



Report of the Chair

Recovery and Future Generations PDC – 22 February 2022

Annual Report 2021-22

Purpose:	To provide the Recovery and Future Generations PDC with an overview of the progress made to date in relation to the work programme for 2021-22 and to identify recommendations to the appropriate Cabinet Members for future policy development
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For Information	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the Policy Development Committees are to develop Corporate Policies for consideration and adoption by Cabinet and / or Council as appropriate. The specific role of the PDCs is to focus on policy development & delivery by in depth analysis of policy issues and consider future policy. The PDCs are also charged with considering mechanisms to encourage and enhance public participation in development of policy and policy options and consider where appropriate to invite relevant organisations / individuals to contribute to policy development discussions.
- 1.2 For the Municipal Year 2021-22, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Recovery and Future Generations Policy Development (PDC) were selected in May 2020 and a work programme was subsequently agreed shortly thereafter. The Recovery and Future Generations Policy Development Committee was re-focused and re-named at Council in December 2020, with a view to the PDC examining aspects of the

Achieving Better Together programme (the Council's Recovery and Transformation programme) in relation to Policy development.

- 1.3 The Recovery and Future Generations PDC was not established to *scrutinise* the Achieving Better Together programme and related work, or lead on the Policy development on *all* parts of the programme, but to consider future policy development and make a report and/or recommendations to Cabinet Members/Cabinet and Council on issues within the scope of this particular PDC and within topics/issues which did not duplicate the work of other PDCs. Likewise the former Equality issues explored previously within this re-focused PDC, have not been displaced, but incorporated within the long term re-focus phase of the Achieving Better Together programme.
- 1.4 The Committee explored the following items as part of its work plan; Swansea Council Employability provision, the Community Hub (High Street), Achieving Better Together (the Council's Recovery and Transformation programme), the Council's approach to Co-production, and the Council's Consultation and Engagement strategy, Community Safety, Recovery from Exiting from the EU (and Brexit), The committee also held two workshops on the Council's Draft Workforce Strategy and plans are in place to explore the Council's Sustainable develop Policy.

2. Outcomes from the Recovery and Future Generations PDC

2.1 Swansea Council Employability provision

The Council's External Funding Manager, supported by the Employability Mentor Team Leader and the Principal External Funding Officer, provided a presentation to the PDC about Swansea Council's Employability provision in June 2021. The subsequent discussion and questions from Members of the PDC provision focused on how referrals were made, the number Young People securing work placements in the Council and with other employers across Swansea, the Beyond Bricks and Mortar scheme and support for volunteers who had provided support through the Covid-19 pandemic – lifelong learning offer. As a result of the presentation and discussion Members gained a greater understanding about the nature of provision and the complexity of different funding requirements and eligibility criteria. The PDC made a number of suggestions in relation to Policy development including the Council reviewing its use of Agency staff and considering paid work placements instead of Agency staff, reviewing Council contracts and procurement to ensure that work placements for local people are incorporated within the offer and signposting people who volunteered in the Covid-19 pandemic to access free training and support, in order to build on these skills and gain employment/self-employment.

2.2 The Community Hub (High Street)

The Community Integration Partnership Manager provided an overview to the Committee in relation to Swansea High Street and Community Safety issues in June 2021. Following unfavourable comments in the press in 2019 regarding the High Street, a Critical Incident Group was established. A number of work streams were set up which operated on a partnership working basis and consisted of; Criminality and Anti-Social Behaviour, Substance Misuse, Street Sex Working and Exploitation and the Public Realm. Funding had been secured for a community space and refurbishment had started on three empty business premises at the top of High Street and consultation with the local community was underway to shape the nature of provision.

