



Report of the Leader/Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

Council – 1 December 2022

Policy Commitments - The First 100 Days

Purpose:	This report highlights the achievements and successes of Swansea Council during the 'first 100 days', in line with the Policy Commitments Statement agreed at Council on 7 th July 2022.
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For Information	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the council meeting on 7th July 2022, a report to establish a number of policy commitments of Swansea Council was adopted (Policy Commitments Statement 2022-27).
- 1.2 This report moves the Policy Commitments Statement on one stage further and reports on what the council has achieved by the end of the first 100 days, outlining some of the key actions that have been taken. It should be noted that not all actions have been detailed in this report, as many aspects continue to evolve and progress.
- 1.3 Swansea Council continues to work in partnership to promote and develop the well-being of all our citizens and our communities, working co-operatively and co-productively both within the council as well as with other bodies / organisations.
- 1.4 The council will continue to place an urgent emphasis on the delivery of high-quality services for all. Swansea Council has become an award-winning council, recognised as excellent in many of the services it delivers

and has been shortlisted for national awards in numerous categories including Council of The Year, Waste Management, Building Services and Construction, and Workforces (including our Apprenticeship Scheme). In September 2022, Swansea hosted more than 300 UK delegates at the annual Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) conference and awards, at which Swansea Council won the award for the best commercialisation and entrepreneurship initiative.

1.5 In addition, a range of independent assessments of our services by Estyn (Education), CiW (Social Services) and Audit Wales provide strong independent validation of the strength and quality of the services in Swansea. For example, officers from Estyn inspected Swansea Council's education services in June 2022, noting that pupil performance is above the national average and there is important work being done to support vulnerable young people to ensure they succeed and remain in school.

1.6 The council wants to continue to be recognised for high quality public services. To this end, the council will continue to modernise and invest in our front-line services to ensure their long-term sustainability through our Corporate Plan 2022/23, which outlines our ambitions and commitments to residents - our 'well-being objectives':

- **Safeguarding** people from harm - so that our citizens are free from harm and exploitation.
- Improving **Education & Skills** - so that everyone in Swansea gains the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life.
- Transforming our **Economy & Infrastructure** - so that Swansea has a thriving mixed use City Centre and a local economy that will support the prosperity of our citizens.
- **Tackling Poverty** - so that every person in Swansea can achieve their potential.
- Delivering on **Nature Recovery and Climate Change** - so that we maintain and enhance nature and biodiversity in Swansea, reduce our carbon footprint and tackle climate change.
- **Transformation & Future Council Development** - so that we and the services that we provide are sustainable and fit for the future.

1.7 The Corporate Plan and corporate priorities are currently being reviewed with a new plan being adopted early in 2023 for the period 2023-27.

2. What Is Being Achieved?

2.1 A considerable amount of work has already been undertaken over the last five years in delivering the council's policies. The council will build upon these achievements to create an environment which enables people to lead flourishing lives, secure local well-paid employment, live in strong and resilient communities which promotes physical and psychological wellbeing, with access to excellent services and protective of our natural environment.

- 2.2 All of the 100 days commitments have been started and some are well advanced, including the following;

