

**STRONGER, FAIRER, GREENER**

**LEADER (COUNCILLOR HUW THOMAS)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 4**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. The reason for the report is to set out:
  - The administration's policy agenda for Cardiff during the current municipal term, from 2022 to 2027.
  - How this will be translated into the Council's strategic policy, partnership, and budgetary framework.

**Background**

2. Following the local government elections on 5 May 2022, a new Council administration was formed. To make clear its ambitions for the city, the Council's administration has set out a new policy programme and associated delivery commitments for the coming municipal term, entitled 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' (attached as **Appendix A**).

**Stronger, Fairer, Greener:**

3. 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' sets out a new policy agenda and programme for delivery for the next five years, based on the following commitments to make Cardiff:
  - **A stronger city**, with an economy creating and sustaining well-paid jobs, with an education system that helps our young people reach their potential, with good, affordable housing in safe, confident and empowered communities, all supported by well-resourced, efficient public services.
  - **A fairer city**, where the opportunities of living in Cardiff can be enjoyed by everyone, whatever their background, where those suffering the effects of poverty are protected and supported, where a fair day's work receives a fair day's pay, and where every citizen is valued and feels valued.

- **A greener city** which, through our One Planet programme takes a lead on responding to the climate emergency, celebrates and nurtures biodiversity, with high-quality open spaces within easy reach for rest and play that are connected by convenient, accessible, safe sustainable transport options.
4. The new policy programme must be delivered in the context of a challenging and rapidly changing external environment. Though the Covid-19 pandemic is now in abeyance, its medium-term impact is still being felt in key sectors of the city economy, as well as in several public services, and is likely to deepen existing inequalities across the city. Demand pressures across statutory services are increasing in volume and complexity, and new risks and issues continue to emerge across public services which demand a city-wide response from the Council and partners.
  5. The cost-of-living crisis, in particular, represents an immediate and escalating challenge. Consumer price inflation is currently at 9.1% in the 12 months to May 2022, with the UK experiencing the highest level of inflation in 40 years. This will impact upon the most vulnerable families and individuals, leading to a likely deepening of inequality and a further increase in demand on statutory services in the short to medium-term, while also increasing cost pressures on the Council relating to the rising cost of energy, raw materials, and wages.
  6. Despite an improved financial settlement in 2022/23, the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) identifies a potential budget gap of £90.6 million over the period 2023/24 – 2026/27. Delivering the administration's policy priorities as set out in 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener', in this challenging and dynamic environment, will require a continued focus on effective planning and resource allocation. The administration's priorities must therefore be translated into the Council's policy and budgetary frameworks and be allied with robust governance, performance management arrangements and strong partnership working.

### **Translating 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' into the Council's Policy and Budgetary Framework**

7. As a politically led, professionally managed and policy driven organisation, the Council's policy framework is crucial in ensuring the effective delivery of the administration's priorities. Where 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' provides a clear articulation of the administration's policy priorities, the Council's policy framework will translate these into organisational objectives with associated delivery milestones, key performance indicators and the necessary resources to ensure progress.
8. The Corporate Plan translates the administration's policy ambitions into clear organisational objectives. In this way, the Corporate Plan sets out what the Council wants to achieve, and how it will organise itself to achieve it. The Corporate Plan is set at a strategic level and is supported by directorate delivery plans, which set out in greater detail how

Corporate Plan objectives will be delivered, as well as how directorate business will be taken forward.

