

SUBJECT: Community and Corporate Plan

MEETING: County Council

DATE: 19th January 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek approval of a new Community and Corporate Plan that sets the direction for the council and county of Monmouthshire, articulating the authority's purpose and priorities alongside the steps we will take to deliver these, the accountable Cabinet member and the measures that will be used to track progress.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Council approve the Community and Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 That Council adopt the six goals in the plan as the Council's Well-being Objectives in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- 2.3 That Council receive the provisional measures and targets which feature as an appendix to the Community and Corporate Plan and agree that any changes to them, required as a result of the approval of the 2023-24 budget, will be made available to members in the first quarter for 2023-24.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Following the elections in May 2022, the new Cabinet began to articulate the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the county. Starting with a series of collaborative workshops, and drawing on a wide range of evidence, high-level political ambition has been converted into a whole authority strategic plan that sets the direction for the organisation for the period 2022-27.
- 3.2 The plan has been produced against the backdrop of economic uncertainty with the council facing rising energy prices, inflation and escalating borrowing costs alongside increased demands in areas such as children's services, adult social care, homelessness, additional learning needs and home to school transport. The budget settlement for 2023-24 was better than anticipated but is still below inflation and these challenges we face are on a scale not seen before as evidenced by significant in-year budget pressures.

- 3.3 The ambition outlined in the document looks to the long-term and is focused on the well-being of current and future generations. The actions cover the first steps of the journey and will inform the development of the council's medium-term financial plan to make sure that our spending follows clear priorities. The Community and Corporate Plan establishes a clear purpose to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. This is supported by six well-being objectives shown in paragraph 3.7 below.
- 3.4 The objectives were initially endorsed by Cabinet in October and presented at Council later in the month as part of what was positioned as an interim strategy. At the Council meeting members did not challenge the direction of travel set in the plan but there was agreement that councillors wanted to see more details about accountability and how progress would be measured. It was resolved to defer the decision to approve the plan until January when a more substantial document could be brought forward.
- 3.5 The additions made since the last version include:
- The inclusion of two columns to show how actions will be measured and specify the Cabinet Member who is accountable
 - A section on enabling functions including financial planning; workforce; procurement; digital and data and procurement
 - A table showing how the objectives align with the seven National Well-being Goals established by the Well-being of Future Generations Act
 - A table of measures which highlights recent performance and the baseline position for key measures that will be used to track progress
 - The addition of a measurement framework as an appendix to the report, with any revisions required as a result of Council approving the 2023-24 budget to be reported to members in the first quarter of the financial year.
- 3.6 The authority is operating with the expectation that financial settlements over the next five years will be challenging. It is not possible to set precise medium targets for all measures at this stage since what can be achieved will be linked to the resources available for delivery. The intention is for targets to be updated following Council's consideration of the 23-24 budget. Progress can then be tracked, and adjustments made, through regular reports to cabinet members which can be examined by Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.7 The document establishes a clear purpose to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life and sets the goals for Monmouthshire to be a:
- **Fair place** to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;

- **Green place** to live and work with reduced carbon emissions, making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- **Thriving and ambitious place**, full of hope and enterprise;
- **Safe place** to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- **Connected place** where people feel part of a community, are valued and connected to others;
- **Learning place** where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.

3.8 These objectives are underpinned by a series of actions that will ensure that the organisation is able to deliver on its ambition and a range of measures to enable progress to be monitored. The Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee will receive reports to evaluate how well the strategy is being implemented and ensure decision-makers are accountability for delivery.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The plan contains commitments to action relating to equalities, social justice, corporate parenting and safeguarding.

4.2 An integrated impact assessment has been completed and accompanies this report. The Community and Corporate Plan applies the ways of working outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This includes taking a long-term view and developing preventative approaches. The Plan details some activities that require further work which will be subject to individual decisions in accordance with the council's constitution including completing equality and future generations evaluations where appropriate.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Every choice we make carries an opportunity cost. Some of these commitments – such as the building of new schools – have already been approved by council as part of an agreed policy position while others are in the early stages of development. Each new proposal brought forward to deliver against these goals will be subject to an individual decision in accordance with the constitution.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 The Community and Corporate Plan sets out clearly the council's purpose. It contains specific objectives which can be measured over time. A full measurement framework is contained within the plan and targets will be finalised early in the next financial year once the budget has been set by Council in March.

6.2 The actions to deliver the plan will be embedded in the service business plans of individual teams. Headline quantitative measures and progress updates

will be made available to the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. A full evaluation of progress will be produced annually.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure that high-level political ambition is converted into a clearly articulated strategic plan that sets the direction for the organisation and gives clarity to council staff and partners.
- 7.2 To ensure that resources can be aligned with the organisations priorities and provide a basis for the organisation's work to be evaluated as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 7.3 To ensure that the Council has clear Well-being Objectives as required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Rising costs will mean that we will not be able to keep doing everything that we have done in the past in exactly the same way. Each of the activities in the Community and Corporate Plan carries some resource implications and the plan has been developed alongside the budget and in knowledge of the financial pressures experienced by the organisation as referred to in paragraph 3.2

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team

This document was developed through a series of workshops involving councillors from all political parties alongside experts and people from different organisations. The current iteration of the plan has also been shaped by comments received when the previous version was debated at Council in October and subsequent interactions with councillors from all groups, led by the relevant Cabinet Member

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

11. AUTHOR:

Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: (01633) 644397
e-mail: matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk