

SUBJECT:	CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE: STRATEGIC AIMS
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	6 May 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the strategic aims that will be in place for the duration of the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet recognise that there is a trade-off between the need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus and the achievement of the goals set within the Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the strategic aims shown in paragraph 3.2.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Coronavirus pandemic has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to our way of life and the way we provide services. Officers and Councillors have been working relentlessly to meet needs in new ways creating childcare hubs for key workers, paying over £14 million, to date, in grants to businesses to help sustain local jobs and working with volunteers to distribute food and medicines to name a few. The need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus, while continuing to support communities, has meant that we have paused or re-purposed a lot of our usual work. We have lessened our focus on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan to re-direct capacity towards the emergency response effort. Throughout this, our sense of purpose has been embellished but remains undiminished.
- 3.2 To provide clarity and ensure accountability through this period, a set of strategic aims have been established. They will be in place for the duration of the emergency response effort:

	Purpose: To protect life and support sustainable resilient communities
Aims	To provide clear purposeful civic leadership
	To continue to provide childcare for children of key workers and ensure continuation of learning for all young people
	To help vulnerable young people and adults who need our support

	To help local businesses survive
	To keep our neighbourhoods clean and tidy whilst managing waste as sustainably as we can
	To be a trusted partner for other agencies / organisations
	To keep a safe, healthy and productive workforce
	To ensure we remain financially sustainable as an organisation

- 3.3 These aims will be kept under continuous review and are used to direct the work of the Emergency Response Team who meet throughout the week and ensure our approach is based on the latest evidence. Each aim is supported by a number of actions with clear accountability mechanisms in place. These are evolving on a daily and weekly basis, examples include:
- Promote the financial support available to businesses and ensure grant payments are made in a timely manner;
 - Provide childcare for the children of key workers and vulnerable learners;
 - Deliver a programme of distance learning to all pupils;
 - Provide social care for vulnerable people throughout the county, training and re-deploy staff from other services where necessary to maintain service levels;
 - Contact all people who are shielded and, where assistance is required, help them access food and medical supplies when they are self-isolating;
 - Increase the number of vehicles used so that we can continue to collect waste;
 - Improve the digital accessibility of our services;
 - Review the authority's Medium Term Financial Plan in light of the consequences of the COVID-19 impact;
 - Ensure testing is rolled out into our key service areas to mitigate disruption to core delivery.
- 3.4 The virus presents a challenge to the short-term cashflow and long-term viability of many businesses. Local authorities are not immune to this. While we continue to receive revenue from taxation, many other sources of income have dried up. It is not possible to predict the long-term outcome of this virus on the public finances but it is likely that we will need to revisit some of the aspirations in the Corporate Plan as we face up to a new financial reality.
- 3.5 Despite the many challenges, the past few months have resulted in new ways of doing things. This includes rapid improvements in our digital infrastructure, remote meeting attendance and accelerating cultural change with diverse teams coming together as part of a single system. These can form part of a lasting legacy of transformation with needs being met in new ways.
- 3.6 The Council's established performance framework will continue to facilitate service planning, performance management and risk management across Council services. Some services area will predominately deliver the strategic aims, manage, and mitigate risks on the Coronavirus emergency response risk register. The actions that are continuing to deliver the Corporate Plan will be embedded in the service or business plans of individual teams and progress can be tracked through regular service updates on The Hub. The

intention remains to produce an annual report of progress on the Corporate Plan by October 2020.

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

- 4.1 The strategic aims have been developed, informed by the latest available evidence and government guidance, to guide the Council's ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic. They have taken equality and the components of well-being into account. The legislation and the council's responsibilities in all these areas will remain an important part in our response as it continues to develop.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The strategic aims have been developed, informed by the latest available evidence and government guidance, to guide the Council's ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic. While a number of arrangements have now been established to support these aims, the Council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and delivery of each aim is not without challenges and risks. The delivery of the aims will continue to be monitored and they will need to be flexible in timescale and content as circumstances and guidance changes.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Each of the actions that underpinned the strategic aims has a corresponding measure or milestone. These will be used to evaluate the success. Nonetheless, it needs to be recognised that in a changing external environment it is likely that actions, and therefore the corresponding measures of progress will need to be continuously reviewed.
- 6.2 The Council's established performance framework will continue to facilitate service planning, performance management and risk management across Council services.

7 REASONS:

- 7.1 To put in place a set of objectives which are focused on protect life, stopping the spread of the coronavirus in our communities, supporting sustainable resilient communities while preserving the health and well-being of our workforce.
- 7.1 There are significant challenges that must be responded to, clearly specifying the council's purpose and strategic aims in response to the Coronavirus pandemic will guide the Council's continuing response ensuring clarity and accountability.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Delivery of the strategic aims will continue to have significant resource implications to the Council, including increased costs to maintain current service delivery and demands in

setting up new or amended services. A number of the Council's income streams have also ceased and savings planned as part of the 2020/21 budget have been delayed.

- 8.2 At time of writing the detailed financial implications of the response have yet to be fully modelled though an early and initial forecast submitted to WLGA for the purposes of extending dialogue and negotiations with Welsh Government highlighted a net loss for the Council of £3.4m for the period to 30th June 2020.
- 8.3 The significant factor that determines the level of impact on the Council's finances is the level of funding received from the UK Government and Welsh Government to compensate for the losses, additional costs and delayed savings. And that results from the COVID-19 response and impact. The other determined factor of course being the length of time that these impacts are felt.
- 8.4 A specific strategic aim has been identified to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable as an organisation. Alongside the recovery plan that will be developed a specific risk on the financial impacts to the Council has been identified as part of the whole authority strategic risk template and continues to be managed.

9 CONSULTTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

The strategic aims have been informed by informal discussions between SLT and Cabinet.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire Corporate Plan 2017/22

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