9. The Corporate Plan is developed alongside the Council's Budget, thereby ensuring that the Council's resources are aligned behind the delivery of its policy priorities. The Corporate Plan and Budget are approved alongside one another by Council in February of each financial year. Progress against the existing objectives set out in the Corporate Plan will continue to be monitored and reported through the Council's strengthened Planning and Performance Framework, which was approved by the previous Cabinet on 24 February 2022.
10. Delivering the 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' policy agenda will also require coordinated action by the Council and its partners. The Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB), chaired by the Leader of the Council, brings together the city's public and third sector leaders, and builds on the long-established platform of partnership working in the city. The Well-being of Future Generations Act has placed in statute the role of PSBs and requires PSBs to publish an assessment of local wellbeing, a local wellbeing plan and annual progress reports. The Cardiff PSB has produced its statutory Well-being Assessment, which sets out how Cardiff is performing across the partnership's seven city outcomes. This assessment was approved by the Cardiff PSB on 9 March 2022 for publication by May 2022. Using the evidence provided in the Well-being Assessment, the Cardiff PSB is required to review its objectives for improving the well-being of Cardiff and develop a revised PSB Well-being Plan for 2023-27 by 5 May 2023, which will set out how public services will work in partnership to address the major long-term challenges facing the city. The Council will work with PSB members to ensure that the priorities identified in the Wellbeing Plan reflect the priorities set out in 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' and that the partnership governance and delivery arrangements are reviewed and refocussed to ensure that they are ready to deliver against these priorities.
11. The refreshed policy and delivery framework will therefore be characterised by the following key components:
  - **Corporate Plan:** The Corporate Plan 2023-26 will set out the Council's objectives in order to deliver the administration's ambitions.
  - **Budget Strategy:** The Council's Budget Strategy will be reworked to support the delivery of the administration's priorities.
  - **Partnership Planning and Delivery:** The Council's policy position will inform the development of the Cardiff Public Services Board's Well-being Plan, which will be launched for public consultation in Autumn 2022 and considered by the Council and all PSB members by April 2023.
  - **Performance Management Framework:** The delivery of the Corporate Plan will be monitored through the Council's strengthened performance management framework.

## **Scrutiny Consideration**

12. This report is due to be considered by the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny committee on 13 July 2022

## **Reason for Recommendations**

13. To enable the Cabinet to approve the Administration's policy priorities and commitments as set out in the 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' policy statement (Appendix A).

## **Financial Implications**

14. The covering report sets out in Paragraphs 4 – 6 the main economic and financial challenges alongside the anticipated funding gap facing the Council over the next three years. Further detail on the financial challenges can be found within the Budget update report that is considered by Cabinet on 14 July 2022.
15. This report sets out the key priorities for the coming municipal year and the medium term and in the event of there being a financial impact in the current year then this will be considered in future budget monitoring reports. In respect to the medium term, where a financial impact is identified then this will form part of the detailed work in delivering the Council's Budget for 2023/24 and beyond.

## **Legal Implications**

16. As noted in the body of the report, the ambitions and priorities of the new administration represent the start of the policy planning process, whereby those ambitions and priorities will be developed into objectives and policies.
17. The Cabinet is responsible for recommending the Council's key policies, referred to as the Policy Framework (comprising of the Wellbeing Plan, the Corporate Plan and a number of other statutory plans and strategies), for approval by full Council.
18. Legal advice will be provided in respect of specific policy proposals as they arise.

## **HR Implications**

19. As noted in the body of the report, the ambitions and priorities of the new administration represent the start of the policy planning process, whereby those ambitions and priorities will be developed into objectives and policies. Any HR implications will be provided in respect of specific policy proposals as they arise.

## **Property Implications**

20. There are no direct property implications within this report however the Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26 aligns closely with the Stronger, Fairer, Greener policy statement. Particularly the four key components of the policy – Corporate Plan, Budget Strategy, Partnership and performance. It will be important to ensure the governance and reporting of the Property Strategy feeds into the delivery of the Stronger, Fairer, Greener policy statement

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the ‘Stronger, Fairer, Greener’ policy statement, which is attached as Appendix A to this report; and
2. Submit the ‘Stronger, Fairer, Greener’ policy statement to Full Council for noting.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>PAUL ORDERS</b> <b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
	8 July 2022

*The following appendix is attached:*

Appendix A: ‘Stronger, Fairer, Greener’ Policy Statement

*The following background papers have been taken into account:*

Cabinet Report, 24 February 2022 – Performance Management and Data Strategy