Education

- 2.3 The council made a commitment to mapping out future priorities, in line with our Quality in Education (QEd) / Sustainable Communities for Learning programme. This pledge is aligned to the Corporate Plan under the 'Improving Education and Skills' objective, and has been included in the work programme for the Education and Skills Corporate Delivery Committee (CDC). The next phase of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme is mapped out and supported, with final delivery being noted as on track.
- 2.4 Swansea Council has commenced the upgrade works at Cefn Hengoed Community School, progressing the £7m investment in a new Community Sports Barn in Bonymaen. South Wales-based contractor Morganstone have successfully tendered to deliver the project and work is now underway on site. The investment at Cefn Hengoed Leisure Centre and Community School will see a new sports barn complete with indoor 3G pitch and fitness studio as well as a re-purposed outdoor five-a-side pitch. The development should be completed by Autumn 2023.
- 2.5 Swansea Council has begun the delivery and development of new special school facilities, a commitment aligned to the Corporate Plan under 'Improving Education and Skills'. Progress to date includes the approval by Welsh Government of the strategic outline case and completion of some ground investigations.
- 2.6 The council has expanded free school meal provision, in line with Welsh Government guidance and the freeze on school meal prices. New or improved equipment has been ordered and delivered, and the majority of school kitchens surveyed. Parents have been informed of programme delivery for Reception children, which commenced in September 2022.
- 2.7 The council has commenced the new regional partnership arrangements; the South West Wales Education Partnership will be a regional collaborative arrangement designed to promote excellence in all of our schools. In November 2021, a legal partnership agreement was approved by the respective Cabinets of the City and County of Swansea, Carmarthenshire Council and Pembrokeshire Council to establish a joint committee for a new regional education partnership, 'Partneriaeth', to support the delivery of school improvement. The joint committee of Partneriaeth is now in place.

Better Care

- 2.8 Incorporated into the delivery programme for the Safeguarding People and tackling Poverty CDC, the council will undertake a review of post-pandemic care provision, including an internal and external domiciliary

care capacity review. Swansea Council is also looking into the development of an Assistive Technology Strategy and an internal residential care provision review. In addition, the workforce development programme (recruitment and retention) is underway, as well as development of a locality-based prevention and early intervention framework.

2.9 Swansea Council's commitment to begin options appraisal and move to increase council direct delivery of care is underway, with progress including the scoping of current demand and pressures. Work is underway to evaluate the cost comparison of in-house and external provision, as well as identifying and addressing any budget gaps. This commitment is also included in the programme delivery for the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty CDC.

2.10 Swansea Council is engaging with Health to ensure care plans align with health recovery. Transformation priorities have been aligned with regional transformation agendas, and objectives have been shared with partners across the region. Specific workstreams have been developed including:

- Prevention and Community Co-ordination
- Homes First Model Development
- Learning Disability & Wellbeing
- Transformation Complex Care
- Wellbeing & Mental Health
- Carers

This commitment is also included in the programme delivery for the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty CDC.

2.11 Work has commenced on progressing a new children's care facility and we have purchased one home for development and transformation. Recruitment and development of staff for this provision is underway. Work is ongoing to source a second property and additional work is ongoing to secure further regional funding for extra developments in this area.

Communities

2.12 The council is completing bus shelter installations and continuing to review records of current stock to confirm which shelters would benefit from upgrading. Part of the city-wide upgrade includes ten new 'green roof' bus shelters, featuring natural plants on top, which can help filter out dust particles and contribute to better air quality.

2.13 Swansea Council committed to setting up the new Cleansing Ward Operative Team, which will head into every ward in Swansea to undertake deep cleans and tackle major littering and fly-tipping issues, in line with input from ward councillors.

- 2.14 Swansea Council have committed to installing new bins and to replace dog waste bins with larger general bins. Tender bids have been received and new bins ordered, with the first deliveries successfully received during September 2022. This area of delivery is aligned to the Corporate Plan under 'Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure'. The council is also in discussions about introducing new smart bins which send messages to the clean-up team to let them know when they are full.
- 2.15 The council is committed to the roll-out of new drainage teams and new PATCH (Priority Action Team for Community Highways) programmes. A major 4-year contract has been re-issued and the programme is due to start with two teams in early October 2022. All works programmed are scheduled to complete within a year. Consideration will need to be given to next year's programme and whether additional funding will continue or revert to pre- ERF levels.
- 2.16 The council has commenced work on progressing the £10m local road upgrade commitment, with areas of intended focus / priority set out for agreement by Cabinet Members. This area of delivery is aligned to the Corporate Plan under 'Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure'.
- 2.17 Swansea Council has revised community budget rules in full.
- 2.18 The council is progressing roll-out of free public Wi-Fi and continue to work on developing options. Work is progressing around delivery of the following aspects:
- Options Appraisal
 - Agree a Strategic Approach
 - Procurement of Solution
 - Implementation
 - Links with the CCTV roll out to ensure state aid compliance
- 2.19 The council continues to progress investigations into the options for a Substance Use Truth Commission, aligned to the Corporate Plan under Tackling Poverty. Partnership work has commenced to commission a substance use review, to help understand how services can operate differently by listening to the lived experiences of people and services. Exact milestones and timelines are yet to be defined in full and final form.
- 2.20 Swansea Council continues to drive forward work to agree a Local Library Plan, including the community hub developments. The central library project is underway as part of the new Hub and the wider plan is continuously developing throughout its scoping phase.
- 2.21 Swansea Council seeks to expand Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and work has been completed to evaluate success of a City Centre PSPO, informing the business case for roll-out to other areas. The City Centre PSPO is now operational.

