



CABINET

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 28th February 2022

REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

**ALL MOBILE TELEPHONES TO BE SWITCHED TO SILENT FOR THE
DURATION OF THE MEETING**

Part 1

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Welcome and Roll Call
3. Chairpersons Announcement/s
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Draft Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027 (*Pages 3 - 182*)
6. Revenue Budget 2022/2023 (*Pages 183 - 238*)
7. Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25 (*Pages 239 - 260*)
8. Monthly Budget Monitoring Report 2021/22 - As at end of December 2021 (*Pages 261 - 282*)
9. Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/22 (*Pages 283 - 296*)

10. Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (*Pages 297 - 320*)
11. Urgent Items
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100b (4)(B) of the Local Government Act 1972

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Tuesday, 22 February 2022

Cabinet Members:

Councillors. E.V.Latham, L.Jones, A.R.Lockyer, A.Wingrave,
C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones, M.Harvey, P.A.Rees and
P.D.Richards

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

28th February 2022

Report of the Corporate Directors Group

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2027 – Recover, Reset, Renew

Purpose of Report

1. To present the draft Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 for consideration and approval prior to the Plan being adopted by Council on 1st March 2022.

Executive Summary

2. The draft Corporate Plan for 2022-2027 (attached at Appendix 1) sets out how we will approach recovery in the short, medium and longer term and has been informed by many people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners. A considerable amount of evidence has also been used to understand how things have changed as a result of the pandemic including wider influences, like climate change, digital disruption and government policy. All of this information has been brought together to reset and renew the Council's well-being objectives, priorities, vision, values and relationships which is documented in the Strategic Change Programme (annex to the draft Plan).

Background

3. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to set well-being objectives which seek to maximise the Council's contribution to the national well-being goals, whilst also embracing the sustainable development principle. The Council's current three well-being objectives were agreed in 2017.
4. The Act requires the Council to consider whether its current well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those well-being objectives should be considered when preparing its Annual Report. This requirement was acknowledged during the preparation of the Council's last Annual Report which was published in October 2021 and it was noted in the Cabinet Report (22nd September 2021):

“In preparing this Annual Report for 2020/2021, the Council is required to consider whether the current well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those objectives should be considered. This consideration is currently underway as part of the preparation of the Council's Corporate Recovery Plan which will be published in 2022”.

Reset & Renew

5. The past 23 months has had an extensive impact on our communities, our local economy and the way we work as a Council. This has provided us with an opportunity to reset and renew our well-being objectives, priorities, vision, values and relationships taking into account:
 - what matters to local people, businesses and our staff;
 - the impact that we know Covid-19 has had on our communities, our local economy and wider stakeholders;
 - the lessons we have learned from our pandemic response and from elsewhere; and
 - other anticipated changes in our external environment (e.g. climate change, digital disruption, financial settlements and government policy).

The above evidence informed the development of the following four draft well-being objectives for this Council:

- **Best Start in Life** - All children have the best start in life.
 - **Communities are thriving and sustainable** - People live healthy, long and fulfilled lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another.
 - **Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations** - Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change. People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.
 - **Jobs and Skills** - Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and help local people acquire the skills they need to access those jobs.
6. What we plan to achieve over the next 12 months under each of the above draft well-being objectives is set out in the draft Plan. A more detailed strategic change programme is set out in the annex – it reflects a “one council” strategic approach to achieving the vision. The Programme describes the changes we aim to make over the next 12 months, the next 5 years and the longer term. It will evolve over time and will be reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis via a revised Corporate Performance Management Framework.
 7. There is further work to do on the measures. As the strategic change programme is initiated more measures may be identified and we will also work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.
 8. Following the May 2022 Local Government Elections, the priorities of the new Council will be reflected into the Plan at the first review stage during the autumn.

Enabling Programme

9. It is acknowledged significant organisational change is needed to deliver the revised well-being objectives, the required cultural change and the associated programmes of work to bring about sustainable changes to economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing.

Consultation

10. The draft Plan has been informed by many people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners.
11. Internal engagement started during spring 2021 to establish lessons learned and priorities for recovery. This included the involvement of all accountable managers in completing strategic assessments to identify lessons learned and proposals for the future shape of services. The cross party Coronavirus – Member Panel met on five occasions (during March 2021 – November 2021) to discuss approaches to form the basis of recovery from the pandemic.
12. A number of all Member Seminars were held to discuss recovery planning, the Let's Talk campaign and the draft Corporate Plan (20th May 2021, 29th July 2021, 16th December 2021 and 22nd February 2022).
13. The initial phase of public engagement started on 19th July and closed on 30th September 2021. The aim of this phase was to find out what mattered to local people in the context of recovery from Covid-19. Over 1,700 responses were received. The feedback informed the four draft wellbeing objectives and the proposed focus of work under each wellbeing objective over the next 12 months, during the next 5 years and the longer term. The findings from this first consultation phase were presented to Cabinet on 5th January 2022.
14. During this initial phase, the Chief Executive visited a number of wards across the county borough to talk to local Members, groups and residents about what mattered to local people in the context of recovery.

15. The second phase of the public consultation (which started on 5 January and closed on 1 February 2022) tested whether or not we had captured what is important to people now and in the future in terms of the changes we aim to make over the next 12 months, the next 5 years and the longer term. The consultation took place against the backdrop of a revised version of alert level 2 restrictions, which came into place on Boxing Day 2021 to respond to the highly contagious omicron variant of Covid-19. The following arrangements were made to help ensure that the consultation was as inclusive as possible, despite the challenging situation:

- **Online questionnaire** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the council's website. The questionnaire was live from Wednesday 5 January (following Cabinet approval) until midnight on Tuesday 1 February 2022.
- **Email** – the email address LetsTalk@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Offline** – for public health reasons, we could not adapt our usual practice of making printed copies of questionnaires and reference documents available in public buildings.

Instead we:

- produced and distributed more than 1,100 printed packs and questionnaires for those who are not online. The packs contained an English and Welsh copy of the questionnaire for people to complete in the safety of their own home and return using a pre-paid envelope. These were:
 - made available at our 8 council run libraries (Neath, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Baglan, Cwmafan, Glynneath, Sandfields, Skewen)
 - distributed by Local Area Co-ordinators and members of the Community of Practice (a group made up of officers from across the council who undertake engagement activities as part of their roles)
 - distributed by The Home Library Service, whilst delivering books and information to residents who have difficulty, or who are unable to visit their local library
 - distributed by Tai Tarian to their Haven schemes for people over 55 - there are 15 of these schemes across the county borough in Cwmafan, Port Talbot, Sandfields, Briton Ferry,

Neath, Cadoxton, Crynant, Tonna, Glynneath, Banwen,
Ystalyfera, Pontardawe (x 2), Cwmgors, Gwaun Cae Gurwen

- made printed questionnaires available to employees in a number of services including the Catering and Cleaning service and the Service Response Centre at the Quays.
16. This second phase of consultation was promoted online (via: regular social media activity on corporate and service accounts, email marketing, and internal council channels), offline (via: radio, press releases, and posters), and by outreach activity via NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement.

In total, the questionnaire received **485** responses.

17. Let' Talk Consultation Responses - Summary:

- Most people strongly agreed / agreed with each of the four draft wellbeing objectives
- Most people agreed with all the things we should focus on in the next 12 months and longer term
- Received very detailed feedback via comments
- A number of comments referred to how we will implement the actions – that detail would not be included in this strategic Plan.
- Four responses received from partners:
 - Third Sector
 - Natural Resources Wales
 - Gwynfi Miners Community Hall
 - Pobl Group

There were a number of consistent themes in the detailed feedback under each wellbeing objective and the draft Plan has been amended to reflect that feedback. A report summarising the findings from the

Let's Talk consultation is attached at Appendix 3 and a full report is attached at Appendix 4.

18. The Chief Executive also attended a number of consultation events to engage partners and stakeholders in the development of the Plan.
- Public Services Board – 28th September 2021 and 9th December 2021
 - Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum – 10th November 2021
 - Staff Council – 10th January 2022
 - 3rd Sector consultation event – 20th January 2022
 - Town & Community Council Liaison Forum – 27th January 2022

Financial Appraisal

19. The priorities described for the next 12 months are reflected in the revenue and capital budgets proposed for 2022/23. In 2022 a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will be developed which will be the means through which the revenue and capital resources likely to be available over the term of the new administration from May 2022 will be aligned with the longer term actions set out in the Strategic Change Programme and the priorities of the new Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment

20. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read

the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 2, for the purposes of the meeting.

The past 23 months has had an extensive impact on our communities, our local economy and the way we work as a Council. This has provided us with an opportunity to reset and renew our well-being objectives, priorities, vision, values and relationships.

This being the case the well-being objectives and council priorities were reviewed taking into account evidence of the impact the pandemic has had/continues to have on our communities. Although the well-being objectives and priorities in our previous Corporate Plan were relevant when they were set pre-pandemic, they did not adequately address the current situation.

As a result of our continued work on improving the availability and quality of our services through Welsh there is potentially a positive impact in relation to opportunities to use the Welsh language.

Amendments were made to the draft Plan as it was developed to help reduce the inequalities in Neath Port Talbot; for example, enhancing "free and low cost" play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.

There will be a positive effect on biodiversity and Eco-system resilience. The inclusion of a wellbeing objective that specifically targets the conservation and improvement of our natural environment, including biodiversity demonstrates the positive intentions around this.

There will be a positive impact in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations as the well-being objectives have been developed in line with the five ways of working.

Valleys Communities Impact

21. The draft Plan has been informed by feedback from valley communities including the findings of online focus groups and in-depth interviews with residents of the Afan, Amman, Dulais, Neath

and Swansea Valleys. Feedback was also sought by the Chief Executive during visits to those communities.

Workforce Impact

22. The programme of organisational development will deliver the workforce changes needed in the short, medium and long term to implement the Corporate Plan. Work is underway on the development and implementation of the Council's Future of Work Strategy which aims to ensure employees can be the best they can be, doing the right thing, in the right place, at the right time and in the right way.

Legal Impact

23. The publication of the final Plan will meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by setting out our well-being objectives and the steps we will take to achieve them and how we will measure progress.

Risk Management

24. The Council's Corporate Risk Register will be updated with any risks associated with the delivery of the work outlined in the draft Plan following its adoption by Council.

Consultation

25. The draft Plan and Strategic Change Programme have been informed by the Let's Talk campaign which was undertaken between July and September 2021 and January and February 2022 and other consultation and engagement events outlined earlier in this report.

Recommendations

26. Having had due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that:
 - i. Cabinet approve the Corporate Plan for the period 2022-2027.

- ii. The Chief Executive is given delegated authority in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader to make any further changes that are necessary prior to final publication and which do not materially change the content of the Plan.
- iii. Members refer this Plan to Council for formal adoption at its meeting on the 1st March 2022.

Reason for Proposed Decision

27. To ensure the Council meets legal duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as they relate to council corporate planning activities.

28. **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation

Appendices

29. Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2022-2027 (including the Strategic Change Programme)
30. Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment
31. Appendix 3 – Let’s Talk – Summary Report
32. Appendix 4 – Let’s Talk – Final Report

List of Background Papers

33. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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Corporate Plan 2022-2027

Recover, Reset, Renew

Introduction

Covid-19 is having an enormous impact on us all.

We have worked together over the course of the pandemic - council, communities, businesses and partners to support vulnerable residents, protect our NHS and to keep essential services running. This spirit of working together is the foundation on which we want to base the work we need to do as we learn to live with Covid-19 and begin to recover from the pandemic.

The pandemic has impacted at a time when the resilience of public services had already been severely stretched following twelve years of austerity. This plan sets out our thinking on how we will approach recovery in the short, medium and longer term. It has been informed by a lot of people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners. We have also used a considerable amount of evidence to understand how things have changed as a result of the pandemic and looked at wider influences, like climate change, digital disruption and government policy. We have brought all of this information together to assess what this might mean for our future priorities. Of course, the pandemic is not over yet so there is a good deal of uncertainty that poses challenges to our planning. Neath Port Talbot residents will also elect a new Council in May 2022. This means that our plan will need to be flexible so we can adapt as we move forward.

A key feature of this plan is the emphasis on working together to help the county borough recover and make Neath Port Talbot a place we are all proud of. We have learned through the pandemic that when we come together we can achieve remarkable things. This plan is the basis on which we can further develop that spirit of collaboration to create a place where everyone can live a good life.

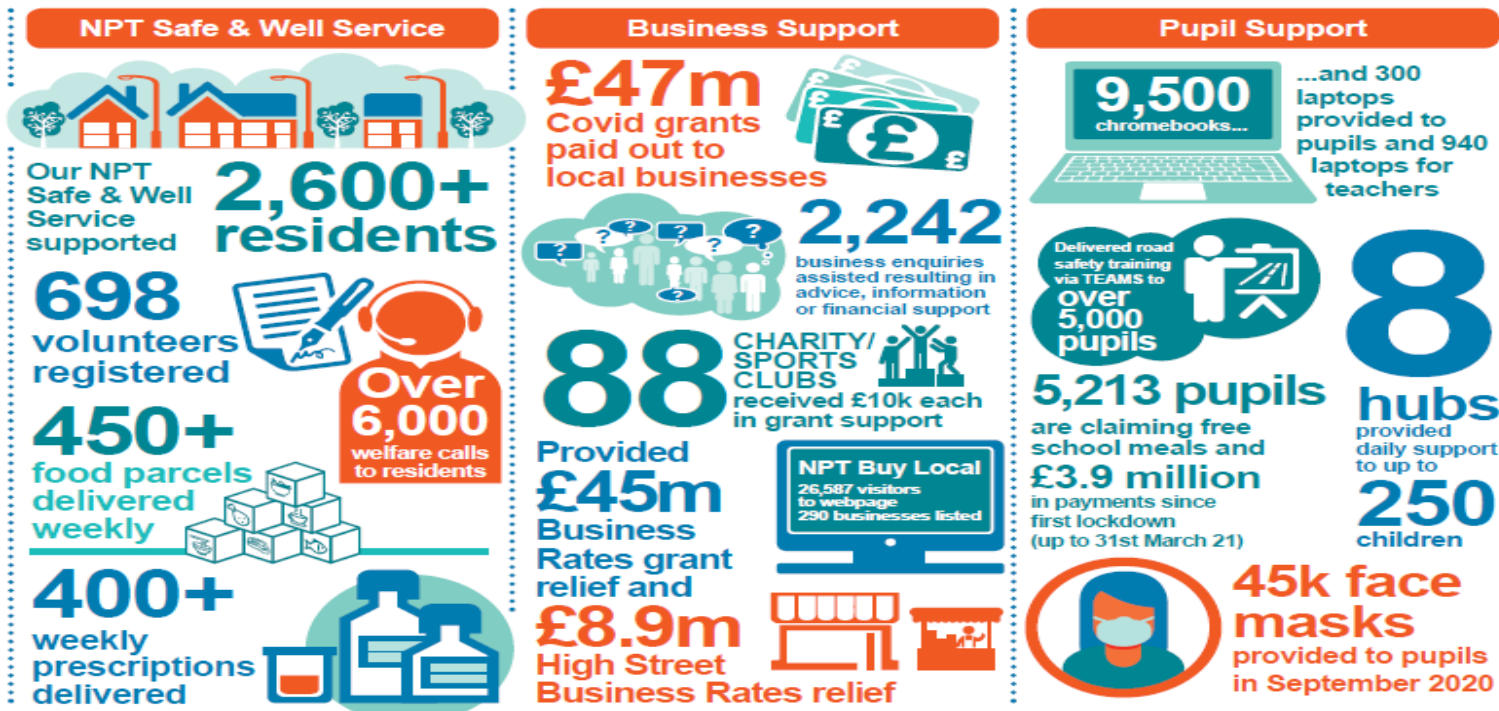
Cllr E V Latham
Leader of Council

Mrs K Jones
Chief Executive

Covid-19 Response

In the middle of March 2020, the Council mobilised an emergency response to the developing COVID-19 national emergency situation. There was an immense effort to ensure the Council responded in step with the policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government. At all times, we have worked with and in support of government policy, striving to protect our NHS, to support our communities and to save lives. The infographics below and over the page provide a visual summary of some of the work we carried out in the first year of response whilst also keeping essential services running – they are achievements we are very proud of.

Council response during the pandemic



Council response during the pandemic

NPT Staff Support

1st council in England and Wales to introduce a "safe leave" policy for victims of domestic abuse working for the council who can take up to five days of paid "safe leave" to access support



OVER 700
laptops provided to staff enabling homeworking

85
online employee training courses delivered to 3,809 attendees

800 NPT staff offered to step into different roles to help with COVID-19

Other Support

470 jobs created/safeguarded as a result of financial support by the council



£19.4m Council Tax support to 17,389 households



Permanent accommodation secured for 258 homeless individuals or households

Accessible cycle routes increased by **6.6km** (during 2019/20 and 2020/21)



Homecare Staff; 200+ COVID trained and 10,700+ monthly visits to service users

113,888 COVID-19 webpage views

50 playgrounds were made COVID safe



Working with Partners



Project managed construction of 340-bed field hospital at Llandarcy



Margam Orangery used as a Mass Vaccination Centre



NPT Test, Trace and Protect Service contacted **31,079** people

up to 31st March 2021

As we moved into the second year of the pandemic, our response was greatly assisted by the availability of the Covid-19 vaccines.

We were pleased to be able to offer further support to our NHS, converting facilities at Margam Orangery for use as a mass vaccination centre and modifying a mobile library for use as a mobile vaccination centre. The mobile vaccination centre enabled the vaccine programme to be accessed by those hardest to reach. We also made facilities available for the rapid expansion of Covid-19 testing at various locations across the county borough.

We continued to administer government financial support programmes. This enabled financial support to be provided quickly to local businesses and also to individual residents – for example, residents required to self-isolate and those who had children eligible for free school meals.

By August 2021, sufficient progress had been made across Wales in vaccinating the population and bringing the virus under control to enable the Welsh Government to move to Level Zero where most restrictions on daily life were lifted. However, the course of the pandemic continues to be uncertain with the UK having experienced a fourth wave following the emergence of the Omicron variant. As we think about recovery from the pandemic and our future plans, we need to ensure our plans are flexible and capable of being adapted quickly to anticipate and respond to new issues as they emerge. The framework we have adopted is set out below:

A Re-opening and Recovery Phase – supporting the safe restarting of activity as restrictions are lifted, whilst continuing to respond to the immediate demands of the pandemic; building confidence, supporting residents, businesses and employees as government removes support and restrictions; and

A Reset and Renewal Phase – where activities and policies to support long term plans are put in place to deliver sustainable improvements in services and in social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes.

1. Summary of Covid-19 Impacts

The impact of Covid-19 has been extensive. This once in a generation global public health crisis has impacted everyone in our community and disrupted our local economy. People have endured many months without contact with family and friends. Over 500 residents have sadly lost their lives due to Covid-19 and many families across our county borough are coming to terms with their loss. There are also many other residents who have had their physical and mental health impacted by the disease.

Local Economy Impacts

Many local businesses had to shut their doors for extended periods of time (some permanently) with workers furloughed and many reliant on government financial support. Retail, tourism, hospitality and close contact services have been hit hard, disproportionately affecting women, young people and workers from BME backgrounds. While our towns have not experienced the level of devastation seen in some of the big cities, we have seen an increase in anti-social behaviour in these spaces and footfall is still well below pre-pandemic levels – the continued policy to work from home and a sharp increase in use of on-line shopping is likely to continue to disrupt our high streets, particularly in the short term.

For others, Covid-19 has presented new business opportunities. We have seen an expansion of employment in some existing businesses as they diversified to exploit new market opportunities and we have also seen an increase in inward investment interest from companies of varying sizes bringing much welcome new, quality employment opportunities into the county borough. The business cases for our City Deal programmes were also signed off by the UK and Welsh governments during the pandemic period – the programmes have a strong focus on decarbonisation of industry and residential homes and are expected to stimulate growth in new green jobs across the county borough and the wider city region. Local economic prospects have been further boosted with conditional planning permission granted for a Global Centre for Rail Excellence at Onllwyn in the Dulais Valley and the development of a high quality adventure resort – Wildfox Resort-Afan Valley – at Croeserw. Taken together, these latter two developments represent £0.5 billion investment and some 1,200 new jobs.

Local Community Impacts

The time spent at home has seen many people reconnect with their local community and the environment around them. It is evident that there is a new appreciation of the importance of local parks, trails, play facilities and local attractions and with this comes an increased demand for investment in our local infrastructure to help people sustainably access and enjoy what

is on their doorstep. However, for others the pandemic has left them lonely and isolated. The importance of being connected to family, friends and neighbours is unquestionably shared across all age groups and all backgrounds. The pandemic was the first time that some residents had volunteered their time to help those around them and this has enabled many residents to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of community. The impact of Covid-19 on community and voluntary organisations as a whole, however, has been mixed with some groups operating through the pandemic, some re-starting as restrictions lifted and others unable to resume.

Whilst children and young people were mostly not clinically vulnerable to Covid-19, the disruption to education has had a very significant impact on the routines and mental health of young people. For some young people, family stresses have increased during the several periods of lockdown with higher incidences of domestic violence and substance use experienced. Over 1,400 young people living in the county borough, identified as vulnerable, required targeted support by our education services, youth services, children's social services and wider partners throughout the pandemic period. Support for unpaid carers and disabled people has also seen some disruption, particularly during the early part of the pandemic period. As we move into recovery, it is important to ensure that those needing care and support and carers are able to access the services they need.

Council Impacts

The first year of the pandemic saw a huge disruption to normal council services. A number of services were stopped and staff, assets and financial resources re-purposed to mobilise the emergency response required by the UK and Welsh Governments as part of the national effort to protect the NHS, save lives and maintain essential services.

Many staff found themselves working from home - virtually overnight – with rapid expansion of digital technology across the workforce to enable the Council to function. There has been radical innovation as services were forced to operate on an entirely new basis with a range of control measures applied to ensure staff and service users were protected against the disease. Communication and engagement has also transformed using new channels, data science and multi-media approaches to reach all sections of our community. New employment practices have been introduced at pace to support the Council workforce as we adapted to the changing situation. Over the summer of 2021, an extensive lessons learned exercise took place to inform our recovery planning and this has identified opportunities for further service transformation through digital approaches, deeper integration of services designed around the needs of our citizens and businesses, continued empowerment of the workforce and a permanent move to a hybrid model in place of traditional office work patterns.

The policy to work from home has also had a profound impact on our democratic arrangements. Face to face meetings were replaced by remote meetings. An unexpected benefit of remote meetings has been a greater participation in those meetings by local people. Whilst some face to face meetings will resume when safe to do so, the majority of serving councillors believe that greater use of remote meetings should be retained into the future to support greater diversity in the membership of the Council and to facilitate better public access.

Demand for council services is changing as a result of the pandemic. In some services, we have backlogs of work that accrued during the periods where services have been required to stop. For example, many regulatory functions carried out by environmental health officers were suspended for those professionals to concentrate on supporting Public Health Wales in protecting the public health; neighbourhood management services were severely curtailed in order to maintain refuse and recycling services; care and support services for disabled people and unpaid carers were temporarily disrupted to protect the NHS; and there are many issues presenting across our schools and wider services for children and young people as the impact on children and young people's wellbeing becomes apparent.

Additional demand is also being seen in many other services. For example, many residents used the additional time spent at home to have a good clear out, increasing demand on waste services; there has been a sharp increase in planning applications as residents re-purpose holiday budgets for home improvements; the move to an 'all-in' policy (introduced by Welsh Government) has significantly increased the demands on council homelessness services - this will be a permanent change in policy; the impact of the restrictions on daily living has also resulted in an increase in the number of people with complex needs, particularly in relation to the impact restrictions have had on people's mental health.

These increased demands are occurring at a time when the local labour market has bounced back much more strongly than initially anticipated. There are more jobs available in the economy and consequently more competition amongst employers seeking to fill vacancies. The combination of increased demand and greater competition for labour means that pressures are acute across many council services. A service resilience framework has been approved by the Cabinet to respond to these increased demands.

Impact on Inequality

The evidence demonstrates that the poorest areas have experienced the greatest impact both in terms of health and financial impacts. Those who faced the greatest disadvantage prior to the pandemic have been hardest hit and as a consequence inequalities across Neath Port Talbot have widened. Addressing these inequalities will be a cross cutting

theme across all of the recovery actions we propose to take in the short, medium and longer term. We will be updating the Council's Strategic Equality Plan (which details how we address the socio economic duty) to ensure as we implement the priorities under each wellbeing objective we are explicitly closing the gap between those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and those who have not.

2. Re-open and Recover

Since the Welsh Government moved to Level Zero in August 2021, we have been focused on the re-opening and recovery phases. The increase in social mixing since Wales moved to Level Zero triggered a third wave of the virus and at the time of writing, a new variant of concern – Omicron – had been identified and a fourth wave was underway. We continued to support our NHS through this re-open and recover period, flexing our Test, Trace, Protect response as community transmission spread whilst also continuing to offer practical assistance through use of our premises and other facilities. Over this period, we have also started to more fully understand the deeper impact of the pandemic, with more people coming forward for services, often with more complex needs, whilst also giving attention to the backlog of work in those services that were re-purposed earlier in the pandemic as we resourced the first phase of response.

Our priorities during this phase are summarised below:

Supporting our NHS	Keeping Essential Services Running	Helping our Communities and our Economy to Recover
Continue to adapt our Test, Trace, Protect Service to help stop the spread of the virus	Social care – Trem-y-glyn care home contract extended for 12 months to retain capacity in the system; 10% uplift in fees to external providers to aid recruitment and retention of carers; recruitment task force to increase the pool of available carers	Community Support - Additional £640,000 investment to improve community infrastructure e.g. upgrades to play facilities, support to sports clubs etc.

Continue to amplify the key public health messages issued by the Government and ensure those hardest to reach receive and understand important public health advice	Streetscene – additional investment to ‘catch up, clean up, green up’ neighbourhoods across the county borough and increase resilience for drainage works	Early Intervention and Prevention - Additional £250,000 grant support to third sector organisations to develop new preventative services in communities with a particular focus on people who are lonely and isolated. As part of this we have also expanded the number of Local Area Co-ordinators and integrated their work with NPT Safe and Well.
Continue to make buildings and other facilities available to support the mass vaccination and testing efforts	Engineering, planning, transport and regeneration – additional investment to respond to the increased number of planning applications; inward investment enquiries; business enquiries and grant opportunities	Town Centres - Two assistant town centre managers have been employed to work with traders and other town centre stakeholders to help the towns recover. Town centre forums are in place in Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe - programmes of events co-ordinated across partners to Christmas 2021 and then on a rolling programme basis.
Continue to apply the policy of work from home where possible and ensure Government advice is adhered to in all Council controlled settings	Schools – support to school leaders to support continuity of learning; recruitment campaign to increase the number of catering and cleaning staff	Town Centre anti-social behaviour – this has been significantly reduced in Neath and Port Talbot town centres through the work of the NPT Community Safety Partnership
Increased investment in Emergency Planning core team to maintain and adjust emergency preparedness	Environmental Health – additional investment to begin to catch up on paused inspection activity	Business Support – A small business grant scheme established by the council to support local businesses ineligible for WG financial support. Grants of up to £20k will be available from early 2022.
	Digital Services – additional investment to support the rapid expansion of digital technologies	Town Centres - Free parking for part of the summer and Christmas periods to encourage greater footfall to town centres

		<p>Homelessness – increased capacity to support the ‘all-in’ policy introduced by the Welsh Government</p>	<p>Improvements have been made in key tourism locations to help with the management of visitors e.g. Glynneath; Afan Valley</p>
		<p>Increased number of opportunities for young people to take up employment within the council, including engagement with the Government’s Kickstart programme</p>	
		<p>A programme of events across the country parks and Council theatres has been established</p>	
		<p>A programme of events for children and young people facing the greatest disadvantage has been delivered as part of the Summer of Fun</p>	
		<p>Business Support – The council has continued to administer financial support to businesses and eligible individuals</p>	
		<p>Hardship Support – the council is administering Welsh Government hardship schemes e.g. self-isolation payments, free school meal payments etc.</p>	
		<p>Food Poverty – the council is working with local organisations to increase help and support for those experiencing food poverty</p>	

3. Reset and Renew

The remainder of this Plan describes how we will approach the Reset and Renew Phase as we move into 2022. It is grounded in what matters to local people, businesses, community organisations and wider stakeholders. It takes account of the new Welsh Government's Programme for Government, the associated Co-operation Agreement and other developments we anticipate will shape our future priorities such as climate change, the continued digital disruption and likely financial settlements. It also complements and can be integrated into local partnership plans and other regional or wider area work, including the revision of the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan.

Covid-19 – ongoing response

The availability of vaccines and improved treatments is already have a beneficial impact however, the course of the pandemic remains far from certain and we will need to sustain and adapt our Covid-19 response for the foreseeable future. Key areas of focus will continue to be:

- **Helping to protect the public health** – we will do this through our Test, Trace, Protect Service and through the work we continue to lead regionally to warn and inform our residents and businesses about the steps they need to take to keep themselves and others safe and well.
- **Supporting and Protecting our NHS** – we will continue to offer facilities and other help to support testing and vaccination programmes. We will also work through our Regional Partnership Board to ensure there are joined up arrangements between primary care; hospitals; our social services and wider community services and support.
- **Implementing Government Policy** - we will provide advice and guidance to ensure people and businesses comply with any government COVID-19 regulations in force and we will continue to provide assistance to government, for example, administering financial hardship payments to local businesses and residents.
- **Maintaining essential services** – we will ensure we remain prepared to respond to changing circumstances, adjusting our service delivery with a focus on maintaining essential services that our local businesses and residents rely upon.

The next sections summarise the evidence we have used to develop the four well-being objectives that provide a framework for our reset and renew phase.

Let's Talk

Over the summer 2021, we ran a campaign to engage people from all backgrounds and of all ages with a view to testing our understanding of how the pandemic has impacted on different parts of our county borough and to also understand what matters most to local people as we take forward our recovery work. Almost 1,800 people engaged with the campaign with a mix of on-line and off-line surveys completed and supplemented by focus groups in our five valleys.

Capturing the views and opinions of local businesses and residents at an early stage in our planning has enabled us to shape our four well-being objectives and associated actions on what matters locally. The summer campaign sought views at a much earlier point in the planning process than is usual. It is our firm intention to continue to engage with people as we move into implementation and as we review and refine the plan over the coming years. This change in approach reflects a renewed commitment to working with our communities, local businesses and partners and it is also enshrined in our new values.

There is a separate, comprehensive report that describes what people said as part of our Let's Talk campaign. The main themes are summarised below:

What matters to you now?

The ten responses most frequently mentioned were as follows:

1. Friends and family (including pets)	6. Health/wellbeing/mental health
2. Returning to normality (easing restrictions)	7. Investing in and protecting the economy/jobs/local businesses
3. Health (mine and my family, friends, neighbours)	8. Leisure/hobbies recreation
4. Staying/keeping safe	9. Community relations/spirit/bringing people together/volunteering
5. Education/keeping open	10. Socialising

In the words of respondents...

'Family, health, friends and making memories'

'That children are given more opportunity to grow, learn and be confident to know they are valuable in our communities and they ALL have strengths'

'Helping people recover from the mental and physical impacts of the pandemic. Particularly social anxiety.'

'Heritage and its preservation now matters to me. The past must be cared for.'

'There needs to be a concerted effort to eradicate this virus from taking any more lives'

'Seeing my friends and family. Ensuring our important local green spaces are improved for nature and are protected/managed for people to continue to use. Doing my best to deliver and push for positive action to address the climate and nature emergencies'

'People get back to some sort of way of life, communities get much needed support to revamp parks/ gardens and fields with benches where people can go and sit and meet friends neighbours outdoors'

'The area needs a clean-up. The town centre and surrounding areas need attention.'

'Supporting local businesses by helping them become far more resilient'

'Safe streets, people's behaviour'

'A safe future for my children, with equal opportunities for the children living up in the valleys as to those in towns'

'Keeping my business open and having more family time, events etc locally to attend'

'Keeping covid under control working towards the cessation of global warming'

'Reducing the council tax'

What matters to you in the future?

The ten responses most frequently mentioned were as follows:

1. Friends and family (including pets)	6.Returning to normality (easing restrictions)
2. Investing in and protecting the economy/jobs/local businesses	7.Work-life balance, working from home, office environment
3. Education/keeping open	8.Community relations/spirit/bringing people together/volunteering
4. Environment, climate crisis, recycling, maintaining green spaces	9.Staying/keeping safe
5. Health and wellbeing/mental health	10.Health (mine and my family, friends, neighbours)

In the words of respondents...

'The facilities in the village are enhanced'

'My child's education she has missed'

'That Port Talbot gets cleaned up and a great place to go'

'Health, Crime rates, Policing'

'Opportunities/activities for teenagers within the town. Continuing a slower pace of life. Reconnecting with friends.'

'Having services starting to re-open again and looking at what services are needed for people in the community'

'I would like to see that community feeling that we had in the beginning. I feel as though we appreciate the our natural environment and want to see more focus on looking after what we have.'

'Helping my children catch up on things they've lost. Concentrating on ensuring their mental health has not been adversely affected, striking a real balance between work and free time.'

'NHS at local and wider area response. Help for community centres.'

'The education of my children without continual disruption. The school experience for my children i.e. concerts, activities. The ability for my children to interact in groups and activities outside of school. Building on the work/life balance offered by working from home. The development of towns and high streets the parks and open spaces.'

'Things are put in place to prevent future lockdowns, Neath Port Talbot continues to redevelop and invest in order to continue to improve for all that live there'

'Capitalising on the agile working acceleration covid created and a thriving community'

'Concerned about what the future will be like, with all services diminishing less things being done to keep the areas clean and tidy. I understand about lack of money and staff shortages but every street looks dreadful, grass, weeds and littering. I wish that something could be done about the current anti-social behaviour in the community but more in the towns, if this could be addressed and acted upon with fines that suit the crimes as otherwise not going to be a very bright future.'

'Our elderly neighbours feel safe, small steps. Our groups all get back together'

Valley Areas – Focus Groups

To ensure the Let's Talk campaign included all sections of the county borough, a number of focus groups were also held in valley areas. Residents in valley areas held many similar views to those who completed questionnaires. Additional issues raised in the focus groups highlighted the importance of transport; having greater levels of engagement with the council and concern about council tax levels.

In the words of the people who took part in the focus groups:

'It is assumed that you can get to a leisure centre or get to where the resources are put. It's not necessarily recognised that in the more rural areas, public transport is more difficult to get there,'

'I want transport for our children to do the extracurricular activities. If they're down the comprehensive in Port Talbot, I want to make sure they can do after school clubs, sports teams and training after school hours. I want them to have exactly the same start as the children all the way down from Cwmafan.'

'They always say we haven't got the money. We have one of the highest tax rates in Wales, where is the money going?'

'More of a partnership approach to service delivery with the wider third sector and local authority'

'...To actually listen to the needs of the community and the people that live in the communities and act upon them. Not a guess of what people need or do what they call a 'best interest'. Actually listen to the needs of the people and the communities. Each community is completely different.'

'There are no early buses at 6:30 for people working in factories or construction. There are no buses, to my knowledge, after 7:30 at night, so if you work shifts then you can't get home. Our bus service has gone to one every two hours.'

Megatrends

Whilst Covid-19 is a major consideration within our forward planning, there are also other important factors that need to be taken into account:

Megatrends	Key Issues
Poverty, deprivation and inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural inequalities were evident across the population prior to the pandemic. These structural issues have been accentuated as a result of the pandemic

Public finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demand for greater spending on health and social care may squeeze spending on other services – many of which are highly valued by the public • Costs of dealing with the consequences of Covid-19 including impact on income generation • Uncertain public spending outlook including uncertainty over replacement EU funding
Green recovery and decarbonisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society has more appetite for clean, sustainable growth • Government has signalled new policy and service responses needed to deliver on this agenda at pace • Residents have become more engaged with their local environment, heritage and culture
Digitisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 has accelerated the growth of the digital economy, bringing changes to working patterns and skills requirements • Adds to inequalities challenges but also brings new strategic risks – eg cyber threat • Growth in on-line shopping likely to result in permanent changes to the use of town centres • The growth in data sciences offers new opportunities but also requires new ethical frameworks
Demographic change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPT has a relatively older population • NPT has a relatively high proportion of unpaid carers and people living with life limiting conditions • NPT has a relatively deprived population using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
Future of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees likely to want a better work-life balance permanently • Shift to home working on a significant scale likely to continue with consequential impacts on the amount and type of office accommodation needed. The importance of appropriate digital infrastructure and consequential impacts on our main town centres • Working practices will need to permanently change to embed the health protection behaviours that will be needed on a long term basis to protect the public health

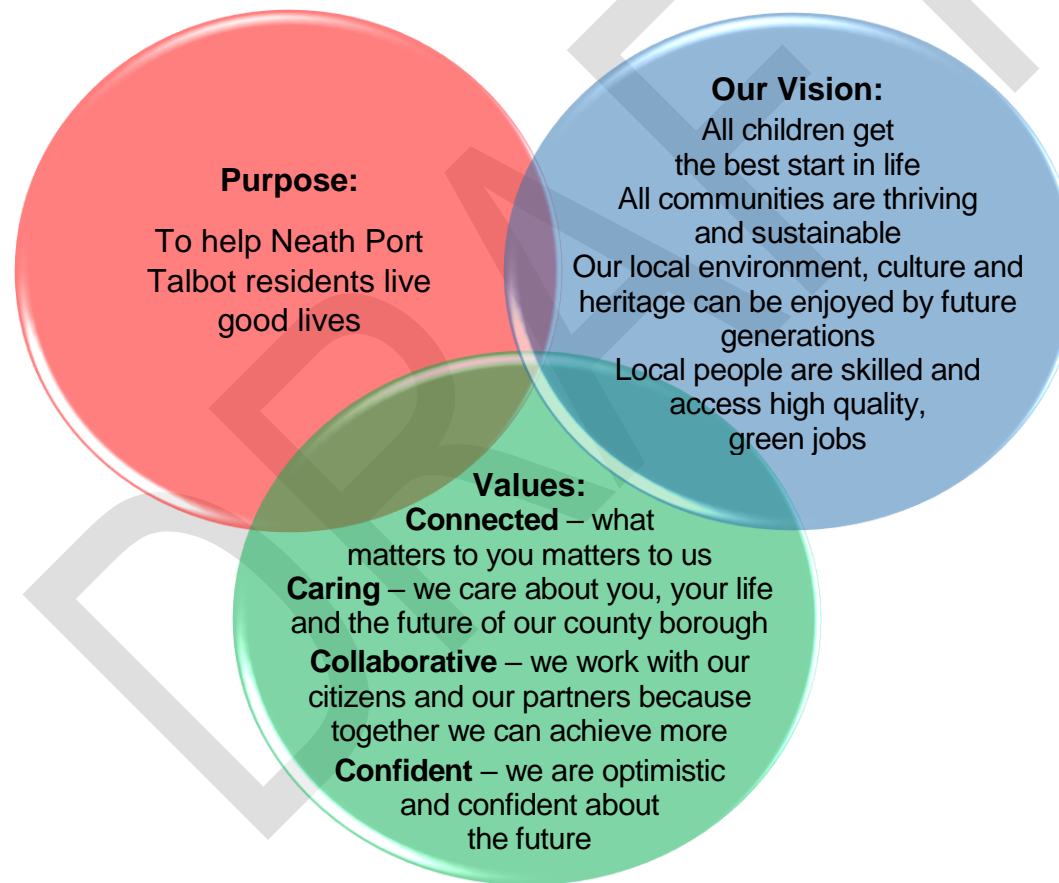
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater competition for labour in a very competitive labour market
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have reconnected with their local environment, neighbourhoods and outdoor spaces • Social contact is the single biggest issue that matters to people. Opportunities for bringing people together are a priority for people of all ages
Government Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Government has published an ambitious Programme for Government and an accompanying Co-operation Agreement. There is a strong emphasis on reducing inequality, alleviating poverty and important commitments to put the provision of social care on a sustainable footing, valuing mental health equally to physical health and terms and conditions with the NHS • There is a continued growth in complexity in governance arrangements with an increase in regional, pan-regional and local partnership arrangements

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4. Resetting and Renewing our purpose, vision and values

The Council's purpose, vision, values, relationships and priorities has been reset and renewed taking into account:

- what matters to local people, businesses and our employees;
- the impact that we know Covid-19 has had on our communities, our local economy and wider stakeholders;
- the lessons we have learned from our pandemic response and from elsewhere; and
- other anticipated changes in our external environment.



5. Achieving Our Vision

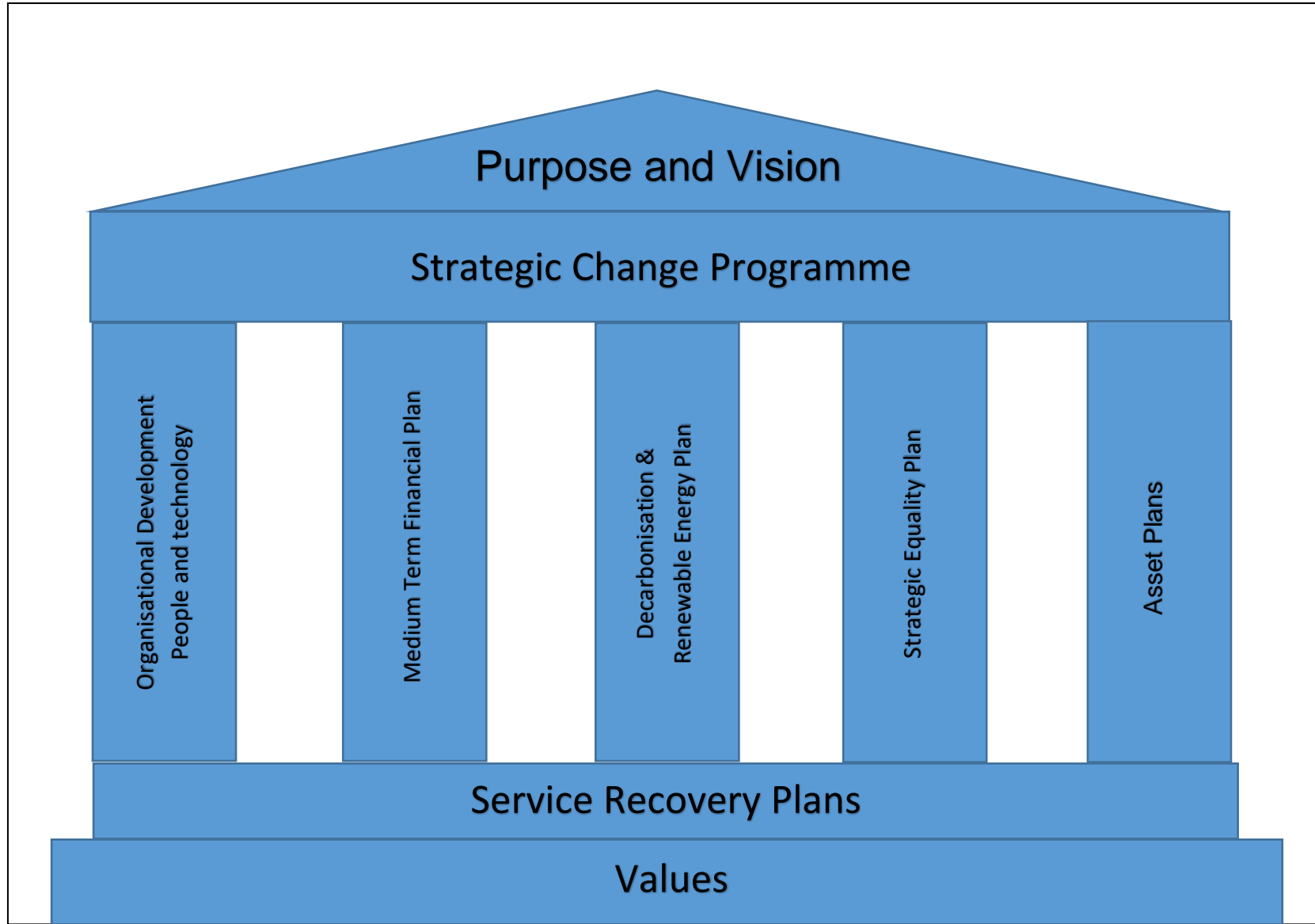
The work we will do to achieve our vision is organised at three levels:

Strategic Level - We will initiate a strategic change programme to ensure we are embracing a 'one council' strategic approach to achieving the vision. The key wellbeing objectives will initially include:

- All children get the best start in life
- All communities are thriving and sustainable
- Our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations
- Jobs and skills - local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs
- Enabling Programme - Organisational Development

Corporate Level - corporate strategies will be realigned to support the achievement of the vision and the delivery of the strategic change programme.

Operational Level - Every service and function within the Council will align their service recovery plans to maximise their contribution to achieving the vision that we have set.



6. Strategic Change Programme – Initial Focus

Our strategic change programme describes the changes we aim to make over the next 12 months, the next 5 years and the longer term. It will evolve over time but its initial focus will be as set out below. Further detail is contained in Annex 1:

Best Start in Life

All children get the best start in life

Next 12 months...

- Support our school leaders to keep schools open (following the pandemic) and help children and young people recover;
- We will work with schools and partners ensuring as many pupils as possible physically re-connect and engage with school reducing the number of pupils currently not within the education system. Also, to improve attendance of pupils in both the primary and secondary phase;
- Ensure a more equitable Early Years offer is available across the borough to improve the readiness of our youngest learners for school;
- We will work with and support schools and partners to ensure they are at an appropriate stage of readiness for curriculum reform in line with Curriculum for Wales (The Curriculum and Assessment Wales Act 2021).
- Ensure effective early intervention is in place for our children, young people and families;
- We will fully implement the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice 2021 across the Local Authority and in schools within Neath Port Talbot;
- Enhance free and low cost play and leisure opportunities for children and young people;
- Make sure it is clear how early help and support can be accessed by those children and families who need it;
- Make sure 'what matters' to children and families is at the centre of the way we plan and provide our services;
- Work with the Welsh Government to increase access to free school meals and childcare;
- Make sure all those children in need of protection are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family;
- Make sure it is clear for young people leaving full-time education how they move on to further training or education or work;

- We will build on our role as corporate parents and help young people leaving care to have appropriate supported transition to enable them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation;
- Explore what more we can do to support young carers
- Increase the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered by the Council and local employers to young people;
- We will work with partners to retain young peoples' engagement in education, employment and training and to reduce youth unemployment within Neath Port Talbot;
- Work with partners to refocus the Children and Young People's Partnership so that all services for children and families are easy to identify and use, meet people's needs and that our communities are child friendly;
- Finalise our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to further strengthen our commitment to the Welsh Language, our traditions and culture;
- We will provide opportunities to enable all learners, families and carers to benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh; and
- Establish new joint planning, commissioning and service delivery arrangements for children who have additional needs.

All communities are thriving and sustainable

People live healthy, long and good lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another

Next 12 months...

- Further develop our work at neighbourhood level, mapping local assets (what's strong about each community) and mapping community vulnerabilities. Work with the community and other partners to identify opportunities for additional informal care and support networks to be developed;
- Expand the number of Local Area Co-ordinators and bring greater consistency to the way they work across the county borough. Increase the number of people helped to connect with local informal care and support networks;
- Identify natural places across communities that can act as community hubs e.g. libraries;

- Create a network of neighbourhood forums to increase opportunities for local people to participate in decisions that affect them and provide greater support for the work of local councillors in their ward;
- Provide seed funding for community and voluntary initiatives that strengthen early intervention and prevention support at the neighbourhood level;
- Work alongside the Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service to encourage and further develop community and voluntary groups across the county borough;
- Introduce a corporate policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer;
- Strengthen our neighbourhood management services and introduce a county borough wide programme to catch up, clean up and green up our neighbourhoods;
- Working closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to increase the number of interim and move on accommodation units;
- Prepare a Rapid Housing Plan;
- Continue to promote and develop our 'Buy Local' initiative, encouraging local people to support their local businesses;
- Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function; and
- Begin to take the actions that will implement our commitment to the place making charter.

Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations

Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change.

People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

Next 12 months...

- Establish a small grants scheme to help community groups and societies to recover from the pandemic;
- Introduce a community recognition initiative, to celebrate the important work being done by volunteers and community groups to enable future generations to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Help to promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Support and encourage volunteering including at council-owned nature sites;

- Establish a programme of training and development to enable our workforce to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Further develop and implement our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy;
- Provide refresher training for officers responsible for carrying out impact assessments when undertaking policy and service change;
- Extend opportunities for children, young people and citizens to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture;
- Increase the engagement of the workforce and citizens in the climate change agenda;
- Further develop the NPT Nature Partnership;
- Drive the implementation of the NPT Biodiversity Plan;
- Work with the community, local partners, funders and other stakeholders to set a new strategic direction for heritage and culture and for tourism/destination management;
- Refresh the council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan and ensure there is increased momentum to implement measures to decarbonise the council's vehicle fleet and property portfolio;
- Seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance the local environment, culture and heritage;
- Implement the Council's decision to bring leisure services back under the direct management of the Council;
- Start work to set a new strategic direction for leisure and recreation;
- Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture; and
- Deliver our planned programme of projects and service changes to improve access to local sport, leisure, culture and heritage; deliver planned projects to conserve our local environment.

Jobs and Skills

Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and help local people acquire the skills they need to access those jobs.

The next 12 months...

Skills and Training

- Review our training offer to help people adjust to the changing labour market;
- Create a 'single front door' to our employability services so that those seeking training and/or work find it easy to access the help and support that they need;
- Work with local employers to increase the number of quality apprenticeship opportunities and ensure these opportunities are seen as attractive to those seeking work;
- Further develop council procurement arrangements to ensure that the money spent by the council supports the employment of local people and the development of local businesses to the maximum extent possible;
- Develop clear pathways for local people interested in working in the council and further develop the council's employment 'offer' to attract, retain and develop a high performing public service that is rooted in its communities;
- Strengthen the council's business support team to help local businesses recruit skilled people and to help local learning providers to adapt learning provision to keep pace with the changing needs of employers;
- Initiate a local skills audit to identify the future work requirement of local employers and any shortfalls in the local learning provision;
- Develop a local investment plan that establishes clear priorities against which we can use the Shared Prosperity Fund; and
- Establish the mechanisms to implement the actions set out in the Local Economic Development Plan.

Jobs

- Launch the 'Invest in NPT' website to place business opportunities in NPT front and centre in Wales;
- Continue to work regionally and locally to develop new green jobs;
- Target businesses seeking to grow or expand within the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors and encourage them to focus their growth plans within the county borough;
- Lead Town Centre recovery;

- Strengthen engagement with local businesses;
- Support local businesses in their recovery, providing financial support when available and helping businesses to diversify so that they are more resilient to future economic shocks;
- Work in areas within Neath Port Talbot where there is the greatest economic inactivity to target business support;
- Establish a manufacturing/engineering forum to improve networking opportunities within this sector and to provide improved opportunities for businesses to inform future plans and funding programmes;
- Develop an investment programme to enable the expansion of sites and premises across the county borough that can support the development and growth of local businesses;
- Continue to develop plans to provide an Integrated Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station linking local bus services to the main railway station, reducing overall journey times, and improving connections between the places where people live and the places where people work, learn and enjoy their leisure time;
- The Welsh Government has announced £1.3m funding to support Community Transport car schemes to expand electric vehicle (EV) community cars. Schemes in NPT have been successful in securing some of this funding and will be looking at introducing EV cars in the Afan, Neath, Dulais and Amman Valleys;
- In partnership with Transport for Wales explore the feasibility of introducing a pilot the Fflecsi bus service in the upper Afan valley. Fflecsi buses can pick up and drop off passengers in a service area not just at a bus stop. These buses are booked via the app or on the phone. This initiative will be subject to funding becoming available; and
- Work with developers to deliver the Global Centre of Rail Excellence and the Wildfox Resort.

**Business – refers to both for profit and not for profit business*

7. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Wellbeing Statement

Our revised, purpose, vision, values and wellbeing objectives show how the Council contributes to the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Neath Port Talbot and to the following seven national wellbeing goals contained in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The priorities we will be focusing on under each wellbeing objective in the short and medium term demonstrate how we intend to maximise our contribution to the seven wellbeing goals set by Welsh Government. We believe the wellbeing objectives relate to different aspects of life's course coupled with attention to factors that impact upon wellbeing provide a framework for improving wellbeing in the long term and will help Neath Port Talbot residents live good lives.



The contribution to the seven wellbeing goals is made through the way in which we work in accordance with the sustainable development principle contained within the Act by considering the following 5 things that show we have applied the sustainable development principle:

- Looking ahead to the medium term – the Strategic Change Programme sets out the focus of our work over the next 12 months (short term), the next 5 years (medium term) and longer term
- Preventing problems from occurring or getting worse
- Ensuring our wellbeing objectives do not contradict each other and complement those of other public bodies
- Working in partnership with others – the wellbeing objectives interact with each other so it is important to consider them as a whole. Services integrate their work

across the Council where this enables us to maximise the impact we have on the wellbeing objectives, as well as integrating and collaborating with other partners where this makes sense.

- Involving local people – the wellbeing objectives have been informed by considerable consultation feedback and a basket of different sources of information. Going forward, we will involve people who have an interest in achieving the wellbeing objectives in their planning and delivery.

The Socio-Economic Duty (Equality Act 2010) came into force on 31 March 2021. This duty requires councils, when taking strategic decisions such as setting priorities to consider how their decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. As stated earlier, evidence demonstrates that the poorest areas have experienced the greatest impact both in terms of health and financial impacts. Those who faced the greatest disadvantage prior to the pandemic have been hardest hit and as a consequence inequalities across Neath Port Talbot have widened. Addressing these inequalities is a cross-cutting theme across all the priorities in the short, medium and longer term.

The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 is a substantial piece of legislation covering electoral reform, public participation, governance and performance and collaborative working. Work is under way across the Council to ensure the Council meets the different requirements set out in this piece of legislation which includes establishing a corporate self-assessment and reporting framework to measure the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements (*exercising our functions effectively; using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and our governance arrangements are effective*) in order to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of our communities.

8. Resetting Relationships – #TeamNPT

Over the course of the pandemic we have seen a transformation in relationships between the Council, our communities, businesses and wider partners, a transformation that we want to build on, putting our partnership working on an even stronger footing.

We have encapsulated the way we want to reset and renew our relationship with our residents and with our business community below. Over the next 12 months we will undertake further work to reset and renew relationships with our local third sector and wider partners.

Resetting relationships with our residents

<u>OUR PART</u>	<u>YOUR PART</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ambitious - believe in our county borough • Create the best opportunities for all of our children and young people • Build services around what matters to people • Encourage communities to be places where people get along together and support each other • Support the local economy to grow • Protect and support our natural environment and our rich heritage • Seek out new investment and provide value for money • Keep the Council Tax as low as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ambitious - believe in our county borough • Help protect and support children, young people and vulnerable residents • Use our on-line services • Tell us what matters to you and let us know if we get things wrong • Get involved in your community • Support local businesses • Be healthy and be active • Re-use items and re-cycle more • Enjoy and help protect our natural environment

Resetting our relationships with our business community

<u>OUR PART</u>	<u>YOUR PART</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create vibrant town centres for everyone to access and enjoy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your town centre and buy local. Keep your town centres clean and tidy by not dropping litter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in more events, festivals and other initiatives that help people to come together and help local businesses to prosper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend events and help to organise them where you can
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote our area to investors so we can create good jobs for local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident and access the help and support you need to help you start a business or take advantage of new jobs in the area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our business support team to help people start new businesses and to help existing businesses to grow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy from local businesses where you can
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help residents to get the skills they need and help them find work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you run a business, take on an apprentice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay the living wage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are an employer, pay the living wage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy goods and services from local businesses where this is possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you run a business, learn how to bid for goods and services that are being procured by public services

9. How we will measure success and monitor progress

Our corporate performance management framework will measure the success of the delivery of this plan. It will include a range of measures and indicators that, taken together, will provide a picture of the difference / impact the work set out in this plan is making and how it is enabling people to live good lives.

The framework could include, but is not limited to:

- Case studies that describe the difference this plan is making
- The experiences of residents via our ongoing Let's Talk conversation
- A set of specific, measurable output and outcome measures
- Data visualisation tools to better communicate the impact of this Plan

10. How will we resource the Plan

The priorities described for the next 12 months will be reflected in the revenue and capital budgets set for 2022/23. In 2022 we will develop a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for discussion with the new council elected in May 2022. The MTFP will be the means through which the revenue and capital resources likely to be available over the term of the new council will be aligned with the longer term actions set out in Annex 1- Strategic Change Programme and the priorities of the new Council.

11. What happens next

Work will be initiated to establish how the strategic programme will be implemented in terms of delivery and the reporting of progress.

Recover, Reset, Renew
Strategic Change Programme

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Foreword

This document sets out the detail of the strategic change programme that will be initiated to enable the Council to achieve its revised purpose and vision. It is intended to be read alongside the Corporate Plan 2022-2027.

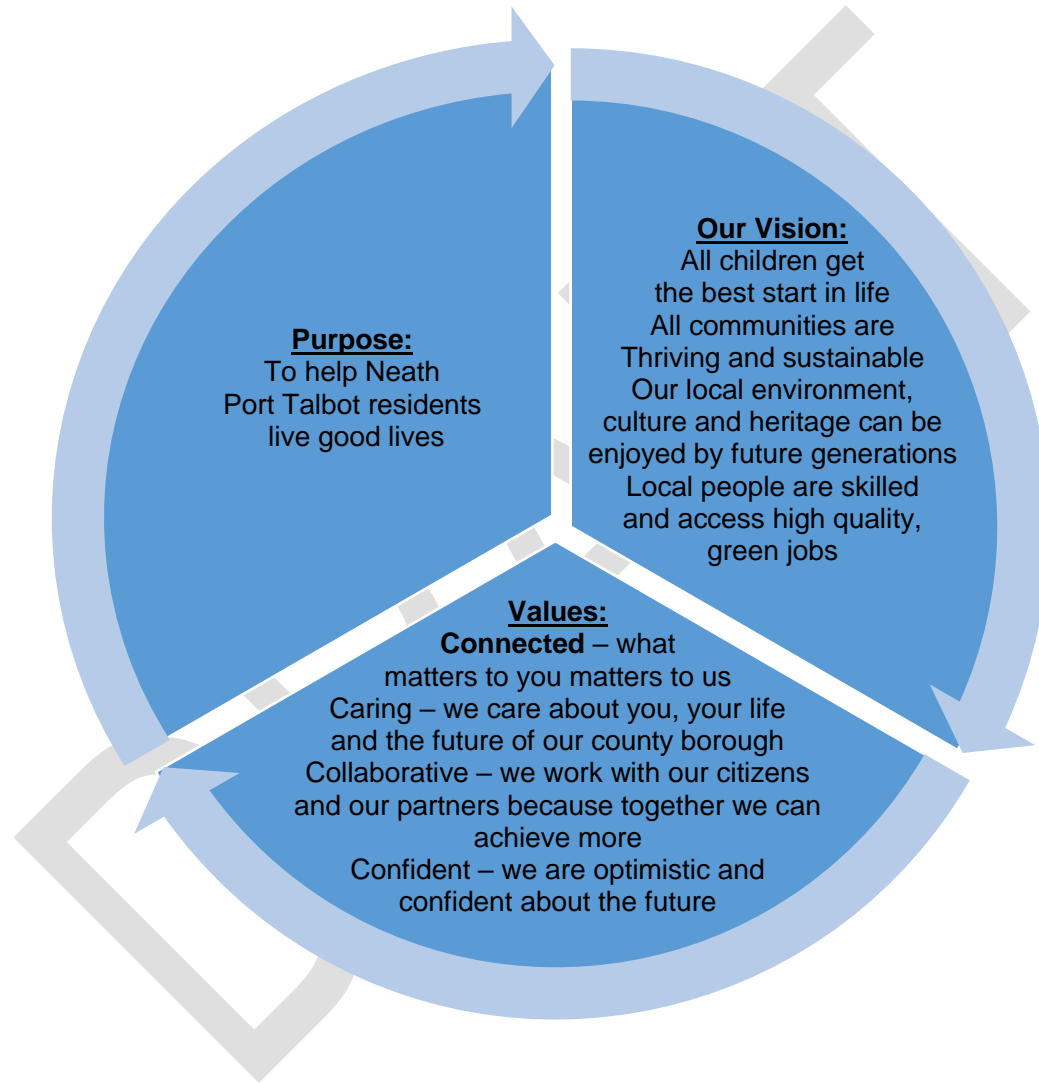
The programme will be built on the Council's revised values and will be adapted, where needed.

There are a number of specific actions to be taken in 2022/23 which have evolved from the analysis of how Covid-19 has impacted across Neath Port Talbot. The programme also takes account of the new Programme for Government, associated Co-operation Agreement and wider factors. It will be adjusted, as necessary, following the Local Government Election in May 2022 to reflect the incoming Administration's priorities.

Cllr E V Latham
Leader of Council

Mrs K Jones
Chief Executive

Purpose, Vision and Values



Strategic Change Programme



Well-being Objective 1 – Best Start in Life

All children get the best start in life.

In 20 years' time...

- All children and young people will be:
 - ▶ ambitious, capable learners;
 - ▶ enterprising, creative contributors;
 - ▶ ethical, informed citizens; and
 - ▶ healthy, confident individuals.
- There will be a shared culture across the county borough that supports aspiration and ambition for all children and young people;
- Inequalities in health, education and economic outcomes will have reduced;
- All families in need will have access to high quality early help and support services and these will ensure children are ready for learning when they start school and families are being helped to move out of poverty;
- We will have completed a programme of school reorganisation and have the right schools in the right place and all children and young people are accessing the schools that are right for them, first time, every time;
- The Council will be systematically removing the barriers to learning and aspiration by convening and working in partnership with other services and agencies that touch the lives of children and young people;
- We will have created an environment that secures access to learning and opportunities for all children, young people and adults in order that they reach their potential and their ambition;
- We will be championing the needs of all learners, particularly our vulnerable and disadvantaged, and building strong relationships with families, schools and communities;

- We will have created environments where learning is a safe, nurturing and fulfilling experience in all settings, where there is respect and due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion; and
- We will be working in partnership to ensure that schools and other providers meet the learning needs of all their pupils and students, building professional capital and collective responsibility throughout the system and ensuring that literacy and numeracy are at the heart of learners' development.

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Why is this important?

Covid-19 has had a significant, adverse impact on children and young people, with disruption to their learning and consequences for their social development and physical and mental wellbeing;

35% of children aged 7-24 live in the 20% most deprived wards in Wales;

84% of children entered nursery without the appropriate literacy, language and communication skills to access the curriculum;

27% of pupils of school age are entitled to free school meals;

Flying Start offers support for approximately 1,800 children per year having approximately 79% of pupils lie outside Flying Start areas which results in inequality of support;

A significant percentage of pupils finish statutory education without the expected levels in language, mathematics and science;

Over half of the pupils who are eligible for free school meals do not achieve a grade C or above in either language or mathematics;

Too many children and young people are being excluded from schools on a fixed term and permanent basis;

At least a quarter of children in our schools have a known or identified Additional Learning Need;

2,237 young people aged 16-24 are economically inactive in Neath Port Talbot – some of these consider themselves unfit for work due to mental health issues; and

The Welsh Government has set a target that 1 million people will speak Welsh by 2050 and we need to play our part in helping to achieve this.

What matters to children and young people?

325 children and young people took part in the Let's Talk campaign and expressed their views about what mattered to them now and what mattered to them as they thought about their futures. There were clear themes from their responses:

- Being safe;
- Being happy;
- Having a stable home life;
- Spending time with family, friends and pets;
- School – getting a good education;
- Growing up to be strong and healthy;
- Having good quality parks, sports facilities and other youth services;
- Having enough money;
- Being able to get a job and being able to afford to live in decent accommodation; and
- Affordable buses to access services.

Moving Forward

In the next 12 months...

- Support our school leaders to keep schools open (in light of the pandemic) and help children and young people recover;
- We will work with schools and partners ensuring as many pupils as possible physically re-connect and engage with school reducing the number of pupils currently not within the education system. Also, to improve attendance of pupils in both the primary and secondary phase;
- Ensure a more equitable Early Years offer is available across the borough to improve the readiness of our youngest learners for school;
- We will work with and support schools and partners to ensure they are at an appropriate stage of readiness for curriculum reform in line with Curriculum for Wales (The Curriculum and Assessment Wales Act 2021);
- Ensure effective early intervention is in place for our children, young people and families;
- We will fully implement the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice 2021 across the Local Authority and in schools within Neath Port Talbot;
- Enhance free and low cost play and leisure opportunities for children and young people;
- We will make sure it is clear how early help and support can be accessed by those children and families who need it;
- 'What matters' to children and families will be at the centre of the way we plan and provide our services;
- We will work with the Welsh Government to increase access to free school meals and childcare;
- All those children in need of protection are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family;
- We will work with partners to retain young peoples' engagement in education, employment and training and to reduce youth unemployment within Neath Port Talbot;
- Young people leaving full-time education will be helped to move on to further training or education or work;
- We will build on our role as corporate parents and help young people leaving care to have appropriate supported transition to enable them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation;
- Explore what more we can do to support young carers
- We will increase the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered by the Council and local employers to young people;

- Make sure it is clear for young people leaving full-time education how they move on to further training or education or work;
- We will work with partners to refocus the Children and Young People's Partnership so that all services for children and families are easy to identify and use, meet people's needs and that our communities are child friendly;
- Our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will be finalised, further strengthening our commitment to the Welsh Language, our traditions and culture;
- We will provide opportunities to enable all learners, families and carers to benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh; and
- New joint planning, commissioning and service delivery arrangements for children who have additional needs will be established.

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In the next 5 years...

- More children are better prepared to learn when they start school;
- Arrangements for supporting young people when they finish their statutory education will improve with all children going on to training, education or work;
- Education reforms related to the curriculum and support for pupils with Additional Learning Needs will be embedded and these changes are raising standards across our education system;
- We will progress our Strategic Schools Improvement Programme increasing the number of 21st Century learning and teaching environments available for children and young people;
- We will increase the number of Welsh medium school places in line with our targets within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;
- More young people will have registered to vote and will be using their vote in Welsh elections;
- The number of children and young people excluded from school will have reduced;
- Play and leisure services will have improved and youth services will have been enhanced;
- All children know and understand their rights and responsibilities; and
- Services for children and young people are aligned across sectors so that the needs of children and families are identified early and support is joined up across agencies and improving people's life changes and outcomes.

Making a Difference - Measuring Progress

There is further work to be done to establish the baseline figures for the measures to enable progress to be reported at the end of the year. As the strategic change programme is initiated more measures may be identified and we will also work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures include:

- Number of full day childcare places provided
- % of children, young people and families accessing early intervention support
- % of 5 year olds receiving education through medium of Welsh
- % of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language
- % year 11 leavers who are NEET
- % of young people who are NEET (aged 16-18)
- % young people in employment (16-24)
- % pupil attendance in primary school
- % pupil attendance in secondary school
- % pupils excluded
- Number of pupils not within the education system

Linked Plans and Partnership

Plans

- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- NPT Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan

Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- NPT Think Family Partnership
- NPT Adult Learning Network
- NPT District Sports Council
- Partneriaeth – Regional Education Consortium
- South West Wales Regional Skills and Learning Partnership

Well-being Objective 2 – All communities are thriving and sustainable

People live healthy, long and good lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another

In 20 years' time...

- Every community is thriving;
- Inequalities in health, economic and social outcomes have reduced;
- People are involved in decisions that affect them, more people are involved in community life;
- People are welcoming of newcomers and treat each other with respect; every individual is included and has an equal voice;
- People can access good quality, affordable, low carbon housing in their community;
- People are connected within their community; communities are connected to each other and the wider world through good quality digital services and transport networks;
- People are resilient; they respect and take care of their environment and they can come together and act at times of crisis;
- Communities are age and disability friendly;
- Communities are pleasant, clean, safe and green;
- Vulnerable people are supported in their community through a range of informal and formal care and support networks;
- Communities can access a range of quality services necessary for daily living; and
- Communities benefit from a high quality of design that reflects the unique heritage and characteristics of each place.

Why is this important?

Covid-19 has had an adverse impact on many people with more people becoming lonely and isolated. There has been a disproportionate impact on young people, women and people from BME backgrounds;

There were 144,000 people living in NPT in 2021. This is expected to grow to 147,000 by the mid-2030s;

The population is ageing – the number of people retired is growing but the number of young people is declining;

People are living for longer and living healthier lives but life expectancy and health life expectancy is below the rest of Wales and the gap between those who are best and worst off is significant;

GVA (Gross Value Added) is lower than the Welsh average;

27% of children are eligible for free school meals;

There are estimated to be over 20,000 unpaid carers in the county borough;

There is a need for more affordable housing of a good quality; and

We expect to see a 35% increase in those aged 65+ who will be living alone by 2035.

What matters to people?

We heard from almost 1,800 people during our Let's Talk campaign. During periods of lockdown, people have rediscovered the importance of their family, friends and wider community. What they said matters to them now and as we look further into the future is captured below:

- Contact and being able to spend time with family, friends and pets;
- Being safe;
- Being healthy and making sure family and friends are healthy; good access to health services;
- Having a secure job and a good work-life balance;
- Children have access to good education and schools stay open;
- Having good relationships within the community and having events that bring people together;
- The arts, our culture and heritage;
- Better bus services;
- Cleaner and better maintained streets and green spaces;
- More and cheaper outdoor leisure facilities;
- More support and facilities for young people;
- Ensuring elderly and vulnerable people are supported; and
- Better interaction with the council.

Moving Forward

In the next 12 months...

- Further develop our work at neighbourhood level, mapping local assets (what's strong about each community) and mapping community vulnerabilities;
- Work with the community and other partners to identify opportunities for additional informal care and support networks to be developed;
- Expand the number of Local Area Co-ordinators and bring greater consistency to the way they work across the county borough. Increase the number of people helped to connect with local informal care and support networks;
- Identify natural places across communities that can act as community hubs e.g. libraries
- Create a network of neighbourhood forums to increase opportunities for local people to participate in decisions that affect them and provide greater support for the work of local councillors in their ward;
- Provide seed funding for community and voluntary initiatives that strengthen early intervention and prevention support at the neighbourhood level;
- Work alongside the Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service to encourage and further develop community and voluntary groups across the county borough;
- Introduce a corporate policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer;
- Strengthen our neighbourhood management services and introduce a county borough wide programme to catch up, clean up and green up our neighbourhoods;
- Working closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to increase the number of interim and move on accommodation units;
- Prepare a Rapid Housing Plan;
- Continue to promote and develop our 'Buy Local' initiative, encouraging local people to support their local businesses;
- Continue to work through our community safety partnership to address the problems posed by alcohol, illegal drugs, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour;
- Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function; and
- Begin to take the actions that will implement our commitment to the place making charter.

In the next 5 years...

- Work with communities to develop a clear and detailed understanding of what is strong about each community and what communities want to achieve for the future;
- Complete detailed mapping of community assets and hot spots;
- Deliver training to Council staff so they understand the principles of community development and have the skills and confidence to put those principles into practice;
- Support the development of more community groups and greater numbers of volunteers;
- Work with the community to prevent problems from happening or getting worse;
- Improve digital connectivity across Neath Port Talbot;
- Provide support to those that are unable to access the internet;
- Improve the range and quality of informal and formal support for elderly and vulnerable residents;
- Seek out funding to improve the quality of the public realm; help to sustain and develop community hubs;
- Improve facilities and services for young people;
- Work with developers to increase the supply of quality, affordable and low carbon housing; help residents to reduce the carbon emissions of their homes;
- Use our place making charter to ensure community developments bring out the characteristics of what is distinctive about each place: and
- Reflect on our current commitment to the health and social care system to meet the needs of people who need care and support.

Making a Difference - Measuring Progress

There is further work to be done to establish the baseline figures for the measures to enable progress to be reported at the end of the year. As the strategic change programme is initiated more measures may be identified and we will also work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures include:

- % of people who volunteer
- % Increase in the number of established social/micro enterprises within NPT
- Ratio of enterprises to local units
- % of people who are lonely
- % of community-owned or managed assets
- % of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area.
- % of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need.
- % of people agreeing that they belong to the area, that people from diverse backgrounds get on well together, and that people treat each other with respect
- % of people satisfied with the local area as a place to live
- % of incidents of domestic abuse where people are repeat victims
- Number of anti-social behaviour incidents
- % of people who feel safe at home, walking in the local area and when travelling (25+)
- Number/% of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless
- % of people living in households in material deprivation
- % of people living in household income poverty relative to the Welsh Median
- % Increase in mental wellbeing in adults
- Gap in employment rate between those with a long-term health condition and the overall employment rate
- % households with access to the internet

Linked Plans and Partnership

Plans

- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan
- West Glamorgan Area Plan

Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- NPT Think Family Partnership
- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board

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Well-being Objective 3 – Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations

Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change.

People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

In 20 years' time...

- More people speak the Welsh language and Welsh is an integral part of everyday life;
- People will value and cherish our local natural environment and have reversed the decline in our wildlife; our most precious sites will be in improved condition and connected via a network of green corridors;
- People will have restored natural processes to mitigate and develop greater resilience to the effects of climate change;
- Our urban areas will embrace and include space for nature that can be enjoyed and provide opportunities for all;
- Residents of all ages across Neath Port Talbot will talk about the local environment, culture, sports and heritage with pride and confidence and more people will be actively involved in the conservation of our environment, culture and heritage;
- Local culture and heritage will be visible, brought to life through high quality, sustainable design that celebrates the past and connects it to the county borough's ambitions for the future;
- The area will be a destination of choice for people to live, work and spend their leisure time. The area will have built a reputation for excellence in the way it promotes a strong sense of belonging through heritage, the arts, sport and culture and supports everyone to connect to the natural environment and to enjoy a high quality of wellbeing; and
- We will increase the appeal of our area as a visitor destination by building upon our sense of place, having an inclusive approach and encouraging sustainable development. Visitors will be encouraged to act responsibly for the benefit of our communities and local environment.

Why is this important?

Heritage is integral to our culture, people's sense of identity and sense of belonging which in turn impacts on people's health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Heritage and culture also contributes to the economy, supporting paid employment, helping to attract inward investment and generating value through voluntary action – part of our wider place shaping agenda.

The Welsh language is a very important part of our heritage and culture. We support the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 ambition to achieve a million people able to enjoy speaking Welsh by 2050.

The importance of protecting our natural environment has, of course, never been so prominent. The Welsh Government officially declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and a Nature Emergency in 2021, recognising the significance of these two interrelated challenges and the urgency in tackling them. The natural environment is vital to our communities and provides us with all our basic needs. It gives us all a better quality of life and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and Wales' natural beauty and heritage, giving people the choice to become more physically active. People come from far and wide to experience our environment and it is intrinsically linked with Welsh culture and language.

While the area has many strengths, it also experiences relatively high levels of poverty, deprivation, ill-health and disability. There is a strong focus on encouraging people of all ages and from all backgrounds to adopt active lifestyles to improve physical and emotional wellbeing. There is also a need to grow more quality jobs in the local leisure and tourism industry and to continue the long tradition of fostering local talent to achieve success as elite athletes and to perform on the world stage.

What Matters to Local People

Through our Let's Talk campaign, local people have told us that their local environment, the Welsh Language and our heritage and culture matters to them. They want us to:

- Keep the past alive, promoting and celebrating our heritage to strengthen our sense of identity and sense of belonging;
- Help to protect, preserve and maintain our historic and heritage sites for present and future generations;
- Promote our Welsh language, traditions and culture;
- Help all generations to connect with our natural environment, heritage and culture;
- Improve facilities for walking and cycling;
- Help our community and voluntary groups to sustain and further develop their important work; and
- Health and wellbeing, leisure facilities and hobbies.

Without a clear commitment to action, there is a risk that we will see irreversible, further damage to our natural environment, a further decline in the use of the Welsh language and our traditions, culture and important heritage sites will be lost to future generations.

With the right actions, we can reverse the changes we have seen in our natural environment, increase the use of the Welsh language and preserve and build upon our traditions and heritage to make a positive impact on economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing positioning Neath Port Talbot as place where people want to live, work, learn and spend their leisure time.

Moving Forward

In the next 12 months...

- Establish a small grants scheme to help community groups and societies to recover from the pandemic;
- Introduce a community recognition initiative, to celebrate the important work being done by volunteers and community groups to enable future generations to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Help to promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Support and encourage volunteering at Council-owned nature sites;
- Establish a programme of training and development to enable our workforce to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Further develop and implement our Welsh Language Promotional Strategy;
- Provide refresher training for officers responsible for carrying out impact assessments when undertaking policy and service change;
- Extend opportunities for children, young people and citizens to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture;
- Increase the engagement of the workforce and citizens in the climate change agenda;
- Further develop the NPT Nature Partnership;
- Drive the implementation of the Biodiversity Plan;
- Work with the community, local partners, funders and other stakeholders to set a new strategic direction for heritage and culture and for tourism/destination management;
- Refresh the Council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan and ensure there is increased momentum to implement measures to decarbonise the council's vehicle fleet and property portfolio;
- Seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance the local environment, culture and heritage;
- Implement the Council's decision to bring leisure services back under the direct management of the Council;
- Start work to set a new strategic direction for leisure and recreation;
- Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture; and

- Deliver our planned programme of projects and service changes to improve access to local sport, leisure, culture and heritage; deliver planned projects to conserve our local environment:

In the next 5 years...

- Work with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to define a programme of flagship heritage and culture projects for the county borough; begin to deliver the new culture strategy;
- Work with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to extend our work to help nature recover and to improve the quality of and access to our natural environment; further implement our biodiversity plan;
- Extend our active travel network and improve public rights of way to reduce reliance on private vehicles and encourage more people to walk and cycle;
- Implement our new leisure strategy to improve access to high quality leisure and recreational opportunities;
- Work with partners to further develop flood and pollution mitigation measures;
- Work with partners to establish the county borough's brand as a destination of choice across the UK and internationally; implement our destination management plan;
- Develop a clear understanding of how the environment, heritage, sport and culture can contribute to a stronger, more sustainable economy;
- Work with communities and partners to engender a greater sense of stewardship, encouraging them to take a more active role in the ongoing management and improvement of their local environment;
- Embed the history of the local environment, heritage and nature into the curriculum and ensure all schools have access to environmental and outdoor learning opportunities;
- Continue to work with partners to facilitate the transition from traditional energy sources to more sustainable energy sources with an emphasis on the delivery of the City Deal programme and the opportunities created through the establishment of the Swansea Bay Corporate Joint Committee to decarbonise industry, housing and transport; implement our revised decarbonisation and renewable energy plan;
- Increase the proportion of the Council's budget spent on greener alternatives for goods and services and which are sourced locally and within the region, strengthening our foundational and circular economy; and
- Promote the benefits of buying local to residents, businesses and partners.

Making a Difference - Measuring Progress

There is further work to be done to establish the baseline figures for the measures to enable progress to be reported at the end of the year. As the strategic change programme is initiated more measures may be identified and we will also work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures include:

- % of persons (aged 3 and over) who say they can speak Welsh
- % of persons (aged 3 and over) who say they speak Welsh daily and more than just a few words
- %/no. of designated historic environment assets that are in stable or improved conditions
- Total (£) invested in protecting historic environment assets
- % of pupils participating in sport three or more times a week (hooked on sport)
- % students (aged 16-19) participating in at least three occasions of sport per week
- % of adults active for at least 150 minutes in the previous week
- % people participating in sporting activities 3 or more times a week
- % of people who attend or participate in arts, culture or heritage activities 3 or more times a year
- Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience
- Number of visitors to Neath Port Talbot
- % of waste reused, recycled or composted
- Kilograms of residual waste generated per person
- Area of Council owned land (or within council control) used as green space, local nature reserves
- The extent of Council owned land (or land in council control) that is protected through designation and/or is subject to appropriate management for biodiversity conservation as set out in an approved management plan
- The extent of Council owned land (or land in council control) that is designated or meets the criteria for designation as a Site of Importance for Conservation (SINCs)
- Number of PM10 breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot / Taibach)

Linked Plans and Partnership

Plans

- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- Natural Resources Wales: Area Statement
- NPT Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (DARE)
- NPT Biodiversity Plan
- NPT Destination Management Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- Gnoll Masterplan
- Afan Forest Park Masterplan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan

Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- NPT District Sports Council / Physical Activity & Sport Service
- NPT Destination Management Plan Steering Group
- Afan Forest Park Tourism Group
- NPT Heritage Forum
- NPT Nature Partnership
- Lost Peatlands Steering Group
- Connecting Green Infrastructure Group
- Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee/Corporate Joint Committee

Well-being Objective 4 – Jobs and Skills

Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and support local people into those jobs

In 20 years' time...

There is a strong and diverse SME base in the county borough which benefits from well-co-ordinated support, premises and finance;

Transformation of major sites at Port Talbot, Baglan Energy Park, the Global Centre for Rail Excellence will be complete;

Significant, new economic benefits have been delivered through the decarbonisation of industry, housing and transport; the area is an exemplar for renewable, clean energy;

Town centres and communities are thriving;

We have made the most of our natural environment, heritage and cultural assets and have a significant, sustainable visitor economy;

There is much improved connectivity to work, learning and services;

There is a skilled and resilient local workforce with rates of workless households or economically inactive people at or below the Welsh average; and

There is a strong partnership between the Council, the business community, local people and wider stakeholders.

Why is this important?

The world of work is changing rapidly, disrupted by the explosion in digital technology advances and now by the response to the climate emergency;

Covid-19 has caused an economic shock across the economy. Businesses have been affected in very different ways;

NPT has a distinctive industrial base which includes the UK's largest steel producer and a wide range of SME manufacturers;

NPT has a number of strategic employment sites and there are many opportunities for economic growth including new green jobs as industry and society decarbonises; the area is well served by rail, road and the deep water harbour is a strategic asset;

The local economy is reliant to a large extent on the activities of a small number of key industries;

88% of local businesses employ less than ten employees;

Start-up rates and business survival rates are on a par with the Welsh average;

There are significant numbers of people commuting into the county borough – possibly for the high quality of jobs; there are also significant number of people community out of the county borough for jobs of more modest value;

There are over 2,000 young people claiming Universal Credit in the county borough;

23,900 people of working age are economically inactive and there are approximately 9,000 households where there is no-one in paid work;

Over 17,000 households are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction Scheme discounts as a result of having a low family income;

Qualification levels are low across each level compared with the Welsh average; and

European funding programmes will soon finish and the nature and timing of replacement funding is still uncertain.

What matters to local businesses?

- Being able to generate enough money to stay in business and have a good standard of living;
- Being able to adapt as markets change;
- Financial support to mitigate the impact of Covid-19;
- Addressing anti-social behaviour, particularly in the towns;
- Creating employment and being a good employer;
- Transport – affects ability to employ people and customer volumes;
- Managing growth;
- Help with recruitment and with training;
- Maintaining and growing the customer base, business profile and marketing;
- Price and stability in the supply chain; energy costs;
- Digital connectivity and digital skills; and
- Help with sites and premises.

Moving Forward

In the next 12 months...

Skills and Training

- Review our training offer to help people adjust to the changing labour market;
- Create a 'single front door' to our employability services so that those seeking training and/or work find it easy to access the help and support that they need;
- Work with local employers to increase the number of quality apprenticeship opportunities and ensure these opportunities are seen as attractive to those seeking work;
- Further develop Council procurement arrangements to ensure that the money spent by the council supports the employment of local people and the development of local businesses to the maximum extent possible;
- Develop clear pathways for local people interested in working in the council and further develop the council's employment 'offer' to attract, retain and develop a high performing public service that is rooted in its communities;
- Strengthen the Council's business support team to help local businesses recruit skilled people and to help local learning providers to adapt learning provision to keep pace with the changing needs of employers; and
- Initiate a local skills audit to identify the future work requirement of local employers and any shortfalls in the local learning provision;
- Develop a local investment plan that establishes clear priorities against which we can use the Shared Prosperity Fund; and
- Establish the mechanisms to implement the actions set out in the Local Economic Development Plan.

Jobs

- Launch the 'Invest in NPT' website to place business opportunities in NPT front and centre in Wales;
- Continue to work regionally and locally to develop new green jobs;
- Target businesses seeking to grow or expand within the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors and encourage them to focus their growth plans within the county borough;
- Lead Town Centre recovery;
- Strengthen engagement with local businesses;

- Support local businesses in their recovery, providing financial support when available and helping businesses to diversify so that they are more resilient to future economic shocks;
- Work in areas within Neath Port Talbot where there is the greatest economic inactivity to target business support;
- Establish a manufacturing/engineering forum to improve networking opportunities within this sector and to provide improved opportunities for businesses to inform future plans and funding programmes;
- Develop an investment programme to enable the expansion of sites and premises across the county borough that can support the development and growth of local businesses;
- Continue to develop plans to provide an Integrated Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station linking local bus services to the main railway station, reducing overall journey times, and improving connections between the places where people live and the places where people work, learn and enjoy their leisure time;
- The Welsh Government have announced £1.3m funding to support Community Transport car schemes to expand electric vehicle (EV) community cars in the Region. NPT schemes have been successful in securing some of this funding and will be looking at introducing E.V cars in the Afan, Neath, Dulais and Amman Valleys;
- In partnership with Transport for Wales explore the feasibility of introducing a pilot the Fflecsi bus service in the upper Afan valley. Fflecsi buses can pick up and drop off passengers in a service area not just at a bus stop. These buses are booked via the app or on the phone. This initiative will be subject to funding becoming available; and
- Work with developers to deliver the Global Centre of Rail Excellence and the Wildfox Resort

** Business – refers to both for profit and not for profit business*

In the next 5 years...

Skills and Training

- Traineeship and apprenticeship programmes expand across the county borough; the council will offer a larger number of quality traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities;
- Employability programmes are further strengthened ensuring that all those needing help to find work can access it, including those who are hardest to reach;
- Targeted programmes are developed to enable local people to benefit from the new employment created through inward investment;
- More young people will access opportunities to achieve a recognised qualification following completion of their statutory education;
- Partnership working to upskill those already in work or who wish to return to work will improve; more local people will hold qualifications at Level 4+ and are supported into local quality jobs; and
- The Council's learning and development offer will be strengthened ensuring that all employees are supported to access lifelong learning opportunities and develop the confidence to advance their careers within the Council.

Jobs

- Establish a strong gateway to business support increasing resilience to future economic shocks and helping to grow existing businesses and establish new businesses;
- Work with local businesses to increase access to public service contracts and new inward investment;
- Improve access to sites and premises – especially in the valley areas;
- Work with partners to take forward the major opportunities at Port Talbot Waterfront, Baglan Energy Park, Global Centre for Rail Excellence, Port Talbot Port and through the Council's Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy;
- Invest and attract investment into our principal towns, district centres and wider communities; respond to the demand for more flexible work spaces;
- Promote the visitor economy and unlock the potential of the natural environment, heritage and culture;

- Develop community based transport schemes to support access to work;
- Strengthen partnership arrangements at the local level to develop the economy ensuring business and communities have a strong voice in shaping future plans;
- Work through the new Corporate Joint Committee to deliver the Regional Economic Development Strategy;
- Increase capacity within the economic development, business support and regeneration teams to better position the council to bid for funding and develop the local economy;
- Assess the impact of the changes made to the Council's operating model and bring forward proposals to re-purpose assets that are surplus to requirements; this could include shared workspace hubs, hybrid office and research and development workspaces, starter units etc;
- The Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station will continue to be developed and it is anticipated that it will be delivered by 2026; and
- The Welsh Government and Transport for Wales are developing a Hydrogen Bus Plan which will see zero emission buses on routes across the region. Officers from the Council are on the working group to develop this initiative.

Making a Difference - Measuring Progress

There is further work to be done to establish the baseline figures for the measures to enable progress to be reported at the end of the year. As the strategic change programme is initiated more measures may be identified and we will also work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures include:

- % young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- % of working age adults qualified to level 3 or higher (National Qualifications Framework)
- % of working age adults with no qualifications
- Number of work based learning programmes in Neath Port Talbot (*this includes level 2, 3 and 4+ apprenticeships, and traineeships in different sectors*)
- Number/% of people economically inactive
- Number/% of workless households
- Number of new business start-ups
- Number/ % of businesses ceasing to trade
- Business Survival Rates (by survival year and birth year)
- Number/% of tenders awarded to SME (small medium enterprise) and local operators
- Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked
- Total operational cost of assets of the Council
- High quality and light industrial space made available/ and % occupied
- % of businesses that are social businesses

Linked Plans and Partnership

Plans

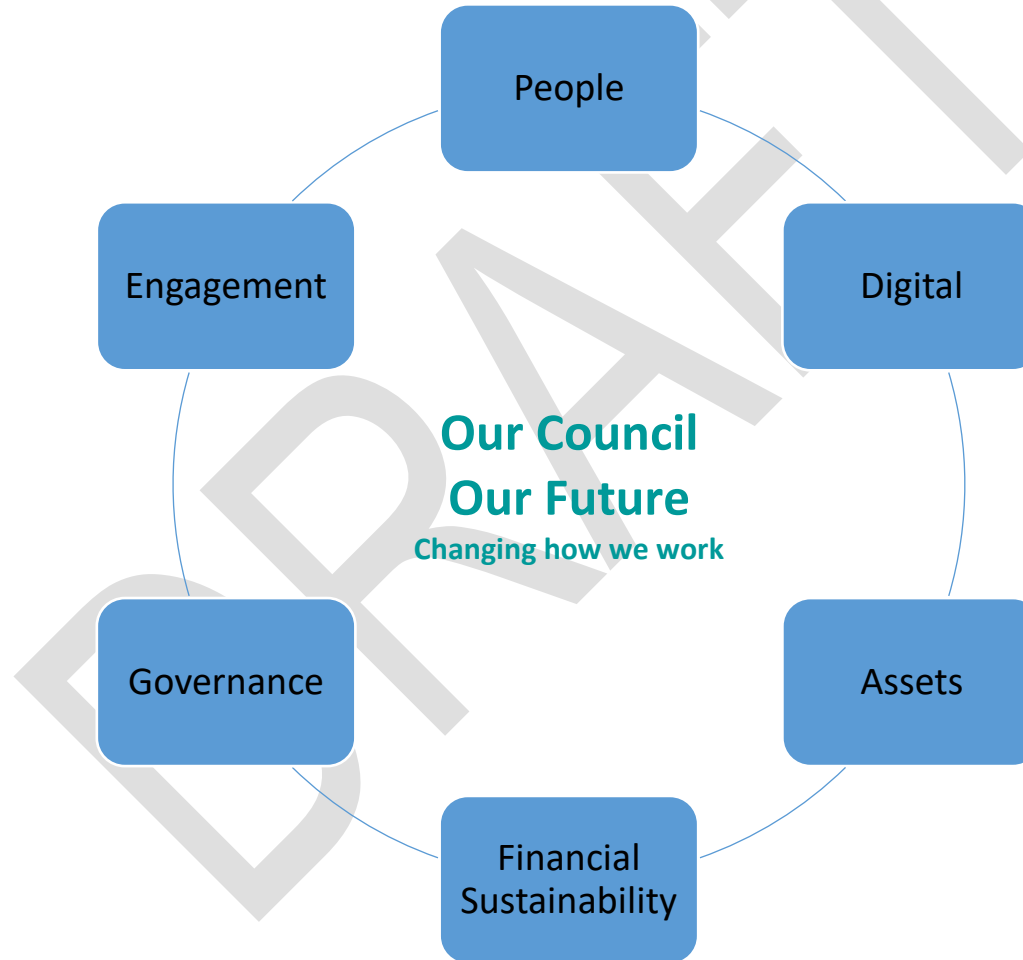
- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- Natural Resources Wales: Area Statement
- South West Wales Regional Economic Development Strategy
- South West Wales Renewable Energy Strategy
- South West Wales Transport Plan
- NPT Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (DARE)
- NPT Destination Management Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- Gnoll Masterplan
- Afan Forest Park Masterplan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan

Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- Swansea Bay City Deal
- South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- NPT Destination Management Plan Steering Group
- Afan Forest Park Tourism Group
- NPT Heritage Forum
- NPT Nature Partnership
- Port Talbot Waterfront – Enterprise Zone Partnership
- NPT Adult Learning Network

Enabling Programme – Organisational Development

Significant organisational change is needed to deliver the well-being objectives, cultural change and associated programmes of work and bring about sustainable changes to economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing.



A programme of organisational development will be delivered to develop the capacity and capability of the Council over a 3-5 year period. The scope of the programme is summarised below and will be further refined as the programme is defined and initiated:

- **People** – we believe people make the difference. We will ensure our people are well led, supported, trusted and recognised for the contribution they make. People will be treated fairly and with respect and also encouraged to bring forward ideas about how we can improve what we do. We will develop a workforce which is representative of its communities and people will have equal opportunity to progress in our organisation. We will develop a culture where people are accountable for and recognised for what they do and how they do it.
- **Digital** – we will become smart and connected as a council and as a place. We will join up and use the data we hold to improve our understanding of what matters to our citizens. We will create new digital services designed around the needs of our citizens which are safe, easy and convenient to use. We will upskill our workforce so that everyone has the digital skills and tools to do their jobs and we will work to remove the barriers that some citizens who are not on-line face so they can enjoy the same benefits as those who are already on-line.
- **Governance** – we will adjust our risk appetite to encourage responsible innovation and invest in building a strong corporate culture where people are responsible and accountable for what they do, where people challenge behaviours that are unacceptable and where people continuously learn and improve. We will systematically replace unnecessary red tape with more modern approaches. We will continue to foster a culture of mutual trust and respect between councillors and officers with each clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. We will provide more opportunities for citizens to take part in our democratic processes.
- **Delivering value for money and ensuring financial sustainability:**
 - We will encourage the Welsh Government to replace Council Tax with a fairer method of funding local government and in the short term we will work to minimise the financial burden on council tax payers. In our community leadership role we will seek to influence the investment programmes of our partners and inward investors for the benefits of all of our citizens. We will encourage the community and voluntary sector to seek funding for activity that supports the wellbeing of our citizens and to extend programmes that provide early help and support. We will encourage people to take part in community life and promote the benefits of volunteering. We will work to increase the amount of public money spent in local and regional supply chains.
 - We will take a ‘whole system’ approach to the way we manage our own financial resources, focusing on ‘what matters’, systematically removing failure demand, reducing duplication and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service operations. We will collaborate across the Council and with external partners to make it

easier for citizens to get the services they need and we will integrate service planning, commissioning and delivery where this improves access to services and value for money.

- We will maximise available income through the further development of our commercial strategy, prioritising services where there are established market opportunities. We will invest in capacity to maximise external grant income and consider whether fees and charges are proportionate to the cost of services and regulatory activity.
- We will change the way we approach our revenue budget, placing more responsibility and accountability with service managers to find ways of mitigating service pressures. We will develop an invest to save culture to support this change in emphasis, making funds and support available to facilitate service change based on solid business cases.
- We will improve alignment between asset management, our capital programme planning and the new vision, values and priorities.
- **Engagement - a council in touch with its communities:**
 - We will further develop 'Let's Talk' so that we have continuous feedback from our residents, our staff, our businesses and partners and increase participation in the Council's work
 - We will revise the tone, channels and forms of communication to reinforce the new vision, values and priorities – this will include using case studies and other engaging ways of demonstrating 'what good looks and feels like'
 - We will make sure people know what the Council is doing to help people live good lives and empower people in our workforce to communicate what we do and the difference we are making
- **Assets**
 - We will review our asset plans to ensure that our physical infrastructure supports the revised purpose and vision and enables the achievement of the changes we are setting out to make.

Our Design Principles

In delivering the strategic change programme we will adopt the following design principles:

- One Council
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Trust and Empowerment
- Fairness and Equality
- Accountability
- Value for Money
- Agile and Innovative
- Sustainable

One Council

The whole council will focus on doing 'what matters' to our residents, local businesses and investors so we can achieve our purpose and vision.

Leadership and Teamwork

Our leaders and managers have a tremendous impact on the council's culture and through our leaders we want to provide a sense of vision, purpose and inspiration to our employees.

Creating Team NPT will enable us to learn from one another, build organisational confidence, lead to innovation and improve outcomes for the people who live and work in Neath Port Talbot.

Trust and Empowerment

We trust and believe in our colleagues. We will make sure they are trained, supported and authorised to do the things that matter so we impact positively upon people's lives.

Fairness and Equality

We will recruit and develop a workforce that is representative of our communities. We will treat Welsh and English on the basis of equality and we will work to reduce poverty. We will celebrate diversity, ensure our services and places are accessible to everyone and root out discrimination in all of its forms.

Accountability

We will make it easy for people to access information and the meetings of the Council. We will explain whether we have done what we said we would do.

Value for Money

We will use public money wisely and work hard to secure new sources of income and influence the investment decisions of our partners with the aim of achieving our purpose and vision.

Agile and Innovative

We will take a user-centred approach to the way we design policies, services and places. We will encourage new ideas and creative thinking to challenge the status quo and improve what we do and how we do it. We will anticipate challenges before they arise and take proactive measures to face them, quickly reacting to new challenges and circumstances.

Sustainable

We will play our part in responding to the climate and nature emergencies. We will increase the amount of Council expenditure spent in the local and regional economy and encourage local people to buy local. We will balance the actions we need to take in the short term with the long term impact those actions may have on future generations.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 1	Fiona Clay-Poole and Rhian Headon	Corporate Policy Officer	14/12/21
Version 2	Fiona Clay-Poole and Rhian Headon	Corporate Policy Officer	11/02/22
Version 3	Fiona Clay-Poole and Rhian Headon	Corporate Policy Officer	18/02/22

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Corporate Plan 2022-2027
1a	Service Area: Corporate Policy
1b	Directorate: Chief Executive's
1c	Summary of the initiative: The Corporate Plan provides the framework for the Council's services and functions whilst discharging duties set out in various legislation, but in particular the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council exists to serve and represent the interests of its citizens and communities. We strive to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of all of our people. We want our county borough to be a place where everyone has an equal chance to get on in life – a place where people want to live, work and bring up their family. We want our beautiful natural environment, and our rich cultural and industrial heritage to be appreciated and protected for many future generations to enjoy. We also want to pursue new and existing opportunities for economic growth so we can sustain our diverse communities for many years to come.

1d	<p>Is this a ‘strategic decision’? Yes, the draft plan sets out our short, medium and long-term approach to recovery.</p>										
1e	<p>Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Everyone who lives, works and/or visits Neath Port Talbot</p>										
1f	<p>When and how were people consulted?</p> <p>Summer 2021 – Let’s Talk campaign, phase 1 Over the summer 2021 we ran the first phase of the Let’s Talk campaign to engage people from all backgrounds and of all ages with a view to testing our understanding of how the pandemic has impacted on different parts of our county borough and to also understand <i>what matters most</i> to local people as we take forward our recovery work. Almost 1,800 people engaged with the campaign with a mix of off and on-line surveys completed.</p> <p>January- February 2022 – formal Let’s Talk consultation on the Corporate Plan A formal, public consultation on the content of the draft plan took place from 5th January to 1st February 2022. A total of 485 responses were received, 137 (28%) of these were paper copies the remaining 348 (72%) were completed online. The consultation was promoted online (via: regular social media activity on corporate and service accounts, email marketing, and internal council channels), offline (via: radio, press releases, and posters), and by outreach activity via NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement.</p>										
1g	<p>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</p> <p>Summer 2021 – Let’s Talk campaign The ten responses most frequently mentioned were:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="295 1102 1980 1401"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="295 1102 1137 1155">What matters to you now?</th> <th data-bbox="1137 1102 1980 1155">What matters to you in the future?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="295 1155 1137 1198">1. Friends and family (including pets)</td> <td data-bbox="1137 1155 1980 1198">1. Friends and family (including pets)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="295 1198 1137 1275">2. Returning to normality (easing restrictions)</td> <td data-bbox="1137 1198 1980 1275">2. Investing in and protecting the economy/jobs/local businesses</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="295 1275 1137 1318">3. Health (mine and my family, friends, neighbours)</td> <td data-bbox="1137 1275 1980 1318">3. Education/keeping open</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="295 1318 1137 1401">4. Staying/keeping safe</td> <td data-bbox="1137 1318 1980 1401">4. Environment, climate crisis, recycling, maintaining green spaces</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	What matters to you now?	What matters to you in the future?	1. Friends and family (including pets)	1. Friends and family (including pets)	2. Returning to normality (easing restrictions)	2. Investing in and protecting the economy/jobs/local businesses	3. Health (mine and my family, friends, neighbours)	3. Education/keeping open	4. Staying/keeping safe	4. Environment, climate crisis, recycling, maintaining green spaces
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4. Staying/keeping safe	4. Environment, climate crisis, recycling, maintaining green spaces										

5. Education/keeping open	5. Health and wellbeing/mental health
6. Health/wellbeing/mental health	6. Returning to normality (easing restrictions)
7. Investing in and protecting the economy/ jobs/local businesses	7. Work-life balance, working from home, office environment
8. Leisure/hobbies recreation	8. Community relations/spirit/bringing people together/volunteering
9. Community relations/spirit/bringing people together/volunteering	9. Staying/keeping safe
10. Socialising	10. Health (mine and my family, friends, neighbours)

Using this feedback, along with other pieces of evidence we have developed the wellbeing objectives and the strategic actions that sit underneath

January- February 2022 – formal consultation

The full final public consultation on the draft plan closed on 1st February 2022.

Responses to the question asking about respondents' reaction to each of the draft wellbeing objectives (nb: percentages relate to the total number of respondents who answered the question).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
All children get the best start in life	63% (300)	17% (82)	12% (57)	6% (27)	3% (13)
Communities are thriving and sustainable	46% (210)	25% (113)	18% (85)	8% (36)	4% (17)
Our environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations	44% (202)	41% (187)	8% (36)	4% (19)	4% (17)
Local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs	40% (183)	31% (143)	16% (72)	8% (37)	6% (26)

There was overwhelming support for the wellbeing objectives which underlined the initial assessment of the Corporate Plan having a positive impact.

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

This plan sets out our thinking on how we will approach recovery in the short, medium and longer term. It has been informed by a lot of people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners through our Let’s Talk engagement activity during the summer of 2021. We have also used a considerable amount of evidence to understand how things have changed as a result of the pandemic and looked at wider influences, like climate change, digital disruption and government policy. We have synthesised this information to assess what this might mean for our future priorities. Of course, the pandemic is not over yet so there is a good deal of uncertainty that poses challenges to our planning. Neath Port Talbot residents will also elect a new council in May 2022. This means that our plan will need to be flexible so we can adapt as we move forward.

