



# CHIEF OFFICER STATEMENT

**Rachel Jowitt**

**Chief Officer  
Neighbourhoods, Planning  
and Public Protection**

**Despite the additional and extraordinary demands that a global pandemic presented, the service has had a successful year.**

**Demonstrating innovative ways of working and with dedicated teams, we have ensured core services were maintained, legal duties were met and major projects continue to make progress.**

**Areas requiring improvement and attention include our project management capabilities; developing a service culture; and some areas of service delivery or staff performance which have a detrimental impact on the reputation of the Council.**

**These improvements will be addressed directly and built into team plans which will be reviewed regularly and robustly during 2022-23.**

## What went well...

- ✓ Our residents continued to receive core services during the greatest business continuity challenge ever faced by local government. This meant that our communities remained clean, recycling was still collected and we were able to continue to deliver on our clean and green aspirations.
- ✓ Aligned to the above service innovation was adopted to ensure services could adapt and evolve quickly. For example libraries, adult education and licensing all quickly adapted to digital solutions to ensure their users and clients were not unnecessarily disrupted able to access services as usual.
- ✓ Clean and Green is a corporate priority. This is as much about putting in place the strategic framework for future action as it is about collecting bins and picking up fly-tipping. Over 2021-22 the Council signed off the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Tree Strategy which outline how we will manage our environment to meet both current and future needs and balancing development and protection for the benefit of all.
- ✓ Covid massively impacted our Public Protection services. A recovery plan was put in place to ensure that compliance on key things such as food safety was put in place to ensure that

our residents remain protected from harm.

- ✓ Over 2021-22 the service has secured over £20m in capital funding from a range of sources to deliver 4 main capital projects:

- Pontypool / New Inn Station improvements to increase park and ride, improve active travel links and integrated public transport to get more people off the roads and using more sustainable forms of transport

- New Recycling facility to ensure service resilience and provide the best quality recycle to the market to promote the circular economy

- Blaen Bran Brook flood alleviation scheme to protect our communities and businesses from future flood events

- The British project seeking to manage the water on site, clean and green and deal with the high priority hazards on the site to make it safe.



# The challenges this year...

Our challenges are based on service delivery over 2021-22 and a renewed focus on data, performance and risk management.

|   | Challenges   | Solutions/Actions  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staffing</b> challenges are a consistent theme in team self-evaluations, including recruitment, retention, capacity, training and development and well-being.</li> <li>• Addressing these issues while recognising the pandemic has seen a shift in <b>workplace behaviours, attitudes and culture</b>.</li> <li>• Delivering services differently including <b>different models</b> for staffing structures.</li> <li>• Dealing with long-term <b>sickness absence</b> has been a key issue for 2021-22 which impacts service delivery and increases pressures on other staff.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with Human Resources on whether the service can participate in pilots for new workforce initiatives</li> <li>• Align staffing and service business cases to the workforce development plan</li> <li>• Engage managers and team leaders to better understand and anticipate pressures and create the environment for different solutions and not accepting the status quo.</li> <li>• Develop robust business cases for delivering services differently with a new staffing structure.</li> </ul> |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing consistent Project Management monitoring and reporting across the service.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implementation of a new project management structure and monthly monitoring.</li> </ul>   |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volatility and soaring inflation within the construction sector impacting on project delivery, costs and delivery timescales.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving project management capability and aligning tendering processes with funding bids including the swift award and close of contracts.</li> </ul>   |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving statutory performance targets for Waste and Recycling</li> <li>• Improving the satisfaction with collections for householders</li> <li>• Delivering delayed projects to replace waste and recycling vehicles and a new recycling depot (delayed partly due to the impact of covid, staff availability, project discipline and delay in grant award).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint new Group Leader for Waste and Recycling</li> <li>• Develop options and business case for improvement which will require decision during 2022-23 for service change in 2023-24.</li> <li>• Develop a Service Quality Action Plan and monitor as a project</li> <li>• Develop a new Waste and Recycling communications and engagement programme</li> <li>• Assign new Head of Service as Programme Manager for vehicle replacement project.</li> </ul>   |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Universal Free School Meals with introduction of key stage 1 children in September 2022 and key stage 2 in September 2023.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a cross-cutting project governance structure and implementation plan with support of all services</li> <li>• Put a new Head of Service to oversee Catering/Cleaning until November 2022</li> </ul>  |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernising the Streetscene service</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the findings of the APSE Review</li> <li>• Phase 2 on productivity/ scheduling been initiated with APSE</li> <li>• Review the service structure created in 2018</li> </ul>  |