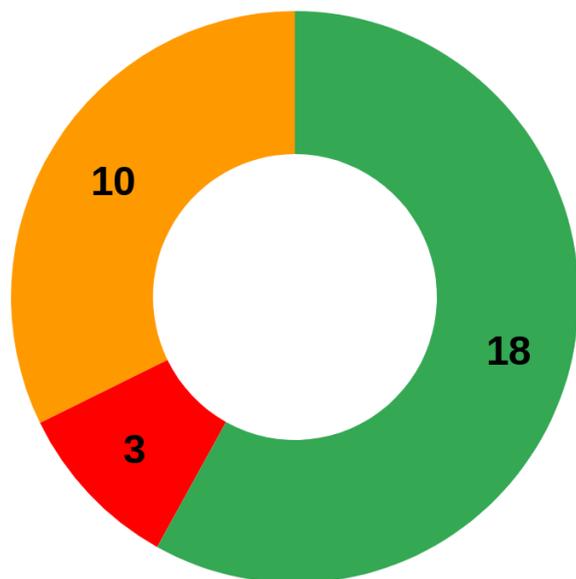
Challenges

Sustainable recovery for our local economies will depend on a wide range of factors and influences. We need to respond positively to the needs of our communities and in the context presented by the climate change agenda.

We will continue to work alongside businesses to promote access to new markets, supporting people to reskill to find new jobs and to support employers, businesses and education providers to make better use of opportunities to help young people entering the job market.

We will need to maintain our energy and reputation for securing investment opportunities that support our Platforms objectives.

Commitment Tracker



● Blue (complete) ● Green (On track) ● Amber (some issues) ● Red (significant issues)

Overview : last six months

The health, social and economic impact of the pandemic is central to our Thrive agenda with a focus on recovery, keeping our communities safe and enabling them to thrive. The “Thrive” platform is driving and connecting a number of key themes that will support and enable our communities, especially those that are most vulnerable through secure housing, developing and strengthening our food system, supporting people with their finances (including those that needed to self isolate), developing a good work agenda and promoting safety.

Platform Highlights : last three months

Autumn / Winter Recovery

In this next phase of the pandemic it is becoming increasingly clear that our residents are experiencing additional and ongoing challenges. The ending of the Universal Credit uplift as well as the end of furlough, combined with increases in National Insurance and the cost of food and fuel, mean that some families risk shifting from coping to not coping. Increases in the National Living Wage, rising salaries and alterations in the way Universal Credit is calculated when working mean that whilst some families will be protected from these changes others will not. Autumn/Winter recovery is therefore the focus of Thrive at this time and includes:

- Identifying those at risk of not coping using available data sets including the LIFT Platform
- Developing stronger pathways of support for people identified through internal and partner support

Thriving People and Communities

- Developing the safety net of provision around support including our Money Mentors and also working with our partners to understand capacity and demand. This work is supported through the following approaches:
- **Getting upstream:** Working with data to identify and support residents who are at the coping / not coping boundary
- **Design around the person:** Create person and where possible community centred pathways to support these residents and households to help them thrive
- **Really getting upstream and out of the water:** Use our place based data to look at how we strengthen support within communities - not just building safety nets but looking at what we need for communities to thrive.

Proactive

Our multidisciplinary Proactive Project is progressing well and by the end of October had engaged over 164 residents. The team uses the **LIFT platform** to identify households with low financial resilience and telephones them to explore ways to increase household income, reduce household debt and also to address the depression, anxiety and loneliness that often accompany financial exclusion. For some residents, support is offered at the first point of contact (our customer services team) but for others, they are “introduced” (referred) to other council teams for further assistance.

The team has now been able to identify financial and wellbeing impacts as a result of this work. LIFT assigns each resident with a financial risk score and we can track these over time.

Of those residents that have engaged with us, we can see that more are moving into a “coping” risk score and out of “not coping” scores. We are also seeing positive impacts in terms of the self-assigned wellbeing scores that residents who engage with the Proactive team report to us.

The work of the **OneStop “Money Coaches”** programme has been fundamental in supporting the Proactive Project and supporting the community more widely. During the period July - Oct 2021 there have been 311 complex referrals (Adur Cases 125 - Worthing Cases 186) receiving at least 10 interventions per referral (3,110). Which has led to an approx increase of income for the referrals of £205,459.00

Food strategy / system

We have spent time over this period working with local food groups to support and enable their work. Working with Community Works, the A&W Food Group has been meeting regularly and has been providing a space to understand needs and issues. We have used our COMF grant to provide direct funding to groups enabling them to purchase food through the Autumn/Winter period and also to engage with people who are food insecure to better understand their needs; this will help us to co design a more sustainable system around the needs of the people.

