



Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Resources
Recovery & Future Generations Policy Development Committee -
21 December 21

Achieving Better Together - Recovery Plan

Purpose:	This report provides an update on the Recovery and Transformation Plan. Swansea – Achieving Better Together.
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For Information	

1. Background

- 1.1 On 15th October 2020 Cabinet approved the new “From Recovery to Transformation” report detailing the 3 Phases from recovery through to the “Swansea – Achieving Better Together, Transformation Strategy & Programme Framework 2022 – 2026”.
- 1.2 The information below sets out the background and current position with regards to the work programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 The main purpose of the Achieving Better Together Programme is to ensure the council is sustainable, efficient and effective in what and how it delivers its services with the citizen at the heart of all that we do. We want to ensure the right services are available to our communities in the right way and at the right time for them.
- 2.2 As well as identifying the priorities in the short and medium term, the Achieving Better Together framework aims to set the foundations for

establishing the longer term shape of the council, looking ahead to the next 20 years to 2040.

2.3 The strategic aims of Swansea – Achieving Better Together are:

- The core purpose of the Council
- Transforming services to be effective and efficient
- Greater collaboration with other Councils, organisations, community groups and residents, with a focus on regionalisation
- Balancing the budget for current and future years
- Greater and more meaningful engagements with our residents and community
- To meet the aspirations and targets within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

2.4 Further to the update to the Recovery & Future Generations Policy Development Committee in June 2021, other key reporting milestones to date include:



2.5 To further assist the Achieving Better Together Programme, more recently, Swansea Council's internal audit team carried out an examination of the programme, governance and structure. An Assurance Level of **'High'** was awarded. This indicates that 'there is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve the programme objectives and the controls are being consistently applied'. There were no recommendations following the examination.

2.6 The programme phases are not linear but overlap so the work undertaken in the prior phase will inform the next phase:

Phase 1 – Short Term	Re-mobilise	Recovering, restarting & adapting a wide range of Council Services
Phase 2 – Medium Term	Refocus (Up to May 2022)	A strategic response to support the city to emerge and grow from the crisis delivering our corporate priorities

Phase 3 – Long Term (work in Phase 1 and 2 will support the actions in Phase 3)	Reshape (After May 2022)	Longer term City and County regeneration and development strategy
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2.7 The work of both the Remobilise and Refocus phase have continued throughout the new pressures of the COVID pandemic and continued impact of COVID. The Councils response has had an impact on progress, however the work-streams have all worked through their agendas to Recover and Refocus the Council.

3. Recovery Well Underway

3.1 The council did not only maintain services throughout the pandemic but is well underway on its journey to refocus the Council. Many of the services transitioned to working from home and the many capital and development programmes were maintained through the planning and preparation process to ensure at the first opportunity and when safe to do so, the projects, plans and strategies were re-introduced and building work began, ensuring that Swansea didn't fall behind in its ambitions and programmes to make Swansea better.

3.2 The Achieving Better Together programme is clear in its message that the purpose of the programme is to enable a sustainable, efficient and effective organisation with the citizens of Swansea at the heart. The remobilise phase initiated a plan that done just that, it called on resources from across the organisation to support local residents, communities and businesses through the pandemic as a priority.

This included a range of interventions from:

- Food banks and support for those shielding
- Issuing grants to businesses and direct payments to carers, those self-isolating, or to parents for free school meals.
- A shift to online channels supported more residents completing online forms for service requests.

3.3 The Council was in a strong position going into the pandemic which enabled desk based staff to make the shift to homeworking easily. In addition, staff from across services got involved in volunteering or supporting vital work to help residents and businesses.

3.4 The Achieving Better Together Programme is contributing towards the achievement of the national well-being goals.

• *A prosperous Wales* – Supporting and training the Council's workforce to deliver transformed services that provides the most sustainable outcomes for residents.

• *A Resilient Wales* – The Managing the Present and Shaping the Future, Swansea Council – From Recovery to Transformation Strategy underpins our recovery from Covid-19 and aims in order to transform services, deliver better

outcomes for residents and achieve financial sustainability with reduced carbon footprint.

- *A Healthier Wales* – The programme work streams have projects in phase 2 – (Refocus) that aim to: encourage greater community ownership, improved health and wellbeing for staff, provide active lifestyle and healthy living for our citizens e.g. our approach to Housing and the Active Travel Project.
- *A more Equal Wales* – Providing the opportunity for local citizens to influence how policies are written and services are developed through the development of a co-production strategy.
- *A Wales of Cohesive Communities* – The Community Response work-stream has a strong focus on community involvement. Projects include: supporting community volunteering, Local Area Coordinators expansion and working with third Sector and other statutory and non-statutory partners in Swansea and encourage the continuation of community relationships.
- *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language* – Through the coproduction framework we will establish a diverse forum for community volunteers to be involve in the decision-making process and give them an opportunity to express their views and opinions. The programme will improve the communication and engagement with communities, which includes welsh medium provision.
- *A globally responsible Wales* – The Achieving Better Together programme has a focus on the future and delivering social, environmental, cultural, economic and financial sustainability through the work-streams. Any decision making considers future impacts e.g. climate change.

