

SUBJECT: Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019/20
MEETING: County Council
DATE: 22nd October 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek council approval of the Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019/20.
- 1.2 To ensure that members have a clear understanding of progress made against the aspirations within the Corporate Plan and the subsequent 'plan on a page' documents that were approved by Cabinet to ensure the organisation is focused on the things that matter most during its response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019/20 be approved, subject to the inclusion of any amendments agreed by Council.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan set an ambitious five-year programme aligned to a clear and unambiguous purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities. Over the past few months our organisation has been tested like never before. Alongside our own services we have accelerated our work to support local volunteers. The efforts of thousands within our communities to pull together and help others has shone through paying testament to the resilience of Monmouthshire's communities and businesses.
- 3.2 This annual report would usually provide an update on progress against our strategic aims up until the 31st March. In light of the impact of the pandemic it will extend a little further into 2020 and describe some of the activity that has taken place in the past few months. Some of the aims within the plan have been paused or progressed at a slower pace than intended. This has enabled us to divert staff and resources into core services and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.
- 3.3 To ensure accountability through this period Cabinet developed a Coronavirus Strategy, also known as the *Plan on a Page*. This was approved in May and subsequently updated in July in response to the changing nature of the response. It contained a purpose, strategic aims and associated actions and has been monitored by Cabinet throughout the pandemic.
- 3.4 Progress against each of the five priority goals in the Corporate Plan, which also serve as the Council's well-being objectives, is described in the annual report. Under each of these sits a number of programmes of work, twenty-two in total. The updates covered include:

- Publication of the Estyn inspection in early 2020 which concluded that the authority's education service does not give cause for significant concern and highlighted a number of positives including the distance travelled since 2012 particularly regarding safeguarding;
- A focus on early intervention and prevention to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and the creation of a multi-disciplinary intensive therapeutic fostering service for Looked After Children and Young People, which supports children with complex needs within a foster care setting;
- The declaration of a Climate Emergency and development of a strategy and action plan to respond.
- Development of a network of community support that brings a range of agencies together with a shared purpose of supporting people's wellbeing, this proved vital as we worked with volunteers to support vulnerable people through the early stage of the pandemic;
- The opening of the UK's first Council run community Post Office in Usk.

3.5 Alongside these the annual report highlights activity delivered under the subsequent coronavirus strategies. The pandemic has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to how we continue to provide a range of vital services. The Council has continued to rise to the challenge by adapting, innovating and establishing new ways of delivering services that support residents and businesses, assists community activity and supports staff well-being. These have run concurrently to our long-standing aspirations. With limited resources there has been a conscious trade-off between these two documents. The pandemic has also resulted in learning that will provide a lasting legacy, such as an acceleration towards more flexible ways of working and reduced car journeys.

3.6 Our purpose in the past few months has been to enable everyone to feel safe in their community, to continue to support each other and to reach out to those who need help over the past few months. Some of the things we have done in this period include:

- Provision of support and payment of more than £20 million of funding to 1,800 local businesses to help them survive the impact of the pandemic and protect jobs;
- Established hub schools to provide childcare for key workers and to support vulnerable children.
- Made phone calls to over 3000 people who were shielded to check on their well-being and offer the delivery of food parcels where these were needed
- Rapid acceleration of our digital capabilities to enable the organisation to function remotely during the pandemic, swiftly re-introducing decision-making processes and facilitating new ways to deliver services including appointments at household waste recycling centres.
- Continued to safely collect waste and recycling from all households;
- Contributed beyond our borders to regional emergency response structures and the staffing of a regional Test Trace Protect contact tracing service that has proved vital to slowing the spread of the virus in the county.

3.7 The Annual Report also provides a wider evaluation of the Council's arrangements over this period in line with requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Corporate

Plan is an ambitious five year programme; some commitments focus on the longer-term future of the county and aim to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act.

- 3.8 The Council's established performance framework has been adjusted to reflect the response to the pandemic. Some processes have been disrupted, postponed or delayed while many services have had a lessened focus on service planning processes to direct efforts towards the emergency response arrangements. Some adjustments have been made to the annual report to take account of this and the continued uncertainty in the conditions the Council operates in. The usual scrutiny of progress against each of the goals ahead of the full annual report being presented to Council has not been undertaken. Significant effort has been made by all services to facilitate as fuller update of performance in 2019/20 as possible in the annual report, facilitating the completion of the report in advance of the statutory deadline of 31st October 2020.
- 3.9 There continues to be uncertainty in understanding fully the wellbeing impacts of the pandemic, particularly in the longer term, and the long-term outcome for public finances. It is likely that there will be a need to revisit some of the aspirations in the Corporate Plan to reflect the latest evidence on well-being in the county and financial impact.
- 3.10 The Annual Report is a public document and should be accessible to a wide audience. The plan will be published by 31st October 2020 on the council's website alongside a shorter summary version.

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

- 4.1 This report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision that would have an impact on these areas. The progress the Council has made on the Future Generations Act, equalities, social justice, and safeguarding is set out in the report.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The annual report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision on a future policy direction. The report provides an analysis, using a range of information, on the council's performance in 2019/20. The structure of the report has been informed by the legislation it is required to meet, including expectations for and feedback on annual reports by the Future Generations Commissioner.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The report provides a comprehensive analysis of the performance of the council in 2019/20 utilising a range of performance information and evidence. Some adjustments have been made to the annual report to take account of the disruption to processes caused by efforts being focused on the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Significant effort has been made by all services to facilitate as fuller update of performance as possible in the annual report.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure that the council can be held to account for performance and can demonstrate progress towards delivering better outcomes for citizens.
- 7.2 To comply with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 None. This report is a review of performance in 2019/20.

9. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team;
Cabinet;

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Corporate Plan 2017 – 2022, 'A Monmouthshire that works for everyone'

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