We are also working with food groups to deliver better infrastructure and this work includes supporting shared food storage spaces. These food storage sites are located in Worthing (Queen Street), Lancing (the Old Police Station), Shoreham (the Shoreham Centre) and Fishersgate (the Gateway building)

Housing First / Homelessness

Demand on the service continues to increase, driven by more evictions following the end of the eviction ban and the end of the furlough scheme, pushing more people into financial difficulties. The Housing Needs Team are working closely with partner organisations to ensure as many households and individuals as possible are helped to avoid homelessness, or be speedily rehoused once homeless. The latest data shows that, in 2020/21, of households presenting to the councils as at risk, homelessness was prevented in 52% of cases in Adur and 41% of cases in Worthing.

A number of new initiatives and close partnership working made this possible. For example, a WSCC pilot project “Discharge to Assess Beds”, provides an improved pathway for those being discharged from Mental Health settings and this work includes:

- Pathways Home floating support (a floating support and mentoring service), together with referral routes for Registered Social Landlords into the Homelessness Team and Pathways Home.
- The implementation of a joint working protocol for young people and care leavers, which includes joint assessments for 16 and 17 year olds.
- The co-location of an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) with the Housing Needs Team
- Working more closely with OneStop to support those in temporary accommodation
- Beginning the process to submit a bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding 2022-2025

- Secured Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme funding to contribute capital and support for single people who have experienced rough sleeping.

The last official annual count found that, in 2021/22 there were 8 people sleeping rough in the streets of Worthing and 1 person sleeping rough in Adur.

While the Hospital Admission Reduction Pathway(HARP) PHE funding stream has now ended, WSCC have funded an extension to the programme until March 2022. This provision provides a housing navigator in the hospital and a community nurse. Options to mainstream this service after March 2022 are being explored as well as looking to expand the remit to include those who misuse alcohol who are currently excluded under the extension due to constraints of the funding stream.

The multi-agency Rough Sleeper Team (RST) continues to ensure homeless and rough sleepers are registered with general practitioners and have access to health services. Successes include being one of the first areas in the country to secure a programme of covid vaccinations for rough sleepers and homeless people led by Worthing Medical Group.

Plans to improve homelessness prevention in prison have started by working with the Probation Service’s CAS3 project, which is intended to provide accommodation to those at risk of being homeless on being released from prison and are not owed a statutory duty

Housing Strategy 2020/2023

In Adur, 15 new homes have been completed at Cecil Norris House and construction has started on a further 6 flats in the district. In Worthing, 19 homes have been completed at Rowlands Road and 8 more homes have been completed as part of the Downview phase 2 development.

Opening Doors Scheme

We have completed a total of 75 lets so far through the Opening Doors Scheme, with a further 14 in the pipeline that we expect to sign up by the end of the year. We have also 'floated off' 16 tenancies, which means that, because they have been successful for two years, the council is no longer liable for the rent guarantees on those properties.

We have also just completed a contract with a property developer, "Crowding Bricks" to secure 21 newly refurbished one-bed properties in Worthing that will be let through the Opening Doors service. Individual landlords are also still showing interest in the scheme, despite the fact that rents are continuing to rise and LHA rates remain frozen.

We are also now working with our HMO emergency accommodation landlords to turn emergency accommodation placements into permanent offers of accommodation, where appropriate, through the Opening Doors scheme. We have completed successfully on two of these with a further two in the pipeline. With rising numbers of single person placements and a lack of available 'move on' accommodation, this is proving to be a very useful method in securing long term accommodation for this group.

HealthyAW

During this period we have completed and signed off our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 'HealthyAW' and the associated Delivery Plan. This strategy sets out our approach over the next two and a half years and our ambition to develop how we work with and enable our communities to thrive, focusing on health inequalities across the following three priorities:

Priority 1 - To improve health and wellbeing for all, focusing most on our communities with the poorest health and wellbeing.

Priority 2 - To create places, spaces, and environments that are sustainable and promote and enable good health and wellbeing

Priority 3 - To promote stronger community resilience in our communities and our workforce

The HealthyAW Delivery Plan outlines what we will do over the next two and a half years and shows the inter connections across many areas of work in the Councils and with external organisations. This is a move towards a systems approach, where we recognise that we live and work within an interconnected, complex context where no one action is divorced from another. The delivery plan therefore aims to help people, including: staff, residents, members and local partners, to make links between their actions and others.

The new HealthAW Delivery Plan will help to drive forward this work. The Autumn Winter Recovery for HealthyAW has been focusing on providing health and wellbeing support for our communities including:

Going Local - Over Q2 2021 (July to September) the service received 325 new referrals for support, an increase of 13% from Q1. We have seen a rise in the complexity of cases, with some key challenges around safeguarding. The main trends over the period were people struggling with their mental health and with feelings of social isolation. The impact of the pandemic has meant that some of the services Going Local would connect people to no longer exist, or now have long waiting lists. To give the team more options for connecting people into local groups there has been an increased focus on the Social Prescribers researching new services in their areas. Over the July to September period the Social Prescribers connected people in Adur & Worthing to 1148 groups and services.

