

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

1st March 2022

Report of the Corporate Directors Group

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2027 – Recover, Reset, Renew

Purpose of Report

1. To present the draft Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 for consideration and approval prior to the Plan being adopted by Council on 1st March 2022.

Executive Summary

2. The draft Corporate Plan for 2022-2027 (attached at Appendix 1) sets out how we will approach recovery in the short, medium and longer term and has been informed by many people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners. A considerable amount of evidence has also been used to understand how things have changed as a result of the pandemic including wider influences, like climate change, digital disruption and government policy. All of this information has been brought together to reset and renew the Council's well-being objectives, priorities, vision, values and relationships which is documented in the Strategic Change Programme (annex to the draft Plan).

Background

3. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to set well-being objectives which seek to maximise the Council's contribution to the national well-being goals, whilst also embracing the sustainable development principle. The Council's current three well-being objectives were agreed in 2017.
4. The Act requires the Council to consider whether its current well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those well-being objectives should be considered when preparing its Annual Report. This requirement was acknowledged during the preparation of the Council's last Annual Report which was published in October 2021 and it was noted in the Cabinet Report (22nd September 2021):

“In preparing this Annual Report for 2020/2021, the Council is required to consider whether the current well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those objectives should be considered. This consideration is currently underway as part of the preparation of the Council's Corporate Recovery Plan which will be published in 2022”.

Reset & Renew

5. The past 23 months has had an extensive impact on our communities, our local economy and the way we work as a Council. This has provided us with an opportunity to reset and renew our well-being objectives, priorities, vision, values and relationships taking into account:
 - what matters to local people, businesses and our staff;
 - the impact that we know Covid-19 has had on our communities, our local economy and wider stakeholders;
 - the lessons we have learned from our pandemic response and from elsewhere; and
 - other anticipated changes in our external environment (e.g. climate change, digital disruption, financial settlements and government policy).

The above evidence informed the development of the following four draft well-being objectives for this Council:

- **Best Start in Life** - All children have the best start in life.
 - **Communities are thriving and sustainable** - People live healthy, long and fulfilled lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another.
 - **Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations** - Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change. People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.
 - **Jobs and Skills** - Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and help local people acquire the skills they need to access those jobs.
6. What we plan to achieve over the next 12 months under each of the above draft well-being objectives is set out in the draft Plan. A more detailed strategic change programme is set out in the annex – it reflects a “one council” strategic approach to achieving the vision. The Programme describes the changes we aim to make over the next 12 months, the next 5 years and the longer term. It will evolve over time and will be reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis via a revised Corporate Performance Management Framework.
 7. There is further work to do on the measures. As the strategic change programme is initiated more measures may be identified and we will also work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.
 8. Following the May 2022 Local Government Elections, the priorities of the new Council will be reflected into the Plan at the first review stage during the autumn.

Enabling Programme

9. It is acknowledged significant organisational change is needed to deliver the revised well-being objectives, the required cultural change and the associated programmes of work to bring about sustainable changes to economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing.

Consultation

10. The draft Plan has been informed by many people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners.
11. Internal engagement started during spring 2021 to establish lessons learned and priorities for recovery. This included the involvement of all accountable managers in completing strategic assessments to identify lessons learned and proposals for the future shape of services. The cross party Coronavirus – Member Panel met on five occasions (during March 2021 – November 2021) to discuss approaches to form the basis of recovery from the pandemic.
12. A number of all Member Seminars were held to discuss recovery planning, the Let's Talk campaign and the draft Corporate Plan (20th May 2021, 29th July 2021, 16th December 2021 and 22nd February 2022).
13. The initial phase of public engagement started on 19th July and closed on 30th September 2021. The aim of this phase was to find out what mattered to local people in the context of recovery from Covid-19. Over 1,700 responses were received. The feedback informed the four draft wellbeing objectives and the proposed focus of work under each wellbeing objective over the next 12 months, during the next 5 years and the longer term. The findings from this first consultation phase were presented to Cabinet on 5th January 2022.
14. During this initial phase, the Chief Executive visited a number of wards across the county borough to talk to local Members, groups and residents about what mattered to local people in the context of recovery.

15. The second phase of the public consultation (which started on 5 January and closed on 1 February 2022) tested whether or not we had captured what is important to people now and in the future in terms of the changes we aim to make over the next 12 months, the next 5 years and the longer term. The consultation took place against the backdrop of a revised version of alert level 2 restrictions, which came into place on Boxing Day 2021 to respond to the highly contagious omicron variant of Covid-19. The following arrangements were made to help ensure that the consultation was as inclusive as possible, despite the challenging situation:

- **Online questionnaire** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the council's website. The questionnaire was live from Wednesday 5 January (following Cabinet approval) until midnight on Tuesday 1 February 2022.
- **Email** – the email address LetsTalk@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Offline** – for public health reasons, we could not adapt our usual practice of making printed copies of questionnaires and reference documents available in public buildings.