- 2.22 Swansea Council has engaged proactively with the Police to improve visibility of local policing. An initial meeting was held in June 2022 with Cabinet Members and the local SWP Inspector, Sergeant and Community Safety Officers. Continuing this work stream, follow-up meetings are scheduled for October 2022, January 2023 and April 2023.
- 2.23 Swansea Council has prepared to receive more refugees. Accommodation options were put in place for the initial reception, inclusive of temporary accommodation and settled accommodation. Robust processes have been put in place using well established support mechanisms, however it should be noted that the level of arrivals has been high, resulting in pressures on temporary accommodation and subsequent delays to move-on options. Hotels have been utilised where appropriate, funded by Welsh Government's Ukraine scheme. The council continue to work with other schemes also in operation, as funded by the Home Office.
- 2.24 The council has progressed the roll-out of next generation CCTV systems. Work is underway for the replacement of the current analogue CCTV system with a modern digital system, providing:
- Faster and more flexible connectivity (digital IP based)
 - More cameras in more locations
 - Analytics Software to assist operators in monitoring activity
 - A robust foundation for further growth of service provision

This area of work continues to develop in line with the Corporate Plan objective of Transforming our Economy and Infrastructure.

Housing

- 2.25 The council has completed the Welsh Quality Housing Standard (WQHS) 1 and has begun work to plan for the implementation of WQHS 2023. Schemes continue to progress at various stages of design, procurement and site delivery to maximise spend of capital budget.
- 2.26 The council will begin its review of its council housing lettings policy. The review of the Allocations Policy ensures it continues to assist those most in need. The deadline for completion of the review is March 2024. The More Homes programme has an ambitious target to increase the supply of social housing which will help meet future demand and reduce the waiting list.
- 2.27 Swansea Council is progressing work aligned to our commitment to agree a strategy to support homeless individuals as the Covid hotel use ends, whilst striving to continue our 'always a bed' pledge. This will be achieved via the HSG, Rapid Rehousing and Move-On strategies, aligned to our corporate plan priority of Safeguarding People from Harm.
- 2.28 Swansea Council is continuing onto the next phase of the More Homes build, whilst maintaining progress on acquiring and further retrofitting of

council homes. Although some schemes are experiencing delays due to design capacity, most schemes are progressing well through the design and planning stages, with four schemes scheduled to start in 2022/23. Associated costs are contained within 2002/23 HRA Capital Programme.