Although referrals into the service remain lower than pre pandemic levels, during this reporting period the **Wellbeing Hubs** have seen a 49% increase in referrals compared to the previous quarter, with Wellbeing Advisors working with 229 people across Adur and Worthing at the time of this update. The lower level of referrals is consistent with other Wellbeing Hubs across the county and could be for a number of reasons, for example: people are reluctant to give up 'props' such as comfort eating, smoking or alcohol whilst still living with uncertainty and the ongoing stressful situation of the pandemic. People may also be more concerned with meeting their basic needs at this time; food, housing, money, rather than their wellbeing. We are noticing an increase in self referrals and informal referrals (where a service has passed on our details to a client but not made the referral themselves). This is perhaps an indication that the usual referral organisations, such as GPs and other health professionals, have other priorities at this time. The initial reasons for referral are mainly related to weight management and eating

healthier. However, it is apparent that for many, there are underlying issues of a more complex nature, which has resulted in their weight gain.

The Wellbeing offer has been increased to six appointments and this increased number of appointments is proving particularly successful at the early engagement stage where people often need to share their personal experience of the pandemic. This allows the Wellbeing Advisor time to build trust to support the client to identify their main priority and also to work through and signpost for other issues such as: feelings of isolation, money worries, bereavement and mental health needs, which need to be dealt with before tackling priorities such as healthy weight management.

We are seeing an increase in emotional eating/binge eating and addictive behaviours in general: smoking, alcohol use, gambling and comfort eating - all of which appear to be linked back to how the pandemic has impacted on people's lives.

The **Alcohol Wellbeing** Advisor has received 25 referrals over this period which is an increase of 75% compared to the previous quarter. We are beginning to notice a number of people who have relapsed, some after having managed their alcohol use for many years. Again this can likely be attributed to the impact of the Covid pandemic on people's lives.

Good Work

We are developing our Good Work approach to connect employment, skills and wellbeing. Our initial focus has been focused on supporting and information and advice. Part of our focus is looking at how, as a large employer for our area, the Councils can provide more employment opportunities to those most impacted by COVID-19 - this includes improving

Thriving People and Communities

our work experience, volunteering and work opportunities for young people, those who are disabled, over 50s and our minoritised ethnic communities.

OneStop has helped 176 employment referrals during the period, with 50 people being offered full time employment, including 90 young people's referrals to the youth hub (started on 06/05/21). We have loaned out over 30 digital devices to provide access to the internet for our most vulnerable residents and signposted 77 referrals to gain digital skills via course or support.

Officers have just secured £66,000 for a **OneStop Employment Youth Hub** - to work in partnership with DWP to support 200 young people (16-24 year olds) who are claiming Universal Credit and who are struggling to find work, and who have additional issues that may prevent them from finding employment. A physical venue is being sourced in Worthing Town Centre to co-locate DWP and Council officers to create opportunities for building stronger professional relationships between our two organisations. This will also provide a safe & friendly space where young people can meet their work coaches and our youth support coaches who will be focusing on supporting personal barriers such as mental health, housing and financial issues to help build resilience during these uncertain times. We are also hoping to provide advice and access to opportunities for young people who might not be claiming Universal Credit

Creating a Space to Collaborate

Part of our 'Covid Response' included a new cloud based case management system that enabled our services to work together and respond at speed to residents in need. Over the last 8 weeks a multi-disciplined team, made up of our Wellbeing Hubs, One Stop (Money, Digital & Employment Support) and

Going Local, have been working together alongside Digital colleagues to further develop this system. Key developments are to include:

- Creating One Front Door for those self referring and referring.
- Improving the quality of referrals, ensuring the service user is getting the right service at the right time.
- To more effectively co-work cases across a number of services.
- To improve the allocation of cases and the management of these.
- Increased data capabilities, providing key information to commissioners, greater insight and gap analysis.

This system will create the space for these teams to continue to improve their practice and more effectively meet/manage the needs of those residents accessing services.

Additional Funding

We have secured additional resources to support this work, including the allocation of £859,000 from Central Government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and £150,000 for round 2 of COMF, which is currently being allocated.

The Councils are also working with WSCC to help ensure the Winter Support Fund and Household Support Grant are used effectively to support our communities during these times.

