

Report to Cabinet

January 2021

WSCC Reset Plan (2021/22 – 2024/25)

Report by: Chief Executive

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

This report sets out the second iteration of West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) corporate plan – the Reset Plan – and the process that has been taken to develop it during 2020.

This builds on the first iteration of the plan, which was approved by Full Council in December 2020 and presents the key performance indicators and targets for the priorities, outcomes and activities that were already agreed. It also includes an overview of how the Council will spend its money in 2020/21, which will be updated once the 2021/22 budget has been agreed and will form the budget envelope for the Reset Plan to be delivered (appendix 2a and 2b). Finally, it includes a plan for how equality impact will be assessed as the plan is implemented. (appendix 3)

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

Approve the Reset Plan and supporting documents (Appendices 1-3) for further consideration by the County Council at its February 2021 meeting.

1 Background and context

- 1.1 Our experience of supporting communities through Covid-19 has helped the County Council consolidate and strengthen the progress that had already started. In the first wave of the pandemic, staff were redeployed, partnership working was accelerated, and we have transformed our digital capability, supporting a predominantly remote workforce. As we continue to deal with the ongoing pandemic, we are building on what have done in 2020 and reflecting it in the Reset Plan.
- 1.2 Although we have made significant progress in key service areas like Children's Services, Fire & Rescue as well as with our corporate governance, we must not forget where we were before the pandemic. We know we needed to change and the good governance project identified key areas for us to focus on, including a

commitment to put residents at the heart of everything we do; to create strong and visible collective member and officer leadership; to work closely with partners; to invest in and value our staff; and to make the way we work as straightforward as possible.

- 1.3 We have demonstrated to ourselves and to others during Covid-19 what we are capable of and the uncompromising commitment of members and our workforce to the residents of West Sussex. We have shown through the cooperation across the health and social care sector and the formation of the community hubs, that we can work well with partners. Things are different already, but we need to keep changing to build on the progress we have made.
- 1.4 It is vital that the County Council develops an integrated business and financial planning cycle that is based on a good understanding of the local evidence base, the national and local policy context, a comprehensive understanding of the financial position (revenue and capital) and the service challenges in meeting the needs of residents, businesses and communities.
- 1.5 The process we have taken to develop this plan has brought together our policy, business, financial planning and risk management processes. The plan will be the vehicle for the County Council's decision making and planning to ensure we are making the very best use of the resources available, understanding the value for money we deliver and focussed on our priority outcomes. It will also ensure we understand the implications of the tough choices that we may need to make in the face of huge resource and demand challenges and a continued uncertain future.

2 Principles

- 2.1 Given the financial challenge we face and the changing nature of demand on our services, we know we have to reset our priorities now, but we must do it in a way that is collaborative and inclusive. As such, we have developed the Reset Plan with staff, partners and elected members to ensure we go on the journey together and make the plan real and focused on the most important things we all need to do in West Sussex. We must do all of this by making the best use of the funding we have.
- 2.2 We have been working to a set of principles agreed at Full Council in July 2020, which underpin the approach we are taking.

Table 1 – Principles

Principle	What we are aiming for
1. Led and made in West Sussex reflecting residents, communities and businesses needs and building on our strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan with a sense of identity for West Sussex • A plan that is developed and owned by our staff, partners and elected Members

2. Strong learning from our own and others' experiences including COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pausing, listening and reflecting great work we know about • Reflecting what our communities need most from us
3. Based in realistic optimism and a sustainable business plan (performance, resources and risks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a sense of direction and are clear on what we are doing and how we will know we've been successful • We prioritise what we do and deliver within the smaller budget envelope we now have
4. Held together consistently with a focus on agreed priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan that focuses on the outcomes we want to see for West Sussex and we can say which priority we deliver on and the role WSCC staff play to achieve them
5. Providing clarity about what successful outcomes look like in 12 months' time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a clear set of measures that everyone understands and will tell us if we've been successful

