

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Date Written	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
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Service Area	Community Regeneration Protection & Safety Services & Housing
Committee Date	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2022

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

### **Working Life Thematic Report – Review of Delivery of Key Objectives in the Corporate Well-being Plan**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Committee has requested a report be brought before them that looks back over the services delivered across the lifetime of the Council's current Corporate Well-being Plan (Focus on the Future: wellbeing in our community) to secure the progress made and clarify the impact secured against the **Working Life** well-being objective contained in that Plan (*People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses; with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination*).
- 1.2 The report responds to Members request to outline progress made when delivering the Working Life well-being objective; and contains relevant data and information on outcomes claimed. The report and its appendices will include information on key lessons learned in relation to this objective; as well as highlighting information on opportunities and key challenges faced and how they have been managed.
- 1.3 The report makes explicit links to other key corporate strategies and policies which have been used to deliver the services; shows evidence of how progress towards more integrated ways of working have developed over the lifetime of the Plan. Information on key lessons learned aim to provide intelligence that can be used when developing the next iteration of the Corporate Well-being Plan

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The content of this report is to be discussed by Committee Members; and performance data carefully scrutinised.

- 2.2 Scrutiny Committee Members provide appropriate challenge on the report content; and offer feedback to officers which can be fully considered and utilised when planning for the next iteration of the Corporate Well-being Plan begins.

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### Legislative Context

- 3.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 specifies that we must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by maximising our contribution to the seven national well-being goals.
- 3.2 We must do this in accordance with the sustainable development principle, which means that we act in a manner that seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are five ways of working that we need to adopt in order to show that we have applied the sustainable development principle; the five ways of working are:
- Long-term
  - Preventative
  - Integrated
  - Collaborative
  - Involvement

#### Strategic Context and Service Delivery

- 3.3 The Council is committed to delivering excellent services. It will do so by delivering its key strategies and through joint working with a range of key partners and wider stakeholders. The key strategies that focus on delivering excellent services supporting the Working Life well-being objectives are:
- 15 year Economic Vision & Economic Recovery Plan;
  - Economic Growth Strategy;
  - Taf Bargoed Strategy;
  - Heritage Strategy;
  - Merthyr Tydfil Strategic Valley Hub Placemaking Plan 2019-2025;
  - Cyfarthfa Heritage Area Master Plan;
  - Active Merthyr Plan;
  - The Active Travel Plan;
  - MTCBC Homelessness Strategy;
  - Workforce Development Plan;
  - Town Centre Master Plan;
  - Local Development Plan 2016-2023; and
  - MTCBC's Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan.

Through the creation of an Economic Recovery Plan; strategies have been refined so that; moving forward, all emerging action plans will align to the Recovery Plan unless there is a specific statutory requirement where a separate plan/strategy must be developed.

- 3.4 The service areas work collaboratively with other departments both within the Council, with external partners via the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board (PSB); the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB); with other local authorities on regional projects such as Cardiff and the Capital City Deal; as well as with multiple partner and stakeholder organisations across both the third and private sector.
- 3.5 The Chief Officer for Community Regeneration, Public Protection and Housing is accountable for reporting on the wellbeing objective **Working Life**. The report will ensure that the outcomes clearly describe what the Working Life objective seeks to achieve. The key outcomes for the Working Life objective are:
- Merthyr Tydfil realises its economic potential; with a skilled workforce and better employment opportunities;
  - We value our built and natural environment, protecting and enhancing our heritage and cultural assets for current and future generations; and
  - We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how these affect others.

## 4.0 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 Continuous improvement is a legal requirement and requires ongoing effort from MTCBC to improve its processes and services. The principal legislation relevant to improvement planning within a public body:
- a) The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009
  - b) Equality Act 2010
  - c) Social Services & Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014
  - d) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- 4.2 The principal legislation provides a common approach to:
- a) Setting objectives
  - b) Planning for improvement
  - c) Evaluating progress, and
  - d) Reporting on improvement
- 4.3 There have been some **significant changes outside of the organisation** over the past 5 years which have affected the local economy and; by extension; the residents of the County Borough. These include:
- An ongoing programme of welfare reform (e.g.) the roll-out of Universal Credit; changes to housing benefit etc.
  - The BREXIT vote and enactment of the UK leaving the European Union;
  - An ongoing period of austerity measures introduced by the UK government lasting approximately 10 years;

- A developing housing crisis and rise in homelessness; ;
- Diminishing manufacturing operations and higher levels of service-sector companies;
- Increasing awareness of climate change;
- The transition to a digital environment and the move to agile working ; and
- The still unquantifiable longer-term impacts of Covid-19.

All of these developments/changes have affected the delivery of Council services/activities to some degree; whether it be directly (such as having to sustain services with less resource); or indirectly (such as changes in the welfare system leading to an increase in demand for support from residents).