Safer Communities

We have also been working on the next Safer Communities Strategy which was signed off by the Joint Strategic Committee in October 2021. Work is now being done to develop the Delivery Plan for this work which will be focusing on the following priorities:

- To reduce the harm caused by serious, organised and acquisitive crime
- To Increase safety for vulnerable adults and children
- To improve pathways out of offending and reoffending
- Increase community cohesion and reduce ASB & hate crime
- Reduce public place violent crime with a particular focus on youth safety
- Tackle social inequality and the drivers of crime
- Embed trauma informed practice across partners
- Better understand the experiences of minoritised communities
- Tackle violence against women and girls at every opportunity

Some of our key metrics and achievements during this last period for safer communities include: Co-delivering a Sussex wide conference to embed Contextual Safeguarding, instigating a pilot to reduce school exclusions, contributing to the Social Care transformation process to safeguard children from exploitation, extending mentoring to children struggling to thrive at school, recruiting an additional officer to support those impacted by anti social behaviour, refreshing the Joint Action Group to be more data and intelligence led and training 4 Community Ambassadors to support communities impacted by youth violence and exploitation.

We continue to respond to an extremely high level of anti social behaviour reports- already reaching almost 200 this year. We have conducted two case reviews under the Community Trigger.

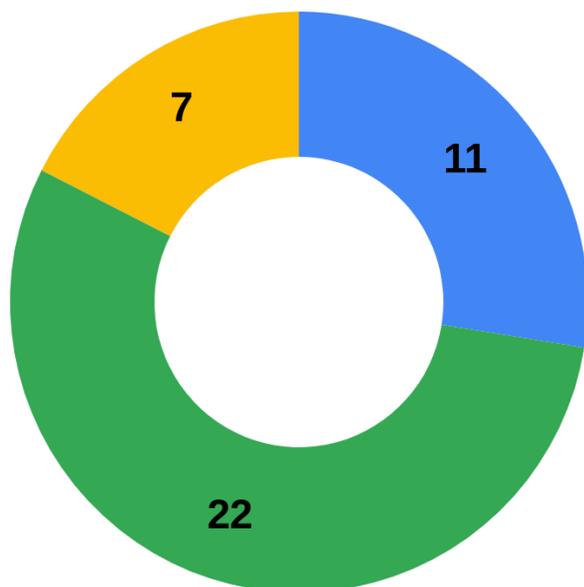
Challenges

Significant challenges during this time have been managing both increasing demand and the complexity of need. Linked to this has been the increasing demands placed on our safeguarding arrangements, created by both greater need and changes to thresholds for support from West Sussex County Council. Work to improve our engagement with our diverse communities, gathering more timely and accurate information remains a focus.

The short term injection of Covid Outbreak Management Fund cash (COMF) has been welcome but the short timescales for spending this have been challenging.

Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

Commitment Tracker



● Blue (complete) ● Green (On track) ● Amber (some issues) ● Red (significant issues)

Overview : Last six months

Significant community engagement work has been undertaken during the last six months, building on the success of the Climate Assembly. The community section of the SustainableAW shared climate and nature plan was completed following engagement with over 200 organisations. The Climate Action AW campaign which ran alongside COP26 helped showcase many local business and community projects as well as council activity.

Platform Highlights

Sustainable Energy

The Councils were recently awarded a £5m grant from central government (BEIS) for the delivery of the **Worthing Heat Network**, a UK leading district heat network scheme to connect 23 buildings including the NHS, councils and the police in Worthing centre using a sewer source heat pump. Aiming to attract an additional £7m of commercial funding, the planned concession model is of interest to project developers across the UK.

Good progress has been made with delivering schemes with the **£2m public sector decarbonisation funding** secured earlier in the year. This includes triple glazing and insulation at Worthing Civic Quarter, solar PV arrays at multiple sites, ground and air source heat pumps at Shadwells Court, Tollbridge House and the Shoreham Centre. A feasibility study for a 3MW solar farm at Dale Road is planned to commence in the next few months.

Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

To date 31 sites are being put forward for installations of **EV charge points** under the WSCC EV network. An Installer was awarded in early November (Connected Kerb) and the first charge points are likely to be installed in AW in Spring 2022. Workplace charge points have been installed at Commerce Way for new EV vans. There are plans to provide EV charge points at Worthing Civic Quarter in the newbuild MSCP where council rental fleet will be parked and can then be switched from hybrid to full EV. The Waste Team is exploring opportunities for Hydrogen fuel for transport and freight vehicles across the Greater Brighton area.

The **Solar Together Sussex (STS)** scheme, supported by Councils across Sussex, including Adur and Worthing Councils, continues to progress well and is in its second phase. STS is a group buying scheme that enables residents to install high-quality, roof-mounted solar panels and battery systems at competitive prices. During the first round almost 50 households installed either solar PV and/or battery storage. During the second round over 400 households in A&W registered interest to have PV and/or battery storage installed in their homes.