3 Developing the Reset Plan

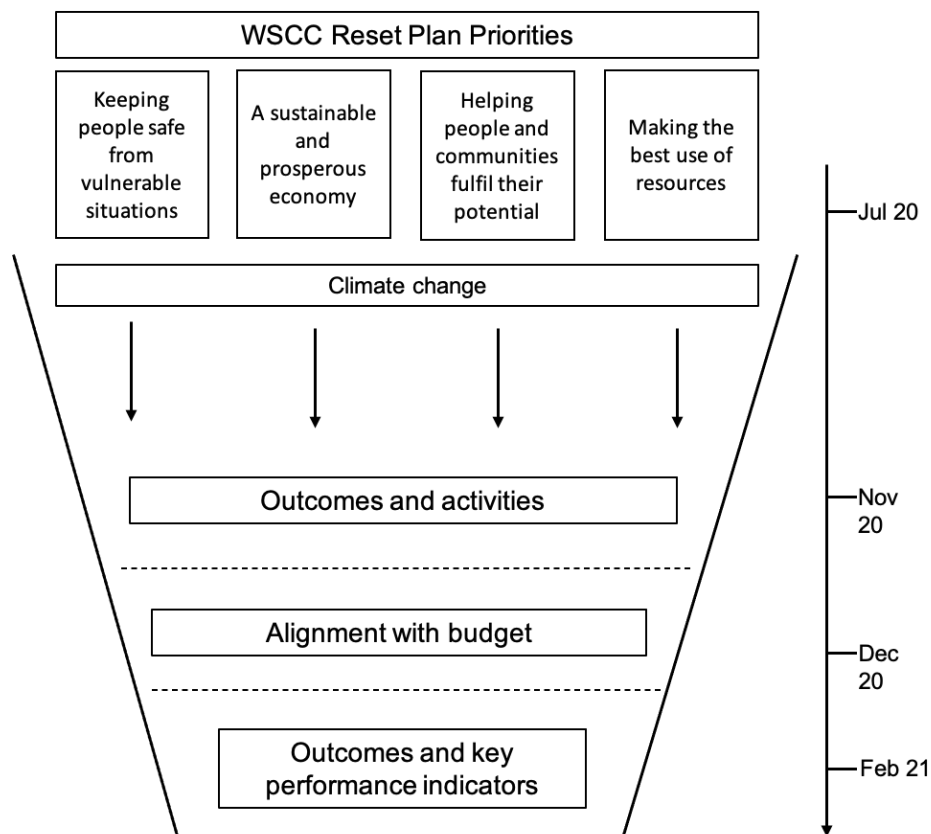
3.1 A collaborative approach has been taken to developing the Reset Plan, by involving staff, partners and elected members in the process and using the research we have already done with residents (including during Covid-19) to reflect what we should focus on and why. We have used our learning from the Good Governance Project and existing improvement activity already taking place across the organisation to develop the content. This has meant that we have a plan that is being 'led and made in West Sussex' and can be built upon further. The following activities have been part of the process:

- Covid-19 resident research (Summer 2020) – we have used the survey conducted after the first wave of the pandemic to gauge what is important to residents and what needs to be prioritised in the plan
- Workshops with WSCC staff and external partners (October 2020) – workshops involving the top 100 senior managers in WSCC and more than 50 partners from across West Sussex have provided an opportunity to build a plan that is both reflective of what WSCC will do on its own and in partnership with others
- Webchat with WSCC staff (October 2020) – Becky Shaw hosted an online conversation with WSCC staff where staff were able to ask questions and suggest what they thought should be reflected in the plan

- The Big Exchange (October 2020) – WSCC staff were able to post ideas and suggestions on what they wanted to see in the plan using an online platform available to all staff
- Community conversations (October 2020) – led by the WSCC Communities team, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with voluntary and community sector organisations and other local public bodies
- Elected member engagement (November 2020) – we hosted an all-Member workshop where we shared the first iteration of the plan and captured views on the content. Feedback has been captured in the second iteration of the plan.
- Engagement with MPs and District and Borough Council Leaders (November 2020) – we have shared the first iteration of the plan with local leaders and MPs and sought feedback, which has been fed into the plan
- Scrutiny (December 2020) – the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee responded to a recommendation from Cabinet to develop a set of principles and methods for the scrutiny of the Plan once it has been approved. These are reflected in section 5 below and have been used to develop the key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets in the plan.

3.2 Figure 1 below summarises the iterative approach we have taken to develop the plan since its development was agreed by full Council in July 2020.

Figure 1 – the iterative approach to developing the plan



4 Reset Plan priorities and delivery outcomes

- 4.1 The process we have taken has enabled us to iterate the four priority outcomes underpinned by the theme of climate change agreed by Full Council in July 2020. Through the engagement we have been able to shape the outcomes we want to see and update these in this iteration to reflect the feedback we have received in the past few months. The priorities and revised outcomes are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Reset Plan priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcomes we want to achieve
1. Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A timely and proportionate approach to prevention• Support to people when they need it
2. A sustainable and prosperous economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resetting and rebooting the local economy• Achieving social value in West Sussex• Sustainable growth by developing modern infrastructure• Supporting people to develop the skills they need for the future• A sustainable economy that tackles climate change• Working in partnership
3. Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to excellent education and learning• Tackling inequality• Promoting and enabling independence• Safe, connected and cohesive communities
4. Making the best use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working together as 'one council'• Getting the best from our people• Maximising our income and the productivity of our assets• Value for money• Working in partnership

5 Monitoring performance and impact

- 5.1 It is important that we are able to measure our performance and the impact that the activities in the plan will have over the four-year period. There are two distinct roles here:
- Cabinet - to set the priorities, outcomes and activities in the plan, along with a set of key performance indicators and targets that will be used to measure its performance and hold council officers to account.