A key feature of this plan is the emphasis on working together to help the county borough recover and make Neath Port Talbot a place we are all proud of. We have learned through the pandemic that when we come together we can achieve remarkable things. This plan is the basis on which we can further develop that spirit of collaboration to create a place where everyone can live a good life.

3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age			+/-	<p><u>December 2021</u></p> <p>The Corporate Plan specifically sets out how the Council intends to improve the well-being of children and their families in the Best Start in Life objective. However, the impacts on older age groups are unknown at this time but will be tested during extensive consultation which will be undertaken during January 2022.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>The feedback highlights limited opportunities in the plan to address the needs and requirements of our aging population; resulting in a more negative impact for those older members of our communities in accessing facilities and leading a full life such</p>

			as lack of transport, personal support, for example for paid and unpaid carers, and personal safety.
Disability		+/-	<p><u>December 2021</u> Many studies over the last 18 months have identified the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on disabled people and the more recent Let's Talk survey responses have elicited responses on 'promoting equality and fair treatment for all' and 'to improve the area for people who have disabilities. Thus, the Corporate Plan has identified priorities that will potentially have a positive impact on those with a disability: for example, improved range of care and support networks, greater opportunities for participation, improvements to public rights of way.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u> The lack of detail in the plan about the actions that will be taken to improve availability of and accessibility to care and support and engagement activities would suggest a more negative impact on those with disabilities in our communities.</p>
Gender reassignment		+/-	<p><u>December 2021</u> Impacts on this group is unknown at this time but will be tested during extensive consultation which will be undertaken during January 2022.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u> While a number of respondents acknowledged there would be an impact in relation to this group it was not clear in the majority of cases what that impact would be. However it was raised that recognition and support for people sharing this characteristic and that discrimination is currently experienced and would suggest thus a more negative impact on those who share this protected characteristic.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership		+/-	<p><u>December 2021</u> Impacts on this group is unknown at this time but will be tested during extensive consultation which will be undertaken during January 2022.</p>

			<p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>There was no feedback in the formal consultation that addressed the impact the plan might have on marriage or civil partnerships.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	+		<p><u>December 2021</u></p> <p>The Corporate Plan features specific changes planned to support children and the parents/carers of children in their early years. Including, making sure it is clear how early help and support can be accessed by those children and families who need it, refocussing our partnerships so that all services for children and families are easy to identify and use, they meet people's needs and our communities are child friendly.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>Responses suggest the plan, particularly the Best Start in Life well-being objective, will have a positive impact on those who are pregnant and/or expecting in terms of support and future service provision.</p>
Race	+		<p>Many studies over the last 18 months have identified the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people from BME communities BME and the more recent Let's Talk survey responses have elicited responses on 'promoting equality and fair treatment for all'. Thus, the Corporate Plan has identified actions that will potentially have a positive impact on people from this group and all our communities; for example, the new curriculum, cynefin, and cultural and heritage awareness.</p>
Religion or belief		+/-	<p><u>December 2021</u></p> <p>Impacts on this group is unknown at this time but will be tested during extensive consultation which will be undertaken during January 2022.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>There was no feedback in the formal consultation that addressed the impact the plan might have on religion or belief.</p>
Sex		+/-	<p><u>December 2021</u></p>

			<p>Impacts on this group is unknown at this time but will be tested during extensive consultation which will be undertaken during January 2022.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u> Very limited responses with regard to the impact on sex other than a suggestion around more male oriented activities.</p>
Sexual orientation		+/-	<p><u>December 2021</u> Impacts on this group is unknown at this time but will be tested during extensive consultation which will be undertaken during January 2022.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u> There was no feedback in the formal consultation that addressed the impact the plan might have on sexual orientation.</p>

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

December 2021

Consultation is required to identify actual impact, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics of older adults, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, disability, Marriage & Civil Partnership and gender reassignment, and to explore potential mitigating actions for consideration.

February 2022

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024, one of the underpinning corporate documents, is being reviewed during 2022-2023 to ensure the equality objectives and actions remain fit for purpose. Where possible/appropriate, areas identified in the feedback that require strengthening will be/have been addressed in the final version of the Corporate Plan. However, where this has not been possible, given the timescales, these will be addressed in the review of the equality objective and actions in the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 by the autumn 2022.

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	+			<p><u>December 2021</u></p> <p>Through the development of the draft Corporate Plan we also took the opportunity to reset and renew the purpose, vision and values of the organisation, by considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what matters to local people, businesses and our staff • the impact that we know Covid-19 has had on our communities, our local economy and wider stakeholders; • the lessons we have learned from our pandemic response and from elsewhere; and • other anticipated changes in our external environment. <p>Recognition of these things has helped us consider how we will work to reduce inequalities across a range of different groups, not just in relation to protected characteristics but other characteristics such as poverty.</p> <p>There are a number of proposed actions to strengthen community cohesion and in particular the way the Council works with communities and with other agencies in empowering and developing community capacity.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>There was overwhelming support for the wellbeing objectives which underlined the initial assessment of a positive impact. As number of amendments have been made to the Plan to help strengthen this impact for our various groups and communities, while some issues will be addressed as part of the implementation of the Plan over the coming 12 months/5 years.</p> <p>Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the attention given to diversity generally in our society as well as highlighting issues where either too much/not</p>
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	+			
To foster good relations between different groups	+			

			<p>enough emphasis has been given to specific issues or communities in NPT; for example 'too much wokeness', anti- English (language), limitation to participation (facilities and engagement) due to disability; anti-social behaviour towards various communities. While a number of these issues will be addressed in the implementation of the Plan, particularly in relation to Wellbeing Objectives 2 and 3, others will be considered in the forthcoming reviews of corporate plans and service specific plans as appropriate.</p>
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Where appropriate the Plan will be amended to reflect any issues raised – either by clarifying the intent, refocusing actions or developing new ones. However, where this is not possible, issues will be considered in the reviews of corporate plans and service specific plans as appropriate.

4. Socio Economic Duty

What is the impact	Why will it have this impact?
Positive	<p>Structural inequalities were evident across the population prior to, and have been accentuated as a result of, the pandemic. Evidence demonstrates that the poorest areas have experienced the greatest impact both in terms of health and financial impacts. Those who faced the greatest disadvantage prior to the pandemic have been hardest hit and consequently inequality across Neath Port Talbot have widened. Addressing these inequalities will be a cross cutting theme across all of the recovery actions we propose to take in the short, medium and longer term.</p> <p>Our wellbeing objectives aim to help address these inequalities in the short term and longer term. The alleviation of immediate hardship through hardship support schemes, increasing help and support to those experiencing food poverty, protecting and safeguarding young people supporting young people and families, work in areas with the greatest economic</p>

inactivity etc.; while looking towards longer term solutions to provide opportunities, support and pathways into education, training and employment from an early age, helping build confidence and pride both as individuals and as communities as well as opportunities to greater participation in society, sport, environment, heritage and culture to help improve wellbeing and health.

The aim of the plan is to have a positive effect by improving people's opportunities and experiences, reducing and wherever possible eliminating inequalities faced by many, thereby improving people's health and wellbeing, their life chances and the communities in which they live and work.

We are mindful of the role intersectionality plays in our society and full consideration will be given to this as we progress the plan.

February 2022

As a result of the feedback amendments have been made to the Plan to help improve the inequalities in NPT; for example, enhancing "free and low cost" play and leisure opportunities for children and young people; adding "local employers" alongside the Council in terms of increasing the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered and extending the opportunities to learn about the local environment, heritage and culture to "citizens" as well as children and young people.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

February 2022

The Plan will be amended to help improve the inequalities in NPT as stated above.

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	+			<p><u>December 2021</u></p> <p>There are a number of proposed actions to strengthen community cohesion and in particular the way the Council works with communities and with other agencies in empowering and developing community capacity. Thriving sustainable communities which are welcoming, accepting and supportive are key. A range of initiatives to help realise this such as neighbourhood forums, Local Area Coordinators, funding and support for community groups and events, improvements to the support and facilities for young people and vulnerable people have been identified, but most importantly is working with communities to realise what is important to them.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the wellbeing objectives, individually and combined, will have a positive impact for individuals and communities alike; increasing social and cultural interaction, participation and economic improvement /stability.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>While there was overwhelming support to the wellbeing objectives there was some dissatisfaction expressed as to society generally as well as particular issues more locally. Dissatisfaction with the attention given to diversity generally in our society as well as highlighting issues where either too much/not enough emphasis has been given to specific issues or communities in NPT; for example ‘too much wokeness’, anti- English (language), limitation to participation (facilities and engagement) due to disability; anti-social behaviour towards various communities. While a number of these issues will be addressed in the implementation of the Plan, particularly in relation to Wellbeing Objectives 2 and 3, others will be considered in the forthcoming reviews of corporate plans and service specific plans as appropriate.</p>
Social Exclusion	+			
Poverty	+			

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Where appropriate the Plan will be amended to reflect any issues raised – either by clarifying the intent, refocusing actions or developing new ones. However, where this is not possible these will be considered in the reviews of corporate plans and service specific plans as appropriate.

6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
<p>What effect does the initiative have on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language 	+			<p>There are specific actions set out in the corporate plan to promote Welsh Language and culture. In particular, the measures the Council proposes to take to increase the education and learning provision to grow the number of Welsh speakers in the area.</p> <p><u>February 2022</u> The majority of respondents considered there would be positive impacts – particularly in relation to the opportunities to learn Welsh for children and young people, the greater use of technology to promote and increase participation, emphasis on culture and heritage as well as the general benefits of using the language. However, a significant number of respondents felt that there would be no effect on people’s opportunities to use Welsh – the main reasons being that opportunities already exist for those that wish to and that nothing is likely to change the fact that NPT is predominantly an English speaking area. Of those that consider the plan to have a negative effect with a waste of finances and resources spent on Welsh at the expense of other priorities among the reasons cited.</p> <p>Although not always specifically stated there were suggested approaches to improve the positive aspects of the plan: greater emphasis on community involvement/ activities; better use of digital opportunities to learn and participate in activities;</p>

			greater focus on Welsh in schools (all Welsh medium schools perhaps) and education support/opportunities; more Welsh medium school places, particularly for SEN pupils; more mainstream cultural opportunities; ensure the language is more visible in everyday life - for example signage in shops, etc.
- treating the Welsh and English languages equally	+		<p>Efforts are made to ensure that the five-year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy is informed by and integrated with the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Strategy action plan is also developed in collaboration by a cross party task and finish group with the assistance of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council staff and a representative of Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot (Menter Iaith CNPT) (Neath Port Talbot Language Initiative).</p> <p><u>February 2022</u></p> <p>The majority of respondents considered the plan to have a positive effect. There was a recognition from many that the language should be kept alive and treating the languages equally was seen as a visible way to encourage its use, with its place in everyday life, recognising the benefits of bilingualism helping promote and encourage participation. Some were clear to point out that there should be no discrimination for either language.</p> <p>Of those that expressed negative views reasons provided concentrated on the low level of Welsh used in the area and the waste of resources and frustration in treating the languages equally.</p> <p>Amongst those respondents indicating there was 'no effect' or 'didn't know' there were mixed views on the need to support/promote Welsh, the use of the Welsh language and its place in our culture and heritage (can't force the language onto people but recognising its cultural importance) and that 'We are in a transition period to being a bi-lingual nation, it will take a generation or so to stabilise'!</p>

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

December 2021

During the latter part of 2020-2021 we started a review of our compliance with and promotion of the Welsh language which will continue over the coming year, to help ensure we can provide a more effective and responsive service going forward.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 is out for public consultation until the 7th January 2022.

February 2022

Following the WESP Consultation we will continue to develop our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, so that we increase opportunities for more of our children and young people to be educated through the medium of Welsh and for pupils to become more proficient in speaking Welsh.

The evaluation and review of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy will take place during 2022-2023. The feedback from the Let's Talk and Corporate Plan engagement during 2021-2022 along with other discrete engagement activity help inform the next iteration of the Strategy.

7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	+			The Corporate Recovery Plan includes a wellbeing objective that specifically targets the conservation and improvement of our natural environment, including biodiversity. It also sets a vision that includes valuing and cherishing our environment and reversing the decline in wildlife. The importance of our natural environment and biodiversity for both its intrinsic value and its value to local people is clearly recognised. Measures to encourage and deliver positive action either through supporting others or through direct action are set out, these will connect people to nature alongside conserving and enhancing our biodiversity resource and

			embedding biodiversity benefits into the way the Council works. The plan will steer positive action for the short and long term, ensuring the Council will delivery our Biodiversity Duty as well as other commitments under the Edinburgh Declaration and contribute towards addressing the Climate and Nature Emergencies.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	+		The Corporate Recovery Plan includes a wellbeing objective and vision that aims to restore natural processes to mitigate and develop greater resilience to climate change. The importance of our natural environment (which includes ecosystems), its connectivity and the services that it provides us is clearly recognised. Measures to encourage and deliver positive action either through supporting others or through direct action to improve our natural environment are set out, these will ensure that the services that people gain from the natural environment will be improved and natural solutions to issues will be delivered through green infrastructure approaches. The plan will steer positive action and promote ecosystem resilience, ensuring the council will delivery our Biodiversity Duty as well as other commitments under the Edinburgh Declaration and contribute towards addressing the Climate and Nature Emergencies.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The corporate plan will steer positive action for the short and long term, delivering the conservation and improvement of our biodiversity resources and ecosystem resilience. In turn this will deliver benefits for local communities through the provision of services, such as improvements to wellbeing, local air quality and flooding. The plan will ensure the council delivers our Biodiversity Duty as well as other commitments under the Edinburgh Declaration and contribute towards addressing the Climate and Nature Emergencies. The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the measures are up to date, relevant and based on current evidence, this will ensure that priorities for action will be able to deliver the most positive outcomes for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	<p>The Corporate Plan is reviewed and published every year to outline the Council’s priorities and how we are changing the way we do things to ensure we continue to improve the services we deliver to support our communities. Although this seems like short-term planning a number of the priorities in the plan embrace current challenges whilst considering the impact these efforts will have on the future. Sustainability plays a key role in the plan, particularly in terms of the natural environment. Current work to reduce the council’s carbon footprint, if successful, will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the future environment of the area and the well-being of its residents.</p>
ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	<p>We have prioritised providing additional financial support to the third sector to develop new preventative services in communities with a particular focus on people who are lonely and isolated. As part of this we have also expanded the number of Local Area Co-ordinators and integrated their work with NPT Safe and Well.</p> <p>The priorities described for the next 12 months will be reflected in the revenue and capital budgets set for 2022-2023. To set longer term priorities and to facilitate early intervention and preventative actions to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of people living in Neath Port Talbot work will be undertaken early in 2022 to develop a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for discussion with the new council elected in May 2022.</p>
iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external	<p>The well-being objectives show the Council’s contribution to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of Neath Port Talbot but the Council would be unable to make these improvements without collaboration.</p> <p>The Council is a statutory partner of a number of multi-agency partnerships locally, regionally and across Wales including: the Public Services Board, Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum, Regional Partnership Board and West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board.</p>

<p>iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The Plan has been informed by many people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners.</p> <p>An initial consultation took place over summer 2021 with aim to find out what mattered to local people in the context of recovery from Covid-19. Over 1,700 responses were received. The feedback informed the four draft wellbeing objectives and the proposed focus of work under each wellbeing objective over the next 12 months, during the next 5 years and the longer term. The second phase of the consultation tested whether or not we had captured what is important to people now and in the future.</p> <p>Views were sought via a range of methods (guided by Public Health guidelines) attracting 485 respondents; conscious of the need to reflect the diversity of our area emphasis was given to encouraging particular groups and communities where necessary.</p> <p>There were a number of consistent themes in the detailed feedback under each wellbeing objective and the Plan has been amended to reflect that feedback.</p> <p>Additionally, we will continue to develop our arrangements to ensure we comply with the requirements contained in Chapter 2 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – Public Participation in Local Government which commence in May 2022.</p>
<p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	<p>The four well-being objectives were developed to show the Council's contribution to the seven national, well-being goals. The plan takes account of the new Welsh Government's Programme for Government, the associated Co-operation Agreement and other developments we anticipate will shape our future priorities such as climate change, the continued digital disruption and likely financial settlements. It also complements and can be integrated into local partnership plans and other regional or wider area work, including the revision of the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan.</p>
<p>Council's well-being objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children get the best start in life • All communities are thriving and sustainable • Our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations • Jobs and skills - local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs

<p>Other public bodies objectives</p>	<p>Public Services Board priorities</p> <p>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in sections 37- 38 sets out the duty of Public Services Boards to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area.</p> <p>The next Local Assessment of Well-being is due to be published in May 2022, in light of the assessment the well-being objectives will be reviewed and revised for publication in the 2023-2028 Well-being Plan. Until 2023, the PSB's well-being objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support children in their early years, especially children at risk of adverse childhood experiences. ▪ Create safe, confident and resilient communities, focussing on vulnerable people ▪ Encourage Ageing Well ▪ Promote well-being through and in the workplace ▪ Recognise and promote green infrastructure, how green infrastructure can support the economic, social and cultural well-being of the people of Neath Port Talbot
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9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

Monitoring at service level will be considered in line with the Council’s governance arrangements and any modification of services will be considered accordingly. An Annual Report will be produced each year which will consider whether the well-being objectives remain appropriate. Where necessary, the well-being objectives will be revised.

The annual report will be published on the Council’s web pages and will also be widely communicated throughout the county borough using a range of different media and by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

The detailed priorities, set out in the Plan, will be monitored through service recovery plan reporting arrangements and through individual appraisal arrangements. The impact of the wellbeing objectives on people who share protected characteristics will be monitored during the life of the plan.

Monitoring of the anticipated impacts as identified in the IIA will be monitored and reported as part of the agreed reporting arrangements. Actions identified in the IIA will be monitored in the same way.

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
Equalities	There is an overall neutral impact with the well-being objectives contributing to our work to address inequality and tackle the causes of inequality experienced by particular groups within our society. Engagement with different groups and communities in the development of the objectives has fostered a greater understanding of and between groups and fostered a shared sense of purpose.
Socio Economic Disadvantage	Amendments have been made to the Plan to help reduce the inequalities in NPT; for example, enhancing "free and low cost" play and leisure opportunities for children and young people; adding "local employers" alongside the Council in terms of increasing the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered and extending the opportunities to learn about the local environment, heritage and culture to "citizens" as well as children and young people.
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	The well-being objectives will have a positive effect on the many facets that contribute to people’s experiences of poverty and social exclusion and will potentially result in stronger communities, greater community involvement and participation thereby ensuring their voices are heard.

Welsh	As a result of our continued work on improving the availability and quality of our services through Welsh there is potentially a positive impact in relation to opportunities to use the Welsh language. This was reflected particularly strongly in relation to the opportunities to learn Welsh for children and young people, the greater use of technology to promote and increase participation, emphasis on culture and heritage as well as the general benefits of using the language.
Biodiversity	There will be a positive effect on biodiversity and Eco-system resilience. The inclusion of a wellbeing objective that specifically targets the conservation and improvement of our natural environment, including biodiversity demonstrates the positive intentions around this.
Well-being of Future Generations	There will be a positive impact as the well-being objectives have been developed in line with the five ways of working.

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised x
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

The past 22 months has had an extensive impact on our communities, our local economy and the way we work as a Council. This has provided us with an opportunity to reset and renew our well-being objectives, priorities, vision, values and relationships. This being the case the well-being objectives and council priorities were reviewed taking into account evidence of the impact the pandemic has had/continues to have on our communities. Although the well-being objectives and priorities in our previous corporate plan were relevant when they were set pre-pandemic, they did not adequately address the current situation.

As a result of our continued work on improving the availability and quality of our services through Welsh there is potentially a positive impact in relation to opportunities to use the Welsh language.

Amendments were made to the plan as it was developed to help reduce the inequalities in Neath Port Talbot; for example, enhancing "free and low cost" play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.

There will be a positive effect on biodiversity and Eco-system resilience. The inclusion of a wellbeing objective that specifically targets the conservation and improvement of our natural environment, including biodiversity demonstrates the positive intentions around this.

There will be a positive impact in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations as the well-being objectives have been developed in line with the five ways of working.


11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Between 5 th January and 1st February 2022, we will undertake an extensive programme of consultation on the draft plan with all stakeholders.	The Corporate Policy Team will work with Communications and Marketing to plan and undertake the consultation programme.	February 2022	We will have undertaken a comprehensive engagement exercise, fully considering all responses to continue to refine the draft plan.
A new performance management framework will be developed to measure the success of the delivery of the plan. It will include a range of measures and indicators that, taken together, will provide a picture of the difference / impact the work set out in this plan is making and how it is	A multi-directorate approach will be adopted.	April 2022	A new, comprehensive performance management framework is developed and implemented across services to ensure ongoing monitoring of the impact of the plan.

enabling people to live good lives.			
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12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Fiona Clay Poole	Corporate Policy Officer	Fiona Clay Poole	18/02/22
Signed off by	Sheenagh Rees	Head of Service – People and Organisational Development		21/02/22

Let's Talk Summary Report Final

Consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 and the Draft Budget Proposals 2022-23

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Introduction

This report summarises the headline findings from the questionnaire on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 and the Draft Budget Proposals 2022-23.

The questionnaire was intended to test whether the Draft Corporate Plan has captured what is important to people now and in the future (as identified in the 'Let's Talk' engagement activity in 2020) in terms of the changes we aim to make over the next 12 months, the next 5 years and the longer term, combined with the public consultation on a proposed 0% council tax rise and the other budget investment proposals for 2022-23.

The consultation ran for four weeks (from Wednesday 5 January to Tuesday 1 February 2022) and the questionnaire received **485 responses**, plus three written responses from groups and organisations.

The consultation took place against the backdrop of a revised version of alert level 2 restrictions, which came into place on Boxing Day 2021 to respond to the highly contagious omicron variant of Covid-19. The following arrangements were made to help ensure that the consultation was as inclusive as possible, despite the challenging situation:

- **Online questionnaire** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the council's website. The questionnaire was live from Wednesday 5 January (following Cabinet approval) until midnight on Tuesday 1 February 2022.
- **Email** – the email address LetsTalk@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Offline** – for public health reasons, we adapted our usual practice of making printed questionnaires and reference documents available in public buildings. Instead we:
 - produced and distributed more than 1,100 printed packs and questionnaires for those who are not online. The packs contained an English and Welsh copy of the questionnaire for people to complete in the safety of their own home and return using a pre-paid envelope. These were:
 - made available at our 8 council run libraries (Neath, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Baglan, Cwmafan, Glynneath, Sandfields, Skewen)
 - distributed by Local Area Co-ordinators and members of the Community of Practice (a group made up of officers from across the council who undertake engagement activities as part of their roles)
 - distributed by The Home Library Service, whilst delivering books and information to residents who have difficulty, or who are unable to visit their local library

- distributed by Tai Tarian to their Haven schemes for people over 55 - there are 15 of these schemes across the county borough in Cwmafan, Port Talbot, Sandfields, Briton Ferry, Neath, Cadoxton, Crynant, Tonna, Glynneath, Banwen, Ystalyfera, Pontardawe (x 2), Cwmgors, Gwaun Cae Gurwen
- made printed questionnaires available to employees in a number of internal services including the catering and cleaning services and the Service Response Centre at the Quays.

Almost a quarter of the responses we received (24.1% /117) were submitted via printed copies.

The consultation was promoted online (via: regular social media activity on corporate and service accounts, email marketing, and internal council channels), offline (via: radio, press releases, and posters), and by outreach activity via NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement.

Section 1 - Consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27

1. What questionnaire respondents said about the proposed objective 'All Children get the best start in life'

- 1.1 Most respondents (80% / 382) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the proposed objective 'All Children get the best start in life', 18% (84) "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed", and the remaining 3% (13) didn't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
All children get the best start in life	63% (300)	17% (82)	12% (57)	6% (27)	3% (13)

- 1.2 When asked to consider a list of changes the council is proposing to focus on in the next 12 months and longer term, most people (around three-quarters - 76% / 364) agreed that all of them are the right things to focus on to respond to what children and young people said matters to them. A further 21% (101) agreed or disagreed with some of them, less than 1% (2) disagreed with all of them and 2% (10) didn't know.

- 1.3 There were 157 responses to the question on whether there was anything missing from the changes we are proposing to focus on in terms of giving children and young people the best start in life'. The key areas identified for amendments to the draft plan were as follows:

- the need to clarify that the reference to 'Keep schools open' is specifically in relation to the impact of the pandemic
- comments relating to the importance/need for "free and low cost" play and leisure opportunities for children and young people
- the need for young people leaving care to have supported transition to enable them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation
- the importance of placements with local companies for young adults
- the need for the appropriate training and arrangements to in place for those delivering support services for children with ALN

2. What questionnaire respondents said about the proposed objective 'Communities are Thriving and Sustainable'

- 2.1 The majority of respondents (71% / 232) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the proposed objective 'Communities are thriving and sustainable', 26% (121) "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed", and the remaining 4% (17) didn't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Communities are thriving and sustainable	46% (210)	25% (113)	18% (85)	8% (36)	4% (17)

2.2 When asked to consider a list of changes the council is proposing to focus on in the next 12 months and longer term, more than three-quarters (79% / 369) agreed that all of them are the right things to focus on to respond to what children and young people said matters to them. A further 17% (78) agreed or disagreed with some of them, 1% (6) disagreed with all of them and 3% (13) didn't know.

2.3 There were 150 responses to the question on whether there was anything missing from the changes we are proposing to focus on in terms of 'communities are thriving and sustainable'. The key areas identified for amendments to the draft plan were as follows:

- Comments around the importance of libraries for communities
- The importance of support to access and use the internet
- Comments on the importance of meeting the needs of people who need care and support

3. What questionnaire respondents said about the proposed objective 'Our environment, heritage and culture'

3.1 Most respondents (85% / 389) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the proposed objective 'Our Environment, Heritage and Culture', 12% (55) "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed", and the remaining 4% (17) didn't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Our environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations	44% (202)	41% (187)	8% (36)	4% (19)	4% (17)

3.2 When asked to consider a list of changes the council is proposing to focus on in the next 12 months and longer term, more than three-quarters (79% / 366) agreed that all of them are the right things to focus on to respond to what people said matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture. A further 16% (78) agreed or disagreed with some of them, 1% (6) disagreed with all of them and 3% (14) didn't know.

3.3 There were 138 responses to the question on whether there was anything missing from the changes we are proposing to focus on in terms of our environment, heritage and culture. The key areas identified for amendments to the draft plan were as follows:

- Comments on the need for environment, heritage and culture learning opportunities to be available to all age groups, not just children and young people
- Comments on the need for a stronger focus on tackling climate change
- Comments on the importance of and the need for investment in leisure facilities/opportunities

4. What questionnaire respondents said about the proposed objective 'Jobs and Skills'

4.1 The majority of respondents (71% / 326) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the proposed objective 'Jobs and Skills', 24% (109) "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed", and the remaining 6% (26) didn't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs	40% (183)	31% (143)	16% (72)	8% (37)	6% (26)

4.2 When asked to consider a list of changes the council is proposing to focus on in the next 12 months and longer term, most respondents (85% / 386) agreed that all of them are the right things to focus on to respond to what people said matters to them about jobs and skills. A further 11% (50) agreed or disagreed with some of them, 1% (4) disagreed with all of them and 4% (16) didn't know.

4.4 There were 95 responses to the question on whether there was anything missing from the changes we are proposing to focus on in terms of jobs and skills. The key areas identified for amendments to the draft plan were as follows:

- Comments around the need for green innovation and jobs
- Comments on the need to engage with/support local businesses in a number of areas - e.g. local supply chain; filling vacancies; apprentices; financial support etc.
- Comments on the importance of improving transport
- The importance of internet access, speed and reliability for business
- More emphasis on the valley communities

5. Other views on the Draft Corporate Plan

5.1 We asked if respondents had any other views on 'Recover, Reset, Renew' our Draft Corporate Plan that they would like to share with us. There were 116. Many of the points raised have been covered in the feedback on the 4 wellbeing objectives, but in addition there were some comments on the draft plan in general. Examples of positive and negative comments were as follows:

Examples of positive comments:

- *"Draft corporate plan seems robust, hopefully there will be regular reviews re progress made"*
- *"Great to see the match between what the public want and what the Council aim to deliver"*
- *"This plan looks to be an exciting opportunity for a fresh start after a tremendously difficult 2 years. Whilst I might not agree with all of the proposals, the plan as a whole looks great. Bring it on!"*
- *"It would be good if we have regular updates on the difference the plan is making"*
- *"Ambitious - lets do it. Let us know if we can help"*

Examples of negative comments:

- *"the plan is far too long and unwieldy to expect people to read through and digest in one sitting. I think you should have broken it down into smaller sections and run a consultation on each so that we can look at the detail"*
- *"most of these should already be in place"*
- *"Proposals are all well and good but unless there is a commitment to deliver these they are just a pipe dream"*
- *"I'm not sure it's ambitious enough. It feels solid and safe. I'm not sure "solid" and "safe" will encourage recovery or jump-start a greater sense of community or ambition within Neath Port Talbot."*
- *"Stop talking and get on with it!"*

Examples of mixed comments:

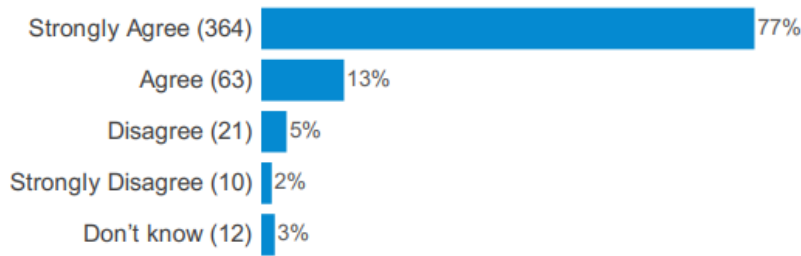
- *"It sounds great but seeing whether it can be implemented in a reasonable timeframe will be interesting. Is it deliverable?"*
- *"Generally a good plan, but with the highest rates in the country, we should be having the best services..And the practice of replacing publicly funded services with funding from the side and the expectation that volunteers will pick up the slack is wrong"*
- *"This plan is OK, but it's hopelessly unambitious in the key area of transport and digital connectivity. In the middle of a climate emergency and a pandemic, I would have expected more."*
- *"Let's make this a reality and not another talking shop!!! People will support change and want to see this plan work!!!"*

Section 2 - Budget consultation responses

6. Council Tax

6.1 We asked respondents how they feel about the proposal that there should be 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23.

Figure 6: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposal that there should be 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23?' (base: 470)



6.2 Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 30 responses, including the following themes:

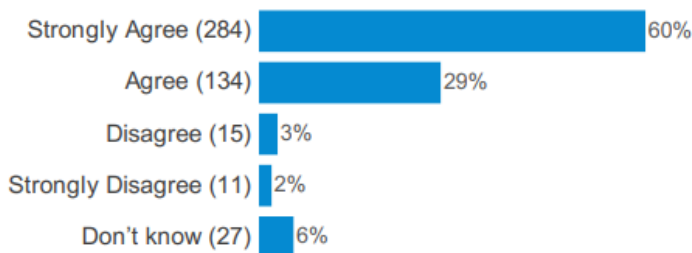
- 12 respondents felt a small/modest increase to council tax should be implemented
- 9 didn't specify that they would support a rise, but made the point that services have to be paid for
- 5 respondents felt that there should be a decrease in council tax – reasons for this included that people are struggling financially because of covid, the perceived high level of council tax in NPT compared to other areas, comments around VFM for council tax paid

7. Best Start in Life (Budget - £700,000)

This proposal would increase community based and specialist youth service provision, early intervention and prevention activities (including educational psychology and key worker support for children and young people affected by the pandemic), extra support for children with additional learning needs and an increase in adult community learning provisions to support people in the journey back to work.

7.1 We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life'

Figure 7: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life'?' (base: 471):



7.2 Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 20 responses, including the following themes:

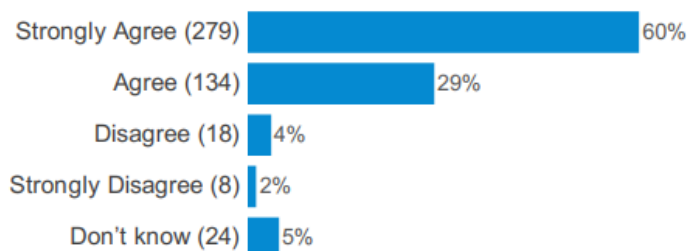
- 6 felt that the proposed amount of £700,000 is insufficient
- 4 commented that there is already a lot of support in this area, or thought there were more important/other areas to concentrate on
- 3 felt that the council should be doing this anyway
- 2 commented that money should be used to further reduce bills/council tax bills

8. Thriving and Sustainable Communities (Budget - £1.2 million)

One of the key messages from 'Let's Talk' was how much people value the environment and neighbourhoods where they live and work. In the pandemic, the council has had to re-prioritise neighbourhood services to ensure continuity of priority services like refuse and recycling collection. To re-address the issue it's proposed a range of proposals are developed to deliver a county borough wide range of highly visible projects to 'catch up, clean up and green up' our neighbourhoods.

8.1 We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £1.2 million in services to support 'Thriving and Sustainable Communities'

Figure 8: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £1.2 million in services to support 'Thriving and Sustainable Communities'? (base: 463):



8.2 Where people indicated that they "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed", we asked them to tell us why. There were 20 responses, including the following themes:

- 7 suggested other areas that might be a better use for the money
- 5 commented that it was a waste of funds and/or that money should be used to further reduce bills/council tax bills

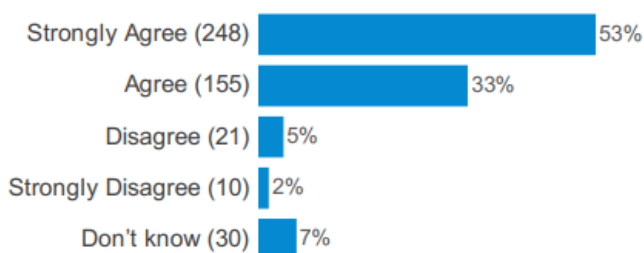
9. Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills (Budget - £200,000)

It is proposed strategies be developed in relation to both culture and environment, leisure and tourism so further proposals can be developed in relation to jobs and skills.