3.5 The Re-mobilise phase set the 2021/22 budget and refreshed the MTFP. This work was undertaken in the Recovery, Reshaping and Budget Strategy Board and has been closely monitored each month from May 2021.

3.6 The current status for the MTFP delivery is positive and on target to be delivered for the financial year 2021/22. The MTFP delivery tracker is reviewed and issues or risk raised at the Recovery, Reshaping & Budget Strategy Board along with an overview of whether the delivery is on track.

4. Refocus Phase to Reshape Phase

4.1 Phase 2 – Refocus is supporting the council to deliver its ongoing corporate priorities and plans, whilst adapting to address the impacts coming out of the COVID crisis.

4.2 The continued impact of COVID and the Councils response has had an impact on progress, however the work-streams have all worked through their agendas to refocus the Council.

4.3 Work is ongoing in relation to the continued recovery, refocussing and reshaping the Council and is structured around the following work streams;

- Care Services
- Education and Learning
- Future Workforce and Equalities
- Community Support
- Economy and Environment

4.4 The work-streams have shown great examples of working together and in partnerships to achieve outcomes for our organisation, staff and the citizens of Swansea since the start of the refocus plan in March 2021, achievements include (but are not limited to):

For Our Staff and Organisation

- Relaunch of the Leadership hub
- Relaunch of the Ideas Hub
- Involvement Workshops
- Programme timetable for MTFP
- Reporting process for Economic Recovery Fund Monitoring
- Renewed Agile Policy
- Ensuring Staff have a safe environment (e.g. office furniture, DSE risk assessment. available for working from home)

For Our Citizens

- Local Area Coordination expansion across Swansea
- Volunteering Toolkits and Training Launched
- Safeguarding & Wellbeing - monitoring of vulnerable children with a shared criteria of understanding vulnerability being used between Education and Child and Family Services.
- Both Education and Child and Family have a Single Point of Contact in relation to vulnerable children accessing on site provision.
- Partnership approach to Community Project to provide free refurbished smart phones with free credit via partner organisations to residents; over 162 phones distributed so far this year. More partners engaged to donate mobiles
- Homelessness Strategy - Over 400 positive moves from temporary accommodation into more suitable supported or permanent accommodation
- Covid Economic Recovery Plan Local businesses supported, safeguarding jobs and securing new investment.

4.5 It is always acknowledged that the programme has a requirement to be flexible as there are influences outside of our control that could require a change in approach such as external issues, legislative or guideline

changes. This has been the case following a recent Nature Emergency declaration by Welsh Government, although the Climate Emergency project has had governance in place and has included Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Local Development plans from the outset. The steering group has reflected on the nature aspect of their work and a report is due to go to cabinet imminently to demonstrate this commitment. The proposition is to rename the programme to Climate Change and Nature Strategy.

4.6 Phase 3 - Reshape will look beyond 2022, it will be subject to the 2022 elections and priorities of the new council, a new Chief Executive, corporate plan and strategy for the council.

4.7 During the preparation of phase 3 and delivery of phase 2 we are working towards:

- Developing the framework for the future delivery programme – Phase 3 of Achieving Better Together – Reshape.
- Ensuring Strategies and action plans (housing, Schools, economy, social care) are embedded and change is visible and increasing in pace.
- A reviewed and updated corporate plan
- Ensuring the culture of the organisation is aligned to the delivery of the corporate plan
- Ensure all priority service areas have new models of delivery maturing
- Delivering a balanced budget and long term MTFP that is sustainable

4.8 The Achieving Better Together Programme recognises changes in strategic context, brought about by changes in both legislation and priority focus areas, including:

