

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 9th DECEMBER 2020

REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To set out progress to date and revisions to both the strategy and action plan which will inform the budget setting process.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town Council adopted the Strategy and Action Plan back in April 2019. This was the first strategy and action plan produced by Abergavenny Town Council. Following the introduction of the Committee structure in September 2019 both the People & Communities Committee and Environment Committee have been responsible for the implementation of projects and monitoring of progress.
- 2.2 In the 2020/21 budget an allocation was agreed to enable the People & Communities Committee and Environment Committee to take forward actions.
- 2.4 Ideally, a workshop would have been arranged for Councillors to come together and review the strategy and action plan and to discuss changes to be made in light for the next few years. Regulations regarding meetings would not permit all Town Councillors to come together with staff and it was felt that a virtual meeting is not appropriate for this type of discussion. However, an email has been sent out to all Town Councillors on 19th November asking for views on the strategy and action and more generally on how they consider the Town Council is performing.
- 2.5 Councillors were given two weeks to respond with a closing date of 2nd December, no responses were received. Therefore a meeting of the Committee Chairs was convened to review the strategy and action plan and the information below and revised Strategy and Action Plan are based on those discussions.

3. CHANGES TO THE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 There has been progress against all the actions in the action plan, although the extent of progress differs. A number of actions are still in the evidence gathering stages whereas other actions are being implemented and have incurred expenditure.
- 3.2 It is advised that the wording in the strategy remains largely unchanged as the strategy contained high level priorities and the challenges for the town council in terms of community engagement, forging partnerships are still current. It is proposed that the wording is strengthened to reflect the climate and nature emergency and economic and social challenges post Covid-19. The changes to the wording in the strategy is displayed in *italics* and wording to be removed has a ~~striketrough~~.
- 3.3 Changes are also recommended to the action plan. Changes reflect the level of progress made in some areas but also reflect new challenges and duties. More actions have been included. Under Section 6 of the Environment Act, the Town Council has a duty to set out how it will enhance biodiversity and is permitted to incorporate these

actions into an existing document rather than prepare a new standalone document so this has been actioned. Again the changes are displayed in *italics* and wording to be removed has a ~~strike through~~.

- 3.4 The changes to the action plan are set out in the separate document but broadly fit into the following:

Children & Young People

Include more actions to reflect progress on information gathering and linking with other agencies.

Challenges of Demographic Change

This is probably proving to be the most difficult priority to take forward. Changes include an action regarding analysis of need and demand for allotments as well as continued liaison with groups representing older people.

To recognise Town Council's financial support to Citizens Advice and Mind Monmouthshire

Protect & Enhance the Environment

To include biodiversity actions – greening the public estate, promotion of biodiversity, bird boxes.

To include closer working with environmental 'friends' group and consider multi-year funding

Economically Thriving Town

To include establishment of the Town Crew

To amend action regarding toilet modernisation following decision not to pursue asset transfer

To reflect Town Council's financial support to Town Festivals and role in the appearance of the town

More Responsive Town Council

To recognise the achievements to date and strengthen actions relating to Council's role to lobby and be the voice of the town and to commit to increase the knowledge base of Councillors.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Should Councillors be minded to approve the proposed changes then the revised strategy and action will be uploaded to the website and the new actions tables will be the ones that the Committees (when they resume meeting) will implement.
- 4.2 Alternatively, Councillors may wish to retain this as a working draft subject to holding a workshop in at some point in the future. However, it should be noted that some of

the new actions have budgetary implications which have been incorporated into the draft budget.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1** To approve the revised strategy and action plan