The 2022/23 budget pressure schedule includes for additional long term funding to provide additional support for economic development and regeneration which will be key for supporting existing businesses as well as attracting further inward investment into the county borough.

9.1 We asked respondents how they feel about the proposal to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills'?

Figure 9: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills'? (base: 464):



9.2 Where people indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, we asked them to tell us why. There were 22 responses, including the following themes:

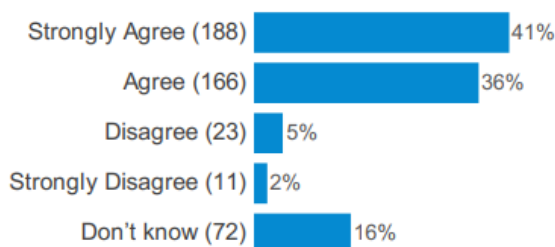
- 16 felt that the proposed amount of £200,000 is insufficient
- 2 felt that the money needs to be spent effectively and/or the outcomes monitored

10. Covid recovery reserve (Budget - £2.8m)

In order to fund these one off investments outlined above, we are proposing to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve. This will fund the 3 proposals outlined, and leave £700k unallocated to support further investments.

10.1 We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve to fund the one-off investments outlined above.

Figure 10: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposal to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve to fund the one-off investments outlined above? (base: 460):



10.2 Where people indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, we asked them to tell us why. There were 24 responses, covering a range of reasons, but the following themes were included:

- 5 questioned using reserves/thought that money should be used for the purpose it was originally set aside for
- 4 felt that there are already sources of funding for covid recovery outside of the council
- 2 questioned where the money would be spent

11. Other views

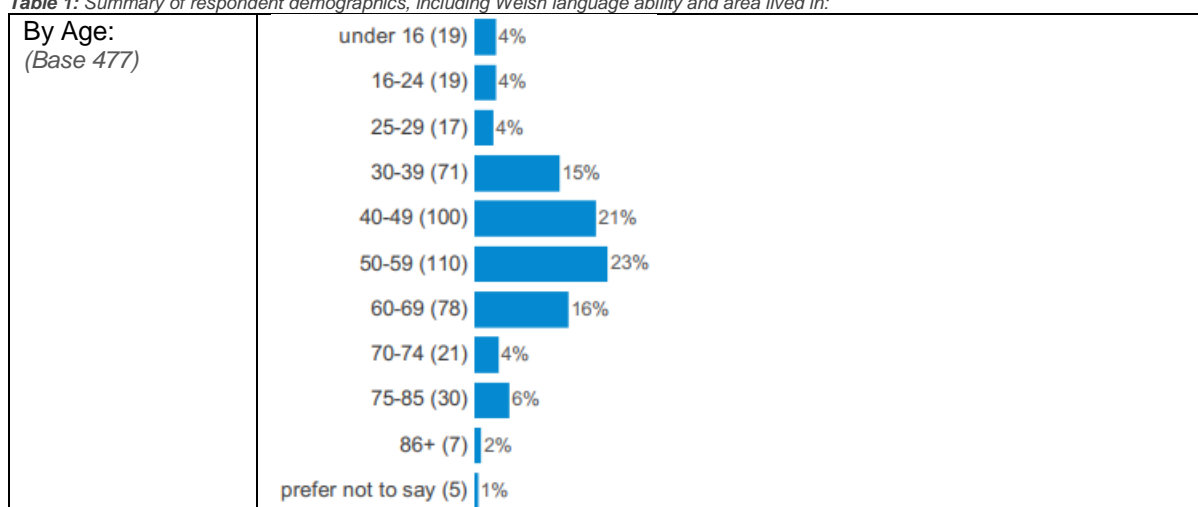
11.1 We asked respondents 'do you have any other views on our draft Budget 2022/23 that you would like to share with us?' There were 97 responses, including the following themes:

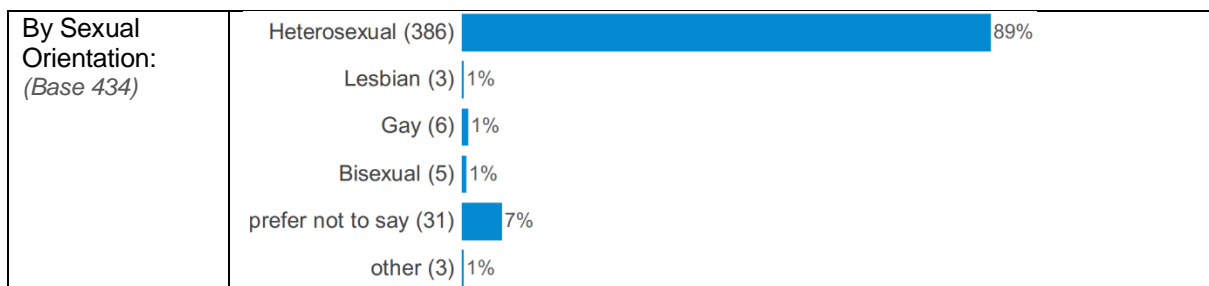
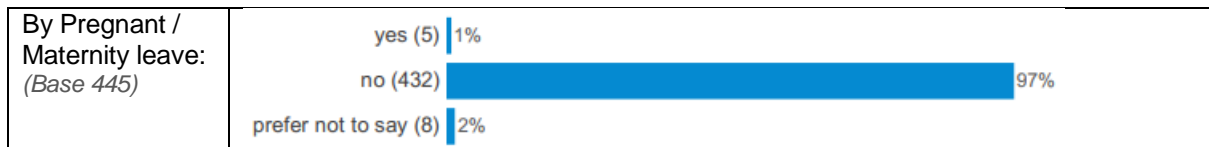
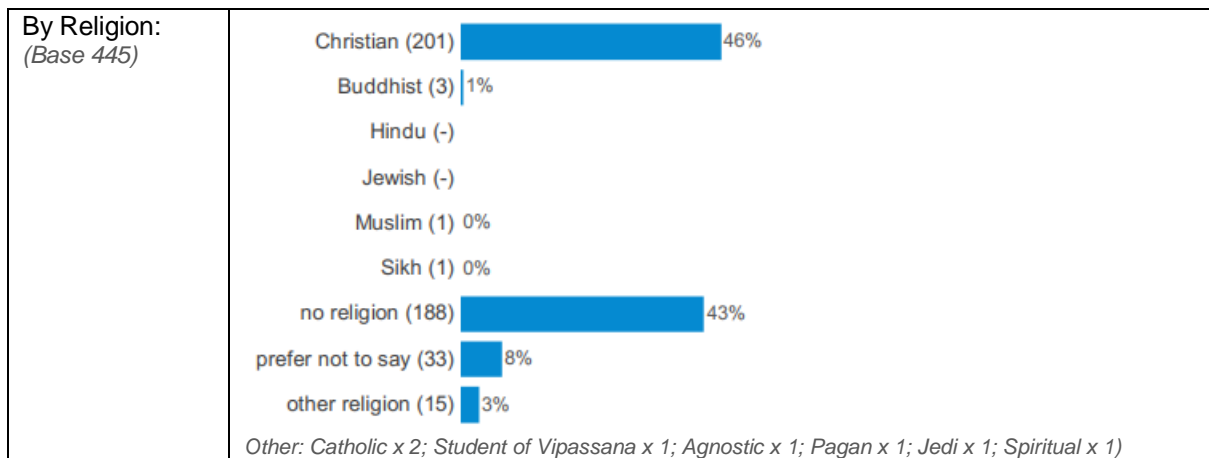
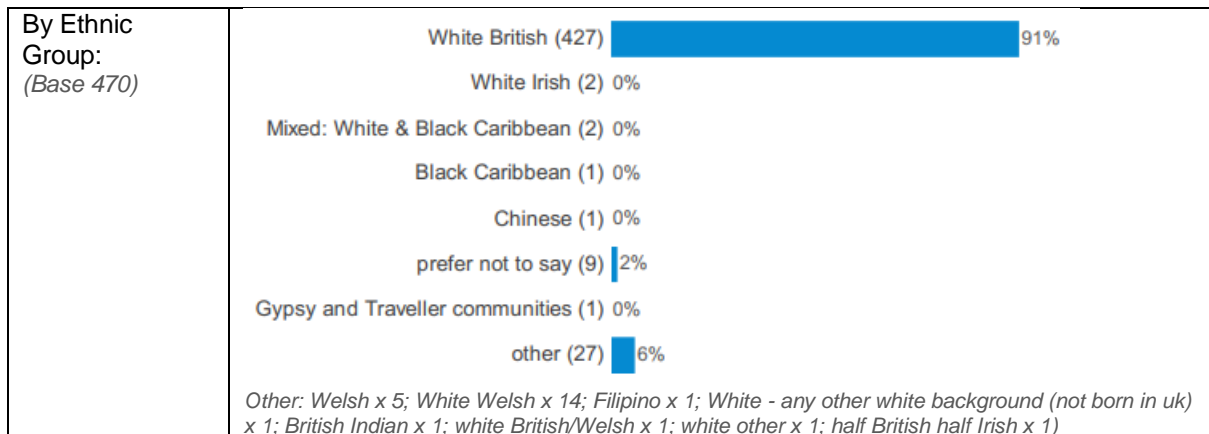
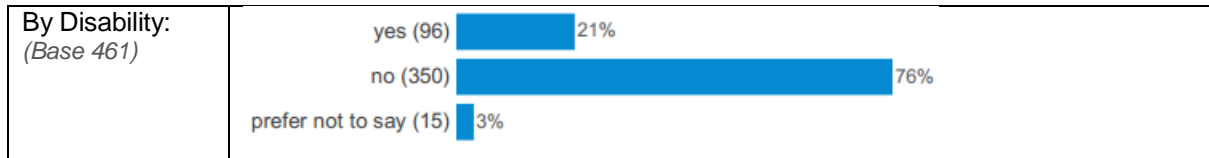
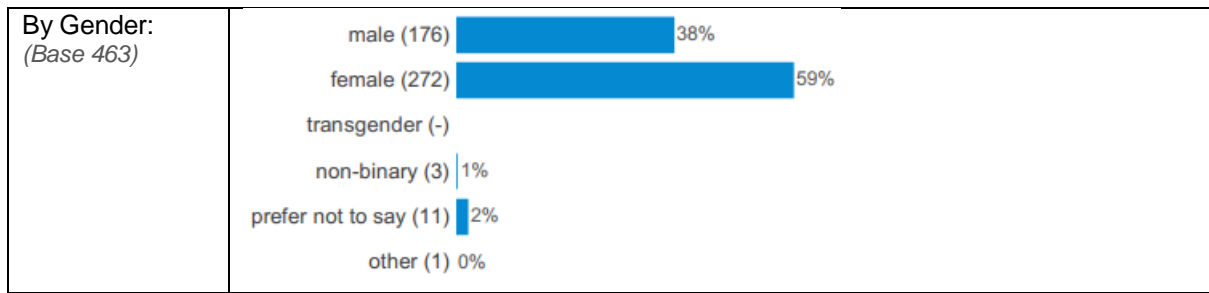
- There were 20 comments relating to council tax – 11 agreeing with the proposal to freeze council tax for 2022-23; 6 saying that it should be reduced; 2 in favour of a slight increase; 1 commenting that council tax should not have increased in 21/22
- 8 expressed a view that some of the 'one-off investments to support covid recovery' were not enough – 5 for culture & heritage/jobs & skills; 3 for 'best start in life'
- 5 outlined the need for services which would support mental health
- 5 commented on the importance of investing in council staff
- 5 outlined the importance of investing in neighbourhood and streets – including cleaning, roads, lighting
- 3 commented on the importance of leisure facilities and parks
- 3 commented on the need for investment in protecting the environment/nature recovery

Who responded

The response profile to the questionnaire is summarised below.

Table 1: Summary of respondent demographics, including Welsh language ability and area lived in:





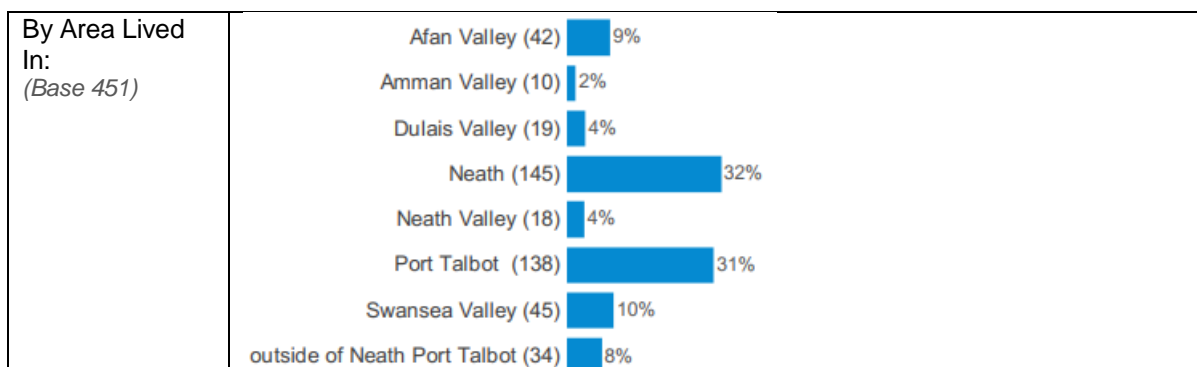
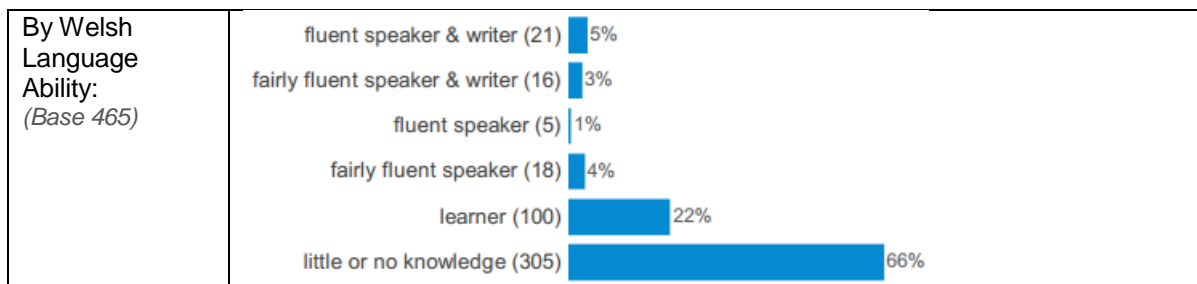
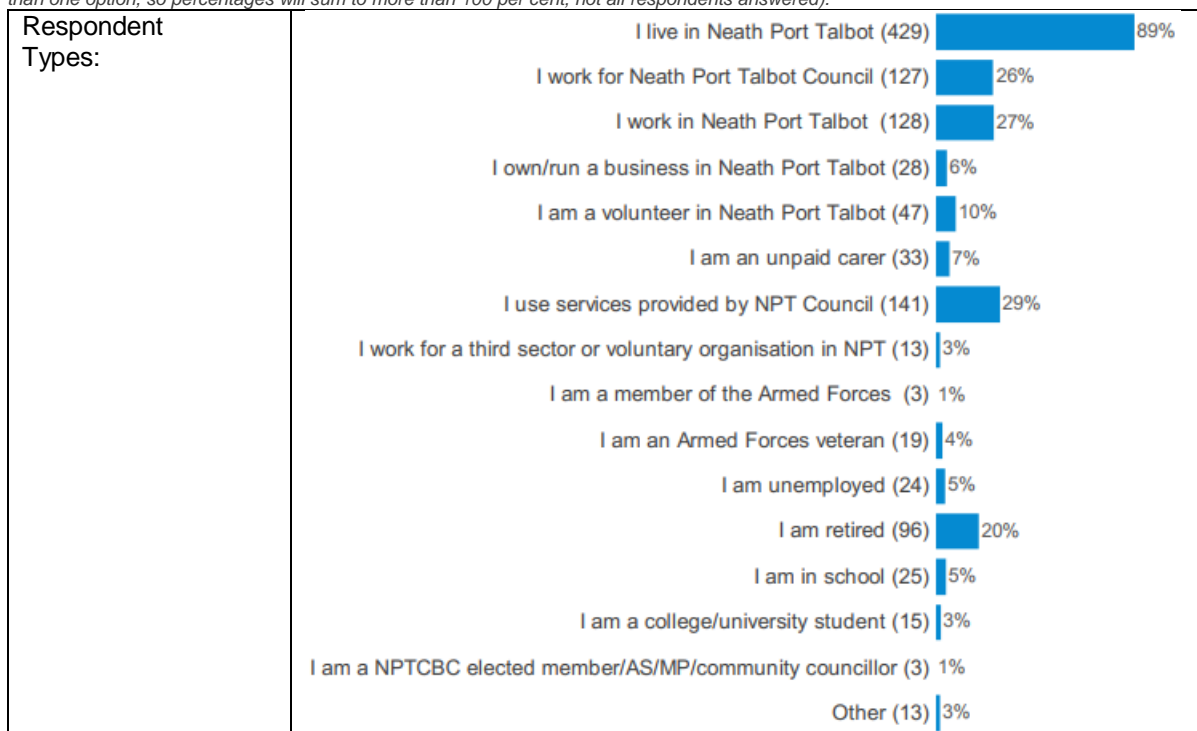


Table 2: Summary of the ways in which respondents described themselves and their relationship to NPT (NB respondents could choose more than one option, so percentages will sum to more than 100 per cent; not all respondents answered).



Responses from Groups and Partners

Three formal responses were received and a summary of issues raised are as follows:

NRW:

- Share the council's vision for continued working together as we progress through the recovery and renewal phases of the pandemic.
- Would encourage the sustainability question to pervade all decision making across all 4 wellbeing objectives.
- Point out that the impacts of climate change will be relevant across all wellbeing objectives and we must also ensure that we are resilient to the anticipated risks that a changing climate will bring.

- Best start – NRW highlights that the natural environment can play an important part in the early years development of our children and the county offers significant opportunities for outdoor learning with added value of connecting young people to their local communities and environment. The links between outdoor green space and blue space/wild play opportunities and physical and mental wellbeing in young people are well documented. Action is needed to secure adequate provision of safe, accessible natural green spaces.
- Thriving communities – NRW supports the asset based approach and welcomes action to “clean up and green up”, recognising the important role of a high quality local environment. Often social and environmental inequities go hand in hand - some of the most deprived communities are also areas of poorer environmental quality and will often be home to those who are most vulnerable to the risks of climate change. Targeting these areas will derive greatest benefits. In developing greater community resilience there will be opportunities to build in nature based solutions. NRW also supports action around place making and high quality/low carbon housing. Active travel links, as well as improved public transport should feature as a fundamental consideration of better connectivity within and between communities.
- Natural and Cultural heritage, suggests there is perhaps merit in more overt recognition of the actions required under Biodiversity Duty Plan in the actions section. This plan will also be a relevant consideration under the other objectives.
- Jobs and skills – NRW support the focus on sustainable, well paid “green” jobs and the action to develop the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors and suggests that part of this should see the development of the circular economy and shortening of supply chains. Interventions may provide the opportunity for delivering multiple benefits, for the economy, communities and the environment. NRW also feels it is positive to see a link to provision of good transport hubs and connections between home and work. Similarly, active travel routes provide opportunities to deliver health and wellbeing, environmental as well as connectivity benefits.
- Whilst NRW feels the plan recognises that the natural environment of the county provides significant economic opportunities, their response points out a need to ensure that the environment is protected and improved (i.e. sustainable management) to secure these natural assets in the long term.

Pobl Group:

- Feels the plan is ambitious and inspiring and that the four pillars around which its structured make good sense.
- Recognises the organisational challenge will be resourcing and creating wider ownership and specific accountability and welcomes the fact that the council talks about partners throughout the document as the achievement of many of the aims will need a ‘shared endeavour’ approach.
- States that some of the enabling actions in the plan in terms of offering small grants to community groups to take some ownership can also be extremely powerful, and suggests that the decarbonisation aims could embrace the education and involvement of citizens more widely beyond the Councils own carbon footprint.

Gwynfi Miners Community Hall:

- Particularly welcomes proposals to increase youth and outdoor leisure services to boost the wellbeing of young people, as well as providing new funding for schools to support children with additional learning needs.
- Also to strengthen support for vulnerable people, including those who have become lonely and isolated due to the pandemic and also increase the number of neighbourhood teams as part of a drive to catch up, clean up and green up towns and villages.
- Highlights that, through a massive and sustained local community effort, some of the services that the council had withdrawn have been restored (due to local groups and individuals in the Upper Afan Valley securing grants and donations annually). They feel that this is not sustainable and council support is needed to have thriving and sustainable communities across Neath Port Talbot.

- Highlights that their community has been one of the hardest hit by the effects of austerity and that as a disadvantaged and low income community, they have borne an excessive burden of the Covid pandemic and inequalities across Neath Port Talbot have widened, but feels it is not at all clear in the budget proposals how addressing these inequalities will be met as there are no clear programmes identified to achieve this.
- Calls for a physical infrastructure of buildings and people if the Council is to be able to deliver on its draft vision of “**community support**”, “**early intervention and prevention**” as well as boosting tourist and local enterprise and to deliver schemes such as “**the Summer of Fun**”.
- Believes the following steps are urgently needed:-
 - provide guaranteed grant support for staff in our existing community centres. Without this support it will be impossible have the facilities from which priorities such as social isolation, promoting the wellbeing of our young people or community recovery can be delivered.
 - review the physical fabric of these facilities with a view to their remediation.
 - provide more support for outdoor sports facilities to complement the excellent voluntary work that is already taking places.
 - review existing patterns of public transport to make it easier for people to get to work, education, public services and amenities that are available to more affluent communities in urban locations..
 - work with local businesses and groups to improve the tourist and leisure opportunities that exist in the Upper Afan as an important economic driver.
 - invest in the good upkeep and cleanliness of our public spaces and work with the local voluntary groups that are doing excellent work in this regard.

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Let's Talk Report Final

Consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 and the Draft Budget Proposals 2022-23

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Introduction

This report outlines the findings from the questionnaire on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 and the Draft Budget Proposals 2022-23. In total, the questionnaire received **485** responses.

The consultation started on Wednesday 5 January and closed on Tuesday 1 February 2022. The consultation took place against the backdrop of a revised version of alert level 2 restrictions, which came into place on Boxing Day 2021 to respond to the highly contagious omicron variant of Covid-19. The following arrangements were made to help ensure that the consultation was as inclusive as possible, despite the challenging situation:

- **Online questionnaire** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the council's website. The questionnaire was live from Wednesday 5 January (following Cabinet approval) until midnight on Tuesday 1 February 2022.
- **Email** – the email address LetsTalk@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Offline** – for public health reasons, we adapted our usual practice of making printed copies of questionnaires and reference documents available in public buildings. Instead we:
 - produced and distributed more than 1,100 printed packs and questionnaires for those who are not online. The packs contained an English and Welsh copy of the questionnaire for people to complete in the safety of their own home and return using a pre-paid envelope. These were:
 - made available at our 8 council run libraries (Neath, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Baglan, Cwmafan, Glynneath, Sandfields, Skewen)
 - distributed by Local Area Co-ordinators and members of the Community of Practice (a group made up of officers from across the council who undertake engagement activities as part of their roles)
 - distributed by The Home Library Service, whilst delivering books and information to residents who have difficulty, or who are unable to visit their local library
 - distributed by Tai Tarian to their Haven schemes for people over 55 - there are 15 of these schemes across the county borough in Cwmafan, Port Talbot, Sandfields, Briton Ferry, Neath, Cadoxton, Crynant, Tonna, Glynneath, Banwen, Ystalyfera, Pontardawe (x 2), Cwmgors, Gwaun Cae Gurwen
 - made printed questionnaires available to employees in a number of internal services including the catering and cleaning services and the Service Response Centre at the Quays.

Almost a quarter of the responses we received (24.1% / 117) were submitted via printed questionnaires.

The consultation was promoted online (via: regular social media activity on corporate and service accounts, email marketing, and internal council channels), offline (via: radio, press releases, and posters), and by outreach activity via NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement.

Section 1 - Consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27

1. Reactions to the 4 Draft Wellbeing Objectives:

1. We asked respondents to indicate how they feel about each of the 4 draft wellbeing objectives set out in 'Recover, Reset, Renew':

Figure 1: Responses to the question asking about respondents' reaction to each of the draft wellbeing objectives (nb: percentages relate to the total number of respondents who answered the question)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
All children get the best start in life	63% (300)	17% (82)	12% (57)	6% (27)	3% (13)
Communities are thriving and sustainable	46% (210)	25% (113)	18% (85)	8% (36)	4% (17)
Our environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations	44% (202)	41% (187)	8% (36)	4% (19)	4% (17)
Local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs	40% (183)	31% (143)	16% (72)	8% (37)	6% (26)

2. All Children get the best start in life

Best Start in Life

In the feedback from the 'Let's Talk' campaign, this is what children and young people told us matters to them:

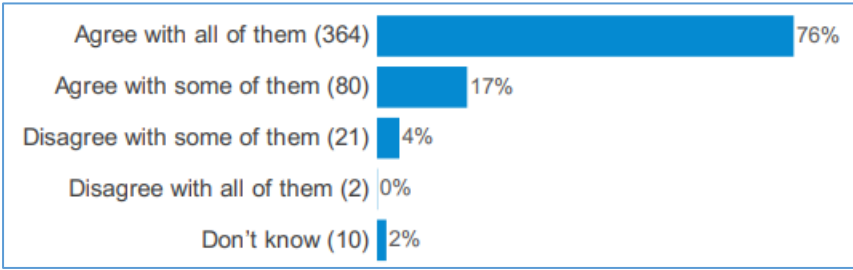
- Being safe
- Being happy
- Having a stable home life
- Spending time with family, friends and pets
- School – getting a good education
- Growing up to be strong and healthy
- Having good quality parks, sports facilities and other youth services
- Having enough money
- Being able to get a job and being able to afford to live in decent accommodation
- Affordable buses to access services

Because of what children and young people told us matters to them, we are proposing to focus on the following:

Next 12 months:	Longer Term:
Keep schools open	More children are better prepared to learn when they start school
Improve play, leisure and other services for children and young people	All young people go on to training, education or work at the end of statutory education
Strengthen early help and support	Education reforms are embedded and standards are raised
Do 'what matters'	More schools have a 21st Century learning and teaching environment
Implement free school meals and childcare policy	The number of Welsh medium school places are increased
Ensure children are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family	More young people will have registered to vote and will be using their vote
Strengthen transition from statutory education	The number of children and young people excluded from school will have reduced
Help young people leaving care to have appropriate support and accommodation	Play and leisure services will have improved and youth services will have been enhanced
Increase the number of opportunities offered by the Council to young people	All children know and understand their rights and responsibilities
Work with partners to refocus the Children & Young People's Partnership	Services for children and young people across agencies are joined up and improving young people's life chances and outcomes
Finalise and implement our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;	
Strengthen joint planning and commissioning arrangements for children who have additional needs	

2. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them:

Figure 2: Responses to the question 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them' (base: 477):



2a. Where people indicated that they “agreed with/disagreed with some” of the things we are proposing to do in response to what children and young people told us matters to them, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figure 2a: merges questions 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them' and 'if you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' in relation to the next 12 months:

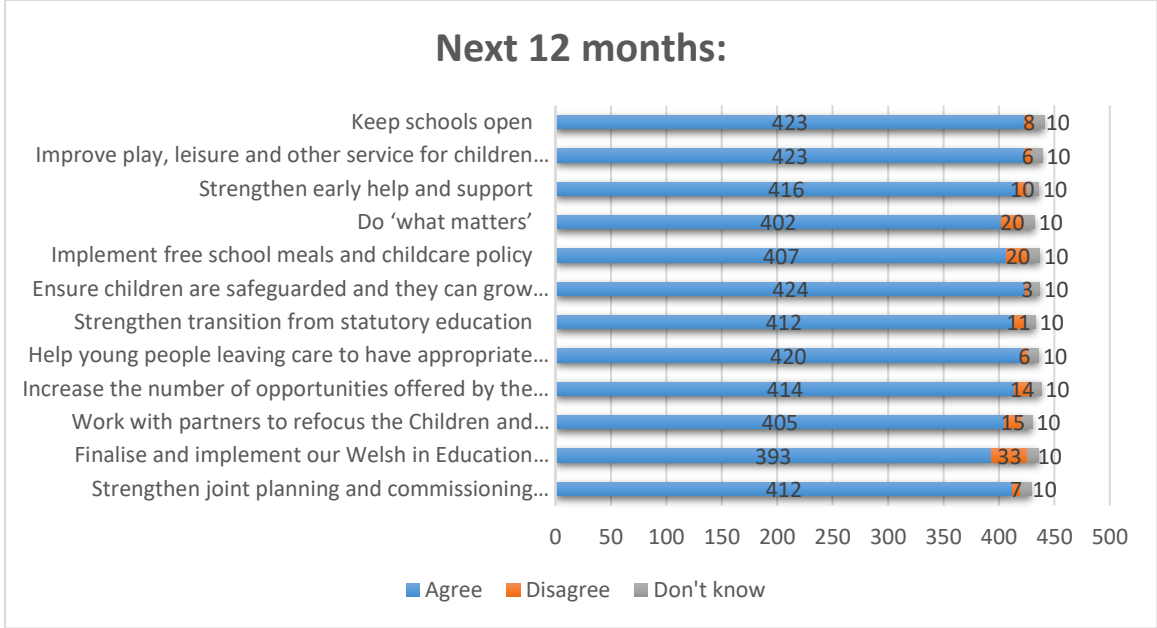
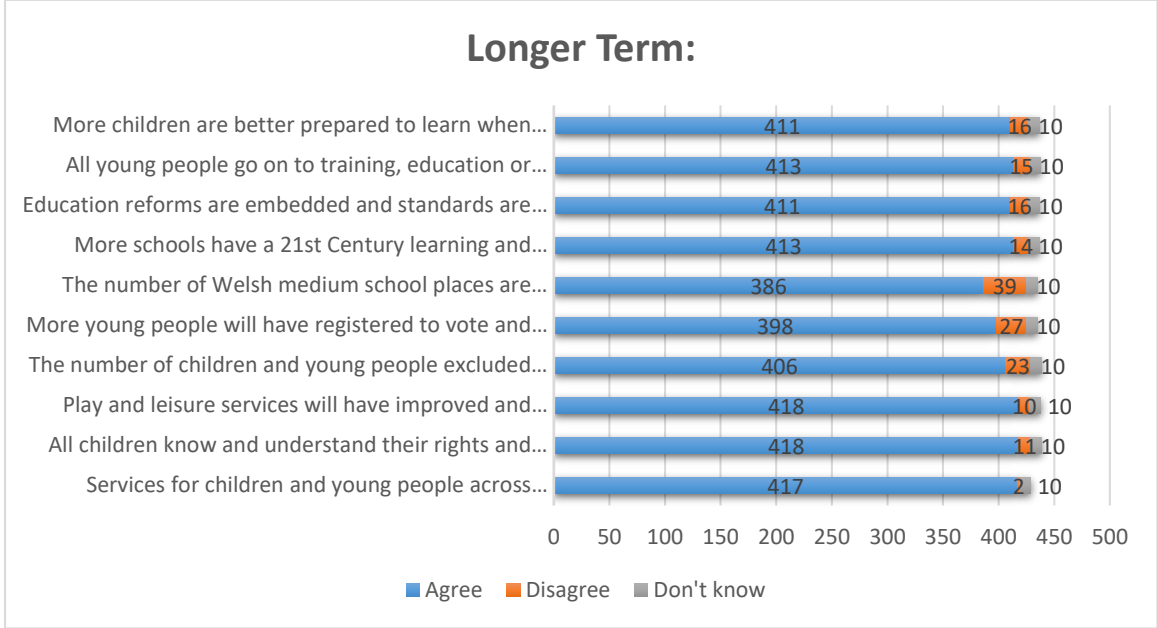


Figure 2b: merges questions 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them' and 'if you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' in relation to the longer term:



2b. We asked if respondents think there anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of giving children and young people the best start in life – there were 157 responses to this question, as follows:

- Hi not missing, but would really like to see the opportunities for apprenticeships and job opportunities given to young people to be expanded upon, the council is probably becoming one of the last places where a “job for life” is a real possibility.
- Real job opportunities, more Apprenticeships and high quality job opportunities for all our young people.
- Focus on lifelong skills and progression to adulthood not focus on jobs and education after - some people want to travel
- Having easily accessible mental health support within school environment. Opportunities for children to work together (maybe through the school council) with children in other local schools, to collaborate on initiatives collectively important.
- Support from social care is essential
- Adult Welsh learning improved so parents can help children with Welsh school work.
- For every child to be able to access flying start not a post code lottery system that I missed out on. Also more support for 17 year old like my daughter who was 'left to It' after the pandemic !
- Do what works ... if it doesn't work ... don't do it.
- Safeguarding is THE main priority. More needs to be done for children who are being mentally and physically abused in their homes - Social workers need more powers to act far quicker
- NPTCBC doesn't deliver on much of what it's targets are unfortunately
- A community approach to supporting young families - helping and encouraging each other - learning from older members of the community
- Related to free school meals and childcare, more emphasis on making sure they don't need free meals or childcare, parents and guardians are responsible for that, not the state.
- Ensuring that children are taught to respect both others and the environment. Help them to be part of caring for the local area and be part of the solution not the problem as in many cases.
- Reduce the size of schools to ensure all children are taught properly and none disappear under the radar.
- I don't feel it goes far enough. Improving provision would indicate the provision is there??? For a child whose parents don't work, where in Port Talbot can they go to play football or netball??? There is NO facility that isn't behind a lock and key. All facilities are locked up and only accessible to those who can afford. Children want 'free time' and not always have to join in at a specific time. There is a lack of facilities and places for children to go, keep fit and play with friends.
- Assistance in moving into higher education
- Access to leisure/community activities locally
- Free school meals for all children
- Keeping the streets clean from rubbish and back areas
- Access to learning about the practical things in life - not just an extension of current subjects but things like understanding finances - things they can use when they go out in the "real world"
- Increased funding for support of ALN learners to support inclusion.
- A particular emphasis on helping young people into work is needed with support for them to progress. This needs to be inclusive eg disabled and BME
- More creative opportunities regarding music, drama and film for young people
- Continue the move to provide 21st century schools for more of NPT young people.
- Restore NPT funding of services in the Upper Afan Valley, allowing additional funding from the windmills to be used for the benefit of the community, as intended, instead of being used to replace npt funding
- Public transport and employment prospects.
- Stop increases in council tax
- In the focus on the next 12 months and longer term - perhaps inclusion of something to help families who are living in poverty - affordable school uniforms, making sure families get any financial support they are entitled to etc.
- Being listened to, having their say and being able to participate in things that affect them.
- Someone outside of the home to talk to.
- INclusion for children with disabilities or better access mainstream services ie school and transport
- The school meals service needs to significantly improve its vegan and vegetarian provision, and reduce the quantity of meat and fish used, in order to meet NPTCBC's environmental sustainability targets.
- activities and support for 0-3 year olds. There is no mention of affordable buses to access services

- Lear for life. Learning for successful independent living. House keeping. Money sense, bills credit etc
- More emphasis on STEM subjects as this will support many of the other aims.
- Work with parents to help them to understand how best to support their children in terms of their education
- Perhaps introducing free public transport passes for young people under 18 to access services.
- No mention of accessible and affordable transport. Not everyone can afford a car.
- Access to nature and the environment, this is proven to help wellbeing and learning yet there is no mention about providing green spaces in school or giving them access to outdoor lessons
- We need to work more in partnership with Parents whose children are not in school, to ensure that their children reach their potential
- preventative services using a trauma informed response.
- Better Mental Health support for children and young people without stigma. Mental Health recovery from COVID19 for young people.
- Promote the importance of cleanliness to children in schools.- especially now with Covid.
- Not enough focus on training to support those with ALN for teachers, TAs, Families First staff, NPT Carers staff, etc. I deliver this training for the local authority and lots of staff attend unpaid and in their own time. Other council areas are not tapping into this free training to maximise the support they can offer.
- Support for parents to go back to work after becoming a parent through childcare facilities that are good quality and affordable. Information for parents on tax relief for child care to be made more readily available in a way that can be easily understood
- More school counsellors to help children living seriously grim and difficult lives. Better and quicker responses from CAMHS and all safeguarding agencies so that no child should ever think that suicide is their only way forward and the onus IS NOT on the school counsellor.
- I think there is more to do in relation to the objective on helping young people leaving care to have appropriate support and accommodation. The words strengthening transition is used in the item above in relation to education, and this is fundamental in the case of young people leaving care. It not just having appropriate support and accommodation, it's about having a supported transition to enable them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation.
- Improve child protection measures and special needs education - Social services and Teams around the family. Quicker intervention with struggling families. More
- help with big stages in life such as leaving primary, starting comprehensive, leaving comprehensive and starting college, apprenticeships...
- The security of knowing our local schools will stay local
- Higher education young adults. University Fees have had to paid although majority of education was by Zoom. Homeless. Other affordable forms of transport.
- Children and young people should be given access to heritage to break down barriers and to nurture an interest in heritage for life. It must not become the domain of elderly white middle class people.
- We are 22 years into the 21st century so what have we been doing until now?
- making parents take accountability for their children
- More children's social workers needed
- allow learning through play to be more of the focus in early years and really invest in pastoral care in primary schools not just secondary schools. Allow children that aren't academic to feel worthwhile by placing importance on non academic subjects, adopting forest school learning across the authority for a decent amount of time per week for all ages
- Increase awareness of the Welsh Government's 'mytravelpass' scheme for bus users aged 16-21
- Children and young people who do not attend school require support to help them lead as a fulfilling life as possible. Just because they do not attend should not mean that they miss out on other services that those who attend school are entitled to.
- Additional resources are required to support children in education with Specific Learning Difficulties including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, ADD. I am the guardian of a GCSE aged child. It has taken us years to get her tested for dyslexia, now that they are in year 11 they have finally be confirmed as having dyslexia, this is far to late into their education. We are still waiting on the formal report but in addition, basic tools and resources like coloured paper / notebooks and printing on coloured paper is severely lacking. This is down to a lack or resource, a lack of priority being given to reasonable adjustments and a lack of knowledge and understanding of schools and teaching staff. Supporting children with SpLDs must be given more priority.