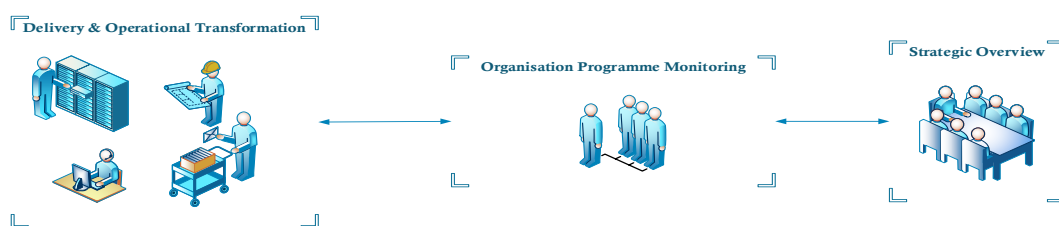
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- Local Government & Elections Wales Act
- Additional Learning Needs Act
- Regionalisation Agenda
- City Deal & City Centre Regeneration (Swansea Central Phase 1)
- Smart City and Digital Strategy
- Responding to Climate Change
- Ten years of Austerity
- Covid-19 Pandemic
- Brexit

The programme intends to meet these new challenges, building upon the successes already achieved as it progresses into phase 3 - Reshape.

4.9 The budget and medium term finance plan will progress through the normal process for approval and help to shape the recovery and focus of the work-streams for 2022/23.

5. Governance

5.1 The governance structure has undergone a review since the original October 2020 Cabinet report. This showed that two overarching Bodies, a Strategic Recovery Board and a Reshaping Board, would be set up to report to CMT & Cabinet. The structure has since been revised, with just one body now overseeing the programme - The Recovery, Reshaping & Budget Strategy Board ('The Board').



5.2 To support the success of the recovery and transformation programme a new post was created to manage the programme process with the Deputy Chief Executive overseeing the strategy. The Strategic Change Programme Manager was welcomed into post on June 1st 2021.

6. Policy Development Committee Support

6.1 Policy Development Committees have provided a support function to the programme and work-streams. The Recovery & Future Generation PDC's support the overarching Achieving Better Together work programme.

6.2 The Recovery & Future Generation PDC's have recently received a session on Co-production, an update on the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and a workshop on the Workforce work-stream. These are all projects within the Workforce & Equality work stream.

6.3 The work-stream leads are working closely with other PDC's on their individual projects, plans and policies. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Work stream	PDC	Agenda Item	Date
Community Support	People PDC	Volunteering Strategy initial workshop	October 2021
Economy & Environment	Economy, Environment&	Swansea Bay City Deal Skills	September 2021

	Infrastructure PDC	and Talent business case	
Community Support	Poverty Reduction PDC	Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision	July 2021
Community Support	Poverty Reduction PDC	Promoting Affordable Credit Draft Policy	June 2021
Economy & Environment	Economy, Environment & Infrastructure PDC	Economic Recovery Plan. High Street Regeneration. Green Fleet Policy	October/November 2021

- 6.4 The Recovery & Future Generation PDC's support and input is critical to helping officers shape policy development & delivery with in depth analysis of issues that arise and taking into consideration future policy development with reference to the Corporate Plan. We have identified areas of the programme that requires this support and input to develop the work plan for 2022.

<i>WORKPLAN 2022</i>		
<i>Council Objective</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Strategy/Policy</i>
Transformation and future council development - Working together to build a Council that is Sustainable, Efficient & Effective in what and how it delivers its services with the citizen at the heart of all that we do.	Ensure we have the right Leadership and Management in place to support the new ways of working and organisation culture	Workforce Strategy Theme 1 – Strand 1&2
	Create a workforce fit for the future	Theme 2 – Strand 3/4/5
	Ensure we are an Employer of Choice now and in the future	Workforce Strategy Theme 3 – Strand 6&7
	Supporting Our Workforce and providing a clear roadmap for health and wellbeing that is accessible and fit for purpose	Workforce Strategy Theme 4 – Strand 8
	Develop an approach to developing or growing by using resources in a way that allows for them to renew or continue to exist for others.	Sustainable Development Policy

	Give local people and partners an opportunity both to design services as an equal partner with the council and to play roles in delivering the services that they have designed.	Corporate Centre Co-production Strategy
	Support Swansea to become a Human Rights City	Human Rights City Project
	Supporting wider conversations / engagement with wider groups	Communication, Engagement & Participation Strategy/s

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This paper demonstrates that the recovery and refocus phase is well underway and that the working groups are in place and working through the actions associated with their agendas.
- 7.2 The reporting mechanisms and governance boards are in place and working well.
- 7.3 Due to the uncertainty with COVID implications, the Council has to be vigilant and prepared to revert to response mode if required. However, work is continuing to building the foundations and scope the work of that will be required of the work-streams for the reshaping phase post May 22, as well as undertaking recovery and refocus work.

8. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 8.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language

- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

8.2 Our Equality Integrated Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

8.3 There are no equality and engagement implications associated with this report.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 There are no financial implications.

Background papers: 'None'

Appendices:

Appendix A – Integrated Impact Assessment