

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	9 APRIL 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 Council's current budget, operating environment and priorities. It recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated, reprioritised and reduced Corporate Plan Delivery Plan. • 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 (with updated targets against them for the year ahead). • A reduction of commitments from 80 to 61.

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. Background

- 2.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) 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, the Council developed a one-year delivery plan to allow for increased agility and flexibility to a rapidly 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 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 embedded in the organisation. It is becoming clear what works well and what does not. 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 was difficult to evidence WBO3 – the Valleys, and the existing evidence did not 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 workforce measures / working with partners.
- 2.5 At the end of quarter three of 2024-25, following discussions on priorities for spending and budgets in 2025/26, work began to start reviewing operational priorities.
- 2.6 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.

2.7 In February 2025, Directorate Management Teams reviewed the Wellbeing Objectives, aims, PIs and commitments against the above principles. On 19 February 2025, Heads of Service / CMB met together to test the balance of the CPDP, reduce duplication and fill any gaps.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The product of this review is a significantly 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
 - Creating modern, seamless public services
 - Enabling people to meet their potential
 - Supporting our most vulnerable
- Aims are reduced from 41 to 20.
- PIs are reduced from 108 to 65
- Commitments are reduced from 80 to 61

3.2 The draft CPDP was considered by Cabinet / Corporate Management Board (CCMB) and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) in March 2025, and their comments integrated. A COSC recommendation included separating the housing aim into two (one for disabled facilities grants and one for homelessness), and the valley / town centres aim into two. Although a good, thoughtful suggestion, this has not been done as –

- It would increase the number of aims
- The new, split out aims would be fairly narrow and specific when we aim to make them broader and more similar in size
- There would only be 2-3 PIs / commitments against each aim – a problem we are trying to move away from with this CPDP

3.3 The updated CPDP is substantially reduced in size and improved in the following ways –

- There is a shorter, clearer set of priorities that focuses on genuine corporate / strategic priorities that are -
 - Resourced / funded
 - Not duplicated
 - Largely within the Council's control
 - Able to be evidenced each quarter / year
- It is more balanced
 - equally sized wellbeing objectives and aims
 - similarly sized contributions from each directorate
- It will be easier to communicate to staff, partners and the public
- It will be clearer to manage / report performance

3.4 In the past, targets have been taken through political sign off separately from the CPDP. CMB asked in 2024 that this process be streamlined, and the two should go through political sign-off together. This change is incorporated into the process, and the targets are included in **Appendix 2**.

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 a review of 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 is entirely informed by and in line with the Council's agreed budget for 2025/26.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council:
- Approves the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan for 2025/26 in **Appendix 1**;
 - Approves the performance indicator targets for 2025/26 in **Appendix 2**.

Background documents

None.