

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017**

#### **DELIVERING THE CORPORATE PLAN – “THE WAY AHEAD”**

#### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR A MORGAN.**

**Author:** Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive - 01443 424026

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out how the Council will deliver its Corporate Plan – “the Way Ahead” over the next three years in a climate of further funding reductions, through investing in Rhondda Cynon Taf’s future and by improving and delivering essential services in a different way.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:-

- 2.1 Consider the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Agree in principle to the proposed five work streams that will seek to modernise and improve the Council’s essential services.
- 2.3 Request that regular reports are presented to Cabinet bringing forward plans to deliver the ambition of the Corporate Plan.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The impact of austerity and increasing financial pressures mean the Council must consider how services are delivered in the County Borough into the future. Be that in education, being healthy and independent or benefitting from clean streets and good roads, to ensure positive outcomes continued to be delivered.
- 3.2 Different times require different thinking and solutions. We are being creative and ambitious in our delivery of services and in the way we secure new sources of investment to fill gaps where previous funding has been cut. Thinking differently and innovatively means we continue to offer a wide range

of essential services that are efficient and effective and represent good value for money for hard-pressed taxpayers.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 In February 2016, the Council approved its Corporate Plan for 2016-2020, which set out its significant ambitions for the County Borough as set out in the **Corporate Plan - The Way Ahead 2016 – 2020**.  
<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/PerformanceBudgetsandSpending/Councilperformance/RelatedDocuments/CorporatePlan201620/CorporatePlan201620.pdf>

4.2 The focus of the Corporate Plan is on three priorities:

- **ECONOMY** - Building a strong economy;
- **PEOPLE** - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone;
- **PLACE** - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work.

4.3 The Corporate Plan recognises that to deliver these priorities, the Council will have to respond to a range of challenges and opportunities by:

- Redesigning local services that are integrated and efficient;
- More involved and resilient communities;
- Health and Social Care services being personalised and integrated, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes;
- Our schools being amongst the best in the country, and with all children achieving the best they can;
- Our children and young people receiving a great start in life;
- Ensuring there will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages;
- Our local environment being clean and attractive, with well maintained roads, pavements, flowing traffic, increased recycling and less waste sent to landfill;
- Our parks and green spaces continuing to be valued by residents;
- Being amongst the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and residents feeling safe;
- Taking a responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created;
- Ensuing customer services will be intuitive and flexible, with increased user satisfaction;

- Working in a way that makes the best and most sustainable use of our limited and decreasing resources, always looking at alternative ways of doing things, to limit the impact on the Council taxpayer.
- 4.4 The Annual Corporate Performance Report, presented to Council on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 set out the good progress made in: responding to the challenges we face; and capitalising on the opportunities to invest in our communities - <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2017/07/19/Reports/AgendaItem7.DraftCouncilPerformanceReport.pdf>
- 4.5 The Corporate Plan is ambitious for the County Borough, yet it still takes into account that the past few years have been very challenging for the public sector. Whilst Welsh Government has sought to protect, as best it can, key local government services, the future financial settlements continue to look bleak.
- 4.6 At the Cabinet Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017, <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2017/07/18/Reports/AgendaItem2MediumTermFinancialPlan2017to2021.pdf> Members revisited the medium term financial plan for the three years to 2020/21 and in doing so discussed the following funding gaps for 2018/19 to 2020/21 that will have to be addressed.

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
	<b>£'m</b>	<b>£'m</b>	<b>£'m</b>
Budget Requirement	472	486	498
Resources available	454	451	447
Cumulative Gap @ -2%	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>51</b>
Annual Gap	18	17	16

- 4.7 Over the past two years, the Council has achieved budget savings in excess of £30m while protecting the majority of frontline services through a continued focus on efficiency savings to address impact of reducing funding. This has been achieved by challenging all expenditure, taking the opportunity to reduce the cost of supplies and services through effective procurement and investing to increase income generated and/or reduce recurring costs.
- 4.9 However, this approach on its own is unlikely to deliver the financial savings required into the future, whilst still providing the essential services the public utilise and value. With further significant funding reductions, the Council will have to consider what services it prioritises for investment and seek to deliver all services in a different way, whether that is through greater use of technology, machinery or digital transactions, collaborating with other partners

in the public and private sectors or by bringing community based and back-office services together to create economies of scale.

- 4.10 Whilst, the financial position is difficult, our strong capital base allows us to take this opportunity to invest in remodelling key services, improving and maintaining key public services within the County Borough but doing so with a lower cost base. To achieve this, we need to challenge how we provide essential services and whether we can offer them in a more efficient and effective manner, working in a way that makes the best and most sustainable use of our limited and decreasing resources, always looking at alternative ways of doing things, to future proof services which the residents of RCT value.
- 4.11 The next stage of this report sets out a suggested way forward as to how we can continue to deliver the essential services efficiently and effectively within the resources available.

