

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

31 JANUARY 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 28

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the draft Corporate Plan 2023-28, which sets out the policy context, ways of working and well-being objectives for the Council.

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

- 2.1 This report proposes replacements for 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 The Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identify the Council's service and resource priorities for the coming years. The Council's current Corporate Plan will come to an end in March 2023. An approach to the development of a replacement plan was proposed in a briefing for all members on 8 November 2022.
- 3.2 The Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 ("the Act") states that public bodies, including local authorities, must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The actions we must take include:

- a. setting and publishing well-being objectives that are designed to maximise our contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals; and
- b. taking all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet those objectives.

3.3 There are 7 wellbeing goals for Wales, set out in the Act. We must demonstrate our contribution to each of these goals, which are –

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

3.4 The Council must also consider the 5 ways of working as it develops the new Corporate Plan. These are –

- Long term - balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs
- Prevention - acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse to help the Council meet its objectives
- Integration – thinking about how its wellbeing goals will contribute to the 7 national goals, on its other objectives and on partners objectives.
- Collaboration – working across different parts of the Council and partners to achieve its objectives
- Involvement - involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring those people reflect the diversity of its area.

3.5 The Corporate Plan is the Council's main vehicle for demonstrating and communicating the priorities to local people and businesses. It is also an important part of the assurance framework for its regulators. Audit Wales intend to test approaches to developing the Corporate Plan (especially the well-being objectives) across Wales over the next 6 months. They will be testing:

- **Planning** – Was the process the body put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle? Their Key Lines of Enquiry (KLoEs) focus on the Council's use of information, involving others and focusing on long and short term activities.
- **Resourcing and delivery** - Has the body considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle? KLoEs focus on the Council's resource allocation and work with partners.
- **Monitor and review**: Has the body put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle

when setting its well-being objectives? KLoEs focus on measurement and monitoring, self-awareness and reflection on the past.

- 3.6 Welsh Government are also taking a keen interest in the development of well-being objectives, in line with the evolution of the Social Partnership Bill and guidance. They are keen to see evidence of the Council working with staff and Trade Unions on the development of its approach, well-being objectives and plan.

Use of research, data and information to inform the Corporate Plan

- 3.7 A series of desktop reviews were completed by the Policy, Performance and Public Affairs Team, presented as a think piece to Corporate Management Board (CMB) on 7 December 2022. The research focused on:

- Existing, agreed priorities that the Council should consider in developing its Corporate Plan e.g. Public Services Board (PSB plan, Regional Partnership Board (RPB) plan, Health board, police and Housing associations' plans, national plans, including the Future Generations Commissioner's plan and Welsh Government's Programme for Government.
- Views on the Council's existing plans, performance, services and areas for particular improvement in the coming year e.g. self-assessment judgements, budget consultation / other consultations, staff survey, regulator inspections.
- Local, regional or national data, intelligence and evidence we should use to inform our plan and objectives e.g. PSB wellbeing assessment, RPB population assessment, regulators' national studies, poverty data, wellbeing tool, net zero comparison tool, National Resources Wales (NRW) State of Natural Resources Report (Sonarr) and area plans.
- Other Councils' corporate plan priorities and measures.

- 3.8 Further research has been completed to look at the use of performance information across Wales, performance indicators included in corporate plans, presentation of performance information, and benchmarking across Wales. This was presented to CMB on 11 January 2023.

Use of engagement, involvement and consultation to inform the corporate plan

- 3.9 Phase 1 of engagement and involvement focused on the approach to the development of the Corporate Plan and wellbeing objectives.

