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| Meeting of: | CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| Date of Meeting: | 17 MARCH 2025 |
| Report Title: | CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW FOR 2025/26 |
| Report Owner / Corporate Director: | CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY |
| Responsible Officer: | ALEX RAWLIN, CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER |
| Policy Framework and Procedure Rules: | Council priorities in the Corporate Plan / Delivery Plan inform Service Plans which form part of the Policy Framework. The Performance Framework forms part of the Policy Framework. |
| Executive Summary: | <p>This report sets out an updated Corporate Plan / Delivery Plan for 2025/26 to reflect the pressures on the Council’s current budget. It recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated, reprioritised and reduced Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (summarised in Appendix 1) • A reduction of wellbeing objectives from 7 to 4 (with some merged or subsumed into others) • Integrating the key measures of the Council’s ‘Ways of Working’ into the new Wellbeing Objectives • A reduction of aims from 41 to 21 with a better balance of performance indicators and commitments against them and a better balance of measures for each directorate. • A reduction of Performance Indicators from 108 to 65 • A reduction of commitments from 80 to 61 |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report outlines an updated Corporate Plan / Corporate Plan Delivery Plan for 2025/26.

2. Background

- 2.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) currently has a high level, five-year Corporate Plan 2023-28. The Council took a new approach for 2023 and did not include commitments or performance indicators in the Corporate Plan. Instead, we developed a one-year delivery plan so we could be more agile and flexible to our changing operating environment.

- 2.2 In late 2024, the Council developed financial plans and scenarios on the basis that there are likely to be severe budget pressures in the coming year. In December 2024, it was confirmed that the Council's budget for 2025/26 will be better than the planning scenarios used but national projections show Welsh Government financial settlements to local authorities will be more challenging from 2026/27. For the coming year, the priorities have been to provide additional funding for services facing demand issues and reducing savings required.
- 2.3 The Corporate Management Board (CMB) have made it clear to Cabinet, Council, staff, and trade unions that budget pressures continue (albeit at a slower pace than anticipated) and the Council still needs to move towards a new operating model. This will also need to be carefully communicated to local residents in coming months.
- 2.4 The Corporate Plan is now 2 years old and fairly well embedded in the organisation. It is becoming clear what works well and what does not. Performance reporting throughout 2024 has been difficult and CMB, Cabinet CMB and scrutiny committees all agree that the current Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (CPDP) is too large and insufficiently focused on priorities. Some of the main issues identified through 2024 were:
- There is an imbalance between Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs) / aims with a huge body of evidence against them and others with very little - each has equal status in self-assessment.
 - There are too many Performance Indicators (PIs) / commitments outside the Council's control.
 - Some commitments / PIs are coming to an end - funding is stopping or work completed.
 - It is increasingly difficult to evidence WBO3 – the Valleys, and the evidence we do have doesn't reflect Members' views.
 - There is duplication - some commitments are duplicated as similar PIs and some commitments appear in more than one WBO.
 - The Ways of Working (WoW) should be incorporated into the new Wellbeing Objectives, including sickness / work with partners.
- 2.5 At the end of quarter three, following discussions on priorities for spending and budgets in 2025/26, work began to start reviewing operational priorities.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 In January 2025, CMB considered a number of options for review of the Corporate Plan. They agreed to review the existing Corporate Plan Delivery Plan, with a clear aim of reducing the number of priorities and measures. They agreed the following principles for the review of the CPDP:
- A smaller, more focused delivery plan
 - More focused on genuine corporate priorities

- Each Wellbeing Objective, Aim, Performance Indicator (PI) and Commitment should be tested to ensure it is still a priority and the following do not apply:
 - The work is completed
 - The work is largely outside the Council's control
 - A PI and commitment duplicate each other
 - The work is unfunded / unstaffed
 - The work is proving difficult to evidence
 - Officers / Members have already agreed that it is not a priority
- PIs do not have to form part of the CPDP just because they are statutory for the Council to measure.

3.2 In February, Directorate Management Teams reviewed the Wellbeing Objectives, aims, PIs and commitments against the above principles. The product of this exercise was a dramatically reduced CPDP which is included at **Appendix 1**. In this:

- Wellbeing Objectives are reduced from 7 to 4 with some merged or subsumed into others. The four that remain focus on:
 - A prosperous place with thriving communities
 - Developing modern, seamless public services
 - Enabling people to meet their potential
 - Supporting our most vulnerable people
- The wording of Wellbeing Objectives has been updated to reflect the council's evolving role and changing financial situation
- The key measures of the Council's 'Ways of Working' have been integrated into the new Wellbeing Objective focused on the future organisation.
- Aims are reduced from 41 to 21.
- PIs are reduced from 108 to 65
- Commitments are reduced from 80 to 61

3.3 On 19 February 2025, Heads of Service / CMB met together to test the balance of the CPDP, reduce duplication and fill any gaps.

3.4 The WBOs are much more balanced, with a similar number of aims, PIs and commitments in each. Similarly, Directorates each have a similar number of aims, PIs and commitments.

3.5 A proposed process and timeline for the next steps of the review of the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan is as follows:

| What | Who | When |
|------------------|---|---------------|
| Consider changes | Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 17 March 2025 |

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|---|---|------------------|
| Develop targets for CPDP (alongside broader Directorate business plans) | Directorate Management Teams (with support from performance team) | March |
| Political sign-off of CPDP and targets for 2025/26 | Cabinet / Council | 8 / 9 April 2025 |

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Wellbeing of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Wellbeing Objectives

- 5.1 This report proposes an approach to reviewing the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that form part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28:-

1. A county borough where we protect our most vulnerable
2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

- 5.2 The 5 ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act have also contributed to the Council developing its own five ways of working. The ways of driving and measuring those ways of working is also contained in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change. However, the Delivery Plan proposes measures and targets to help us assess the Council's performance on areas including climate change.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific implications of this report on safeguarding or corporate parenting. However, the Delivery Plan proposes measures and targets to help us assess the Council's performance on areas including safeguarding and corporate parenting

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Review of the Corporate Priorities will be entirely in line with our agreed budget for 2025/26.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the proposed CPDP for 2025/26 as set out at Appendix 1 and provides feedback on the wording, balance, and any gaps or duplication identified.

Background documents

- BCBC Corporate Plan 2023-28
- BCBC Delivery Plan 2023-24 and 2024-25