- Understanding of personal finance.
- I think there could be a member of staff at school that could be a young persons champion and be identified as that if the child needs to have personal support.
- Ensure that young people understand working in business and have an appropriate bridge to employment or apprenticeships
- Put more focus on vocational training for some students
- Assist in placements with local companies for young adults
- I feel there should also be a focus on getting parents/carers onboard and enabling them to support children. Also NPTCBC does a lot for younger children but there are little or no provisions for teens and young adults, these should be a priority. Get them involved in the community, hear their voice.
- Voluntary or compulsory work required if not in education or employment.
- Improve social skills by interacting with older people.
- Ensure that children who need a little extra help, or learn differently to that offered through mainstream education, are given the support and opportunity to thrive.
- No mention of Young Carers
- There is nothing here about improving the physical and mental wellbeing of children or about being able to access affordable transport
- Morals. No one seems to know 'Whats right' (point 4) in order to teach that to the children.
- Are all of the Welsh medium schools full? Do we need more places.
- More support for those young people that may have got left behind academically during the pandemic
- To to also prevent and break the cycle of a non aspirational society by helping to educate parents and carers make better choices regarding their children or young people. In their care.
- Strife to keep comunity schools at the very heart of policy. To keep Children walking to school cancel all plans for factory schools immediately.
- Being able to walk in the area without stepping in dog mess - we walk to school and the bulk of the conversation is "mind the poo" - it's disgusting!!!
- Not only a focus on personal responsibility, independence and questioning, but as a society a heavy emphasis on health and environment.
- Up to date education about money, how it works, how to make it work for you and others.
- there is no direct mention of sport or other health based activities
- Maximising income - benefit support, where necessary
- Educations is needed for lifestyles choices which feeds in to Growing to Be Healthy & stronger
- Make being courteous part of the curriculum - not riding bikes on pavement / swearing loudly / littering etc.
- A timescale and how it will be paid for
- Giving them the chance to enjoy the pleasure of reading.
- Reduce discrimination against more deprived areas and facilitate a safe school environment by keeping primary schools smaller, keeping them within the community they serve and within walking/cycling distance
- I see hardly anything to help improve the schooling life and life in general for children with special educational needs. Teachers in mainstream school also need training on how to have the basic understand of children with special educational needs. More activities in the community that cater specifically for children with special educational needs. Assessments need to be a lot more quicker for children with special educational needs as they are suffering for a long time without the correct support especially if they currently don't have a diagnosis
- Ensure adequate support for mental health
- The objective needs to be SMART, these are not very specific or measurable
- Children and young people must have an opportunity to have fun whilst doing the above.
- It's not that i disagrees with what you want to put in place, it's actually achieving them, we have the highest council tax in the area yet there isn't flying starts for all children, there are 8+ staff at the dumps that just stand around not helping, there are areas like where I live where the grass doesn't get cut the residents are expected to do this, the fact that we only have bin collection every other week that's crazy when there are larger families or have family come to stay for holidays,
- There needs to be more for teenagers. They have very limited provision which is designed for them.
- extra support for children to catch up on lost learning and wellbeing activities missed as a result of covid

- Giving them guidance as a child, know the boundaries, advise them on finance and about taking responsibility
- Ensuring fair access to Welsh medium education across all areas of the local authority so that Welsh medium education is a fair choice for all children no matter where they live or their background.
- I think education should start as early as possible. With that said I believe children should have the opportunity to start interacting with other children from a younger age and the age of the 30 hour free learning should be reduced to the age of 2 not 3
- Review how children access Flying Start to ensure that children who would benefit are not excluded because of their postcode . It would be excellent if all children have access to flying start as it is superb
- Age appropriate and thorough sexual health and sexuality education, reducing stigma and prejudice for non-heterosexual and non-cisgender young people.
- Children to have an understanding of emotional literacy as they grow as is age appropriate. Encourage a child's passion and capabilities even if a child is not able to achieve a high level academically.
- We MUST remove the inequalities in the system. eg the postcode lottery of the Flying Start Scheme and some changes to the 30 hour CCO
- Free wraparound care in schools, using after school for extra curricular activities
- Affordable and tidy housing for people with gardens their children can play in.
- No, the Childrens vouces have been heard
- Sex has always been an important part of life, but sex is now exploited endlessly - TV shows, advertising, singers & entertainers. Children are being bombarded with sex from an early age. Restrictions should apply in what they watch. Parental guidance?
- Realise the importance of the voluntary youth sector and support them to flourish and grow
- Good quality parks when local has decimated all sporting leisure grounds.
- 1) a focus on protecting the environment 2) an impact assessment on building a super school in Pontardawe in terms of environment and child welfare
- It's not an ideal world, unfortunately. Health, both physical and mental need addressing.
- Ensure more safe and green spaces for children to play rather than build in any free space
- Teach young people to respect the elderly (one day they may be old)
- I am 85 and a little bit slow
- Help children and families with complex needs/mental health issues. Help for children living in poverty. Free gym membership for families needing to use food banks. Youth clubs. After school clubs with fun activities.
- Encourage proactivity in the community through voluntary projects from an early age - this teaches both personal responsibility and respect for the environment in all its forms.
- Wokeness, cultural Marxism, and left wing indoctrination will be stopped. Anti-English attitudes will be addressed. Misandrist attitudes to boys education will cease.
- Unbiased factual education on the environmental crisis that we are facing and what we can do, both personally and collectively, to try and prevent it
- Better transport options, particularly in the smaller communities around NPT.
- How you plan to work with children and young people to review and updates your proposals
- actions in preparation for the impacts they are going to have to endure due to the climate & nature emergencies.
- I think all these are statements without any indication how they are going to happen. What does the ambiguous do what matters mean?
- Dont think so. But our sports facilities across the Borough in most areas are poor or not available. Just look across the boarder in England to see the sporting facilities they have. We are 20 years behind. Education reform, surly after all these years we should have a good education framework for our children? If not, why? Leaving care in NPT needs a lot of work, this area is not up to standard. All the above is what we should have had in place years ago. To achieve the above you need a proper strategy with money, some of this looks like a wish list. Sorry for being so negative, but if the above was achievable it would have been in place by now.
- More families that live closer to the school their children go to Walk instead of driving there ok we all know about certain individuals however have a better communication system set up and if the children parents are unable to collect them then a designated person to escort them home
- Anything to do with making buses affordable, raised as an issue by children and young people

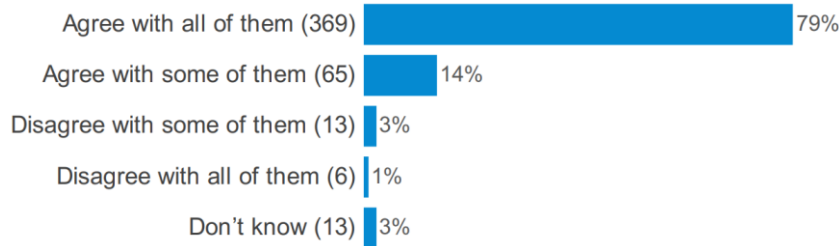
- Actively develop and promote links with Arts and Culture venues - for example specific activities with the Pontardawe Art Centre. Tailoring shows and offers to be alongside the curriculum; music acts for young people; drama and dance classes etc.
- Educational support for those with borderline abilities, it feels like the talented are nurtured and the less able are supported but those on the cusp are neither coping or helped, especially true of further education in the colleges
- Opportunities for work experience, links to business community, volunteering, life skills such as managing money
- Actively develop and promote links with Arts and Culture venues - for example specific activities with the Pontardawe Art Centre. Tailoring shows and offers to be alongside the curriculum; music acts for young people; drama and dance classes etc.
- I don't understand all of the above so couldn't really say if it's good or not to some points
- Raise more awareness for mental health in schools as well as providing more support for young people with mental health, educating others on it as well.
- I think more options should be available for children with additional needs (not just mainstream School)
- Children need the best support they can get
- Antisocial behaviour with youth culture in Neath particularly where I live is not being addressed. All schools should have places increased not just Welsh language. Why is there not a church in Wales senior school in Neath?
- No mention of parental support - too much focus on schools (what about those EOTAS?) No mention of post statutory education, what about young people?
- More co-operation between local schools and local sports teams to encourage active and healthy lifestyle so local teams are not charged exorbitant fees to use facilities. Parent/local clubs cannot afford the fees that some are charging i.e. Cefn Saeson. Parents already pay council tax.
- The younger generation are the future
- Being able to get a job and to afford decent accommodation. Getting a good education.
- More support for children with SEN
- Free school meals should be for ALL children. Flying Start should be more accessible to more families in the area. More activities that include disabled children
- We have a great beach with lots of space. Space which should be filled with things for families and children but our **** council have done nothing about it for 40 years
- Green skills: learning to grow food, forage etc.
- Mental health understanding and support.
- Library service is important for children
- Improve access to mental & physical health, nutrition, well-being facilities and education.
- What about older people who have lost a lot of things to help them keep active.
- The parks are disgusting and ruined. Children (teens) ruin it for the younger ones damaging equipment and being violent. Police let them get away with it because of 'home problems'
- Mental health support for children, it is abysmal in this borough. I'd go as far as to say it is criminal how hard it is to get help/
- More after school clubs run by the school for all ages of children both primary and comp.
- I particularly think that affordable buses with a regular time table would be invaluable.
- Re-introduce perhaps the last Labour Govs. Sure start scheme.
- Develop "SureStart" type comprehensive early help for disadvantaged families. Vital, as it helps the whole family.
- Better advice and guidance with the working environment as well as advice on all possible careers.
- What does do what matters mean?
- Schools should educate on LGBTQ+ issues. R.E should include paganism and Wicca.
- We are 2 90+ residents. This proposal is geared for the youth of today, whilst we wish them well, we would welcome more support for the elderly and for our daughter - our full time carer.
- They need to be informed/made aware that there are consequences to inappropriate behaviour.
- It's great
- Too old now 82 years
- All children need to be included no matter their background
- Smaller classrooms of children - they are more likely to pay attention, learn + with a smaller class, a teacher can tend to those with questions/queries. I feel like my education (maths in particular) suffered due to larger classes. This was noticed from primary age onwards.

3. Communities are Thriving and Sustainable

Communities are thriving and sustainable		
In the feedback from the 'Let's Talk' campaign, this is what people told us matters to them:	Because of what you told us matters to you in relation to our communities, we are proposing to focus on the following:	
	Next 12 months:	Longer Term:
Contact with family, friends and pets	Map our neighbourhoods; what's strong; how can informal care and support be improved	Work with communities to agree what communities want to achieve for the future
Being safe	Expand the number of local area co-ordinators; bring greater consistency to their work; increase the number of people helped to connect with local informal care and support networks	Deliver training to council staff so they understand the principles of community development
Being healthy; good access to health services	Create a network of neighbourhood forums	Continue to support the development of more community groups and volunteers
Having a secure job and a good work-life balance	Provide seed funding for community and voluntary initiatives that strengthen early intervention and prevention support	Work with the community to prevent problems from happening or getting worse
Children have access to good education and schools stay open	Encourage and further develop community and voluntary groups	Improve connectivity, both digital and transport
Community relations; having events that bring people together	Encourage and support council staff to volunteer	Improve informal and formal support for elderly and vulnerable residents
The arts, our culture and heritage	Strengthen our neighbourhood management services and introduce a county borough wide programme to catch up, clean up and green up our neighbourhoods	Seek funding to improve the public realm and help to sustain community hubs
Better bus services	Continue to promote and develop our 'Buy Local' initiative	Improve facilities and services for young people
Cleaner and better maintained streets and green spaces	Continue to work through our community safety partnership to address the problems posed by alcohol, illegal drugs, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour	Work with developers to increase the supply of quality, affordable and low carbon housing; help residents to reduce the carbon emissions of their homes
More and cheaper outdoor leisure facilities	Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function	Use our place making charter to ensure community developments bring out the characteristics of what is distinctive about each place
More support and facilities for young people	Begin to implement our place making charter	
Ensuring elderly and vulnerable people are supported		
Better interaction with the council		

3. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about communities:

Figure 3: Responses to the question 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about communities' (base 466)



3a. Where people indicated that they "agreed with/disagreed with some" of the things we are proposing to focus on in communities, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figure 3a: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about communities' and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the next 12 months:

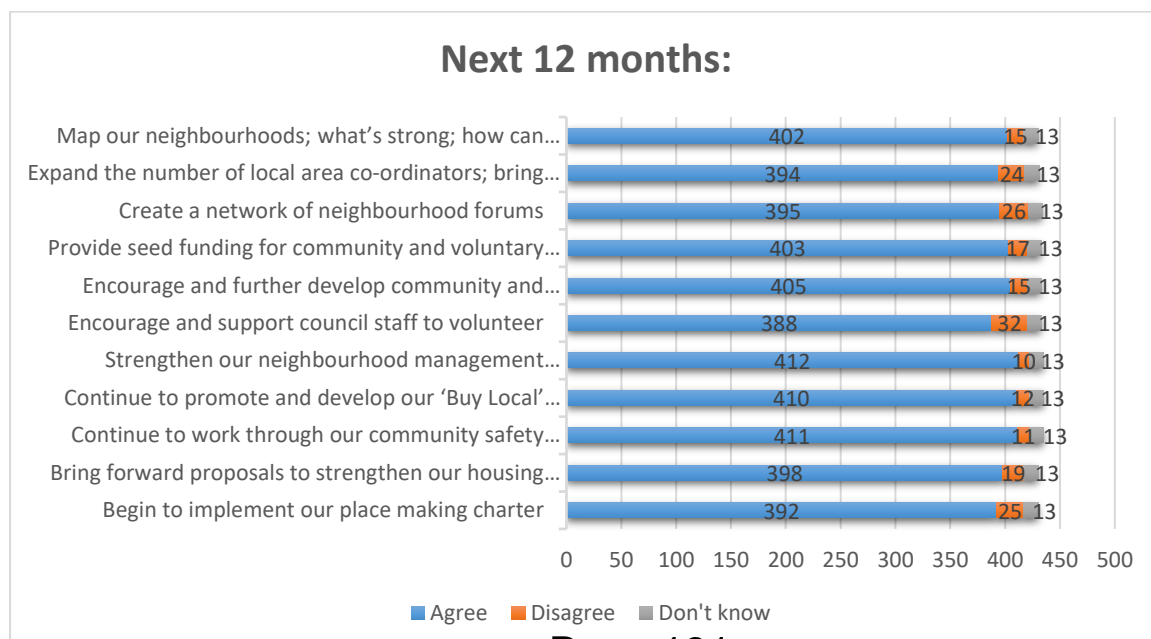
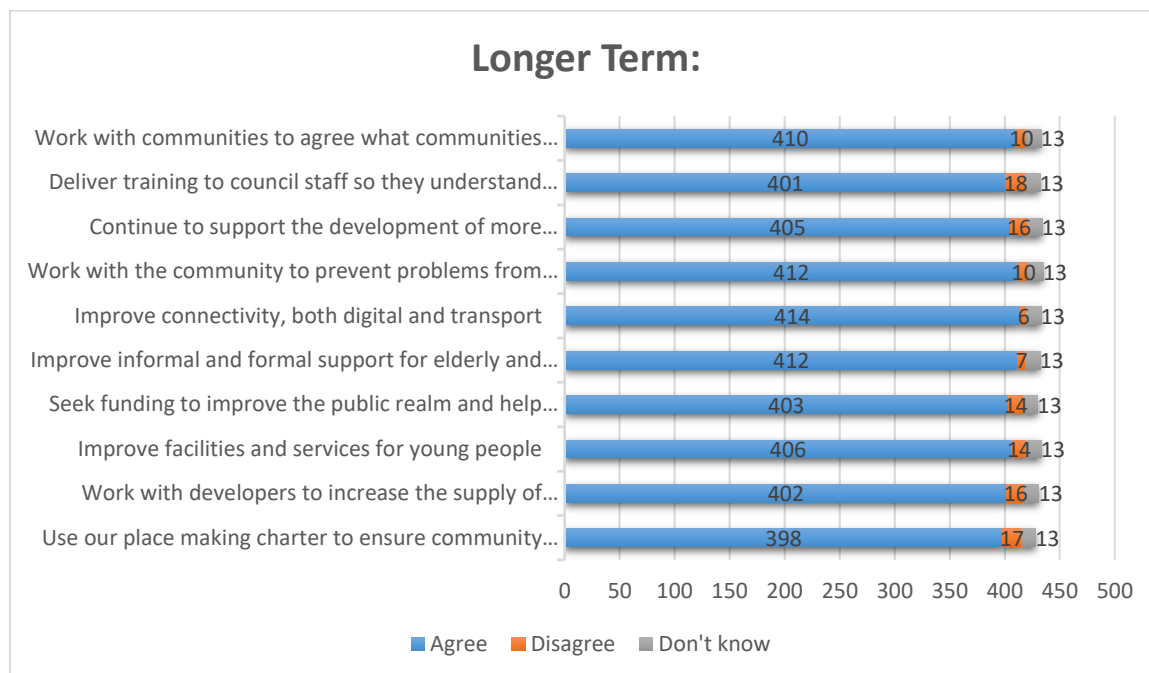


Figure 3b: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about communities' and 'if you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the longer term:



3b. We asked if respondents think there is anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of thriving and sustainable communities – 150 people responded to this question, as follows:

- A lot of elderly or adults without social media aren't aware of what's available in the community.
- Trying to develop strategy for individuals as start-ups and also the further development and help of tourism in the areas suited to bringing outside money into the authority.
- It's difficult to disagree with your aspirations but it's frustrating that the survey leads us instead of focussing on what we want to tell you, that's why I put don't know to have an opportunity to speak to you, I agree with all of them but I don't believe realistically you can achieve them in the current or future climate, just my view really.
- Hold surgeries with local community to get feedback directly from the community and understand any specific issues.
- A museum in the town.
- Continuing and prolonged cuts are impacting on the standard of service the council is able to provide but it has become more and more expensive for an inferior service. Firefighting is more expensive than proactive planning and strategy.
- Improved local sport facilities, amenities and shops
- More financial help for working families who are struggling.
- Funding to help ALL families deal with current rises in energy prices and inflation, not just those on benefits
- Stop wasting our money on glass bus stops
- Digital capability is priority - the pandemic isolated many residents and affected their mental health when face-to-face services were retracted. We need to learn from this and not just rely on libraries but set up supported internet cafes with universal access for all
- Need to stop the politics and look after the people better across all of NPTCBC, your ambitions are commendable but service delivery very poor indeed.
- Reduce the impact of cars - blocking pavements etc. Encourage people to walk more, even if it's from one side of car park to the other. Effective measures to slow traffic (speed humps don't do this)
- Nothing about better bus services, outdoor leisure facilities or being safe. It's all well and good writing lists but the Council needs to ensure it listens and acts.
- Bring back the old character of our town. Encourage small shops and businesses into the area and clear station road of drunks and layouts.
- School holidays reform. 6 weeks in the summer is too long esp when working from home.

- Opportunity to volunteer locally
- Make sure the community venues that already exist are used as part of the planning - libraries are a wonderful community venue and people see them as safe and unbiased, also community centres - why aren't these used more by the council?
- Better housing stock
- Affordable housing to include more and affordable social housing.
- Extend understanding of support to "community" to include victims of domestic abuse - e.g. train staff + Improve council's digital capability - e.g. ability to make payments online via website instead of phonecall
- Access to services for those that struggle with digital platforms also those with reading difficulties.
- Transport and good connectivity are essential to make sure everyone has equal opportunity. We need to talk up the area and make sure local people are engaged with the council
- More cultural opportunities for the community to express themselves and help with mental health
- A return town house leisure services and social housing.
- There is too much emphasis on the voluntary sector, where volunteers come in existing npt services go out..No help for people to gain employment outside of the Afan valley, no transport at shift change times..
- Council workers speaking to people with more compassion and not being unapproachable
- not from my view
- Better street cleaning, better bus services, stop people allowing their dogs to roam the streets off the lead and fouling pavements.
- Consider the cost to council tax payers
- To feel safe and not have so many incidents of anti social behaviour, for businesses in the communities to be considerate to local people living in the area, for car parks to be provided in area's where parking a car is becoming problematic , to have accessible roads and paths, more cycle paths, more rubbish bins to be emptied, for communities to be involved and listened too when developing anything in their area.
- 'Much much' better interaction with the local council!
- A level playing field for ALL areas of NPT. I am a resident of GCG and fortunate to have my own transport. There is a lack of public transport from the villages of the Amman Valley to allow residents to access Pontardawe, our local Town. Therefore they are unable to support the ' buy local' initiative. (We can access Ammanford through an hourly service.) We are the only area of NPT which does NOT have regular public transport to its nearby town.
- Clear strategic plan for a future without Tata
- Transport us always a difficulty with a sparse distribution of communities unlike London for example. Some thinking outside the box !
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points in order to encourage the transition to electric vehicles.
- Sustainability? Nothing about public transport
- To ensure important historic landmarks and sites are not lost, are preserved and well promoted. Also to support the arts in all its forms from grass roots clubs to venues including music venues and art galleries.
- green spaces accessible to communities, especially the more urban ones
- We also need to work better with our smaller communities such as Gypsy Travellers, we also need to understand that community development also means putting trust in local people to find answers within their own community.
- Glynneath has become grubby & unkempt with litter & dog fouling. It would be nice to see more teams of litter pickers on a more frequent basis. Glynneath has the opportunity to blossom as the gateway to Waterfall Country & the Brecon Beacons -an opportunity that is being lost at the moment. It would be great to see more 'greening up' of the town as trees are being cut down at a rate of knots. More importantly is maintaining Trem Y Glyn residential home in Glynneath. It is a treasured and well loved home that cares for our local elderly & vulnerable residents and needs to stay open when it is due it's review this year
- Libraries
- Better Mental Health and better housing support and options for 16+ who are not Care Leavers.
- There needs to be routine checks on care providers to make sure that they are doing their job correctly. Also providing elderly people with activities that kept them mentally well, provide interaction with other people for support and Company.
- We desperately need a single place to list all leisure facilities in the NPT area, to include everything from a photography club or group to gym classes with Celtic Leisure. Many people

don't have the digital skills to perform an effective search. This is why we need to make it easy for them with links to web pages and an easy way for service providers to input their own details so that they are always maintained and up to date without affecting council human resources.

- More housing like one/two bedroom flat and houses is necessary. Also please don't build too many housing estates etc as this will also go against your plan to 'green up' the plans to build housing on the old Lido site are an example of this. That land could have been used to develop something to improve green energy using the sea or greener areas inline with the seafront already and the easy is option is to stick a load of houses there
- AS long as what is suggested is adhered to then the Communities and people should benefit
- Perhaps there is a lack of emphasis on poverty - with energy prices soaring - I think there are going to be more people facing poverty
- Bring back provision for learning art and craft within community venues - being active and creative help with health and wellbeing. ACL stopped all art and creative courses which means there is no scope in NPT for older (or younger) people to explore their creative sides. Digital inclusion is wonderful but many many people want to learn by sharing and being with other people within their community or making friends with others who have similar interests.
- Linking to the 'Buy Local' initiative should be an initiative to support capable and committed local third sector providers with long-term funding to ensure continuity of services should also be included in the long term.
- Help to provide job opportunities, training and support measures to get long term unemployed into the work place.
- education on how these things can and will happen so that people get involved
- Buy local could be extended to local farmers markets. Ensuring the homeless are supported. Support and facilities for young carers. Better use of empty shops- pop up businesses etc.
- The homeless and vulnerable need to be cared for and integrated into society with decent housing and education.
- Support and fund libraries I. No community measures can be achieved without adequately funding our main community hubs ie libraries
- Briton Feery not to be overlooked AGAIN when funding these projects
- There's a great emphasis on developing community groups, volunteering, LACs, etc. Not so much about service delivery - cleaning streets, for instance, I live in The Croft notorious for drains being blocked and have seen a street sweeping vehicle once in a whole year.
- better health and social care infrastructure - pay carers a decent wage and make the jobs appealing
- Ensure there are opportunities for young adults in our communities that fall between service provision as they are often forgotten/unable to access certain groups of support due to them being 25-30.
- revamp port talbot town centre. bring music and performers to the town centre. revamp aberavon beachfront also. lots of potential here
- Appoint Street 'leaders'.
- To support young unpaid carers
- Support business needs in the community through the establishment and support of networks
- Reduce business rates to encourage new businesses into Neath, Port Talbot, Briton Ferry and Skewen. Neath has very little to offer shoppers and there is so much anti social behaviour and drug use in the centre it is intimidating for people especially the young and elderly. The first impression when you step off the train or park your car is people drinking and drug taking
- More apprenticeship opportunities
- Encourage and further develop community groups, and 'continue to support the development of more community groups', sounds like you will only support them in getting set up. You need to enable them and provide ongoing support to facilitate action. There have been many instances of community groups feeling that working with the council is a barrier to them achieving their aims and you need to change that perception. You need to get the words 'enable' or 'support' into each of these actions.
- I think there are enough LAC's but need to ensure the best outcomes for communities by working closely with other organisations, needs more focus on carers
- There needs to be a stronger focus on community health and wellbeing
- Communities don't generally look to social services to come riding in like the cavalry so save their community. We're getting very 'worthy' and self righteous about our role. We are not the community. We're just an option.
- There isn't a specific strategic focus regarding the arts and culture. We know that if culture is thriving within a community, the community itself continues to prosper. This also can't be

shoehorned into a "community hub" objective, it needs its own focus and long term vision. The development of the plaza is fantastic, but we need to be careful we don't just rely on the development of a building to solve our problems and address some of our challenges. What we fill the building with will have a far greater impact.