- 2.2.1 The subsequent discussion and questions from Members of the PDC provision focused on governance, the role of partners, the number of Police Officers patrolling streets, community engagement and co-production, the process of naming, designing and use of community space, future funding streams from community grants and the potential of rolling out community space to other areas. As a result of the presentation and discussion, the PDC suggested it was essential to use a co-productive approach and involve local people in decision making. The PDC also recommended exploring future funding opportunities with key partners in the local area such as Network Rail to support the project and to link with other infrastructure improvement projects in the local area. Other suggestions from the PDC included the need for an increased Police Officer presence on the streets in the local area, a long term preventative approach in relation to planning policy and designing out crime and anti-social behaviour and long term continual engagement with the local community, rather than consultation in relation to specific projects.
- 2.2.2 The Community Integration Partnership manager provided a further update to the PDC in October 2021. Further community engagement events had taken place in, June, July and September 2021. Suggestions from the community about ideas for the community space included; the development of a Social Enterprise, a Café/Shop/Bakery, space for Grow your own projects, 'Pop up' space for creative activities, a Safe Space for Outreach work – to include evening work with the SWAN project, a space for Youth Engagement, wider community provision in the day – space for community engagement and activities, a Multi-agency hub for Partnership working/hot desking and a Pop up Cinema and Games.
- 2.3 Achieving Better Together Programme (the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan)
 - 2.3.1 The Deputy Chief Executive and the Strategic Change Programme provided an overview and update on the Council's Achieving Better Together programme to the Committee in June 2021. The Deputy Chief Executive reported that good progress had been made in respect of Vaccinations, however new variants were keeping the Council in a

position of response, rather than full recovery. He reported that the Council were also still supporting the Track and Trace programme and the Vaccination Programme, as well as providing advice to businesses and communities in relation to tackling Covid-19. On behalf of the Welsh Government, the Council have also been leading on the All Wales Vaccination Certification Service and had processed approximately 19,500 Vaccination Certificates across all of Wales.

- 2.3.2 The Strategic Change Programme Manager highlighted some key areas of success within the wider programme to date which included; the appointment of the post Strategic Change Programme Manager, the establishment of a Steering Group, the identification of Work Stream leads, reporting mechanisms and developing a robust governance and assurance framework. Other areas of progress to date include the development of a reporting and monitoring process for the Economic Recovery Fund, monitoring the Medium Term Financial Plan, reviewing corporate risks and consultation with the Leadership team and other staff about the future workforce plan and approach.
- 2.3.3 The subsequent discussion and questions from Members of the PDC provision focused on the review of Agile policy, learning from the experience of Covid-19, taking small steps to build upon the benefits of new ways of working and the importance of co-production. As a result of presentation and discussion, Members of the PDC suggested ensuring that the Agile policy was sufficiently flexible for staff to continue working from home to some extent and benefit from the ability to combine other commitments such as caring responsibilities, with the opportunity for office based work for staff who indicated that they would benefit from working in an office environment.
- 2.3.4 The Deputy Chief Executive and the Strategic Change Manager provided a further update and presentation on the Achieving Better Together programme to the Committee in December 2021. The Deputy Chief Executive reported that whilst good progress was being made with the Transformation aspects of the programme, the rising wave of new Covid-19 variants and subsequent restrictions meant that many immediate priorities focused on response, rather than recovery and re-focus. Nevertheless, despite the challenges posed by the new variants, good progress had been made in relation to key strategic regeneration programmes in the city centre and across Swansea, albeit with some minimal delays in the pace of delivery. The Strategic Change Manager outlined the progress made in relation to the re-focus elements of the programme including; the re-launch of the Leadership hub, and the development of an Ideas hub for staff, a renewed Agile Policy, the expansion of the LAC service across the whole of Swansea, the development of a single point of contact for Vulnerable children, the development of a mobile phone project for Vulnerable people in the community, the re-purposing of ICT equipment from the DVLA and a revised Homelessness strategy.

Members of the PDC acknowledged the recent successes of the Achieving Better Together programme and focused on questions around the Council's ability to retain and attract new Social Care staff, Council policies in relation to the provision of more affordable 1 and 2 bedroom homes and requested more details about the mobile phone project for Vulnerable people.