We continue to support the **Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Green Homes Grant Programme** in consortia with other South East local authorities. LAD aims to decarbonise homes through installing measures such as insulation, new heating technologies and solar PV to homes EPC rated D,E,F & G. To date, with the SE Warmer Homes Consortium, 63 million pounds worth of investment has been secured and 900 homes across the SE have benefited.

Waste and Recycling

Our **recycling rate** has continued to rise year on year, figures from April - October 2021 show a further 3.16% point increase in Adur and a 5.24% point increase in Worthing, compared to the same period in 2020-2021. We collected 3,349 tonnes of recycling material in Adur, (down 218 tonnes) from 3,567 tonnes and in Worthing we collected 6,41 tonnes, (up 182 tonnes) from 6,237.89 tonnes compared to the same period last year. The recycling percentage point increase was helped by the increase in garden waste collected. Adur & Worthing saw an increase of 5.79% point and 5.58% point increase respectively in the same period compared to last year. Overall we are running at an increase of 4.20% point, when compared to the same period last year and a significant 7.32% point increase when compared to pre alternate weekly collections. (reported as a joint service)

Collected refuse figures for the same period (April - October) this year totalled 6,489 tonnes in Adur, which is a reduction of 334 tonnes. In Worthing we've collected 11,820 tonnes, a reduction of 27 tonnes. Adur has seen a bigger decrease compared to Worthing in part due to the higher number of new properties coming live (in future we will start reporting on volumes of waste and recycling per household to provide more meaningful context). However both have shown a decrease which is positive given the current climate we face.

The **commercial food waste service** was launched in October initially serving a small number of customers on a trial basis. The trial has gone very well helping commercial customers manage their waste more sustainably and reduce costs. A more high profile campaign is now being launched to offer this service more widely.

Tackling Climate Change and Supporting our Natural Environment

Nature Restoration and Protection

The Councils are members of the **Sussex Kelp Restoration Project**, a collaboration of national and local organisations taking an evidence-based approach to tackle the challenges to the restoration of Sussex kelp. We have also initiated a West Sussex Coastal Local Authority Forum to help coordinate action along the coast as the kelp forest returns, working collaboratively on beach management issues.

Linked to this, excellent progress is being made with **Sussex Bay**, the ambitious initiative to drive integrated “blue habitat” restoration along the coast through kelp forest and river estuary restoration. The project is working with DEFRA and many local partners, and has recently successfully engaged the Worthing small boat fishing community in developing plans for the future of sustainable fishing locally. Work is also progressing with the Arun to Adur Farmers Group regarding use of seaweed as fertilizer for soil improvement to tackle the wash up of kelp from winter storms.

The Councils’ land acquisitions for nature restoration are among the most innovative interventions made in the UK by any local authority. Partnership and community working locally is very strong, and restoration plans are progressing well. **The Adur River project** (Pad Farm and New Salts Farm) has passed the Expression of Interest stage with DEFRA test & trials, and funding from this scheme would assist the development of blended finance models for the sites, and support engagement with landowners in the wider river valley.

- The Councils are also part of a wider project across West and East Sussex. The locations selected to be a part of this project includes Steyne Gardens, Kingston Beach and Buckingham Park with links to the

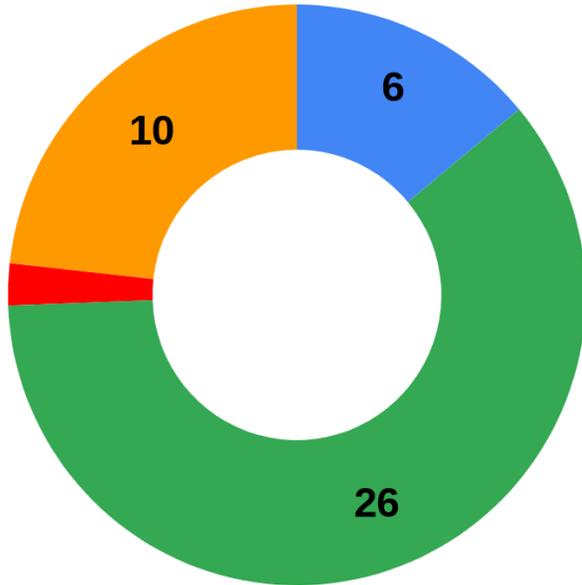
Local Nature Partnership and Health objectives across the region. All aspects of these projects are connected with the local communities and key stakeholders and will define a baseline assessment of the natural conditions of these locations and then work alongside the local community to create a set of recommendations that will include how to fund them, what work is needed to aid nature recovery, what work is needed to bring in ecosystem services into that model and how the community feel / respond to this. These projects will then be replicable over our landscapes.