- Village schools are at the heart of every community. Close them and the community will wither and die. The reason we need any of the above is due to the systematic destruction of our village schools to save money. This must stop now. All of the above points that need to be funded are a side effect of School closures.
- Not sure what the place making charter is? With regard to working with developers, don't bother. They relieve the council of it's money quite easily. It's common knowledge in the industry.
- more focus on youth into self employment and creating jobs, not just applying for jobs (digital economy)
- Green spaces are not just about being cleaner or better maintained but about improving their biodiversity to help people interact with nature for their mental and physical health
- Maximising income - benefit support, where necessary
- Natural environment- integrating spaces for nature in our built environment enriches people and communities
- how much money do you give to public transportas some services have been stopped altogether
- Equality for all communities - some are better served by elected members than others. Poor local shops and no notice taken of environmental damage e.g. from TATA
- Timescale and funding for projects
- I never see anything where you help the quality of life for children with special educational needs, children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities.
- I have lived here all my life, now walk down the streets and they are dirty and uncared for , why cant you sweep the roads and drains more frequently, why does grass grow in the gutters, why are the drains blocked.....
- Needs to be SMART, specific and measurable, how will you know if you have met your objectives?
- Charging points for electric cars , also rubbish in streets is worse I have ever seen it introduce consequences for dropping litter , bin men need extra manpower to sweep up dropped recycling otherwise why are we bothering to recycle !
- More advertising about what's going on in the community
- if managed will benefit those in some areas but not in all areas
- Why are the young people services being put into the long term? Why can't you do anything for them in the short term too?
- disabled people need to be able to have dropped kerbs all around so they can access bus stops and crossing roads.
- You need an organisational chart to highlight accountability and specifics of who will deliver services. Most of the above are buzzword driven, community, sustainability, partnership all pretty meaningless but look good on an action plan
- Major improvement to accessing NHS services
- Reducing the rates on Neath premises in order to encourage more 'local' business to the area instead of everyone 'closing down'.
- More networking events for third sector and community organisations
- Ensure the digital and transport connectivity of communities is affordable and reliable
- There needs to be training available for volunteers to ensure that they meet good governance processes. Strengthen partnership work with volunteer groups. Communication with the council is not easy
- Increase Welsh language community opportunities and learning for all
- Community development is key, encourage members of the local community to become involved with service provision, communitie need more ownership of the services provided to encourage others to become involved.
- Second council staff to the charities that work on the ground in the borough to understand the principles of Community Development
- Reduce council tax
- What matters is also how a place looks and is presented. eg. Coming through Briton ferry looks terrible and shop and home owners should be made to make it presentable
- More food bank resources
- Speaking as a disabled person it is a vital requirement that mobile library services are at the very least maintained and improved
- Cheaper outdoor facilities when local authority washed their hands with leisure activities

- improved communication with residents so that we know what can be available
- Better communication between public and NPT [Transport etc]
- Develop disused areas for community developments and activities
- 'Buy local' needs to be more specific to local produce, independent businesses.....not Tesco which is across the road from me. Improved sustainable travel is vitally important, particularly for low incomes.
- Children should be told at a very young age NOT to throw litter etc. in the outdoors
- Not missing as such, but you state 'continue...to address problems caused by alcohol, illegal drugs...' etc. I feel this should say 'continuously review' as this is a huge problem for the town and has a huge impact on having (or not having) a thriving community
- Community gardens where local people can walk, meet, and help maintain. Invest in the Celtic leisure centres, they have warm empty rooms, use them to tackle loneliness, have fun, educate, alleviate fuel poverty. Free gym memberships to the poorest, give room space to charities to reach communities, advertise these services. Improve your website..
- Thriving on green initiatives such as solar wind and hydro for homes and businesses. Also better communication on all these initiatives
- Public transport. Public transport around the ages of NPT is non-existent or extremely poor.
- Reduce immigration and address those communities that refuse to integrate - both are seriously damaging social cohesion
- Unbiased factual education on the environmental crisis that we are facing and what we can do, both personally and collectively, to try and prevent it
- Advocacy
- Promoting community wellbeing through the use of open green spaces.
- Although it is mentioned that there will be a continuation in working to address problems with anti-social behaviour, mostly caused by drugs and alcohol, it does not say how this will be achieved, and this has now become a major problem in Neath, so although it is mentioned, I am concerned in how this can be achieved.
- Mental health support and funding is seriously required and is extremely poor in npt
- the box relating to carbon emissions should be listed under the next 12 month, not "longer term" - the climate crisis cannot wait. Also Support and encourage neighbours to hold street parties - they are amazing at creating doorstep connections
- Again how will this be achieved. I think all this is highly dependent on people feeling safe in their neighbourhood. We need to retain valuable people leaving Neath Port Talbot because of the degradation of the town and some of its inhabitants.
- Most of these are not achievable. Normally long term means never.
- And more importantly educational of drivers who, example Speed up Bertha Road. When the children are leaving school for the day.
- Better bus services are highlighted by the Lets Talk Campaign, but there appears to be scant recognition of that in the proposals for the next 12 months or longer
- Specific recognition of the importance of places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community and economic hubs which help create vibrancy and meeting space in the Community. More active links to Arts and social prescribing to help mental health and well-being.
- Community transport, particularly crossing between Neath area and Port Talbot. Help for home owners to install windows, doors, wall ties, rendering,. Options for installing solar panels or using water turbines to create energy
- Renewable energy projects, focus on locally sourced sustainable produce, ev charging ports / transport
- Specific recognition of the importance of places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community and economic hubs which help create vibrancy and meeting space in the Community. More active links to Arts and social prescribing to help mental health and well-being.
- i dont understand all of the above to be able to comment
- They should plant more trees in the area to help with the air pollution in Port Talbot from the steel works.
- Work to stop bullies in school
- More youth clubs
- There must be a strong commitment to fulfill these pledges backed by finance and actual practical solutions. A need to engage with the public more equally and not just when there is an election.
- Not enough support always for carers at home.
- No mention of older people in the proposals for the next 12 months. Also, no mention of how social isolation and loneliness are going to be tackled
- Treating all communities the same

- We need a service for elderly people that are on their own, and would appreciate someone to talk to, take to hospital appointments, just to visit them and have interaction
- Why are our town centres full of down and outs
- Green neighbourhoods, sharing renewable energy, excluding cars
- More soft plastic recycling. What's being done about people who aren't recycling as much as they could be.
- Take back control of facilities currently run by private companies and make them council run
- Promote and support local business looking to operate locally (walking distance) reducing carbon footprint and enhancing the community.
- More cleaning of roads in the valleys as well as towns.
- Re bus services ... they need to be available early in the mornings... for shift workers and people with early starts. Also later for people again "workers" but also for people going out for a meal/concerts/theatre not everyone has a car.
- I agree with all stated above , but in our financial situation can't see how it can be achieved.
- I don't think anything is missing. I just think none of this will be carried out as there has been years of neglect.
- Call me a cynic, but all these surveys and promises, just a couple of months before the elections in May. Heard it all before, and thankfully people are starting to realise it as well.
- More buses in to discourage car use.
- Better public transport vital. If buses are frequent/reliable they'll be more used; fewer cars. BUT - drivers, cyclists, impeded by buses, leading to congestion. More road space needed BUT not more roads! How to solve this? Better organisation of existing space?
- Providing more work and education for adults around work.
- Facilities needed for older teenagers to 'meet up' instead of 'hanging around' children's parks/playgrounds, streets, where others may feel intimidated by them. Nb. 'Buy Local' usually means buy 'expensively' local.
- UPDATE PANT FEDWEN HOUSES, ESPECIALLY THE ROOFS. GET RID OF THE PLASTIC DOORS AND REPLACE THEM WITH WOOD DOORS. WOODEN DOORS KEEP HOUSES WARMER.
- 1. Free car parking (or free up to 3 hours) for town centres - this will encourage local people/those passing to shop in that location - the current parking situation are driving potential customers away; 2. opportunities for businesses to invest in the locality + create jobs; 3. provide "street marshals" to locate vulnerable people + either signpost them/arrange transport via taxi to their home/hostel

4. Our environment, heritage and culture

Our environment, heritage and culture

In the feedback from the 'Let's Talk' campaign, this is what people told us matters to them:

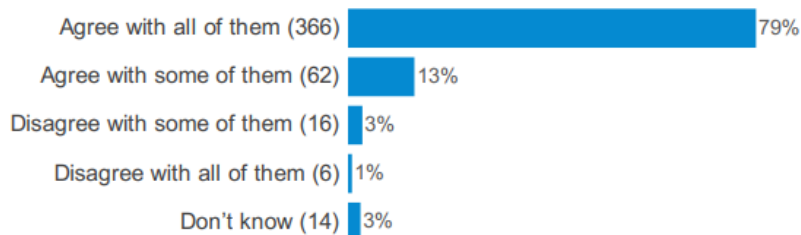
- Keep the past alive, promoting and celebrating our heritage to strengthen our sense of identity and sense of belonging
- Help to protect, preserve and maintain our historic and heritage sites for present and future generations
- Promote our Welsh language, traditions and culture
- Help all generations to connect with our natural environment, heritage and culture
- Improve facilities for walking and cycling
- Help our community and voluntary groups to sustain and further develop their important work

Because of what you told us matters to you in relation to our environment, heritage and culture, we are proposing to focus on the following:

Next 12 months:	Longer Term:
Establish a small grants scheme to help community groups and societies to recover	Define a programme of flagship heritage and culture projects for the county borough
Introduce a community recognition initiative, led by the Mayor	Extend work to help nature recover
Help to promote the work done by local groups	Extend our active travel network and improve public rights of way
Support and encourage volunteering at council-owned nature sites	Implement the new leisure strategy
Train our workforce	Further develop flood and pollution mitigation measures
Further develop and implement our Welsh language promotional strategy	Establish the county borough's brand as a destination of choice across the UK and internationally
Enable children to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture	Link the environment, heritage, sport and culture to work to create a stronger, more sustainable economy
Set a new strategic direction	Encourage local people to be more active in the stewardship of their local environment
Refresh the council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan	Embed the history of the local environment, heritage and nature into the curriculum
Seek external funding opportunities	Transition from traditional energy sources to more sustainable energy sources
Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements	Increase the proportion of the Council's budget spent on greener alternatives for goods and services
Deliver our planned programme of projects and service changes to improve access to local sport, leisure, culture and heritage	Promote the benefits of buying local to residents, businesses and partners
deliver planned projects to conserve our local environment	

4. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture:

Figure 4: Responses to the question 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture' (base 464)

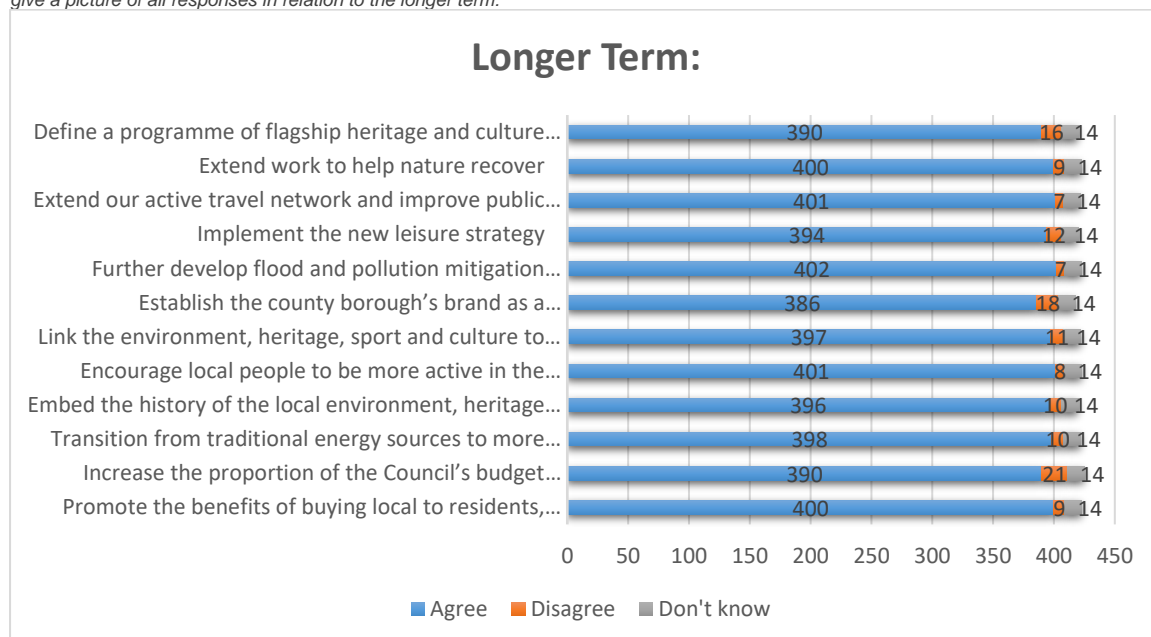


4a. Where people indicated that they “agreed with/ disagreed with some” of the things we are proposing to focus on in terms of our environment, heritage and culture, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figure 4a: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' in relation to the next 12 months:



Figure 4b: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the longer term:



4b. We asked if respondents think there is anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of our environment, heritage and culture – 138 people responded to this question, as follows:

- The beach park area and streets and surrounding school are littered and filthy with dog faeces. Many dog owners want their dogs access all areas even the childrens playground which they arent allowed but they litter and dont pick up after their dogs which is a risk to children. The streets of port talbot are disgusting and embarrassing. The threat of fine is no threat at all!! I've challenged dog owners myself on the beach and they dont even pick up faeces when I have told them theyve forgotten to pick up. More patrols and greater fines. Dogs should be on a leas on the beach so owners cant use the excuse that the dog has runoff and they didnt notice. I am a dog owner and parent and there are a lot of dog owners who dont take responsibility.
- Again, our environment, heritage and culture are one of our biggest assets as attractions to tourists so we should try to further develop this. We should support and possibly be more involved with the Rhondda tunnel project and also look at the secondary tunnel from the Afan valley into the Pelenna valley, again enhancing what we have to offer.
- Again agree with your aspirations but deliverable I doubt it very much, things haven't improved in NPTCBC for a very long time unfortunately and it's not just down to the coronavirus situation, rural wards have and are still being left behind unfortunately
- Be more transparent on process when securing external funding and the process following successful outcome. For example, it seems funding was successful re restoration of bandstand in taibach memorial park however no works have began and it seems the local community group are currently doing more. The silence on this is very frustrating.
- A museum in the town
- Agree with them all yet our shops are closing, our church is closing, we have to travel for shops and petrol, and our landscape and local environment is not maintained
- this one to me is extremely important- connecting green spaces and our rich environmental and historic culture to the residents - ensuring it is preserved and understood- and not brushed over for a quick financial fix.
- Long term plan for the closure of the steel works to enable NPT to become a cleaner and more attractive leisure destination
- Training in schools for safe bike riding practices.
- Invest in our Parks which became a haven for all during the Pandemic. Develop the coffee/chatting/meeting facilities and update the childrens equipment which is sparse and boring in most parks in Neath Port Talbot. Margam Park is expensive to get into but it is run down, neglected with poor facilities - make it the jewell in the crown again. Celtic Leisure is a great facility - more free classes for 60+ perhaps and the more popular classes in the evening for those who work 9-5pm
- Maintain Margam Park and Castle and use the whole park, open it up similar ro pembrey Country Park. Have camping, camp site, cycle tracks ect
- Rural and most valley communities are let down with lack of investment for far to many years, nothing happened since the demise of the mining operations really
- Improve facilities for cycling and walking not strong enough. Provide proper facilities, even at the expense of reducing facilities for cars. Pedestrians and cyclists not sharing same space. Pedestrians and cyclists priority needs to be upped, more zebra crossings, fewer pelican crossings.
- Nothing about improving facilities for cycling and walking? Many areas eg parts of the Gnoll and public rights of way can be impassable because the council does not cut and maintain the paths. We regularly have to ring up to have a public bridleway near us to be cut back as it is impassable. There should be preset maintenance plans in place which also includes litter picking and drain clearance.
- These are priorities which should be in place anyway
- Not sure how you will encourage and enable young people to be active....when access to any areas or facilities are locked away for clubs only. This is a massive step back from how the towns and areas of NPT looked 30 years ago. Having big new schools is fantastic, but only allowed to use if you pay is ridiculous. All fields are now locked and available only if you hire. Whilst this benefits the council as there isn't a need to maintain, this takes away opportunity and facilities for everyone.
- Maintain/improve facilities for local residents
- From all I've seen, Libraries play a role in all of the above yet are not mentioned here and are probably being cut year on year. They always have lots of children's activities - great for their literacy and development but also for us parents as we get to socialise; they run author

events and local history talks and reading groups and would probably run more of all if they had the funding; they help lots of people trace their family tree and learn about their heritage; they help people use the computers (from what I can see a lot of them don't want to have to use the PCs but they have to for buss passes and COVID passports and things like that) and so much more than I know about.

- We need to ensure that the role of women in Welsh culture and history are not forgotten. Think about monuments/statues that are of incredible local people.
- The rubbish in the streets and back areas
- Put street lighting on road to brecon beacons
- Access for local residents, parking costs etc. We help to pay in to support schemes through our council tax but also then have to pay the highest costs often when compared to other LEA's
- More needs to be done to ensure neighbourhoods are clean and well maintained. The infrastructure for walking and cycling needs to be extended and better communicated
- I think the council should be working closely with NRW with the damage the aging steelworks is doing to the community and health
- Return to in house leisure provision and return to council ownership of social housing from Tai Tarian
- These proposals are "nice to have" great , interesting hobbies ,but not a need, this is one sector to hat should have minimal funding and be left in the be hands of enthusiastic volunteers..
- No, good on this view
- Stop pollution from local industry, especially Tata Steel.
- Consider the hardship of council tax payers. We can't keep on supplementing every social issue
- Find a good provider to take over Celtic Leisure who is a good employer for the staff who work there and can make it work financially so it doesn't rely on more public funding
- These are all a little non descript. An increase could be 1p or 1 minute, so in principle it sounds good but in reality and based on previous experience of LA etc so not holding out any real change improvement as its a political tick box. Do not trust anything NPTCC say or promise. Would love to be proved wrong.
- Levelling up needed. Amman area of NPT does not have walking/cycling paths linking neighbouring towns and villages.
- Set a new strategic direction; - this is vague, agree/disagree, depeends on the direction
- With the revelations about sewage etc entering our water courses more monitoring and prosecutions of polluters should have more priority.
- A programme of retro-fitting homes to become more energy efficient (along with the points raised earlier about diet and transport).
- Public transport
- Grants should be obtained so historic buildings, structures etc can be maintained and kept for future generations to enjoy
- more focus on biodiversity and protecting the natural environment, we are in a nature and climate emergency yet biodiversity seems to be taking a back seat in this plan to cultural and heritage. Its should be engrained as a base in all the objectives. Its proven to help mental health and wellbeing for people so it should be a focus to improve biodiversity on sites in NPT
- Libraries
- My previous point about a single access point for leisure activities would allow for better communication from all the ventures that develop as a result of the funding and initiatives explained above.
- What does 'Set a new strategic direction' mean? Disagreeing with the energy plan statement as there needs to be a lot of work done on this. It's really important to develop renewable energy etc but it seems to be as simple as build a windfarm. This shouldn't be the case.. The plans to build the Y Bryn Windfarm are incredibly detrimental to PT, Bryn, Cwmavon and Maesteg. Also it feels like putting heritage and culture in the same bracket as environment are quite conflicting. One thing we have in this area is amazing valleys, views, parks, biking trails and then something like the seemingly abundant plans to build windfarms will ruin this and destroy the heritage of the area. Use our seas and rivers, they are an outstanding asset for renewable energy that doesn't get a look in. Also how can you 'work to help nature recover' if it is being destroyed by 'renewable' energy? Welsh language is extremely important and glad to see there are plans to protect it.
- Again if everything is adhered too then these proposals should ensure a stronger understanding of environment, heritage and culture
- Stop tree planting everywhere and look after what you've got

- Make information clear regarding access to community grants to allow community to develop related projects
- People are more important than learning to speak Welsh. There is no mention here about how the Council is going to help elderly people live better and more fulfilling lives - they are part of our heritage and culture too!
- Not everyone wants to speak Welsh - people should be left to choose and not forced. There is far too much emphasis put on this and resources
- encouraging people to go out exploring what is on their doorsteps
- don't know what these planned strategies are? Wouldn't want 'leisure' facilities developed at the expense of heritage, natural environment, beautiful sites.
- A Heritage Champion Councillor - as in Merthyr Council. Link the Heritage sites in a Heritage Trail. Cadw should have a role. The Art work purchased by the Council and in storage should be displayed.
- I think there should be a heritage centre in Neath, where NPT's painting can be displayed, and an advice centre for making our homes and lives more sustainable.
- Joined up approach is vital. We have such a vast rich historical past which isn't utilised enough. Need more accommodation so perhaps campsites, green woodland lodges, encourage people to stay in our beautiful county. Develop cefn coed as a visitor attraction, gateway to Dulais valley and Brecon beacons. Opportunity for accommodation, museum and outdoor classroom space, small craft/business units, café
- Briton Ferry not to be overlooked AGAIN when funding projects
- Working alongside key partners such as Cadw to promote flagship sites of historical and cultural heritage.
- stricter measures on pollution from industry supporting transfer to greener steel making, better events in heritage sites
- Offer more community based leisure activities/groups for adults in NPT. Children's active promotion gets more funding from Welsh Government and this is needed for adults too
- the mayor is not a function I support and think should be scrapped
- If we could get rid of the Red Bricks from the Town Centre, and go back to what we had before, in the Long Run would we not save Money on repairing the Sinking Bits? back to the Da
- Ensure Welsh language place names are protected, encouraged and respected when promoting the county borough's brand and developing local tourism infrastructure and facilities. Will help to reinforce a sense of place and respect local history rather than risking renaming of places to appeal to English visitors, as is happening elsewhere in Wales
- Get more local culture and heritage taught in our schools, possibly at primary or early secondary phase
- build hubs with local businesses to attract coach tours, and have lovely shops selling Welsh produce and craft - This will help achieve the above also.
- More emphasis on supporting the workforce to learn Welsh and a Council wide policy on allowing the workforce time to do so. Many managers do not allow their staff time to learn. More Welsh and other learning opportunities in local classes for the public. Road improvements, safety and signage. Road side littering and fly tipping has also worsened since the closure of the recycling centre at Abernant.
- Embrace digital technology to educate communities and children of the heritage and history of PT.
- Provide unpaid carers with a reduced fee for gym and swimming pool use.
- Promote sustainability both at the individual and business levels
- Help to protect, preserve and maintain our natural, historic and heritage sites for present and future generations - environment needs to have higher priority
- Unless we make the area safer and less intimidating there is little point spending money on preserving the local heritage as people will not visit so there will be no revenue.
- free transport initiatives to attend culture venues including weekends for families to maximize their experiences
- More use of beaches for leisure activities
- Promote live events that enable local young people to participate in various art forms.
- The actions you have set for the natural environment are broadly focused on project delivery, supporting volunteers / partnerships to deliver, awareness raising / education and a broad statement on 'extending work to help nature recover'. All of these are important, but they do not demonstrate a commitment from the Council itself to embed biodiversity measures across all service areas. Recognition of the Biodiversity Duty Plan itself would have been welcomed, as would a recognition that there is a need to take strong action to halt the decline in biodiversity. Whilst the section on environment has given a higher profile to the natural

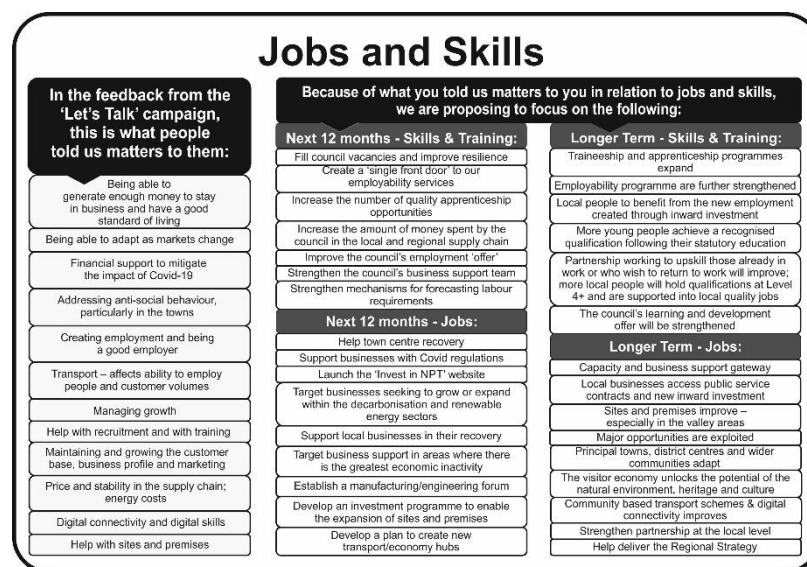
environment, it is not demonstrating greater action than that which has been achieved by the Countryside and Wildlife Team for some time.

- There seems to be a lot of talk about many of the above initiatives over the years but little action or positive outcomes
- Be careful who it is that decides and defines what our culture actually is. People will focus on what they say is worthy, not what actually is real culture and history.
- More messaging around littering and dog fouling, promote schemes such as Keep Britain Tidy
- Every single point above could be recognised and solved by a policy of revitalise, reopen, regenerate local village schools.
- Biodiversity
- With regard to expansion of Welsh language/culture, I don't disagree (only two choices available) but I would suggest that it would be more beneficial for the population to be multilingual like many European countries. With regard to the spend on sustainable fuel etc. That would be a project for WGov rather than local authority. With regard to culture, remember Wales virtually gave the world coal....and the industrial revolution....and hence global warming. However, I think we have a high potential for outdoor leisure and tourism but it is currently not regarded as important at all.
- Life skills training. Communication, assertiveness, negotiation, leadership, service, entrepreneurship by business owners
- Nature and the natural environment should be at the top of the list
- No- but note the nature recovery work is listed as long term. This should be in the priorities in the next 12 months as there is a nature emergency in Wales & it will build on the biodiversity service already in place at NPT
- one thing mayor has got a car. could they not use a bus service instead.
- More information about arts/culture/history. Not enough focus on making a pleasant environment for everyone - everywhere is dirty, scruffy and polluted. No notice is taken of environmental complaints and there is litter / dog droppings everywhere.
- Can't buy local as not many businesses in our village, improve opportunity like in a local farmers market
- Giving the library service more money and space to keep and maintain their important local heritage and studies collections.
- Focus on areas of relative deprivation rather than on more affluent areas
- Need more help to help provide home charging points for people who have electric cars whether you're working or not
- Again needs to be SMART,
- It would be interesting to see what your budget is to cover this wish list
- The environment includes our streets. Action must be taken against fly-tipping and those who don't dispose of the rubbish and recycling properly.
- Having fun!
- Wow
- Mark pavements that are for pedestrians, because cyclists think pedestrians should step aside for them
- Finalise the Culture and Heritage policy and ensure it links up with other related Council policies and strategies such as the Welsh language promotion strategy, Welsh education strategic plan and more.
- There must be closer connections between the council and volunteer groups. As the landowners, the council need to be aware of and agree the strategic aims and objectives of groups. It is very stressful implementing projects when there are no clear lines of communication. We need opportunities to be able to present project/ funding proposals to the council for joint discussion, guidance and agreement. This is a big barrier
- Long term goals relating to the Welsh language
- A focus on the positives of our environment, be able to be proud of Neath port Talbot.
- More street parties for our community. Briton ferry's main road to be cleaned up and look presentable especially the fronts of shops and houses.
- Although I am a fairly good Welsh language speaker, I disagree with using money to promote Welsh. It should be allowed to sink or swim on its own merits, The money would be more usefully used for other things. Also see note on use of sex in entertainment.
- I think there needs to be a much stronger action to combat climate change and the declines in nature/biodiversity. Covid has highlighted how vital green space access is to people in the last couple of years but it has further exacerbated the problems we face regarding single use plastics (disposable masks, gloves and places less/unwilling to provide refills).
- Nothing is missing

- 'Further develop and implement our Welsh language strategy'. Explain what this looks like? When Ysgol Gymraeg Castell Nedd wanted to purchase the old court building to expand the school- it went to the council instead. These council offices could have been almost anywhere. The building would have made a huge difference to the school. Unfortunately this shows me where the council's commitments are with regards to Welsh medium education.
- I'm keen to see a programme of 'blue plaques' erected to celebrate those whose outstanding achievements in the locality should be marked.
- Develop ways that all people can participate. If you live in a village, on a low income, getting to visit places or enter them can be impossible.
- Improve the NPTC website. Grass verges to be wildflower meadows. Plant more trees, encourage community gardens and support adoption of unloved spaces. Benches. Reduce pesticide and herbicide use. Promote walking clubs for all abilities and interests. Use empty rooms in council run facilities to host classes/exhibitions/activities for all age groups. Aberavon beach is a gem, let's keep it clean and healthy.
- Poor recycling system. The current bag system is flawed and needs to change back to the previous simpler and less messy system.
- Compile public register of heritage and cultural asset including works of art, heritage and literature to encourage public access and use. Encourage volunteering in the field of culture and heritage by heritage /local history fairs and presentations at pre retirement courses. Promote and facilitate access to heritage sites many of which are not easily accessible from existing rights of way networks eg Mynydd y Gaer hillfort above Briton Ferry and Baglan with benefits for heritage, health and wellbeing. Promote online history walks both countryside and urban for residents and visitors. Some local authorities run museums and galleries (with support from volunteers) to promote heritage. Could this be considered in NPT particularly with Neath's old library becoming vacant. Considerable time spent on one example of street art while collections of local art are not on display. Preserve Welsh language and traditional English language place names by use in naming new developments.
- Man made climate change is the greatest scientific fraud in history. Even if it were true, only China & India could make any meaningful difference.
- Unbiased factual education on the environmental crisis that we are facing and what we can do, both personally and collectively, to try and prevent it
- Active travel and public transport need to be improved urgently as part of NPT's response to the climate emergency. Many communities in the area have little public transport and limited access to active travel.
- Work with the Local Nature Partnership to plan and execute actions that will improve the resilience of natural environment.
- Possibly more organised events using the Gnoll park, Neath Abbey ruins for events, to help make the most of what we have, plus to generate revenue. And to ensure that these events are well publicised. Possibly work with local drama groups for outdoor theatre in the Summer.
- Keep and improve bridal paths
- Declare a climate emergency - NPT is now one of the few councils yet to do so. It is good that the DARE strategy is being updated as it was weak in relation to target and deadlines. However, the council really needs to start conveying the urgency of the climate & nature emergencies and a declaration does this.
- Engagement and instilling a sense of pride in the town. Promoting clean streets and litter picking.
- Preserving and maintaining our heritage is an expensive and time consuming job. It would be good to look after and bring back the past, but just walk through Neath Town Centre. It looks like it is being left to look like the past. Cheap looking building materials, shops not occupied and it appears there is no vision or investment to create a vibrant town.
- Teaching about the environment and historical facts that today are being forgotten about, such as WW1 and Two
- A recognition Arts and Culture are important investments and move away from old thinking of them being services which are subsidised. Ensure the Pontardawe Art Centre is refurbished and renewed together with the resources it needs to be sustainable. Develop a culture strategy to provide a long term investment road map.
- public electric charging options in the county
- Make the refuse collectors pay for all of the broken bins they just throw around
- Encourage schools to use visiting tutors to demonstrate heritage,
- Promotion of the area as a tourist destination with investment in leisure and hospitality
- Improve, increase and connect bridleways

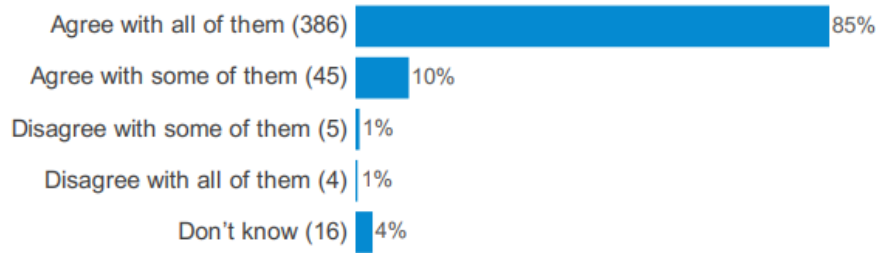
- A recognition Arts and Culture are important investments and move away from old thinking of them being services which are subsidised. Ensure the Pontardawe Art Centre is refurbished and renewed together with the resources it needs to be sustainable. Develop a culture strategy to provide a long term investment road map.
- More support for community groups with aim to help all not some
- After many years of neglect in Neath a very big commitment is required to achieve these goals. The town needs regeneration other than social housing. Neath town is full of social hoisting which has changed the culture and stability of the town.
- More facilities for and help people with disabilities
- Including sport, leisure, environment, heritage and culture under one objectives looks as though the impact on certain elements will be diluted, culture barely gets a mention here! They are all complex and sometimes contrary areas of work and should be split into two distinctive objectives, not one.
- It would be nice to see Margam Castle used more:- nice to see if renovated inside either as a museum or a country house hotel, and money from that put back into Port Talbot
- Margam Park should have more focus on the castle and there should be a caravan park there. It's a forgotten gem.
- Identify and promote more local historical sites using local residents' knowledge
- Reduce or stop Charging for Gnoll park parking
- More lighting (and possibly CCTV) along designated walking and cycling paths. Increase and promote outdoor facilities i.e. Forest Parks such as Afan Argoed, possibly Aberavon Beach. There is a lot of potential at these and other locations that feels wasted
- Engage with local businesses that may be interested in volunteering their time and sharing their experience to help support, encourage and engage with the community. d
- I think Social Media would be a great help to promote things.
- Develop NPT as a tourist/holiday destination. More help for industrial archaeology sites etc. Encourage holiday hospitality small businesses (B&Bs rather than holiday cottages). Think about sensitive development of provision of all - weather facilities - prolong holiday season! Encourage welsh identity in all ways.
- Opportunities for learning welsh for residents. 'greener' energy plans to improve.
- Culture should be enjoyed, but not enforced. We should also work to widen and explore various, older parts of our culture to "revive it" and make it more closed and specific to welsh people.
- Leave the past in the past - and focus on the future.
- Some people are unable to access these areas due to lack of transport (unless taxi which may be too expensive). Not accessible due to personal mobility issues.

