

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2021

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

#### FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

##### 1. Purpose of report

- a) To present the items previously proposed for the interim Forward Work Programme, following consideration of the quarter 2 Performance Update at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) on 14 January 2021 including those items proposed for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees (SOSC);
- b) To request the Committee to review the Forward Work Programme items proposed;
- c) To request the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the schedule of Scrutiny meetings for 2020-21, using the agreed Criteria Form.

##### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Under the terms of the Council's Constitution, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee must publish a Forward Work Programme (FWP) as far as it is known.
- 3.2 An effective FWP will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear rationale as to why particular issues have been selected, as well as the approach that will be adopted; i.e. will the Committee be undertaking a policy review/ development role ("Overview") or performance management approach ("Scrutiny").
- 3.3 The FWPs will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any information gathered from FWP meetings with Corporate Directors and Cabinet.

#### Scrutiny Update

- 3.4 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, the scheduling of standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees upon: the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance, the Corporate Plan, Budget Monitoring, Scrutiny Annual Report, etc. were mapped.
- 3.5 Forward Work Programme Update reports were submitted to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees held in October / November 2020 for consideration, and to be fed back to this Committee to set a focused overall Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.
- 3.6 Due to the revised timing of the Local Government financial settlement from Welsh Government, scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was considered by Scrutiny Committees after Cabinet considers draft MTFS proposals on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and not in the December cycle of meetings as originally planned and arrangements were made to move the date of the January meetings to facilitate this, as approved by Council on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- 3.7 At the round of SOSC meetings held in October / November 2020, the Committees received Forward Work Programme Updates and agreed to receive updated briefings from the relevant Corporate Director on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon their Service areas and the operational response, in their meetings in December and that the MTFS would be considered in the January cycle of meetings.

#### Identification of Further Items

- 3.8 The SOSCs were also asked whether they wished to identify any further items for consideration on the interim Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings, using the prior agreed Criteria Form. The Committee are reminded of the Criteria Form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to ensure a strategic responsibility for Scrutiny and that its work benefits the Authority. The SOSCs agreed it would be prudent to wait until

the Corporate Directors reported to their December meetings, before identifying further items for consideration for inclusion in the Forward Work Programme.

#### **4. Current situation / proposal**

- 4.1 Members will be aware that this is the last cycle of Scrutiny Meetings within the original schedule of Scrutiny Meetings for 2020-21 agreed by Council, with COSC on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, SOSC 1 on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, SOSC 2 on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and SOSC 3 on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- 4.2 In the December round of SOSC meetings SOSC 1 proposed a report upon Blended / hybrid / remote learning including safeguarding (welfare and wellbeing) as an item for their Work Programme for the next meeting, which has been scheduled for the meeting of SOSC 1 on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- 4.3 At the meeting of COSC held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 following consideration of the quarter 2 Performance Update report, the Committee confirmed the following proposed items identified for the Forward Work Programme:
- Stress Related Sickness Absence (COSC)
  - Safeguarding (SOSC2)
  - Future Waste Contract (SOSC3)
  - Town Centre Masterplan (post consultation) COSC
  - In the medium-term: the effect of the Pandemic upon the delivery of the Corporate Plan (Cross-Party Recovery Panel /COSC)
  - In the long-term: Corporate Tender Contract and Procurement Policies / Procedures when appropriate. (COSC)

#### Corporate Parenting

- 4.4 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a Local Authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.
- 4.5 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 4.6 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 The work of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council constitution to be updated.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There are no equality impacts arising directly from this report.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.
- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service, Elected Members and members of the public.
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that the public and stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 The delivery of the Forward Work Programme will be met from within existing resources for Overview and Scrutiny support.

## 9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider the items previously proposed for the interim Forward Work Programme, following consideration of the quarter 2 Performance Update at COSC on 14 January 2021 including those items proposed for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- b) Review the Forward Work Programme items proposed as outlined at paragraph 4.3;
- c) Identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the schedule of Scrutiny meetings for 2020-21, using the agreed Criteria Form.

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**25 February 2021**

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**Background documents:** None