

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

21 FEBRUARY 2023

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### CORPORATE PLAN 2023-28

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's Corporate Plan and seek endorsement from Cabinet for the Corporate Plan 2023-28, attached as **Appendix 1**, prior to submission to Council for approval on 1 March 2023.

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

- 2.1 This report proposes replacements for the following current 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 Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-2027 is being presented to Council for approval on 1 March 2023 alongside the updated Corporate Plan 2023-28. The two documents are aligned to each other, enabling the reader to make explicit links between the Council's well-being objectives and the resources directed to support them.
- 3.2 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (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 the Council must take include:

- a. setting and publishing well-being objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals; and
- b. taking all reasonable steps 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, including:

- **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 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, to reflect 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 Corporate Management Board (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 The Council's Phase 1 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.

3.11 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 ‘Shaping Bridgend’s Future 2022 budget consultation
- A discussion and engagement session with the Youth Council
- Discussion sessions with political groups

3.12 Phase 2 engagement from the budget consultation showed that 1,009 people responded to the question about the new ways of working for the Council and 1,025 people responded to the questions about the new proposed well-being objectives. Of those, 805 people (80%) were satisfied with the proposed principles, a high rate of satisfaction. Similarly, 793 people (77%) were satisfied with the proposed Wellbeing Objectives. The main comments and criticisms were:–

- Criticism of two of the principles (stopping or cutting services and helping communities to find their own solutions) which were felt to be very negative and would need more consideration and consultation
- There should be more focus on Bridgend Town Centre and tourism in Porthcawl
- There should be a clear focus on listening to local communities and acting on their views
- There should be more focus on universal, high-quality services for all Council taxpayers
- The wording of the Objectives was positive and aspirational but lacked a clear link to Council services

3.13 Youth Council, on 18 January 2023 provided the following feedback:-

- Criticism of the same two principles which were felt to be very negative and would need more consideration and consultation
- Would like to see a stronger focus on employment for young people
- Would like to see a stronger focus on arts and music in schools
- General agreement with the inclusion of a separate Valleys objective, as they believed the challenges faced were different/ worse than in the towns

3.14 Responses from the Staff Survey showed that 911 people responded to the question about principles and objectives, of those 829 people (90%) were

satisfied with the principles and 840 people (92%) were satisfied with the objectives. The main comments and criticisms were:–

- Criticism of two of the principles which were felt to be very negative and would need more consideration and consultation
- There should be more focus on Bridgend Town Centre and tourism in Porthcawl
- There should be something in the objectives to focus on staff welfare, recruitment and pay.
- The wording of the Objectives was positive and aspirational but lacked a clear link to council services.

3.15 Phase 3 engagement focused on the draft Corporate Plan with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.16 Phase 3 engagement feedback from discussions with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee were as follows:-

- The wording of some of the principles (and the icons that represent them) was negative and they should be more focused on positive aims and aspirations for the Council
- Positive feedback about the cost of services diagram but would like to see the information per household, or even per household per day
- There should be a clear focus on listening to local communities and acting on their views
- The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee were keen to be involved in the development of the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan

3.17 The findings from all of the consultation and engagement work has been thoroughly considered and shaped the final version of the Corporate Plan. Some of the feedback was not consistent and therefore the Council has sought to achieve an overall balance. The most significant changes made following consultation and engagement and summarised in paragraph 4.6.

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

4.1 The research and early engagement feedback were brought together into a set of draft principles and wellbeing objectives, which formed part of the annual budget consultation and the staff survey, and were discussed with Cabinet Members, and political groups.

4.2 These principles and wellbeing objectives have been brought together in the draft Corporate Plan attached at Appendix 1. 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 well-being 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.

4.3 The research undertaken showed that around half of Welsh local authorities do not include performance indicators in their corporate plans at all, instead

develop 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 been updated to reflect the findings of the budget consultation, staff survey and Scrutiny Committee feedback) are –

- Better and more targeted use of resources
- One Council, working well together and with partners
- Improving communication, engagement and responsiveness
- Supporting and empowering communities
- Protecting the services that matter to you the most

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. This will form part of the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

4.5 The draft well-being objectives (which have also been updated to reflect the findings of the budget consultation, staff survey and Scrutiny Committee feedback) 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 live healthy and happy lives

The detail of the objectives and performance indicators (or key results) will form part of the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan, to be developed alongside the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March and April 2023.

4.6 Since initial engagement with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, significant changes have been made to the Corporate Plan to reflect the Committee's views, and the views of staff and residents. The main changes are –

- Rewriting the principles, and changing the icons that represent them, so they are more positive, aspirational and forward looking

- Adding a small section on context to each wellbeing objective to demonstrate the link with specific council services
- Reconfiguring the diagram on the Council's finances to reflect costs per household, per day
- Adding extra references to town centres and Porthcawl
- Adding information in Wellbeing Objective 2 to focus on staff welfare, recruitment and pay.
- Adding information in Wellbeing Objective 6 to focus on listening to and responding to residents' views
- Adding information on youth employment, and the music service.

## **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 full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken on the Council's Corporate Plan (attached as **Appendix 2**). The full 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. The proposals contained within this report cover a wide range of services and it is inevitable that they 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 Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides a framework for embedding sustainable development principles within the activities of the Council and has major implications for the long-term planning of service provision. The 7 well-being goals identified in the Act have driven the Council's proposed new well-being objectives, which are designed to complement each other and be part of an integrated way of working to improve well-being for people in Bridgend County. In developing the Corporate Plan, officers have considered the importance of balancing short-term needs in terms of meeting savings targets, with safeguarding the ability to meet longer-term objectives.
- 7.2 The proposals contained within this report cover a wide range of services and it is inevitable that new principles and wellbeing objectives will impact on the well-being goals in different ways.
- 7.3 The Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle, is reflected in several areas within the Corporate Plan, not least:

<b>5 Ways of Working</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on long term, high level actions before committing to detailed performance indicators and targets</li> <li>• Introducing annual Corporate Plan Delivery Plans to provide an element of flexibility to the Council</li> <li>• Focusing our principles on making smarter use of resources with service reductions kept to a minimum and only as a last resort</li> </ul>
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on preventative measures to reduce the burden on more costly statutory services</li> <li>• Introducing a principle focused on supporting and empowering communities to help them help themselves</li> </ul>
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced a principle focused on acting as one council, working well with partners</li> <li>• Achievements and commitments focus on collaboration and integrated working</li> <li>• Clear actions focusing on Health and Social Care integration</li> </ul>
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit links between the Corporate Plan, the Capital Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy</li> <li>• Clear links with the Social Services and Education strategic plans</li> </ul>
Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A robust consultation exercise, including surveys and in person engagement, to inform proposals</li> </ul>

7.4 The above features are aimed at ensuring the Council's Corporate Plan supports future generations. Although resources are limited, the Council aims to target them in a way that reflects the Council's priorities, including the seven wellbeing goals. The new proposed principles focus on better and more targeted use of resources, protecting our priority services and supporting and empowering communities.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 There are no direct 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 Cabinet is recommended to: -

Endorse the Corporate Plan 2023-28 attached as **Appendix 1** and recommend it to Council for approval on 1 March 2023.

**Mark Shephard**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**10 February 2023**

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**Background documents:** None