- Scrutiny committees – to use the key performance indicators and targets set by Cabinet to monitor the impact that parts of the plan aligned to the relevant committee’s remit is having across West Sussex, and in doing so hold Cabinet to account on the delivery of the plan.

5.2 In line with Principle 1 in Table 1, in November 2020 Cabinet recommended that the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee consider the expectations and principles that should drive scrutiny of corporate performance and how scrutiny committees could be supported in that task. The committee took forward this recommendation at their meeting in December 2020 and put forward some overarching principles on performance management to be followed:

- KPIs need to be ambitious and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound)
- The plan needed to include ‘value for money’ indicators to retain focus on financial management
- Where possible, ensure KPIs are able to be benchmarked for comparison with statistical neighbours
- Where possible, ensure KPIs allow for trend analysis to track progress year-on-year

5.3 We have used these recommendations and industry best practice to shape a range of key performance indicators and targets that will help measure the impact we will have on the outcomes set out in the plan. There are 53 KPIs which are set out alongside the Reset plan priorities and outcomes in Appendix 1. These KPIs are few in number as they are designed to be the top indicators that WSCC services will use to track progress against the Reset Plan. Services will continue to use more detailed KPIs (including statutory indicators) in more detailed business plans that will sit under the Reset Plan. More details are in section 6 below.

5.4 The KPIs set out in the plan vary depending on the nature of what is being delivered or achieved. For example, some KPIs track year-on-year progress towards a goal over the duration of the plan; some track projects that will be delivered by a certain date and therefore do not have a year-on-year target after that date; and some have targets where particular years need to be defined once we are clear on issues that are outside of our control, e.g. national policy. In all cases, we will keep the KPIs and targets under review on a regular basis and add, remove or update KPIs to ensure we continue to measure impact in the right way.

6 Delivering the Reset Plan

6.1 2020 has shown us how important it is to plan for the future but remain flexible enough to respond quickly to the changing needs of our communities and the demands on WSCC. The Reset Plan is no different and needs to be a plan that is live and can be updated to focus on what is needed.

6.2 At this juncture, we will now begin planning for the implementation of the Reset Plan, ensuring we continue to take the learning from the Good Governance project forward. This will include putting in place the structures and governance inside WSCC to oversee delivery of the plan and a regular cycle of planning,

implementation and review to ensure the plan remains live and reflective of WSCC priorities. WSCC will develop a set of business plans containing more detail on how and when the activities in the Reset Plan will be delivered, and any further KPIs that will be used to track progress at a more operational level. In line with our commitment to transparency, we will continue to publish progress against the Reset Plan KPIs on the Council's website.

- 6.3 This business planning and performance management routine will support Cabinet to retain oversight of the plan, while also enabling Scrutiny Committees to hold Cabinet to account.

7 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 7.1 We have taken a collaborative approach to developing the plan, using existing research with residents and engaging WSCC staff, partners and elected members in the process.
- 7.2 Further consultation, engagement and advice will take place as the plan is implemented.

8 Finance

- 8.1 The approach set out above is in alignment with the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for West Sussex County Council and supports the delivery of a balanced budget for 2021/22 in accordance with the Council's statutory duty.
- 8.2 Appendices 2a and 2b set out how and where the Council currently spends its money in 2020/21. Once the budget for 2021/22 has been agreed, these figures will be updated to reflect the current budget of the Council. The Reset Plan will be delivered within the Council's budget envelope.

9 Risk implications and mitigations

- 9.1 It is critical that the council has a corporate plan in place, as it articulates the purpose of the organisation, its areas of focus and priorities, the core outcomes it wants to achieve for residents and how it will measure success. Crucially, it also determines where the organisation will spend its money and therefore must be aligned to the budget and medium term financial strategy. The following risks have been identified and mitigations put in place:

Table 3

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Not having a corporate plan	We have taken an iterative approach to developing the plan, with the first version approved by Full Council in December 2020. This final version of the plan will commence from April 2021 and will replace the existing West Sussex Plan.
The budget is not aligned to the Reset Plan	The budget process has run alongside the Reset Plan process throughout its development. The Reset Plan is deliverable within the resources that WSCC currently has.

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
It is not clear what success looks like	This final version of the plan contains a set of key performance indicators and targets over the four-year period (where applicable) which sets out what success looks like

10 Policy alignment and compliance

- 10.1 The Reset Plan will become WSCC’s corporate plan and will therefore be the foundation for policy development, governance and compliance.
- 10.2 Climate change is an underpinning theme in the Reset Plan and has been considered at every stage of the plan’s development. The Council’s Climate Change Strategy is a core part of the draft plan and the KPIs relating to climate change are highlighted in the plan.
- 10.3 The Council’s Social Value Framework is referenced in the draft plan and will be a core part of how we get the most for local people from the £600m that the Council spends each year.

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 – WSCC Reset Plan
- Appendices 2a and 2b – How we spend our money 2020/21 (revenue and capital)
- Appendix 3 – Plan for assessing equality impact