

# NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COUNCIL

9<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTORS GROUP

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Corporate Strategy 2025/2028: Working towards a more prosperous, fairer and greener NPT**

#### Purpose of Report

1. To present a revised Corporate Strategy for 2025/2028, which was approved at Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025, and is referred to Council for formal adoption.

#### Background

2. Section 3(2) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies to:
  - Set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise the Council's contribution to achieving the 'well-being goals; and
  - Take all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet those objectives.
3. The above statutory requirement is discharged via the publication of the council's Corporate Strategy.
4. The current Corporate Plan was approved in July 2024, and following feedback from all scrutiny committees during the year it was felt that we needed to review and strengthen the way we articulated how we were delivering our four well-being objectives. It was felt that much of

the content needed to be streamlined to ensure the document is clear and concise, simplifying the way we present our key priorities to ensure greater accountability and clarity of purpose.

5. We are continuing to experience the demand on services. More people seeking help from social services; more people presenting as homeless; and more children needing extra help in school and in travelling to school. However, the funding made available by the UK and Welsh governments for these functions in recent years has fallen significantly short of what is needed to respond to our communities.
6. We have secured a large amount of investment funding under the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda to help regenerate our communities. In addition, there are major projects that have the potential to grow a large number of sustainable jobs into future years, including the Freeport status for the port of Port Talbot.
7. The decarbonisation programme being implemented by Tata Steel UK Ltd has led to the end of traditional steel making at Port Talbot and a transition to new technologies. This shift has introduced an additional strategic dimension to the economic landscape.

### **Looking Forward – Working towards a more prosperous, fairer and greener NPT**

8. The Corporate Strategy 2025/2028 represents a significant shift from the current approved Corporate Plan 2024/2027. The four well-being objectives, set in 2022, are unchanged and remain our focus for 2025/2028.
9. The strategy outlines the council's aims and will be supported by Heads of Service Business Plans, which are essential for ensuring service and financial sustainability in the future. Detailed actions and performance measures for achieving the council's aims will be set out within these business plans. All services and functions will contribute to the four well-being objectives through service planning and performance management arrangements at the operational level.
10. Whilst the nine transformation programmes have been removed the strategic priorities that were detailed within each programme have

either been captured under the strategic aims, or within business plans.

11. Members will be aware that the financial context for future years is extremely challenging. The focus on financial sustainability and ensuring statutory duties are discharged may cause a delay in delivering some of the other outcomes identified in the corporate strategy or require a further revision of strategic aims in due course.
12. Following further consideration of the Draft Corporate Strategy 2025/2028, and discussions with Corporate Directors and Heads of Service, it was felt an additional aim should be added under Well-being Objective 2. This addition aim demonstrates a greater alignment with a number of our service areas. The aim is noted below and can be found on page 23 of Appendix 1.

*Fostering a safe, resilient, and inclusive community, enhancing public safety to ensure that all residents feel secure and supported, contributing to a high quality of life and a strong sense of community well-being.*

## **Engagement**

13. Since our well-being objectives remain unchanged, no new external consultation has been conducted. The 'Let's Talk' and 'Let's Keep Talking' engagement campaigns have provided valuable insights into the current community priorities and changes in people's lives since the original exercise was undertaken back in 2021/2022.
14. Internal consultation on this corporate strategy has been undertaken with officers, members and trade unions. The trade union consultation was undertaken as part of our social partnership duty under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023. This feedback has been considered and will be woven into the strategy and business plans. A summary of their feedback is included below for noting:

*Trade union partners highlighted that the corporate strategy demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusion, fairness, and community values, as well as a long-term vision for the communities across Neath Port Talbot. They also emphasised the*

*importance of safeguarding adults in the community and tackling anti-social behaviour.*

*In relation to schools and teaching staff, trade unions stressed the need for the council to foster a thriving learning environment while addressing the challenging financial conditions in local schools. Additionally, they voiced the importance of improving pupil behaviour to reduce exclusions, investing in education, and maintaining staff levels to improve pupil qualification outcomes*

### **Performance Measures**

15. A comprehensive set of performance and service user perspective measures have been incorporated into the corporate strategy to illustrate our progress in achieving our four well-being objectives. These provide greater accountability and will allow us to demonstrate continuous service improvement and the impact of budgets cuts on service delivery over the next three years. Additionally, the strategy aligns with the several Well-being of Future Generations National milestones, further demonstrating our commitment to integrating service delivery with the national framework.

### **Financial Appraisal**

16. In developing the corporate strategy, we have considered budget savings and financial impacts as part of the council's budget setting and planning process. Additionally, "invest to save" proposals which were approved by Members during 2024/2025 for various transformation areas have been taken into account. Given the uncertain and volatile external environment, the strategy must be adaptable. Consequently, corporate strategy aims, business plan actions and measures will need to be adjusted in accordance with evolving revenue and capital budgets.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

17. 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 not required as

### **Valleys Communities Impact**

18. The refocused Corporate Strategy 2025/2028 contains initiatives to support valley communities across the county borough.

### **Workforce Impact**

18. The council's Strategic Workforce Plan links to and supports the strategic aims set out in the corporate strategy, by identifying what the workforce needs to look like and how it needs to operate to deliver outcomes for the residents of Neath Port Talbot. The strategy helps provide the direction and to ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills and attitudes, in the right place and at the right level.

### **Legal Impact**

19. The publication of the Corporate Strategy will meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by detailing the steps that we will take to achieve our four well-being objectives. Our well-being objectives show how the council contributes to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of Neath Port Talbot and to the seven national well-being goals contained within the Act.

### **Risk Management**

20. The council's strategic risk register will be updated with any risks associated with the delivery of the work outlined in the Corporate Strategy.

### **Consultation**

21. There is no requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to consult on this reset strategy as there has been

no change to the well-being objectives. Many of the proposals within the strategy have already been subject to individual public consultation processes and those elements of the strategy that are at early stages of development will be subject to consultation as required.

## **Recommendations**

22. It is recommendation that:

- i. Council adopt the Corporate Strategy for the period 2025/2028, but note the priorities will need to be subject to ongoing review given the level of uncertainty in terms of available revenue and capital resources provided by Government. The Director of Strategy & Corporate Services is given delegated authority in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive to make any further changes that are necessary prior to final publication and which do not materially change the content of the Plan.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

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

## **Implementation of Decision**

24. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

## **Appendices**

25. Appendix 1 – Corporate Strategy 2025/2028: Working towards a more prosperous, fairer and greener NPT
26. Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

## **List of Background Papers**

## 27. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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