- 2.4 The Council's approach to Co-production and the Consultation and Engagement strategy.
 - 2.4.1 The Council's Learning Disability Officer provided a presentation on the Council's Regional Co-production strategy developed for Social Care to the Committee in September 2021. The presentation included an overview of the background to the strategy, an outline definition of co-production, principles and values and the implementation of the strategy.
 - 2.4.2 Members of the PDC provision acknowledged the good work which had been undertaken by Social Services, but suggested that co-production should be extended across all Council services, not just Social Care. Subsequent questions and discussions focused on the role of volunteers, social enterprises and the impact of co-production on Social Care staff, examples of good practice, potential pitfalls and challenges, costs and the practical arrangements for co-production and establishing co-producers, particularly those not known to services.
 - 2.4.3 Members of the PDC suggested that the Council's co-production policy should be informed by the wider evidence base and lessons learnt from other parts of the UK. Members also suggested that a Council wide policy on co-production should also be written in plain language to enable all to understand the concept and support should be provided to enable people actively participate in decision making, particularly if they have been familiar with service directed provision and being passive recipients of services. The PDC also recommended protecting Council jobs and guarding against the over reliance on volunteers to undertake tasks previously undertaken by the paid work force. They also recommended that Council's co-production policy should not lead to any compulsory redundancies (albeit the transformation of the work stream coming out of the co-production strategy, rather than the co-production strategy). Finally, the PDC agreed that a further workshop was need to look at a Corporate Co-production workshop across the Council.
 - 2.4.4 The Council's Consultation and Engagement co-ordinator provided an updated on the Council's revised Consultation and Engagement strategy, which has been reviewed in light of the experience of Covid-19. The draft strategy provided a Corporate Framework and guidance for services across the Council to undertake consultation and engagement work. Members of the PDC of the PDC asked a series of questions about the history of the Council's consultation and

engagement work, including the work undertaken by Swansea Voices (the Council's former citizen's panel) and its composition and the Council's Reputation Tracker. Members of the PDC were invited to submit further comments to the Consultation and Engagement co-ordinator on the revised strategy, prior to wider consultation.

2.5 Recovery from exiting the European Union

The Corporate Performance Manager presented a report which outlined and identified the detailed preparations that had been undertaken by the Council for the EU Exit, the main risks identified at that time and also updated the committee on the current post-EU Exit situation. The report outlined the impact that both Brexit and the ongoing pandemic have had locally, nationally and globally on issues such as the supply chain and price increases, workforce availability and rising fuel costs etc and the work carried out across on the EU citizen's resettlement scheme. The subsequent discussion and questions from Members of the PDC provision focused on numbers of EU citizens who had not applied for settled status and future EU replacement funding issues.

2.6 Workforce

2.6.1 Two workshops were held for the Recovery and Future Generations PDC in November and December 2020 to explore in-depth the Council's draft Workforce strategy and to enable the PDC to make suggestions and recommendations in relation to the development of this strategy. The Strategic HR and OD Manager provided an outline of the Council's draft Workforce strategy 2022-26 including an overview of the strategic context, the vision for workplace culture, values, a description of the future workforce, workforce planning processes and an outline of the strategic themes and priorities of the strategy. He also provided an update on the results of the staff survey, feedback from workshops with staff, managers and Trade unions and outline of other consultation and engagement work to date.

2.6.2 Subsequent questions and discussions from Members of the PDC focused on the engagement with and support for staff during the pandemic, the nature of future engagement with and support for staff coming out of the pandemic, absence reporting processes, dealing with long term sickness, best practice, the role of Trade Unions and the Welsh Language. Members of the PDC made a number of suggestions in relation to this strategy and further policy development including;

- identifying and sharing examples of good practice in relation to staff engagement and support for staff,
- developing a Staff handbook for staff to inform staff about all the service provided by the Council and all the benefits and support which are available to them,

- developing an anonymous helpline or chatbot to support staff with Mental Health and other well-being issues,
- continuing to develop good working relationships with Trade Unions, but also recognising the need to invest in other employee engagement mechanisms - as Trade Unions don't represent the whole workforce, or all staff concerns,
- giving a clear commitment to reduce Agency staff, particularly in relation to Waste and Cleansing services,
- developing a culture of trust between Managers and staff and rolling out training on Social Partnerships,
- recognising that not all staff want to disclose disabilities and/or health conditions and exploring signing up to charters such as the "Dying to Work Charter,"
- granting line managers trust and discretion in relation to work absences where there are complex, health and personal factors,
- Increasing support for staff who have been abused or attacked in their workplace at the earliest opportunity.

3. Conclusions

Overall, the Recovery and Future and Generations PDC received a wide range of presentations and reports which generated a number of questions and discussions amongst the Committee. The PDC made a number of suggestions in relation to the further policy development and added value to new or revised policies. Building on the good work undertaken by Social Services in relation to embedding co-production in their services, the PDC have continued to advocate for a corporate approach to co-production across the Council and will be working with the Strategic Change Manager to explore the nature of resource required to develop this in the March 2022 Committee meeting.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

4.1 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.

4.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 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'.

4.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None