Platform Challenges: last six months

- We recognise that further strategic work is needed to develop approaches to tackling the 2045 area wide target, which is extremely challenging. We are connecting with partners such as the Green Growth Board and Low Carbon Leaders (an SME group) to explore how to galvanise action across the business community. Domestic heating and transport are the other two major sectors to tackle, and further strategy work will be undertaken Jan-Jun 2022.
- We also plan to develop approaches to Scope 3 emissions, for example the councils’ supply chain, business mileage etc. to extend the work of our councils in tackling carbon emissions.
- Finally, we recognise the need to start to develop a low carbon strategy for Adur Homes social housing, and plan to commence that strategic work following delivery of more critical priorities.
- We recognise that further works on our landscapes are required, including the gathering of baseline data, to better monitor progress.

Good Services and New Solutions

Commitment Tracker



Blue (complete) Green (On track) Amber (some issues) Red (significant issues)

Overview : last six months

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 staff or our communities. Our work to both effectively manage the budget and invest in new ways of working is enabling the councils to respond at speed to community needs, improve service provision, support our staff and better utilise resources.

Platform Highlights:

- With reference to our working practices, **WorkspacesAW** has seen the Councils respond quickly to learning gained through the pandemic. By leasing a part of Portland House, revenue has been generated to support the Councils' finances while providing the financial capacity for significant modernisation of office spaces. WorkspacesAW will deliver different kinds of office space (meeting rooms, quiet spaces, collaboration spaces) while supporting home working and making a **blended model of working** the norm. Our staff travel policy being developed in parallel is helping staff shift modes of transport helping secure reduced commuting and business miles, helping reduce carbon emissions.

Good Services and New Solutions

- Our customer service team has continued to deliver excellent levels of service throughout the post pandemic period, embracing the opportunity to proactively support the most vulnerable, making calls out to help customers facing financial or housing difficulties, and referring them on to further support from housing, well-being or third party support services. This **proactive work**, described in more detail in Platform 2, is data led, person centred, and focuses on improving household income and/or reducing household debt. Customer service has established and led a cross service team that can take a more holistic view of residents to support those already in crisis, and can also take an early intervention approach to minimise the numbers of residents tipping into crisis. A simple pathway has been followed for over 160 residents, with tangible financial and wellbeing outcomes identifiable for many of those. Of those who have engaged with the proactive team, more are now “coping” financially than previously and fewer are “struggling” or “at risk” .
- With new internal service design expertise in place, work to design **Citizen Hub** is underway. Designed to enable joint working across teams and track outcomes for those receiving support, citizen hub will be expanded over time to enable tracking of customer experience end to end, across multiple services.
- The **Good Services Board** has been created to help services meet the Good Services Standard. The Board will use data to help services understand their performance, and get closer to the experiences and needs of their customers.
- **WorkspacesAW** is a programme that aims to deliver post pandemic transformation in our working model. Funded through income generated by the lease of part of Portland House, the refurbishment of Worthing Town Hall will be completed in the spring, providing different types of office space to support blended working.
- Our digital estate continues its migration to the cloud, with the **Revenues & Benefits** system on target for launch in November 2022. The provision of much needed digital self service will be launched in Q1 of 2022/23 and is expected to make a big impact on convenience for customers and should reduce call volumes freeing staff up to support customers proactively.
- Revised **Business Rates bills** have been issued following the government announcement about the reduction in Expanded Retail Relief for the retail, hospitality, leisure & tourism sectors from 1 July.
- Applications for **£500 Test & Trace Support Payment** s for residents who are self-isolating, unable to work from home and suffering a loss of earnings continue to be administered. The scheme has now been extended until 31 March 2022 with more than 3,600 applications received to date.

Good Services and New Solutions

- Our commitment to **developing our staff continues**. This work includes support for our leaders with the quarterly Leadership College bringing around 80 senior managers together to learn and develop together. The second cohort of the Leadership Lab is currently providing development support to 14 of our most talented leaders.
- Our work to deliver best practice in **procurement** continues with a pilot programme exploring the opportunities presented by the procurement green paper. This has identified a number of procurements where greater emphasis will be placed on the opportunities to drive social and environmental value, and local spend.