Regeneration

- 2.29 Working with our regional partners, we are progressing the £1bn regeneration and £750m partnership with Urban Splash as our new strategic partner, with an initial focus on Copr Bay Phase 2, the Civic Centre site and St Thomas site. This new partnership had been announced on signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement and early work has commenced on design of the initial three schemes and delivery strategy.
- 2.30 The council is working towards securing a major new tenant for the Debenhams unit in the Quadrant Shopping Centre. Productive discussions continue, with a focus on securing the use of this unit for the future.
- 2.31 The council continues to progress work on the new Castle Square Gardens project. A planning application was submitted in July 2022, and work continues on the procurement and construction aspects of the project. The design stage is now complete, as well as pre-application consultation.
- 2.32 Swansea Council is driving forward work on the new Central Library project, as highlighted in paragraph 2.20 above. The planning application has now been approved, and the RIBA (plan of work) stage 3 complete. We are pleased to confirm that a contractor has also been successfully appointed.
- 2.33 Swansea Council has begun the phased demolition of Ty Dewi Sant and the old multi-storey car park. Work is underway to begin site demolition to clear footprints for the redevelopment as part of Swansea Central North scheme. Work continues to progress on Ty Dewi Sant and the full car park demolition will follow in 2023. Capital costs for this project are included in the Copr Bay project costs.
- 2.34 Work is progressing on site at 71-72 The Kingsway, to create an innovation hub which will be home to new businesses and up to six hundred new jobs. We successfully appointed Bouygues UK as the development's main contractor, with the development on course for completion by summer 2023. This commitment is also included within the delivery programme of the Economy and Infrastructure CDC.

Finances and Resources

- 2.35 The council continues making cost of living (COL) payments on behalf of Welsh Government until the scheme closes or the fund is spent in full. All Swansea citizens who are eligible for a payment from the scheme and who have made the necessary applications will have been paid their COL payment by April 2023. Over 91% of the people who are eligible for the

main scheme element have been paid. Payments under the discretionary scheme have commenced and are well in hand.

- 2.36 The council has agreed the outturn position, resulting in a report to Cabinet and a substantial add to reserves.
- 2.37 Given the national financial crisis, the council is reviewing the Economic Recovery Fund (ERF). A range of projects and initiatives will proceed but consideration is also being given to retain a proportion of the fund in reserves to deal with future budget pressures, including rising energy costs.
- 2.38 Work is underway to review the 'Achieving Better Together, Transformation Strategy & Programme' goals. In November 2022, Cabinet will be invited to approve an outline transformation strategy and goals to be finalised alongside the corporate plan and Medium-Term Finance Plan before the start of 2023-34 financial year. A 'Lessons Learnt' review of Sustainable Swansea is in progress.
- 2.39 The council has commenced a senior pay and grading review, aiming to ensure it fits with the wider workforce pay and grading scheme. External consultants have been appointed and have started the review, which includes looking at a future scheme, the pay and grading structure and potential impacts of change on Grade 12 National Joint Council workforce. By mid-October 2022 external consultants will have produced a report with recommendations in respect of the senior pay and grading scheme and implications for the wider workforce scheme. The next steps will be determined as part of the work on the MTFP.
- 2.40 The council is ensuring that all planned savings as set out in the budget approved for 2022-23 are delivered in full or if necessary, by exception, mitigating alternative savings are achieved. First quarter monitoring to Cabinet (15 September) and tracking of Achieving Better Together indicates a service shortfall of currently approximately £1m to date, which is a mix of emerging spending pressures and four savings items, which are not fully on track.

Directors and Heads of Service are expected to mitigate the current gap. Spending pressures are likely to become exacerbated during the remainder of this financial year, but a distinction will continue to be made between pressures outside of the council's control, those that are, and those that are directly shortfalls in quantum or delays to timings of savings. £1m in the context of a £0.5bn revenue budget is considered within reasonable tolerance of the budget set and thus currently this commitment is on track.

- 2.41 By the end of October 2022, Cabinet will have been invited to agree principles that will underpin the council's post-pandemic working model, taking account of operational requirements, customer expectations and workforce needs. The council has an extant agile working policy, as well

as an accommodation strategy, a draft workforce and a draft digital and customer service strategy. These are being reviewed together with feedback from members and staff gathered during the pandemic to inform the development of principles to underpin a post pandemic working model. Continued work around this commitment is also included in the delivery programme of the Organisational Transformation CDC.

