



## Report of the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services

Governance and Audit Committee – 12 April 2022

### **Achieving Better Together - Recovery Plan**

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report provides an Assurance update on the Recovery and Transformation Plan, Swansea – Achieving Better Together.
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#### **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.

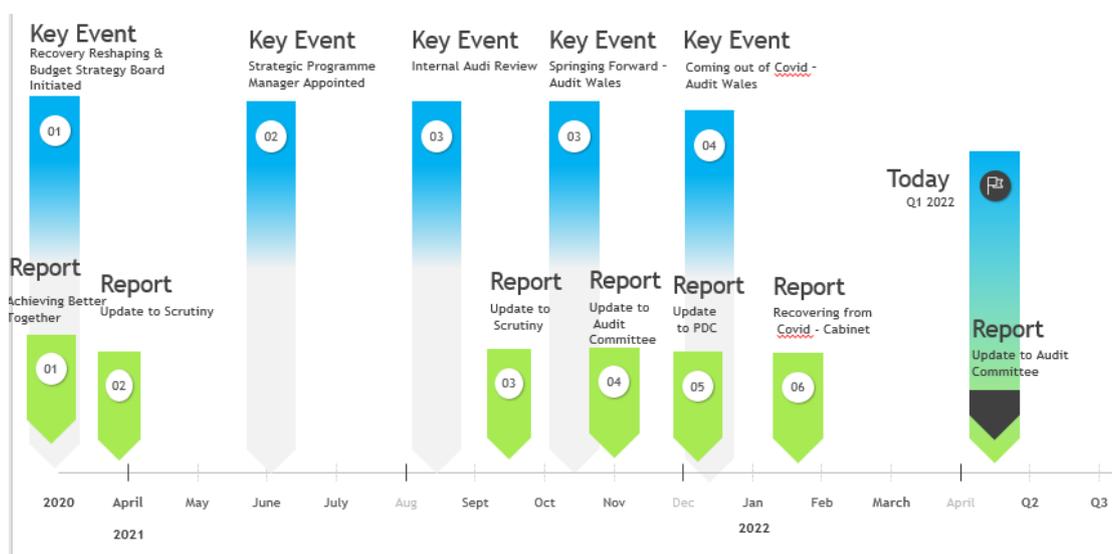
#### **2. Purpose**

- 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 Audit Committee in November 2021, other key reporting and milestones to date include:



2.5 To further assist the Achieving Better Together Programme, 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

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.

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 has done just that, it called on resources from across the organisation to support local residents, communities and businesses through the winter omicron pandemic as a priority.

3.3 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 provide 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 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.

3.4 The programme currently has two amber risks on the corporate risk register – Ref. 276/277. These amber risks have mitigation in place and a programme of work to address them. Both risks are reviewed and updated on a monthly basis by the Recovery, Reshaping and Budget Strategy Board.

3.5 The current status for the MTFP 2021/22 delivery is positive and on target. 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.

3.6 The Re-focus phase has set the 2022/23 budget and refreshed the MTFP. This work was undertaken in the Recovery, Reshaping and Budget Strategy Board and will be closely monitored each month.

#### **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;

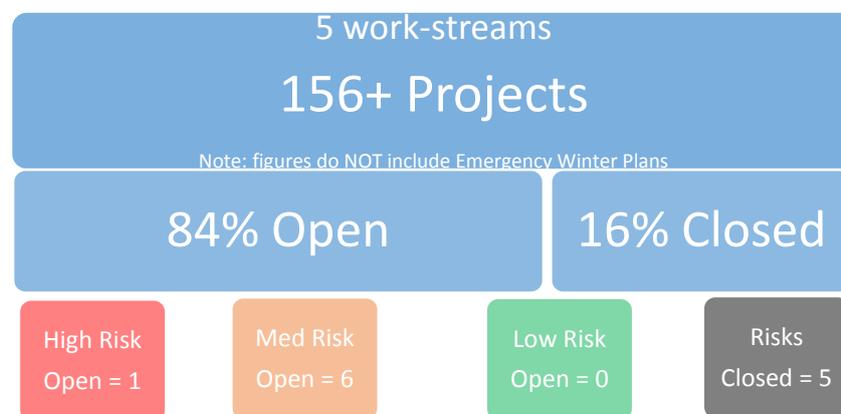
- Care Services
- Education and Learning
- Future Workforce and Equalities

- 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.

4.5 The work- streams are working towards realising a large number of benefits and successful outcomes across the programme for Staff, Citizens and the Organisation.