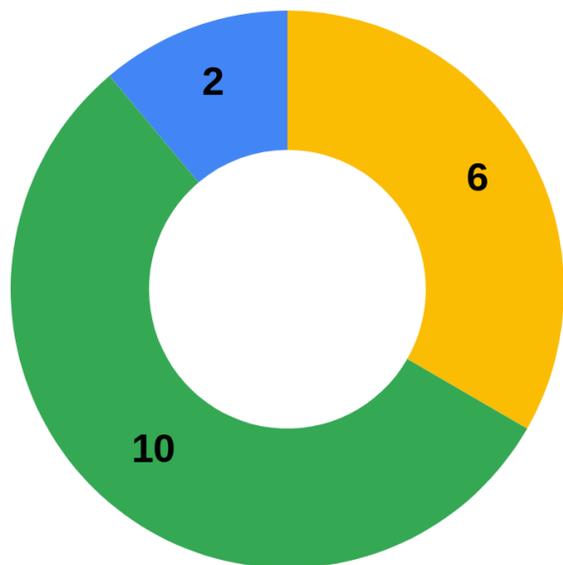
Platform Challenges:

- The implementation of the Revenues & Benefits system into “the cloud” was delayed by several months through a combination of resource pressures and technical challenges. However, the system successfully went live in November 2021 in good time for the annual billing process with no major “go live” issues.
- The Councils have been managing 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 keep within budget and release resources where required for pandemic response.

- The corporate digital asset management system has not progressed as planned (the red item in the donut above), although good progress has been made using the T100 risk management system in relation to tracking asset checks and inspections. The need for a comprehensive asset management system remains, and is being considered in digital prioritisation and planning for 2022/23.

Commitment Tracker



● Blue (complete) ● Green (On track) ● Amber (some issues) ● Red (significant issues)

Overview : last six months

Over the past 6 months the councils have continued their work in supporting residents affected by Covid 19. The councils have actively taken the role of systems leader, helping to address the immediate and longer term issues faced in Adur and Worthing with our partners. Our focus is now very much also on recovery and the development of greater resilience in our communities and local economies, especially over this autumn and winter period. We see our work on **building resilience** as a journey, increasing Adur and Worthing Councils' ability to both respond to the unexpected and be able to develop, change and improve as a result.

We also have an increased focus on the wellbeing of our staff who continue to deliver both the Platforms' ambitions as well as our core services in incredibly challenging conditions. A major learning point from the pandemic is to make sure we focus on resilience and not just efficiency.

In "*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*" we highlighted the need for **strong relationships** with communities, businesses and public service providers locally, regionally and nationally. These relationships have enabled us to be there for our residents and our businesses when they most need us, as described across all four of the preceding Platform reports. An ongoing focus of the Councils is on the development of even stronger relationships, to further strengthen this work, improving the health, wellbeing and long term prosperity of our communities.

Leadership of Place

In this next phase of the pandemic we know our residents and communities are experiencing another set of challenges. **Autumn and Winter recovery** work is therefore a key priority for the councils, working with partners, to ensure our communities and businesses have what they need to thrive through the next phase of the pandemic. In doing this we are working to address the short term impacts of the pandemic as well as the deeper implications for structural inequalities which have been highlighted by the last 20 months.

As we anticipated in “And Then” and previous Platform updates the pandemic and the implications of it have also created new opportunities, for example by intervening in commercial sites, accelerating gigabit build out, supporting community action, developing skills opportunities, and progressing our ambitious sustainability agenda. Officers and Members have continued to work extremely well together and with our partners and communities to seize these opportunities.

We are now starting to gather the learning and experience from the Platforms strategy in order to inform what comes next, in doing so we are looking both at how we work together internally and externally as well as what has worked and the outcomes which we have achieved - and want to achieve in the future.

Platform Highlights : last six months

Critical Relationships - The councils continue to maintain and develop a diverse and ever increasing set of partnerships including housing partners, the community and voluntary sector, the NHS, Police and Community Safety

organisations. Our relationships with other Districts and Boroughs continue to be positive and we are keen to further cultivate these for example through strategic work such as Sussex Bay. Our work with West Sussex County Council in many areas is also progressing well and this will need to develop further if we are to successfully implement policy changes such as the Environment Act and the Health and Social care reform agenda plus other areas of shared priority including the relocation of Afghan Refugees. At a regional level the Local Resilience Forum has continued to be invaluable, bringing together a variety of local players to deal with the pandemic response at a Sussex wide level. Our work with the Local Economic Partnership and the Greater Brighton Economic Board continues, supporting our ambitions around place, prosperity and sustainability.

Place Campaigns- “Time for Worthing” is guided by a management board made up of local businesses, partners and third sector organisations. The focus of Time for Worthing continues to include the visitor economy, seeking to rebuild its previous successes of three million visitors a year, delivering an estimated value of £200m to the local economy. As part of this work a total of 30,000 copies of the Time for Worthing summer guide were distributed across the region to entice people to our blue and green spaces including the newly reopened Highdown Gardens, as well as inspiration for enjoying local restaurants and bars and independent shops. The **Christmas Campaign** was launched in late November supporting the reopening of the economy and local high street shopping. As part of this work, Time for Worthing is supporting the Town Centre Initiative’s **local gift card** that aims to keep Christmas spending local. The card is valid in independent and national

businesses across the Town Centre including participating shops, bars, eateries, leisure, and cultural venues.