Instead we:

- produced and distributed more than 1,100 printed packs and questionnaires for those who are not online. The packs contained an English and Welsh copy of the questionnaire for people to complete in the safety of their own home and return using a pre-paid envelope. These were:
 - made available at our 8 council run libraries (Neath, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Baglan, Cwmafan, Glynneath, Sandfields, Skewen)
 - distributed by Local Area Co-ordinators and members of the Community of Practice (a group made up of officers from across the council who undertake engagement activities as part of their roles)
 - distributed by The Home Library Service, whilst delivering books and information to residents who have difficulty, or who are unable to visit their local library
 - distributed by Tai Tarian to their Haven schemes for people over 55 - there are 15 of these schemes across the county borough in Cwmafan, Port Talbot, Sandfields, Briton Ferry,

Neath, Cadoxton, Crynant, Tonna, Glynneath, Banwen,
Ystalyfera, Pontardawe (x 2), Cwmgors, Gwaun Cae Gurwen

- made printed questionnaires available to employees in a number of services including the Catering and Cleaning service and the Service Response Centre at the Quays.
16. This second phase of consultation was promoted online (via: regular social media activity on corporate and service accounts, email marketing, and internal council channels), offline (via: radio, press releases, and posters), and by outreach activity via NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement.

In total, the questionnaire received **485** responses.

17. Let' Talk Consultation Responses - Summary:

- Most people strongly agreed / agreed with each of the four draft wellbeing objectives
- Most people agreed with all the things we should focus on in the next 12 months and longer term
- Received very detailed feedback via comments
- A number of comments referred to how we will implement the actions – that detail would not be included in this strategic Plan.
- Four responses received from partners:
 - Third Sector
 - Natural Resources Wales
 - Gwynfi Miners Community Hall
 - Pobl Group

There were a number of consistent themes in the detailed feedback under each wellbeing objective and the draft Plan has been amended to reflect that feedback. A report summarising the findings from the

Let's Talk consultation is attached at Appendix 3 and a full report is attached at Appendix 4.

18. The Chief Executive also attended a number of consultation events to engage partners and stakeholders in the development of the Plan.
 - Public Services Board – 28th September 2021 and 9th December 2021
 - Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum – 10th November 2021
 - Staff Council – 10th January 2022
 - 3rd Sector consultation event – 20th January 2022
 - Town & Community Council Liaison Forum – 27th January 2022

Financial Appraisal

19. The priorities described for the next 12 months are reflected in the revenue and capital budgets proposed for 2022/23. In 2022 a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will be developed which will be the means through which the revenue and capital resources likely to be available over the term of the new administration from May 2022 will be aligned with the longer term actions set out in the Strategic Change Programme and the priorities of the new Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment

20. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read

the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 2, for the purposes of the meeting.

The past 23 months has had an extensive impact on our communities, our local economy and the way we work as a Council. This has provided us with an opportunity to reset and renew our well-being objectives, priorities, vision, values and relationships.

This being the case the well-being objectives and council priorities were reviewed taking into account evidence of the impact the pandemic has had/continues to have on our communities. Although the well-being objectives and priorities in our previous Corporate Plan were relevant when they were set pre-pandemic, they did not adequately address the current situation.

As a result of our continued work on improving the availability and quality of our services through Welsh there is potentially a positive impact in relation to opportunities to use the Welsh language.

Amendments were made to the draft Plan as it was developed to help reduce the inequalities in Neath Port Talbot; for example, enhancing "free and low cost" play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.

There will be a positive effect on biodiversity and Eco-system resilience. The inclusion of a wellbeing objective that specifically targets the conservation and improvement of our natural environment, including biodiversity demonstrates the positive intentions around this.

There will be a positive impact in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations as the well-being objectives have been developed in line with the five ways of working.

Valleys Communities Impact

21. The draft Plan has been informed by feedback from valley communities including the findings of online focus groups and in-depth interviews with residents of the Afan, Amman, Dulais, Neath

and Swansea Valleys. Feedback was also sought by the Chief Executive during visits to those communities.

Workforce Impact

22. The programme of organisational development will deliver the workforce changes needed in the short, medium and long term to implement the Corporate Plan. Work is underway on the development and implementation of the Council's Future of Work Strategy which aims to ensure employees can be the best they can be, doing the right thing, in the right place, at the right time and in the right way.

Legal Impact

23. The publication of the final Plan will meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by setting out our well-being objectives and the steps we will take to achieve them and how we will measure progress.

Risk Management

24. The Council's Corporate Risk Register will be updated with any risks associated with the delivery of the work outlined in the draft Plan following its adoption by Council.

Consultation

25. The draft Plan and Strategic Change Programme have been informed by the Let's Talk campaign which was undertaken between July and September 2021 and January and February 2022 and other consultation and engagement events outlined earlier in this report.

Recommendation

26. Having had due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that:
 - i. That Council approve the adoption of the Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 as detailed in the Appendix 1 to the circulated report.

Reason for Proposed Decision

27. To ensure the Council meets legal duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as they relate to council corporate planning activities.

28. Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation

Appendices

- 29. Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2022-2027 (including the Strategic Change Programme)
- 30. Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment
- 31. Appendix 3 – Let’s Talk – Summary Report
- 32. Appendix 4 – Let’s Talk – Final Report

List of Background Papers

- 33. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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