

Revision of Corporate Plan – February 2024



Appendix 1a – Proposed Approach – Important Briefing Note for Members

The following appendix 1b has been worked up by the Strategic Planning and Performance Team from their professional knowledge and expertise as to how the present Corporate Plan's reporting structure is working at all levels, and it is felt that what is outlined here represents the easiest way for Council to reduce the reporting burden currently being experienced by the Team and produce the capacity that we would like to see there. It will also release some wider capacity amongst managers and officers across the council to address current pressures, and potentially slow any future financial commitments.

The items that have been de-escalated to Service Plan level (see appendix 2) have been chosen because their continued reporting at a corporate level is not felt to add any great value in the wider context of what the Plan seeks to achieve. This maybe because:

- Work has either already been completed, or that the work is sufficiently embedded that it is now business-as-usual for services.
- There may also be things where we know resources are stretched, and are unlikely to improve or match our original ambitions. In these cases, future reports would only show worsening performance, and perhaps it is a more positive message that we are making brave decisions now as to the limit of our ambitions, accepting the financial restraints.

We must stress that the removal of pledges from the Corporate Plan does not mean that these things stop. They will continue at Service Plan level for as long as resources allow. These changes are strictly about how we report.

Critically, we have tried to keep in the things that we know are important to members, residents, communities, and our regulators. Overall, it is a compromise, but hopefully a palatable balance has been achieved.

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Further Context That Is Important For This Debate

The Strategic Planning and Performance Team, in addition to losing a post, are facing a number of increasing asks in new directions. These include:

- Supporting the Panel Performance Assessment process, required under Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act. Work to commence early 2024 in preparation for fieldwork in late Summer / early Autumn 2024.
- Supporting the Impact Assessment of ongoing budget proposals, which will continue for the foreseeable future.
- Developing capacity for insight and research to support necessary transformational change within the authority.
- Supporting the Welsh Government's equality action plans (ARWAP, LGBTQ+, etc.)

These are significant tasks in addition to the Team's usual work supporting eight council services with service planning, performance and risk management, equality and well-being impact assessment work. The team also supports the work of the Public Services Board; the Corporate Risk Register; the Service Challenge Programme; quarterly Corporate Plan performance / Self-Assessment reports; five Boards (plus other groups); the Stakeholder Survey; Audit Wales fieldwork; and Welsh Government consultations. This is a high performing team, but there are limits to capacity.

It must also be noted that what Council is being asked to do here is not unusual or unique. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to review the appropriateness their Well-being Objectives annually, which is what we are now doing. In light of the significant financial challenge faced by the council, it is appropriate that changes are made. We are also not alone in this task in Wales.

The following is what officers and Cabinet propose for what the Corporate Plan will look like. The specific changes have been detailed in appendix 2. In addition to the new section covering Welsh Language and Equalities (which would appear prominently before the themes themselves), the introductory text to the Plan (covering the plan's development, financial strategy, monitoring, etc) has also be updated to explain why these changes are necessary, and how the Plan differs (which is a legislative requirement).