Attractions

- 2.42 The council continues to progress development and investment through the Skyline park attraction on Kilvey Hill, having hosted the Skyline board visit during June 2022 and various meetings since. We continue to liaise frequently with Skyline on this project and are working closely together to progress funding. This project has been earmarked as part of the delivery programme for the Economy & Infrastructure CDC.
- 2.43 The council continues to progress hotels discussions for the City Centre and Stadium through ongoing dialogue with the private sector to identify viable development opportunities, and gap funding discussions are nearing completion. This commitment is aligned to the Corporate Plan objective of Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure.
- 2.44 The council remains committed to progressing the development and reopening of the River Tawe corridor, including new pontoons expected by Winter 2022. Progress so far includes completed designs, with which a planning application was submitted in July 2022. The project has now moved into the procurement phase and work is underway to begin installations during Autumn 2022.
- 2.45 Swansea Council continues to work towards delivering new promenade improvements and developments, as well as completing the missing lighting to the promenade along Swansea Bay. These developments are progressing through the design and procurement stages and will advance pending further approvals as and when appropriate.
- 2.46 We are committed to delivering a range of exciting events and immersive attractions, summer concerts and a new phase of Arena shows; encapsulated in a larger than ever events programme (including the half Iron Man event), which commenced with community support for a range of successful Platinum Jubilee events.
 - 2.46.1 During summer 2022, five concerts were programmed / supported in Singleton Park, and more than two thousand people took part in the first pro-race of the 2022 Ironman UK season. We continue to liaise with the Ambassador Theatre Group regarding opportunities for designing events / activities in the wider area, although we recognise programme announcements are outside the remit of the cultural services department.
- 2.47 The council remains committed to retaining the Wales National Air Show in Swansea, bringing tens of thousands of visitors to the City for this annual

event and reviewing how its delivery can align with its net-zero carbon targets. The National Airshow took place in July 2022, with two days of flying featuring The Red Arrows, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and many other displays to entertain visitors from across the UK. The Wales National Airshow is set to return in 2023 and work is underway to establish how we can better align delivery of this event with net-zero carbon targets.

- 2.48 Swansea Council has been committed to progressing discussions for the new interactive aquarium, aiming to offer an immersive experience for visitors and a wider educational resource. This commitment is aligned to the Corporate Plan objective of Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure. The project has been progressing and initial design works are underway. Discussions continue to take place with the aquarium operator.

Transport and Energy

- 2.49 Work continues to progress on the Blue Eden project with cabinet reports expected before the end of December 2022. Work is underway to complete feasibility studies, and this project has been planned for the delivery programme of the Economy and Infrastructure CDC.
- 2.50 The council has successfully continued the 'free bus ride' scheme for 2022 school summer holidays and will consider further extensions in the future.
- 2.51 Swansea Council has increased the availability of electric vehicle (EV) charging points and continues to work to develop a wider EV charging strategy. In June 2022, fifteen public facing charge points were successfully installed in council car parks.
- 2.52 Work is underway to review the council transport fleet to increase the green fleet in line with its agreed Green Fleet Strategy. In line with the ULEV Transition Strategy (2022-2030), approximately 100 electric vehicles and 60 fleet charge points are planned for 2022-2023.
- 2.53 Swansea Council has commenced the review of its disabled parking bay policy, and work continues to update the existing policy. Draft papers are scheduled to be presented to the Policy Development Committee in Autumn 2022.
- 2.54 The council continues to strive to progress discussions regarding a new ferry service linking Wales with the South West of England. Although initial discussions have become delayed, we continue to work diligently to identify a viable option that is commercially deliverable.
- 2.55 The council is progressing talks on the development of a hydrogen fuelling hub; discussions are ongoing as part of the expanded Blue Eden project.