## **5. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

- 5.1 To deliver the vision and objectives of the Corporate Plan, it is proposed that Cabinet agrees to a major programme of change that will guide future budget decisions and the shape of the Council and its services in the future. Delivering significant savings and changing the way in which the Council operates takes time. However, time is short and to ensure the pace of change is sufficient we require a co-ordinated programme to provide the best opportunity to review services/activities at the right time and minimise any impact the effect on the services residents may need and expect.
- 5.2 It is proposed that over the next few years the Council focuses on the following five workstreams to invest in order to improve the essential services we provide:
- **Digitalisation** – more and more transactions between the resident/customer and the Council are now on-line and there are opportunities to further increase this. The digital plan approved by Cabinet in June 2017 recognises that we still need to maintain a quality face to face and telephone contact service, but work with residents to improve their digital skills and access to technology to empower more people to interact with us digitally. A key aspect of the digital plan is to enable more of the workforce to be agile, which boosts productivity and reduces the need for office space. We have set challenging targets to reduce our office space requirements and we will be investing in improving our ICT systems to ensure staff are appropriately equipped and resourced to be more productive. The Digital Plan was approved by Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017 -

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2017/06/22/Reports/AgendaItem5CouncilsDigitalStrategy201718to201920.pdf>;

- **Commercialisation** – the Council trades to a small extent with the private sector, but there are opportunities to do more, increase the capacity and capability of some teams and generate a profit that will reduce the impact of potential budget cuts. We have started bringing together the range of services we offer businesses into one place and begin to understand the potential to widen the offer and also introduce fees and charges for a range of such services;
- **Early Intervention and Prevention** – investing in preventative services to deliver savings in the medium term. This will include:
  - The creation of community hubs that provide a range of community based services in one or a number of closely located buildings, which best serve the community. These community hubs will include a range of service providers including key council services, voluntary sector, local businesses and other public sector providers. Bringing similar services together will create economies of scale, in terms of staffing and building costs, which will enable the Council to continue to provide a comprehensive range of services within key communities.;
  - Introducing new approaches to ensuring that families are resilient reducing the number of families requiring statutory intervention; and
  - Introducing a new approach to reducing the number of victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- **Independence** – reshaping our services for vulnerable residents to ensure that we promote independence and deliver first class care services. We have begun to modernise our social care services building new extra care facilities that can allow individuals and couples to remain independent for longer, whether they have learning difficulties, mental health issues or are elderly. The community hubs will also play a key role in creating local environments that can engage people of all ages and complexities and provide the community support networks that enable them to remain independent in their own home;
- **Efficient and Effective Organisation** – challenging our ongoing service delivery and driving out further efficiencies through for example, continuing to challenge why we procure goods and services and whether we can continue to reduce the cost. This will also include simplifying internal processes, consolidating similar back office functions across the Council, reducing administrative costs and the size of our property portfolio. This includes land that could be suitable for to generate a commercial rent or for development and will generate capital receipts. There are also opportunities to reduce sickness levels in some teams. For the past 10

months we have been actively monitoring sickness absence and have made good progress in reducing the length of long term sickness. However, sickness levels are still too high and inconsistent in some service areas, and further improvements can be made.

5.3 In addition to these modernisation changes, the Council will continue to invest in the future of the County Borough through:

- Improving the highway infrastructure;
- A large 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme;
- Regeneration projects such as the Taf Vale development; and
- The City Deal investment programme.

5.4 Each of the five work streams is being led by a senior officer and is supported by staff from a range of services. Over the coming six months a number of reports will be presented to Cabinet bringing forward projects that will deliver the modernisation and improvement of many services.

5.5 The first of these reports will be for Cabinet to consider the:

- Implementation of a County wide development of Extra Care Homes, which will enable some of our most vulnerable residents to remain independent for as long as possible within their local community, and housed in high quality accommodation; and
- Development of a voluntary sector led community hub at St Mairs Day Centre, Aberdare.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None at present. As individual projects are developed and reports considered by Members, equality impact assessments will be prepared as required.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 As individual projects are developed and reports considered by Members, the Council will be consulting and engaging with residents, service users, businesses, local authority members and the wider community as appropriate.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 None at present. Any additional financial implications will be considered as and when individual reports are considered by Members.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

9.1 None at present. Any legal implications will be considered as and when individual reports are considered.

## 10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This Report is focused on the delivery of the Community Plan.

### **Other Information:-**

***Relevant Scrutiny Committee*** - Overview & Scrutiny Committee

***Contact Officer*** - Chris Bradshaw 01443 424026

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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Item: DELIVERING THE CORPORATE PLAN – “THE WAY AHEAD”

**Background Papers**

[Council – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016](#)

Officer to contact: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive (01443 424026)