### **Wellbeing Duty**

- 4.4 The Wellbeing Duty dictates that we, as a public body, must develop in a way that is sustainable over the long term, to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales.
- 4.5 The Council's primary contribution to prepare for the Wellbeing Duty is via the delivery of Cwm Taf population (wellbeing) assessment project, scenario planning and identifying proposals for wellbeing objectives.
- 4.6 When we set out well-being objectives and take steps (actions) to meet these, we must demonstrate how we have applied the sustainable development principle (the 5 ways of working), this means the Council must:
- (1) Balance short-term needs with the need to safeguard long-term needs;
  - (2) Act to prevent problems occurring or getting worse;
  - (3) Consider how our wellbeing objectives integrate with others' wellbeing objectives;
  - (4) Act in collaboration to help meet the wellbeing objectives; and
  - (5) Involve people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals.
- 4.7 A collaborative approach to the development and planning of the Corporate Well-being Plan was led by Corporate Management Team who worked with the Council's Cabinet and Elected Members. The draft population (well-being) assessment documents were presented to the Governance, Performance, Business Change and Corporate Services scrutiny on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017; at this time the Committee formed a small task and finish group for review the assessment with a view to making recommendations to further strengthen these.
- 4.8 On completion of this work; a draft Statement of Well-being was developed and taken before Full Council on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 for review and comment. Approval of the Statement of Wellbeing was secured from Full Council; confirming 9 well-being objectives.
- 4.9 Using the approved Statement of Well-being; a draft Corporate Well-being Plan was developed based upon the nine approved well-being objectives – two of these objectives related directly to the Working Life Theme:

## Working Life

- Making skills work for Merthyr Tydfil: Developing the workforce of the future
- Developing the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish

4.10 This report focuses on the Working Life theme and outlines the way in which services has worked have developed, changed and been strengthened. **Appendix 1** offers an overview of all changes which have been actioned since the roll out of the Corporate Wellbeing Plan in 2017. This document also offers an overview of the key lessons learned whilst delivering the Working Life theme; and how we have used these to further develop our ways of working.

## 5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 Services are now operating in a new digital-first landscape; where changing customer expectations means the way we work also continues to evolve. To remain fit for the future; services are engaged in a process of transformation. Using more agile ways of working, services remain focused on achieving positive outcomes for people; working together to generate insights on how to create real value.
- 5.2 Over the years in which our services have been delivering the Working Life objective; the Annual Performance Report has demonstrated the progress made against the wellbeing objectives since Focus on the Future was rolled out in 2017
- 5.3 We have outlined the progress made against the relevant KPIs recorded in the Working Life Strategy on a Page and included the performance data included in each of the Annual Performance Reports published since delivery of the Corporate Plan began in 2017; this is shown in **Appendix 2**.
- 5.4 There are a number of key projects which service areas are delivering to support and meet identified need. Each of these projects has been established with full consideration being given to corporate and wider priorities; and the sustainable development principle (the five ways of working) have been utilised in all planning; delivery; monitoring and assessment activity.
- 5.5 The Council developed a Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan (RTI Plan) in June 2020. A fundamental aspect included within this Plan was the need lay out the steps the Council would take to support an effective economic recovery across the County Borough.
- 5.6 We have provided a precis of the themes which have been developed in the Working Life/Economic Recovery theme if this plan below for Committee Members information. A more detailed overview of progress made to date against the tasks and actions set down in the RTI Plan can be found in **Appendix 1**

### WORKING LIFE/ECONOMIC RECOVERY



Develop a 15-year Economic Vision for the County Borough



Realign the Economic Growth Strategy and create an Economic Recovery Board



Analyse business activities and services, including a specific focus on Covid-19, to secure improved economic outcomes



Develop and grow connections between the business sector and Merthyr Tydfil's education providers

5.7 An update report on progress made against the actions and tasks set down in the Working Life / Economic Recovery project plan was taken to Regeneration & Public Protection scrutiny committee on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 where Committee Members explored the progress made to date in relation to the RTI Plan; and confirmed they were assured on the positive progress made.

5.8 **Appendix 3** offers an overview of how the progress being made by Teams over the lifetime of this Corporate Plan have been communicated to the public using content publicised via the Council's main communication channels (e.g.) CONTACT magazine (which is delivered to every household across the County Borough) and social media channels.

## **6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE**

6.1 By 2030, our ambition is for:

- Working with key stakeholders, MTCBC will to improve the pace of change/ recovery in relation to the local economy, recognising that this cannot be achieved without the support and participation of key partners and businesses;
- Develop Merthyr's extended landscape and built heritage into an international quality visitor destination and experience;
- To have developed a well-connected Economic Growth Partnership where information and outcomes are jointly owned and shared. By achieving this goal, we aim to maximise the positive connections to produce positive results;
- To develop the Town Centre as a Strategic Hub as part of the Cardiff City Region Metro focusing on transport infrastructure, physical regeneration and place-making;
- Make positive progress against the tasks and actions set down in the Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan; and
- Use lessons learned to inform development and delivery of the key projects and programmes that will support delivery of MTCBC's next Corporate Well-being Plan.

## **7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT**

7.1 Having completed the process to produce this reflective report; we have identified a number of key 'lessons learned' that will provide a focus to support the development of the new Corporate Well-being Plan; and which will inform the delivery of our future strategic priorities and operational projects.