- 3.10 Phase 2 engagement focused on the draft principles and well-being objectives. Engagement has included –

- A session with Bridgend PSB to discuss how the Corporate Plan fits alongside the PSB plan and other partner plans
- Questions in the staff survey and discussions with CMB and Heads of Service
- Monthly discussion and updates with Trade Unions
- Questions in the budget consultation
- A discussion and engagement session with the Youth Council

- Discussion sessions with political groups

3.11 The Council's engagement demonstrated that those involved were largely satisfied with the proposed approach and contributed numerous useful suggestions, including –

- Focus and audience for the report – putting residents first, focusing on responsiveness and communications
- Content of the report – focusing on core behaviours and principles as well as well-being objectives, clarifying the financial situation in simple terms, introducing the idea of a new operating model with fewer services and additional roles / responsibilities for residents and the third sector, work with specific communities or geographical areas, looking at the long term rather than being reactive, looking at a range of resources to support services and improvement.
- Format of the report – keeping the report short and making it clear and accessible with infographics, images, videos etc
- Review of the report and performance management framework– learning from other organisations' corporate plans, having challenging targets and a clear and robust performance and review framework.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The research and engagement feedback have been brought together into a set of draft principles and well-being objectives, presented to Corporate Management Board on 7 December 2022. These have formed part of the annual budget consultation (which closed on 22 January 2023) and the staff survey (which closed on 26 January 2023), and have been discussed with Cabinet Members, and political groups.

4.2 A draft Corporate Plan has also been developed. It is brief and accessible with simple language, wide use of infographics (although these will be developed by the designers following council approval) and a focus on principles / ways of working as well as the wellbeing objectives. There is a focus throughout the report on the financial situation and need for change, putting residents first and improving responsiveness and communications as well as personal / community responsibility alongside Council services. The draft Corporate Plan is included at **Appendix 1**.

4.3 The research showed that around half of Welsh local authorities do not include performance indicators in their corporate plans at all, instead developing annual delivery plans to cover Performance Indicators (PIs) and targets. This has many benefits, as detailed below, and it is proposed that this is the approach taken for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC):

- Providing less rushed timescales for producing the Corporate Plan
- Enabling the Council to produce a shorter, more accessible Corporate Plan with less technical detail
- Allowing flexibility to change the course of action when needed

- Allowing for additional engagement and involvement of staff, trade unions and members (particularly scrutiny members) in the development of performance indicators in March and April 2023.

4.4 The draft principles or ways of working (which have recently been out for consultation in the budget consultation and the staff survey) are –

- Improving responsiveness to residents, making communication faster, more honest, and accessible
- Supporting communities to create their own solutions and reduce dependence on the Council
- Stopping or reducing services that aren't highly valued or well used
- Using resources in more planned and efficient ways, focusing them on those in the greatest need
- Acting as one Council working with partner organisations for the good of communities

The principles will need to be properly defined, and the mechanisms to drive them and measure their progress will need to be developed and agreed. The detail of this section of the Corporate Plan is currently being completed by Corporate Management Board, following closure of the budget consultation and staff survey. As a result, only a short outline of this section is included in the draft Corporate Plan in Appendix 1.

4.5 The draft well-being objectives (which have also recently been out for consultation in the budget consultation and staff survey) are –

- A county borough where we protect our most vulnerable
- A county borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
- A county borough with thriving Valleys communities
- A county borough where we help people meet their potential
- A county borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
- A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
- A county borough where we support people to be healthy and happy

The detail of this section of the corporate plan is currently being completed by the Heads of Service Board, following closure of the budget consultation and staff survey. As a result, only a skeleton of this section is included in the draft Corporate Plan in Appendix 1.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 Performance against the Corporate Plan forms part of the Council's Performance Management Framework. The draft Corporate Plan proposes an update to the Performance Management Framework.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 A high level Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out and included within the final Corporate Plan in February 2023. The high-level EIA considers the impact of the strategy, policy or proposal on the nine protected characteristics, the Socio-economic Duty and the use of the Welsh Language.
- 6.2 The proposals contained within this report cover a wide range of services and it is inevitable that the prioritisation or deprioritisation of services will impact on the local population in different ways. In developing these proposals, consideration has been given to their potential impact on protected groups within the community and on how to avoid a disproportionate impact on people within these groups.

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

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered when writing this report. It is considered there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of the existing well-being goals as a result of this report.
- 7.2 The report proposes replacement well-being goals / objectives in line with the requirements of the Act.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The report has been developed in tandem with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy so that they support each other.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the key issues and draft Corporate Plan and make comment upon the report.

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