

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance

Council – 22 September 2016

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2015/16

Purpose:	To present the 2015/16 Sustainable Development Report.
Policy Framework:	Sustainable Development Policy.
Reason for Decision:	To present the Sustainable Development Report for approval prior to submission to Council and publication on the Council's website alongside the Annual Statement of Accounts.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Council approves the report content (for publication alongside the Annual Statement of Accounts).
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Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Reporting on sustainable development publicly demonstrates the Council's commitment to sustainability and helps embed the principle in practice across services. Sustainable development reporting results in considerable reputational benefits, improved performance, greater transparency and provides accountability for the Sustainable Development Policy.

1.2 This is the sixth and final year of sustainable development reporting. In 2011, Swansea was the first local authority to publish a report on carbon emissions and energy use within its Annual Statement of Accounts. In 2012, a sustainable development reporting methodology was developed with consultancy support from PwC to include indicators reflecting outcomes relating to social, economic and environmental wellbeing. This development has enabled the Council to mature sustainable development reporting to the point where Sustainable Development can

be effectively embedded within the corporate reporting framework in line with the Well-being of Future Generation Act (Wales) 2015.

2.0 The Rationale for Sustainable Development Reporting

2.1 Reporting explicitly meets the requirement within the Local Government Measure 2009 which places a duty on local authorities to promote and improve on sustainable development performance. From April 2016, the Council has been subject to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's duty to 'carry out sustainable development' and to report explicitly on how it contributes to well-being in line with the 'sustainable development principle'. This final year of independent reporting provides a transition to the full integration of sustainable development within the Council's corporate planning and reporting framework.

2.2 Reporting on Sustainable Development creates closer connections between policy and performance. The report is a means of providing public accountability for sustainable development and provides a tangible measure of the Sustainable Development Policy's effectiveness.

2.3 The process of sustainable development reporting engages services and helps them to have a better understanding of their impact in delivering sustainable development. Involving services in the collection and analysis of data focusing on sustainable development highlights and improves performance eventually influencing the outcomes achieved.

2.3 The publication of a Sustainable Development Report creates considerable reputational benefits demonstrating good governance and transparency. Sustainable development (and specifically work on reporting) was praised as an example of positive action within the 2015 Corporate Assessment Report and has been nationally recognised as good practice contributing to the Council's success winning awards for its approach to sustainable development.

2.4 The connection between the report and the Statement of Accounts demonstrates publicly the link between financial management and sustainable performance, impacting decision making. The Council can mitigate risk and identify opportunities based on information highlighted through the reporting process.

3.0 The Methodology

3.1 In 2012, the Council was supported by PwC to develop a bespoke methodology based on the concept of integrated reporting using the principles of Accounting for Sustainability. The approach has been adhered to in 2016 for consistency and comparability. This 'connected reporting' approach is based on three steps:

- Identification of material sustainability issues and connection to business strategy

- Identification of Key Performance Indicators
 - Production of a Connected Performance Report
- 3.2 In order to assure the data, an audit trail has been created recording the source of data. A sample has been internally scrutinised and the robustness of information confirmed. Internal indicators have been certified by a compiling officer and agreed by a Head of Service.

4.0 The Report Structure

- 4.1 An introductory front page sets the context of the report and details the methodology developed. This is followed by a summary sheet in tabular form defining each of the Seven Priority Areas and the number of indicators in that section. The number of indicators varies reflecting the nature of the Priority Area and availability of relevant data. The main body of the report brings together performance, financial information and targets.
- 4.2 The arrow based assessment assigned to each indicator indicates direction of travel in the past year rather than the achievement of specific targets. Although it should be noted where targets have been set they are included as a means of embedding sustainable development into day to day operations and driving progress. An arrow summarising each Priority Area's status is alongside each heading.

Drivers and Trends Impacting Future Reporting

5.3 The Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- a. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in common with the Council's sustainable development policy aims to ensure sustainable development is a central organising principle. By extending this principle to 44 devolved public bodies, the Act is effectively changing the way that the Welsh public sector does business.
- b. The Act aims to ensure that the governance arrangements of public bodies in Wales take account of the needs of future generations while making decisions securing social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being. The Act requires that public bodies demonstrate they have considered or taken account of five governance approaches closely aligned to those underpinning "Sustainable Swansea - Fit for the Future"; integration, the long term, collaboration, prevention and involvement.
- c. The Act requires from April 2017, the Council will publish an annual statement setting out well-being objectives which contribute to the progress of seven well-being goals as part of the corporate planning and reporting framework. The extent to which objectives are achieved in line with the sustainable development principle and governance approaches will also be demonstrated. As a result, there will be no future need to publish a Sustainable Development Report.

- d. Opportunities to ensure that Swansea continues to lead in realising the benefits of sustainable development will however continue to be explored by the Sustainable Development Unit and appropriate support provided to services. As guidance from the Commissioner for Sustainable Futures and Welsh Government emerges, developments in areas such as carbon foot printing, foresighting, integrated reporting and widening involvement will continue to be investigated in terms of the potential benefits for Swansea.

7.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 7.1 A Screening for EIA has identified relatively low impacts and minimum implications with regard to Equalities and Engagement. Appropriate measures in line with Council policies will be taken in terms of ensuring access to the document.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Online publication and translation costs are expected to be minimal and will be contained within the existing budget.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no specific legal implications at this stage. The existing and proposed legislative frameworks are referred to in the Report itself.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: Appendix A – City and County of Swansea Sustainable Development Report 2015/16.