7.2 Develop and deliver our current strategic priorities:

- a) Implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan;
- b) Emergence of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and the Levelling-up Fund;
- c) A465 – Northern Gateways development;
- d) The delivery of major projects including Glebeland Site and transport interchange between bus and rail services. (Signature Sites);

- e) The Delivery of the Masterplan for the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area;
- f) A review master plan at Hoovers Site;
- g) The Development of the Southern Valley Strategy; and
- h) The Development of the Housing Support Programme Strategy.

7.3 Continue to develop and deliver our top operational projects:

- i. The redevelopment of the former bus station (Glebeland Site);
- ii. Train Station development to include bottom of High Street and Gillar Street;
- iii. The redevelopment of the YMCA;
- iv. Delivery of the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area masterplan;
- v. The further development of Tourism and Destination Development;
- vi. The redevelopment of Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Swimming Pool and Skate Park;
- vii. Tackling the increase in Homelessness;
- viii. The housing development at Dragon Parc; and
- ix. The remediation and residential housing development scheme at Heartlands, Dowlais.

7.4 Further develop the Community Regeneration, Public Protection and Housing Board ensuring departmental connectivity is at the forefront of its development. Additionally; it is critical to maintain the excellent working relationships with external partners and stakeholders effectively deliver work undertaken (i.e.) it is an embedded culture across Protection and Safety Service teams to work with South Wales Police (e.g.) Licensing and the Police work hand in hand to carry out day-to-day activities;

7.3 Further develop the Economic Growth Partnership ensuring partnership ownership and engagement is of real benefit to partners;

7.4 Further develop the Economic Recovery Board ensuring the Board maintains oversight of the work in relation to the Economic Recovery element of the Council's Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan;

7.5 Further development of the Merthyr Tydfil Community Safety partnership;

7.6 Development of the new CCTV technology in relation to a range of enforcement activities; especially associated with the Town Centre;

7.7 Restructure MTCBC's response and enforcement of Fly Tipping;

7.8 As part of Covid recovery; continue to engage with and support local Businesses; and ensure they are fully aware and supported to receive as much direct grant aid to ensure Business survival;

7.9 Continue to positively respond to the requirement's laid down by both the UK and Welsh Government in relation to the provision of effective support, advice and guidance to communities in relation to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic;

7.10 Continue to positively progress all tasks and actions within the Working Life/Economic Recovery project plan supporting delivery of the Council's Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan;

- 7.11 Protection and Safety Services aim to further develop effective data capture methods to further demonstrate both the economic and social value of the services;
- 7.12 We will review the Counter –Terrorism duty in line with new responsibilities and Home Office guidance; and
- 7.13 Continue with the development of the Merthyr Tydfil Community Safety partnership.

## 8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 As a result of our ways of working changing over the lifetime of the plan; the services and activities delivered now clearly link with the other objectives within the Corporate Well-being Plan. A number of factors have had an impact on performance Well-being Plan.
- 8.2 Working Life work supports the outcomes within the **Best Start to Life** well-being objective in a number of ways (e.g.) members of the Council’s Employability team sit on the Business and Education Together Partnership (BETP); with officers leading on specific tasks and actions within the BETP’s Action Plan.
- 8.3 Working Life has developed close working relationships with the services overseen by the Chief Officer: **Environmental Wellbeing** and their services operate collaboratively on a number of levels (e.g.) Working closely with the Planning and Estates department has supported better outcomes when developing and delivering projects and activities. Members and officers also regularly attend the CRPPH Board meetings.
- 8.4 Working Life work closely with colleagues across Social Services who deliver the **Living Well** corporate wellbeing objective. This work consists of a number of connections to meet the needs of our service users (e.g.) working with the Protection and Safety Services acting as a key connector to services that support those at risk of or experiencing Domestic Violence-related issues; and via close working relationships developed between the Social Services team and the Housing and Homelessness officers to support earlier identification of people at risk of homelessness so that targeted support can be put in place.

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**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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**DEPUTY LEADER WITH PORTFOLIO FOR**  
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Title of Document(s)</b>	<b>Document(s) Date</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
<u>Report to Full Council</u> : Focus on the Future: wellbeing in our community	26/07/2017	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life – Making Skills work for Merthyr Tydfil: developing the workforce of the future	12/09/2017	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>

<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life – Developing the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish	24/10/2017	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life – Making Skills work for Merthyr Tydfil: developing the workforce of the future	05/12/2017	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life – Developing the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish	16/01/2018	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life – Making Skills work for Merthyr Tydfil: developing the workforce of the future	17/04/2018	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life – Developing the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish	17/04/2018	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Report to Full Council</u> : Annual Performance Report	24/10/2018	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life	09/04/2019	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Report to Full Council</u> : Annual Performance Report	23/10/2019	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Working Life	26/11/2019	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Report to Full Council</u> : Annual Performance Report		<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
Working Life Update	12/01/2021	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Scrutiny Report</u> : Recovery, Transformation & Improvement Plan: Working Life/Economic Recovery	21/09/2021	<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<u>Report to Full Council</u> : Annual Performance Report		<a href="#">Click here for report</a>
<b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?</b>		NO