Community and Voluntary Sector - Our relationship with the local Community and Voluntary Sector continues to develop and mature. With funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) we have been able to further support the local food partnership and other mutual aid groups in Adur and Worthing. For example, we are working with food groups to increase community partnership working and resilience by developing shared food storage facilities in Worthing (Queen Street), Lancing (the Old Police Station), Shoreham (the Shoreham Centre) and Fishersgate (the Gateway building).

Community Participation - We have also begun to further develop our Asset Based Community Development practice to improve and strengthen our work with communities. A project under development is our Minoritised Ethnic Community engagement project that aims to develop collaborative working relationships with minoritised ethnic community partners and organisations, helping to inform the development of the Councils' policies and services going forward.

Community Safety - We have been working with the Sussex Police and our community safety partners on the development and agreement of the new Safer Communities Strategy which was signed off by the Joint Strategic Committee in October 2021. Work is now being done to develop the Delivery Plan for this work which will be focusing on the following priorities:

- To reduce the harm caused by serious, organised and acquisitive crime
- To Increase safety for vulnerable adults and children
- To improve pathways out of offending and reoffending
- Increase community cohesion and reduce ASB & hate crime
- Reduce public place violent crime with a particular focus on youth safety
- Tackle social inequality and the drivers of crime
- Embed trauma informed practice across partners
- Better understand the experiences of minoritised communities
- Tackle violence against women and girls at every opportunity

Health And Wellbeing - The HealthyAW Delivery Plan was agreed in the Autumn and outlines what we will do over the next two and a half years to improve health wellbeing in Adur and Worthing. The plan is part of our system leadership, mapping and working with the inter connections within, between and across areas of work in the Councils and beyond, to external organisations. The strategy focuses on health inequities across the following three priorities:

- **Priority 1** - To improve health and wellbeing for all, focusing most on our communities with the poorest health and wellbeing.
- **Priority 2** - To create places, spaces, and environments that are sustainable and promote and enable good health and wellbeing
- **Priority 3** - To promote stronger community resilience in our communities and our workforce

Housing and Homelessness - Housing partnerships continue to work well together, skillfully and compassionately seeking to provide rapid and comprehensive support to those affected by homelessness. We have continued to make progress in tackling homelessness. The impacts of domestic violence, unemployment and family breakdowns have taken their toll and we are seeing this reflected in those presenting as homeless. Partners are working well together in constantly reviewing cases to ensure we are able to prevent homelessness and assist residents with housing problems. Our developing 'Opening Door's' partnership with local landlords continues to grow and assist with housing needs. Work with local charities and the County Council continues helping to home and support Afghan refugee families.

Nature Restoration and Protection - The Councils are members of the Sussex Kelp Restoration Project, a collaboration of national and local organisations taking an evidence-based approach to tackle the challenges to the restoration of Sussex kelp. Linked to this work, excellent progress is being made with **Sussex Bay**, the ambitious initiative to drive integrated "blue habitat" restoration along the coast through kelp forest and river estuary restoration. The project is working with DEFRA and many local partners, and has recently successfully engaged the Worthing small boat fishing community in developing plans for the future of sustainable fishing locally. Work is also progressing with the Arun to Adur Farmers' Group regarding use of seaweed as fertilizer for soil improvement to tackle the wash up of kelp from winter storms.

Good Work - We are developing our Good Work approach as part of our autumn winter recovery programme, seeking to develop opportunities for those most impacted by COVID-19 - this includes work opportunities for young people, those who are disabled, over 50s and our minoritised ethnic communities. The programme uniquely undertakes this work through an integrated approach to wellbeing, skill development and employment support. Officers have just secured £66,000 for a **OneStop Employment Youth Hub** - to work in partnership with DWP to support 200 young people (16-24 year olds) who are claiming Universal Credit and who are struggling to find work, and who have additional issues that may prevent them to find employment. A physical venue is being sourced in Worthing Town Centre to co-locate DWP and Council officers to create opportunities for building stronger professional relationships between our two organisations. This will also provide a safe & friendly space where young people can meet their work coaches and our youth support coaches who will be focusing on supporting personal barriers such as mental health, housing and financial issues to help build resilience during these uncertain times.

Emergency Planning and Civil Contingency Work - In "*Platforms for our Places : Going Further*" the importance of Emergency Planning and Civil Contingency work was emphasised. Over the past 24 months we have been working with West Sussex County Council, the lead authority for public health, to ensure that vulnerable people in our communities are supported. This work has been wide ranging and as described above, includes secure housing, developing and strengthening our food system, supporting people



Leadership of Place

with their finances (including those that need to self isolate), mental health support, addiction services, developing a good work agenda and promoting safety.