4.6 Risks & Issues are reported and monitored monthly through the steering group they are escalated to The Recovery, Reshaping & Budget Strategy Board ('The Board'). The status is below:



4.7 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.

4.8 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

4.9 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.

4.10 The budget and medium term finance plan progressed through the process for approval and is helping to shape the 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 was revised in 2021, with just one body now overseeing the programme, which was the merger of the two groups into 1 – This group is now The Recovery, Reshaping & Budget Strategy Board ('The Board').



5.2 The Recovery, Reshaping & Budget Strategy Board ('The Board'). The board sits monthly and focuses on strategic issues and high level risks that have been identified in relation to the programme. The governance structure, together with details of the membership of The Board, can be seen at **Appendix 1** The Board predominantly oversees and monitors three programmes of work:

1.	Phase 2 (Refocus) of Achieving Better Together work-streams
2.	The Medium Term Finance Plan
3.	The Economic Recovery Fund

5.3 Monthly Organisational Cross Cutting & Transformation Steering Group ('Steering Group') sits below The Board. Detailed discussions are conducted at Steering Group meetings in relation to the activities of each Work-stream. Where significant risks / issues are identified at Steering Group, those issues are reported to 'The Board' and the relevant Work stream Lead Officer may be invited to attend a meeting of The Board to provide information as required. Audit Wales have been invited to attend meetings of Steering Group and either attend or request documentation on a regular basis.

5.4 The Recovery, Reshaping & Budget Strategy Board and the Steering Group have both liaised and meet virtually via MS Teams on a Monthly basis. The actual dates are set out below:

<b>Steering Group (21/22)</b>	<b>Board (21/22)</b>
17 <sup>th</sup> March 21	14 <sup>th</sup> April 21 (rescheduled from 8 <sup>th</sup> April)
27 <sup>th</sup> April 21	12 <sup>th</sup> May 21
25 <sup>th</sup> May 21	9 <sup>th</sup> June 21
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 21	14 <sup>th</sup> July 21
27 <sup>th</sup> July 21	8 <sup>th</sup> September 21
28 <sup>th</sup> September 21	13 <sup>th</sup> October 21 ( <i>Budget</i> )
26 <sup>th</sup> October 21	10 <sup>th</sup> November 21 ( <i>Budget</i> )
23 <sup>rd</sup> November 21	8 <sup>th</sup> December 21 ( <i>Budget</i> )
28 <sup>th</sup> December 21	12 <sup>th</sup> January 22
25 <sup>th</sup> January 22	9 <sup>th</sup> February 22
22 <sup>nd</sup> February 22	9 <sup>th</sup> March 22
22 <sup>nd</sup> March 22	

5.5 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.

<b>WORKPLAN 2022</b>		
<i>Council Objective</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Strategy/Policy</i>
	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

<p><b>Transformation and future council development -</b> Working together to build a Council that is Sustainable, Efficient &amp; Effective in what and how it delivers its services with the citizen at the heart of all that we do.</p>	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
	Community Safety	

- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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 & Infrastructure PDC	Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent business case	September 2021
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

5.8 The Achieving Better Together Programme has also been the focus of a number of Scrutiny Committees:

16<sup>th</sup> March 2021

19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

The end of year update will go to the next Scrutiny after the new council and committees are formed in May 2022.

## 6. Conclusions

6.1 This paper demonstrates that the refocus phase is well underway and that the working groups are in place and working through the actions associated with their agendas.

6.2 The reporting mechanisms and governance boards are in place and working well.

6.3 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 build the foundations and scope the work that will be required of the work-streams for the reshaping phase post May 22, as well as undertaking recovery and refocus work.

## 7. Integrated Impact Assessment Implications

7.1 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.

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

7.3 There are no integrated assessment implications associated with this report.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 There are no legal implications.

## **9. Financial Implications**

9.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report itself. The programme, its governance and operational delivery, via the work-streams, will help provide the assurance mechanisms for the duration of the medium term finance plan and ultimately beyond, that the planned savings, but equally the correspondingly larger investment of new resources, will be delivered and resources targeted flexibly and appropriately as the wider environment and financial outlook for the public sector and the wider UK and global economy evolves. The overriding aims are to achieve value for money, remain financially sustainable, directly aid and assist the recovery and ultimately achieve better outcomes, together.

**Background papers:** None.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Governance Structure – Phase 2.

Appendix 2 - IIA Screening Form.

# Appendix 1

## Structure and governance