Well – Being

- 2.56 Swansea Council is progressing the delivery of all-weather sports pitches. Discussions are underway with Football Association Wales, Welsh Rugby Union, local groups and leagues. As outlined in paragraph 2.4 above, work is now underway on the £7m sports and leisure complex at Cefn Hengoed Community School. A turf-cutting ceremony has been held at the site of the new indoor sports barn on the city's east side.
- 2.57 The council remains committed to progressing discussions with partners regarding the International Sports Science Village. A feasibility study is now underway, aiming to identify opportunities around how best to deliver a diverse sporting infrastructure for growing participation; elite performance and international events.
- 2.58 Swansea Council is working towards announcing new Active Travel routes, which develop the built and natural environment and encourages higher levels of physical activity. Work is underway to successfully deliver Active Travel grant funding within the current financial year (2022-2023).
- 2.59 The council remains committed to delivering better skate-park facilities within Swansea. Projects are progressing and discussions continue to evolve in line with a feasibility / site consultancy contract (yet to be awarded) and final details will be agreed with the skateboarding community.

Other

- 2.60 The new regional Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) is now formally constituted, with a recent meeting having been held in July and October 2022. A new work programme for 2022-23 has been agreed for each of the four work strands. This area has been incorporated into the delivery programme for the Economy & Infrastructure CDC.
- 2.61 The council has commenced a review of delegated decisions that can be taken by both Officers and Councillors. Work is underway to define the scope and remit of this review, which will include aspects of officer decision making, and the process for recording / publishing decisions. It is planned that any consequential amendments to the constitution will be presented via a formal report to the Constitutional Working Group and to Council.
- 2.62 Swansea Council is working towards agreeing a new Swansea Bay Strategy and a draft delivery plan is emerging. The scoping document(s) are being prepared to capture relevant strategies that should inform an overarching masterplan. This topic has been incorporated into the planned delivery programme for the Economy & Infrastructure CDC.
- 2.63 The council is working towards updating the recognition and naming policy, with a working group to be established to oversee this cross-cutting

project. This is also incorporated into the planned delivery programme for the Organisational Transformation CDC.

- 2.64 The council will progress TAN15 discussions with Welsh Government to find a solution that supports appropriate development, having already instructed commission and received initial reports. We continue to work alongside Welsh Government to attend workshops and events as necessary. This area of delivery is aligned to the Corporate Plan under 'Transforming our Economy & Infrastructure'.

3. Integrated Impact Assessment Implications

- 3.1 The council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) 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 Act.
- 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.

- 3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

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

- 3.4 This is a statement of progress over 100 days meeting the Council's Policy Commitments. Each individual commitment will need to be clearly defined and built into Corporate / service plans and subjected to consultation and engagement and individual IIAs as appropriate. The report is for information only and so there is no impact on the people and / or communities covered by the IIA.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Whilst there are no immediate financial implications arising directly from simply adopting this report, acceptance of the actions contained within the report may result in additional expenditure at a future time which will be dealt with by appropriate and subsequent cabinet reports if additional revenue or capital funding is required.

- 4.2 The first substantial tranche of funding will be aided and assisted by the replenishment of the Economic Recovery Fund (ERF).
- 4.3 Acceptance of this report does not mean further additional resources will be made available beyond those in the Economic Recovery Fund, once that is replenished, or already budgeted for 2022-23 and it should be assumed for now that all future spending needs will need to be contained within existing budget and medium-term financial plan provisions and specifically set aside reserves levels.
- 4.4 That assumption regarding overall future revenue spending will be dependent upon the level of future local government finance settlements and decisions to be made by Swansea Council on levels of future Council Tax as part of the annual budget cycle and medium-term planning. Overall real terms future revenue resources are likely to remain significantly constrained given current inflation pressures and expectations.
- 4.5 Capital investment decisions and the associated funding requirement will be primarily a function of decisions by Council regarding the broad level of capital versus revenue spending, including any further amounts that Council may decide to budget for capital financing (borrowing), capital receipts from ongoing asset disposals, continued successful access to large scale capital funding programmes and future funding flexibilities.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Legal advice and assistance will be provided where necessary in relation to the policy commitments.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – IIA Screening form