

12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

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## **WLGA STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2024-27**

### **Purpose**

1. To update members on the development of Strategic Objectives to help deliver the WLGA's Corporate Strategy and to update on progress in taking the work forward.

### **Background and update**

2. The WLGA's Corporate Strategy<sup>1</sup> was approved by the WLGA Council at its Annual General Meeting in June 2023. The Strategy sets out the vision and aims of the Association, our values and how we undertake our work.
3. The Corporate Strategy states the Association will achieve its vision by:
  - Promoting the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders
  - Ensuring maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance
  - Championing and securing long-term and sustainable funding for councils
  - Promoting sector-led improvement
  - Encouraging a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity
  - Supporting councils to effectively manage their workforce
4. Reflecting our values, we will seek to be:
  - Ambitious in our expectations and in our vision for local democracy and services
  - Accountable to our members and member authorities
  - Proactive in our defence and promotion of local democracy, our policy development and our engagement with members
  - Receptive through listening to and considering the range of views of our membership, partners and stakeholders
  - Responsive through our services and support to our members and member authorities
  - Collaborative in our approach to governance and partnership working with Welsh government and other stakeholders

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<sup>1</sup> [Download.aspx \(wlga.wales\)](https://www.wlga.wales/Download.aspx)

5. Our priorities are underpinned by our core aims to secure:
  - Reform, continuous improvement and a commitment to partnership
  - Fair and flexible funding
  - Commitment to the principle of subsidiarity
6. The Strategy also reflects that in delivering our priorities we will:
  - Support councils and other partners in promoting equalities and creating an anti-racist Wales
  - Promote a transition to a net zero economy and respond to the wider challenges of climate change
  - Work with councils to make Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) work as efficiently and effectively as possible for the people and communities they represent
  - Promote the role of councils in social care with an enhanced focus on prevention and early intervention and community and primary care.

## **WLGA's Strategic Objectives**

7. In developing the strategic objectives for the next three years, there was engagement with leaders, Spokespersons and in some cases where possible with Cabinet Member Networks, as well as being informed by ongoing discussions with officers, partners and professional groups. The findings and recommendations of the internal management review were also taken into account as well as the commitments set out in the Corporate Strategy.
8. The feedback from leaders as fed into the internal management review identified a number of policy areas where members would wish to see a more strategic and proactive approach being taken such as social services and health and in achieving net zero and decarbonisation, and offering challenge to Welsh Government, such as in the area of CJCs, rather than reacting to Welsh Government policy proposals or initiative. Leaders also stressed the importance of the work undertaken proactively on behalf of the Association to be considered in terms of impact and outcomes achieved, that is, 'what difference have we made?'
9. The review however also identified competing work priorities and the limited capacity within the WLGA to focus on core priorities, which can be exacerbated when individuals are responsible for policy work and management of grant funded services. The workload of the Association has increased as the devolution, legislative and regulatory agenda has expanded. While staff seek to meet all demands placed on them, there is also a need to match resources available to identified priorities, as well as maintaining the agility to respond in a dynamic manner to emerging areas and/or urgent situations or crisis. Any impact on the corporate priorities due to conflicting or competing priorities will be reported to members.

10. Members agreed to the following policy areas as being the strategic priorities for the Association:

- Digital
- Economic development and regeneration, including planning
- Education
- Finance
- Housing, including community safety and migration
- Improvement and governance
- Public protection and frontline services
- Social Services and Health
- Sustainable development, including circular economy and climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Workforce issues.

11. A number of Strategic Objectives have been developed in all these areas as set out in the Corporate Plan which was agreed by the Executive Board in December 2023. The WLGA Corporate Plan Objectives 2024-27 are set out in Appendix 1a (Cymraeg) and 1b (English). It should also be noted however that the Plan cannot set out the totality of the work undertaken by the Association and there is a range of ongoing work which will continue as per usual, such as facilitating cabinet member networks, arranging events, responding to consultations and providing evidence, promoting and showcasing the work of local government in Wales.

12. Detailed action plans have now been developed by each team to support implementation of the strategic objectives. This work will be planned and monitored through a revised performance management system and progress will be reported to members on a 6 monthly basis.

## **Recommendations**

**13. The WLGA Council is invited to:**

- 13.1 Note and comment on this report and the Strategic Objectives at Appendix 1a and 1b and**
- 13.2 Receive regular updates and reports against progress at future meetings.**

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