5. Jobs and Skills



5. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about jobs and skills:

Figure 5: Responses to the question 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about jobs and skills' (base: 456):



5a. Where people indicated that they “agreed with/disagreed with some” of the things we are proposing to focus on in terms of jobs and skills, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figures 5a & 5b: merge questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about jobs and skills' and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the next 12 months:

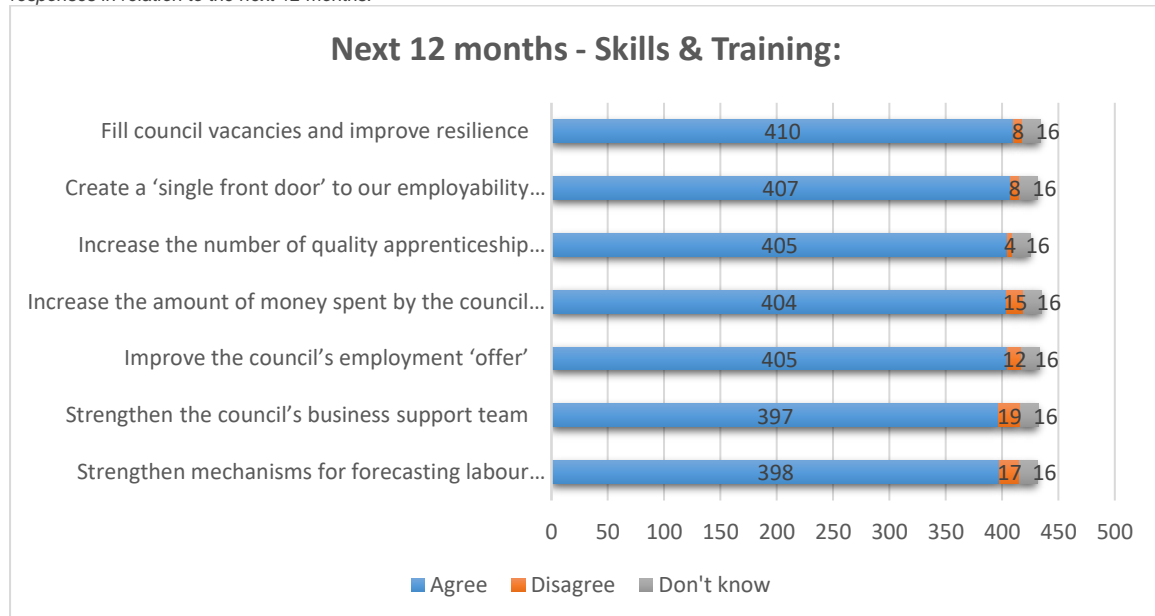
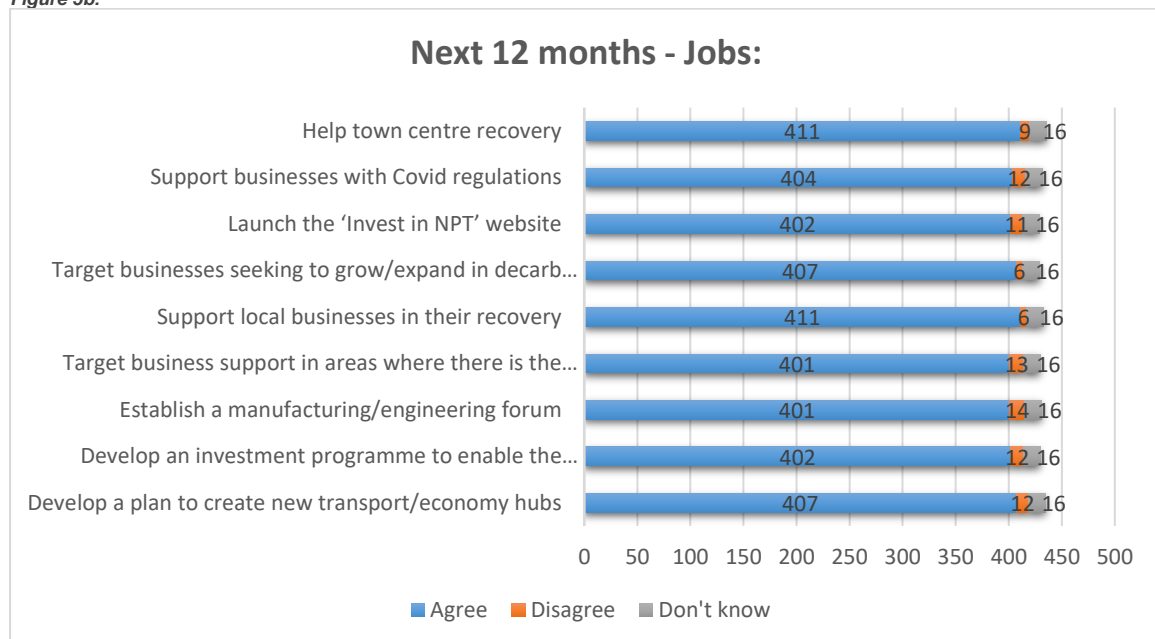


Figure 5b:



Figures 5c & 5d: merge questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about jobs and skills' and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the longer term:

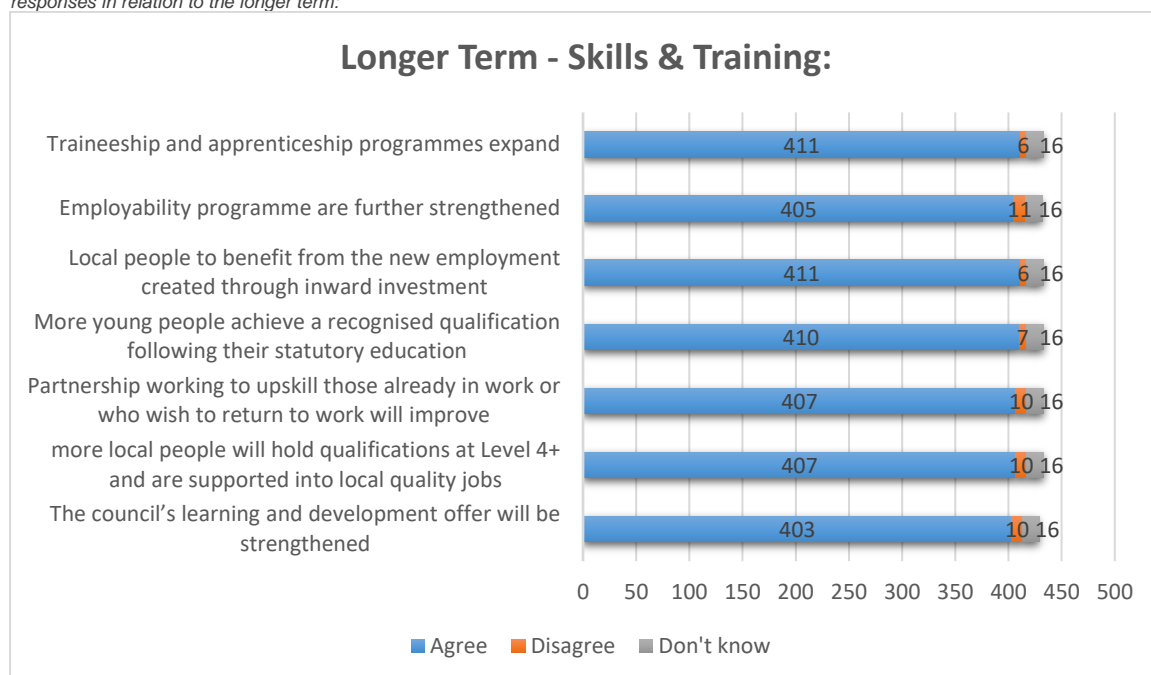
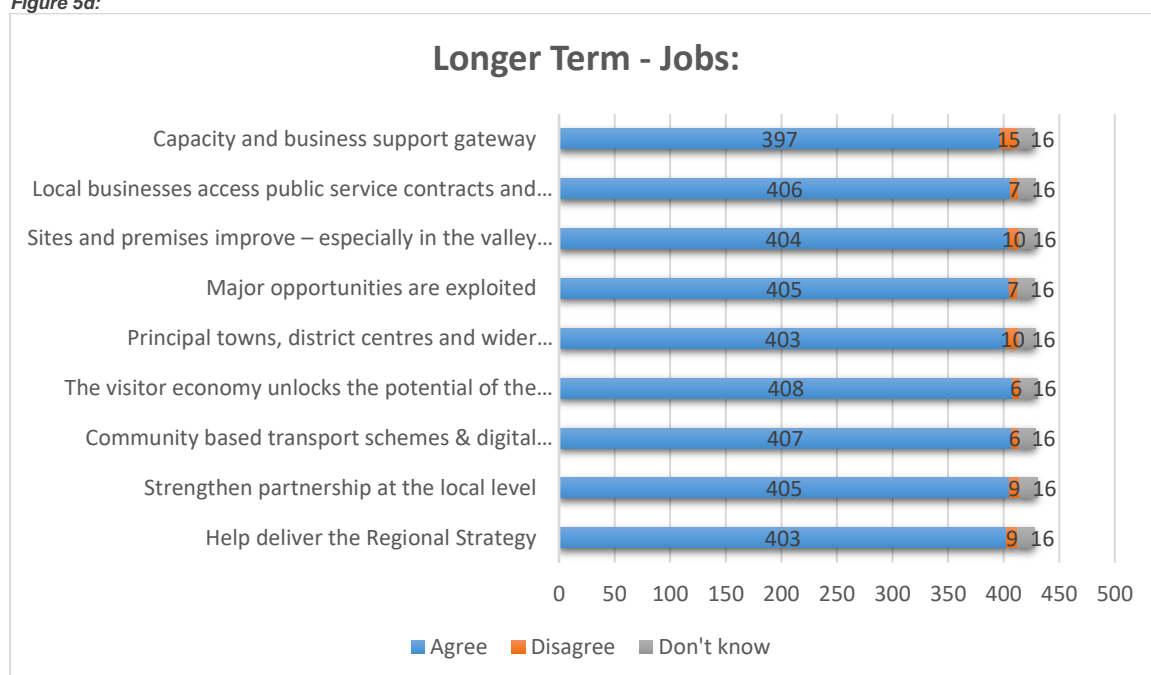


Figure 5d:



5b We asked if respondents think there is anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of jobs and skills – 95 people responded to this question, as follows:

- If not covered, perhaps more support to reactivate apprenticeships and training. We know we have a shortage of skills at the moment, a situation that is getting worse, so unless acted upon to redevelop, the knowledge of those already trained will not be passed on.
- Same view as other ones, we struggling to supply real well paid jobs right across NPTCBC as one of the most deprived areas across the whole of wales unfortunately
- Provide same opportunities to children across all schools to allow them to engage in vocational type courses/subjects to give them better chance of progressing on to further education.
- But again matching jobs to peoples skills and interest seems unrealistic

- Make formal links with Careers Wales, Jobcentres and L.Authority. Bring employability under one umbrella so employment provision is less confusing with no duplication making it far more cost effective to the tax payer. For years in Neath Port Talbot there has been some really good provision to those who are looking for a job but access to it is the biggest barrier.
- Lower the business rates in the town center to attract businesses instead of having empty shops or charity shops. Move the job center to a different location, or police the drunks and drug users from intimidating shoppers in Broad daylight.
- People again didn't communicate properly from the valley communities because they don't trust those running things at NPTCBC and I mean the ruling group of councillors, clearly shown by the previous leader and his comments, showed a complete disregard for us residents living in the valley.
- Pay and promote a living wage
- Full council vacancies??? What about all the other companies trying to recruit? This is an issue for all because it's all so confusing!!! More join up of services to make it more accessible and benefit everyone.
- Reduce the £750 covid isolation payment to the actual weekly amount they earned the week prior to isolation. Keep some benefits for people just starting work like free school meals for their children and buses to encourage people back into work and to stay in work.
- Lobby the uk government to buy uk (port talbot) produced steel
- Promote buy local initiatives
- New transport hubs? You need to address that white elephant in Port Talbot of a second bus station. Embarrassing waste of money. A small town by anyone's measure with TWO bus stations.
- Better transport links throughout NPT
- anti social behaviour is an issue in villages as well as towns. It needs to be addressed appropriately and promptly.
- The town centres need attention to bring out local culture and heritage. More events are needed to support our towns and seafront and housing needs to be a much bigger priority.
- More emphasis on the deprived ,under funded valley communities, more help on the transport problems..and quickly..
- The upskill of Current employees of NPT Council needs to be improved, this is touched on in "partnership working".
- This is going to cost council tax payers too much
- The reason why it is all in such a mess, got fed up of ticking things that should be in place. Anti social behaviour is a problem everywhere not just towns.
- Definitely addressing 'anti-social' behaviour in towns!
- More priority given to encouraging youngsters to take up quality apprenticeships considering the price of further education particularly Universities.
- we also need to help promote a better work / life ballance for council staff
- more support for care leavers to gain skills for employment
- Better 'Starting out in life' job opportunities for 16-25 year olds who decide not to stay in education.
- Provide apprenticeship schemes in Comprehensive Schools so young people get work related qualifications should the normal school curriculum not suit
- I also think we need a 'single front door' to out learning services for adults. This will better enable us to identify skills gaps that impact on employment prospects or progression.
- Create more green jobs
- What about skills in the arts and creative crafts - these have been totally ignored here.
- 'inward investment' for local third sector not just local businesses. Long-term funding to enable third sector to attract and develop a long-term skilled workforce.
- Encourage greater footfall in our towns by providing safer places to visit and also get Council staff back in their offices.
- where to find help when it comes to job searching
- Use the canals as a new form of transport. Utilise volunteers to achieve the above as well. .
- The homeless and ex-prisoners need to be trained for employment to prevent re-offending.
- Briton Ferry not being overlooked AGAIN when it comes to funding
- Much of this means very little at all. Language such as "strengthen", "help", "partnership working" are all too vague. It's just jargon that fills the page but means nothing much at all.
- let people continue to work from home, flexibly and dont push people back to the "old" and outdated ways of working thats why no-one wants to work for the council/nhs
- More of a push on bigger teams of social workers in order to promote preventative work
- Our town centre is wel out dated. We have great sites along the PDR road that could and should facilitate a retail park. Other than Bridgend, we are the only town along the M4 without

a retail park straight off the M4, which has good links. Instead people have to go to either Swansea or Bridgend areas. A good retail park could strengthen our labour market.

- Encouraging Artists, Crafts with events and fairs also helps boost community through a feel-good vibe. Street markets, Farmers markets also help
- Work closely with Trade Unions to draw on their expertise.
- Is there something here about encouraging volunteering to link to other targets?
- Support businesses with making the changes to more sustainable ways of working to reduce impact on the environment. Help them to take steps to contribute to the preservation of our natural heritage where possible.
- The Council's commitment to meet these proposals
- Improve self employment opportunities and opportunities to learn new skills
- More start a business courses on offer
- Help fund apprenticeship schemes.
- Helping people to get online is really important
- Support local supply chain through the Council's procurement and improved Select List
- I think we should take a stronger stance in our rhetoric. Rather than "Help" town centre recovery, it should be "Lead" in the town centre recovery strategy, Communities will need a sense of purpose in order to get involved, but also strong leadership to implement this. Words like "help" and "support" don't instill a sense of action or forward momentum. Let us be a voice for positive proactive brave change.
- Support local businesses to fill vacancies, not just council jobs. Also work experience programme for young people, getting them ready for the world of work.
- Neath town center is depressing. I live here and have visited twice in ten years, I don't spend any of my income there. The council business support team will need people who have run successful business to advise it, not people with a A-Level in business studies. The council already supports local business by allowing the sub-contractors to overprice work. Economic activity is a symptom of something else. Address the cause of that and business will grow organically, forcing it will only mean a proliferation of weak businesses which fail.
- Wide publication and access to this - social channels, forums, media - we never hear about this stuff as business owners here.
- My bus service starts at 7 am in some jobs you need to be in by 7.20am. Impossible up here
- Prioritise local people getting important jobs / particularly in the LA. Make planning easier so that small businesses can open more easily especially when they are tourist focused. Do something important to the front at Aberafan beach - not houses!
- Timescale and funding
- Help people with learning difficulties and special educational needs transition into employment
- Accessible to those with disabilities, Applies to all, again SMART
- Desperately need a link between schools colleges and local companies to get students into apprenticeships. Local authority to support with the financial support. You really need to look long and hard at the pedestrian area of Port Talbot. The pedestrian area needs to be revamped. It needs to be made attractive to small creative businesses. Low council rates. Grants and expertise to help these companies.
- Reduce rates, free parking, try and attract businesses into town centre that appeal to young people such as Primark, Nando's, H&M why not have facilities such as climbing walls in town centre, encourage outdoor dining we have a huge town square outside the old next, this could have better seating and more greenery to encourage people to sit and enjoy
- More support for disabled people who are looking for work/training. The Jobcentre doesn't care about this anymore.
- This is all very good but where is the money coming from council tax is high enough as it is, everything else is going up and doing this will increase the tax for families that are already struggling
- Improve our ability to develop bids for new funding so that we don't miss any opportunities e.g. Levelling Up Fund
- Need to ensure there is scope for older people, still in pre pension age, the ability to retrain and gain employment
- Lack of follow-up for youngsters to be able to participate in real job/career opportunities. I know lots of parents with teenagers 16 yrs+ that have been cast adrift & left to sit at home - a severe lack of communications from the very people who are supposed to be a support - I think it's hard for all but our future is in our 16 yrs+ & I dread to think what our future is going to be like. CHANGES - SUPPORT communications for them NOW

- All these points need clarification. If helping town centre renewal means shops that are not needed - no. Other alternatives such as community centres, play centres etc are needed to bring community together.
- How you will do these things - we've got the 'whats'. Where are the 'hows'?
- Something urgently needs to be done to police better the town centre.
- To encourage people to buy local and support local business, offer free car parking.
- Encourage businesses to make themselves safer for clinically vulnerable people, promote those that are doing well. Have job and training boards in leisure centres and libraries. Parking is an issue, make it easy to bring people in to town centres.
- The Internet. Businesses depend on the Internet, whether it is a home-based business, office or workshop. Internet access, speed and reliability is fundamental to business.
- Support of green innovation and jobs
- Digital connectivity and skills are key, and urgent. Remote working is a massive opportunity for people here, and the infrastructure needs to support them.
- support & encourage businesses to develop environmentally sustainable practices and decarbonise their operations
- Can you tell me what is the strategy for the Town centre in the next 12 months is? why did we take over a old factory in the Melyn and refurb it and leave Neath centre looking like it is, baffling?
- Antisocial behaviour is not just central in town it happens in such places like Bertha Road Margam, unfortunately it's worse when parents are picking up their children from school,
- Again reference is made to the Lets Talk initiative, with comment about transport but the proposals seem limited on what is being proposed for the next 12 months and longer on this issue.
- Recognise, through investment and promotion, the importance of the Council's own assets, such as the Pontardawe Art Centre, in supporting local town's recovery and economies.
- Support for those who struggle in mainstream education, dyslexia and dyscalculia assessments and support, particularly for borderline abilities
- Focus the area on attracting high growth areas such as creative sector, digital, renewable energies to create demand for local highly skilled labour
- Recognise, through investment and promotion, the importance of the Council's own assets, such as the Pontardawe Art Centre, in supporting local town's recovery and economies.
- Ensuring financial support is given to all not just those on benefits
- Those out of work, get them to clean buildings so that the whole town looks cleaner. Young people to be encouraged to take up apprenticeships in all forms of work.
- Not much of a focus on training, upskilling those already in the workplace. Oddly, there is no mention of links to schools, colleges or FE providers, surely this would be key?
- Reduce business rates to encourage new businesses to open in the town. Sell or renovate the old post office by the station.
- Investigate job corruption at NPTCBC
- As a self employed person it be nice to see more support to help business employ more staff
- We need local jobs for local people. Need investment into Hydro Electric we have lots of moving water we do not use
- More focus on local employment opportunities, making NPT more attractive & financially viable for business. Less focus on centralisation & city commuting for jobs
- see Q4b and Q5b - lots of opportunity to create jobs throughout the borough
- Support and provide infrastructure for community based businesses that offer employment opportunities and skills development.
- Do not think anything is missing. Anti-social behaviour in Port Talbot is the highest it has ever been. Given chance after chance which allows them to get away with it. Reported many incidents and they have been ignored or been given a stupid reason behind it.... could go on.
- and general - Encourage LOCAL businesses to make attractive, interesting and diverse town centres. Assist don't depise charity outlets - valuable recyclers, loved by customers, provide work experience opps. Thriving Charity Shops are an asset to town centres.
- Not sure why support for onlone start ups isnt on here.
- Many find job hunting difficult due to lack of IT skills/equipment; even though computers are available in libraries, those using them haven't got jobs as a main goal. Bring back Job Centres with frontline support whether online or 'cards on notice boards'.

6. Other views on the Draft Corporate Plan

6. We asked if respondents had any other views on 'Recover, Reset, Renew' our Draft Corporate Plan that they would like to share with us? There were 116 responses, as follows:

- I don't know much about this but I'm sure as a council you do your best, but the political side of it ruins any real progress because of your councillors in the main, we would have a better county borough if we could do without them lol just my thoughts I'm afraid
- Covid has prevented children from being able to take up work experience and open days for further education are now online which is much less of a positive experience. Could Education dept work with local employment groups to deliver online sessions to give career guidance, an insight into their roles and following that opportunities for low level mentor ship to support those who want to proceed with vocational courses.
- There needs to be more investment in time out on the street and practical vision instead of continual planning and changing of theories and blueprints
- Also feel that bringing council service back under the control of the authority would help strengthen the community both in terms of how residents think of the council and for local jobs
- Be innovative - that's not always digital based. Be inclusive - many have been isolated and left behind because of IT during the pandemic. Start at the very beginning again with fresh eyes, with the future of our children at the forefront of everything you do.
- More support and respite for people living with dementia and their carers.
- Not really as we doing what need to do already here in the valley , helping our disadvantaged and struggling residents , we are a close community and wouldn't like to see anyone struggling.
- Vastly improved public transport and additional affordable housing are crucial cross-cutting themes
- Bit alarmed at the 'train council staff', is this not there already? Do you employ staff who are not trained?
- These are just lists. The Council should already be doing most of this but it doesn't. The County Borough is in dire need of a good sort out due to the neglect of the Council workforce. In many cases employees spend longer trying to avoid doing any work rather than just getting on with it. The whole culture of the Authority needs to change and become a can do organisation not can't. COVID has only resulted in a neglected County Borough as quite frankly many feel it has been used as a convenient excuse not to do anything.
- Good luck and hope you stick to your plans
- Let's make this a reality and not another talking shop!!! People will support change and want to see this plan work!!!
- How to ensure involvement of those without internet access
- the plan is far too long and unwieldy to expect people to read through and digest in one sitting. I think you should have broken it down into smaller sections and run a consultation on each so that we can look at the detail.
- Keep Neath's culture and history at the heart of future plans
- Use the recovery from COVID as a real opportunity to reset partnership working with the community and between agencies. Be ambitious and invest in the area
- LAC workers should be managed by NPCVS and work more on Community Development not a arm length provision of Social Services
- Ensure the council support jobs are REAL jobs where there has been an identified need established by outside agencies as well as NPTCBC.
- Generally a good plan, but with the highest rates in the country, we should be having the best services..And the practice of replacing publicly funded services with funding from the side and the expectation that volunteers will pick up the slack is wrong...
- As long as the plan considers the current factors of the ongoing pandemic and the aftermath, which could lead to not meeting these targets.
- Stop people walking their dogs off the lead in public places.
- These issues have nothing to do with the responsibility of a council . Council tax payers are fed up with funding this nonsense
- not only that most of these should already be in place.
- There is a real opportunity here to reimagine npt through clean energy transport and digital
- Review council tax prices - for example why are our council taxes higher in NPT than the equivalent hours in affluent areas of Swansea eg Mumbles - seems unfair.
- Insufficient focus, so far, on environmental sustainability

- I think there is a real lack of focus on the environment and Welsh language
- New projects are great but properly maintaining existing assets is equally important. I see too many assets left to decay through poor maintenance.
- I'm happy the council is putting greater focus on tourism as it will help boost the economy and the area's profile
- This plan looks to be an exciting opportunity for a fresh start after a tremendously difficult 2 years. Whilst I might not agree with all of the proposals, the plan as a whole looks great. Bring it on!
- I am concerned about an absence of libraries in the plan. The library service users responses have been extremely positive whilst the service has remained running since last summer through the pandemic. Equally, local communities have made clear their views on how important the libraries are in delivering the objectives every time budget proposals have come out. I would have expected the roles libraries play in delivering; community cohesion, strong communities, helping vulnerable people, tackling joblessness and digital exclusion to have been recognised and given a role in the plans
- Particularly enjoyed the inclusion offered at all parts of the consultation process
- Please ensure the people are listened to going forward, not just in an election year.
- Promote inclusion and diversity in all that we do
- It would be good if we have regular updates on the difference the plan is making
- Facilities should be brought back to in house management
- Already stated
- Be bold and brave. Work with larger organisations such as urban splash to develop neath town centre. Green town, green businesses, well being centre, a place where people want to live, utilise the river and canal
- There is no mention of the library service, this needs to be amended
- Yes - I am fed up of funding going to either Neath or Port Talbot and our community in between being left out until it comes to dumping undesirables and approving planning for facilities not welcome here - then we are suddenly suitable. No more HMOs or secure unit for "problem" teenagers. Put them in the parts of the borough where the councillors on the planning committee live!!!
- It's what you might expect really from a council that is failing and is now looking to put a greater emphasis and a lot of its responsibilities onto voluntary and community groups.
- better community based resources for parents, affordable child care, community centres back open and running
- Be careful of green washing whilst awarding future contracts.
- I feel NPT town, and surrounding areas is missing a culture vibe. There needs to be more music, big bands to watch in open spaces. More arts&craft, and more hubs with high quality craft / gift shops selling local artist / designers / manufacturers produce. This would also help local small businesses.
- remove focus on 'Staff' in NPTC as they are employees of the 'business' - seems self serving?
- Proposals are all well and good but unless there is a commitment to deliver these they are just a pipe dream
- quick access funding to start up a business and less paperwork too
- Whilst this Corporate Plan is giving greater recognition to the importance of the natural environment and the climate crisis, it doesn't reflect a strong commitment to deliver action which will address these two urgent issues. Both the climate and biodiversity crises need to be seen as corporate priorities, with a clear mandate for action.
- Supporting the needs of carers, prioritise mental health support, engage with the Regional Partnership Board on the Carers Strategy
- I'm not sure it's ambitious enough. It feels solid and safe. I'm not sure "solid" and "safe" will encourage recovery or jump-start a greater sense of community or ambition within Neath Port Talbot.
- Distinct lack of ambition on addressing the biodiversity crisis
- It sounds great but seeing whether it can be implemented in a reasonable timeframe will be interesting. Is it deliverable?
- Set test questions, such as 'does a development support optimal wellbeing, health or independence?' If a plan does not meet the test questions then it should be low priority.
- Ambitious - lets do it. Let us know if we can help
- During lockdowns people made more use of their local countryside and that should be a primary focus for the future.
- Need to look at open areas and reinforce good healthy sport play zones.
- help with disabilities

- Start up the renovation of unused buildings in the area. Use Margam Park more (caravan clubs, more leisure activities, more shows/game fayres/events)
- Stop talking and get on with it!
- How are you going to pay for this? Who is going to do it and over what time?
- There seems to be no mention of the importance of libraries in providing part of a social network for elderly and lonely people. Nor does it mention its importance in education.
- I would like to see specific measurable targets, and more mention of disabled access, engagement for all areas.
- Take school children to local businesses (fourteen/fifteen) Saturday workshops use local tradesmen
- Cycle path from skewen to neath
- The leisure centre... absolute waste of money. Will still be going to the LC2 due to it being better for children. Why didn't this questionnaire come around before the planning of that building. We would have all told you to have something more appropriate for children of NPT to enjoy, as is what your plan states. Terrible! I am utterly dismayed.
- No support for the local men's shed group from the community council after being evicted by them.
- Ensuring qualified Youth Workers are at the heart of delivery is absolutely vital to the success of this work.
- Town centre of Neath needs rejuvenation at just about every level .
- Get back to basics, this will take enormous dedication to deliver. never mind award schemes and Mayor-led ceremonies
- Great to see the match between what the public want and what the Council aim to deliver
- Invest in the more deprived areas rather than the towns.
- Draft corporate plan seems robust, hopefully there will be regular reviews re progress made.
- Include more streets in the flying start eligibility.
- I pleased to see you have spoken to our community, listened and have a plan moving forward. Well done to the team of people that have worked hard to organise this and for the future team that implement it. I am skeptical it can be done but hopeful.
- Have a pride in our town and keep our streets clean and consequences for those who don't
- With nptcbc cutting back and losing all their identities. How are they going to recover no sporting facilities run by nptcbc shocking
- I am very unhappy at the way the super school in Pontardawe has been pushed through despite local opposition.
- Neath TOWNRIDER, PLEASE bring it back. Here, no supermarket has easy pedestrian access.
- The important and the benefits
- Reduce council tax as its miles too high and we are not getting any value for it
- I'm especially concerned that our historic heritage should be safeguarded with many sites little known and appreciated and becoming ruinous.
- Some of the leisure centres run by Celtic Leisure are long overdue investment. There are plans for improvement which have been on hold for reasons unknown. Lockdown and the subsequent changes to how these facilities are used, make these improvements more important than ever.
- please free council tax
- 1. A reliable, pro-commuter joined-up public transport system with neighbouring areas. 2. Improve Internet services - critical for businesses, education, social interaction for the marginalised, and social mobility
- The term "reset" is too connected to the evil 'Great Reset', 'Build Back Better', and the WEF.
- Increase emphasis on supporting people in poverty and recognising the more recent impacts of cost of living increases
- This plan is OK, but it's hopelessly unambitious in the key area of transport and digital connectivity. In the middle of a climate emergency and a pandemic, I would have expected more.
- We have all come through an unprecedented period of uncertainty during the last 2 years and, for many people this has meant hardship, fear and sorrow. During this time, the value of the natural environment as a place of peace, comfort and inspiration has become obvious and it is clear that a significant number of people have discovered this for the first time. More people walk in and enjoy our natural environment now than at any time in the last 50 years and more will join them in the future. It follows that a resilient natural environment is a high priority not just for its own intrinsic value but also for community well-being, heritage and culture. Everyone agrees that it is a precious resource which we have to protect and enhance as much as possible. We can only accomplish this by assessing the state of nature in NPT

and acting accordingly. As we have steered our way through the Covid crisis by 'following the science', we must also listen to the evidence-based advice and opinions of informed experts on environmental matters, like resilience, if we want to aspire to the current vision of the NPT CBC that is outlined in the Corporate Plan. Fortunately, NPT has a Local Nature Partnership populated by people representing all the relevant environmental bodies and experts in NPT's wildlife and wild places, as well as individuals who represent communities and the general public. NPT is also fortunate to have a dedicated team of ecologists in its local authority offices who work

- I would like to see the council take over facilities, such as The Gwyn Hall, and swimming pool.
- It is very important that NPTCBC continues to support leisure facilities, for example the footballer fields in Pontardawe and Pontardawe Arts Centre. These enable our young people to gain skills and experiences that will help them in future. With a decrease in funding, there is a danger that fewer extra curricular activities would be available and this would have a detrimental effect on many hundreds of children and young people.
- Reduce our council tax!!
- I acknowledge I have only read overview, but it comes across as weak on addressing the urgency of the climate & nature emergency. It is the biggest challenges humanity has ever face, and with the gravity of the situation we now find ourselves, addressing the issues within NPT should be front and centre of the budget. Off the top of my head I would suggest: Training ALL staff and councillors in current climate science; ceasing funding to organisations that are not actively reducing the ecological footprint; Create a role / dept overseeing climate and responsible for ensuring this issue is embedded in every decision taken by the council; utilise social media post to connect the dots for local people and how they relate to the things that you are doing - talk about the climate & nature emergencies
- As previously stated there needs to be a sense of pride in the town, clamping down on litter dropping, helping people feel safe to walk the streets and asking people feel that Neath is a good place to live, stopping the migration of residents to other more desirable towns.
- To bring in new businesses to our Towns that will attract people and investment. Who is working on this? Because who ever they are it doesn't appear to be working.
- I agree with RRR idea and hope to see vast improvements happening
- Only in so far, it needs to look beyond electoral timescales and be a plan for not just one year but each year. Particularly those which do not have an election in them.
- It is difficult to be more specific without sight or knowledge of the finances attached to priorities and in sufficient detail to give a reassurance plans to invest in the Pontardawe Art Centre remain as communicated. In general terms there is a lot to be welcomed and supported in principle if followed through. We emphasise the importance of the Pontardawe Arts Centre as a community asset /hub, and it has a key role to play in the "recover, reset and renew" of Pontardawe. We very much support the direction of improving/broadening access to disadvantaged groups and others. There must be opportunities to link with Social Prescribing / health (particularly mental health) agenda.
- Better facilities and opportunities for disabled and those with additional needs.
- Very disappointing to see the lack of attention to building/restoring resilient environments or nature recovery as a priority for wellbeing of communities and young people. NPT has suffered decades of degradation of our natural environment, often as a direct consequence of shortsighted local development policies. 'Recover, Reset, Renew' appears to be a lost opportunity to begin putting this right.
- More natural environment focus
- It is difficult to be more specific without sight or knowledge of the finances attached to priorities and in sufficient detail to give a reassurance plans to invest in the Pontardawe Art Centre remain as communicated. In general terms there is a lot to be welcomed and supported in principle if followed through. We emphasise the importance of the Pontardawe Arts Centre as a community asset /hub, and it has a key role to play in the "recover, reset and renew" of Pontardawe. We very much support the direction of improving/broadening access to disadvantaged groups and others. There must be opportunities to link with Social Prescribing / health (particularly mental health) agenda.
- there needs to be more for young people to do in their areas. parks and youth clubs would be great or something to do in the evenings
- It appears that the plans cover most things for an improved future, hopefully if these are achieved our town will be a better place for the next generation
- Yes a huge increase in litter clearing in town and neighbourhood. I ring the council weekly to highlight the hotspots. As a council tax payer I should not have to do this. It is a known fact that the environment you live in affects your well-being. Therefore living in a rubbish dump cannot be healthy. The amount of funds being put aside for working from home is

disproportionate to the funds being made available for litter, antisocial behaviour and maintaining acceptable standards in Neath.

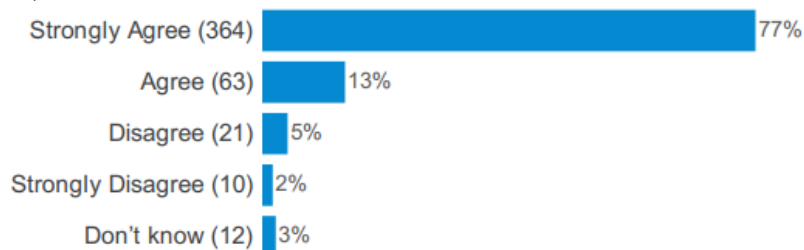
- Surprised that older people, disability, veterans, mental health, poverty and inequalities barely get a mention (certainly not in the proposals and especially with all the research findings regarding the impact of the pandemic. It's a shame this opportunity wasn't taken to start thinking about the Council's offer to some of our most vulnerable communities and how services could be better structured to deliver what is really needed.
- Neath could become a thriving town. It has some amazing buildings and facilities but there are dilapidated buildings that let it down. There is a thriving community spirit who care about the town and this could be tapped into see Facebook: Neath Voice, This is Neath. Work with vandals to stop destructive behaviour.
- I feel all aspects have been covered in the draft corporate plan and it would be great to see these met in the near future. It would be nice to see our young and elderly community in particular being able to walk our streets without anxiety and fear due to the increase of street crime, alcoholism and drugs
- Put all the roads and repairs of, out to private tender, to get our town and villages up to a decent standard
- A toboggan ride in Margam Park would attract more visitors, e.g. like the one in Pembrey
- Please keep libraries open for free accessible services
- My only view is that we should listen to our communities and avoid wasting money on facilities that offer very little value to the vast majority of the population.
- Homeless people in Port Talbot are neglected unless well known such as Terry Alan you will be ignored.
- Yes, as alluded to on another question. It is pie in the sky, pre-election promises that will be shelved by this winter.
- More public toilets in towns and disabled parking.
- NPT Council recently sold they were going to spend £60 million on repairing a rusty bridge rather than spending it on better mental health services. It is clear that priorities are wrong and money is being put in the wrong place.
- improve roads and pavements. More buses

Section 2 - Budget consultation responses

2.1 Council Tax

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposal that there should be 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23

Figure 6: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposal that there should be 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23?' (base: 470)



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 30 responses, as follows:

- I disagree because we have had council tax rises since this NPTCBC was formed, we in my knowledge but might be wrong ever had a freeze or reduction, and listening and reading how healthy you are this time around I believe you can give back as further cut, say 1% or even 2% which isn't an awful lot of money as I understand it's 800k per 1% so with the healthy reserves, welsh government settlement and other monies in the council, given the two years we all have had, inflation through the roof, heating prices as gas doubling and eat or heat becoming a reality then every little help is important to us all so cut it further please.

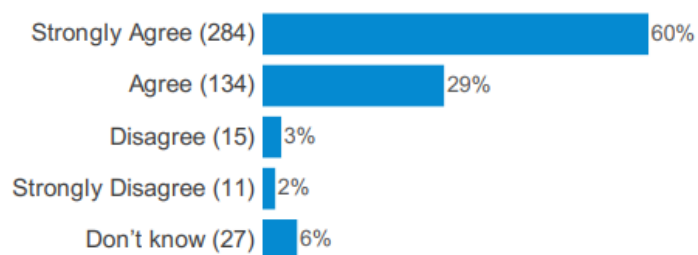
- A small increase should be implemented. Freezing is nothing other than political bargaining. Minor yearly increases i.e. 0.5-1% yearly in healthy budget years avoid requirements for a larger increase later down the line in years to come.
- I feel there should be at least a 1.5% reduction. I purchased my home 11 years ago and every year it has risen. However as a service user who uses very little I feel quite aggrieved that I am paying over £100 a month to have poorly lit streets and the rubbish collected twice a month.
- If we could all pay a little more it would enhance services further- those unable to pay are helped out with additional payments so it could be affordable
- Because you have burdened us council tax payers with years of council tax rises and freezing it now doesn't make much of a difference as it's political, council tax gone up over probably 30% over many years and we have all struggled, this year after covid we have struggled more, so we going to either heat or eat in my opinion, so you should take a couple of % off the 0% so I would suggest a -2%
- 0% freeze will have to be recovered in future years
- All in this together, by adding more funds would that not help the reserves
- Freeze for those who may struggle with an increase (means tested), increase for those who could afford to cover.
- There's so much that needs to be done just to maintain and improve existing council services - let alone the new challenges - and the council will need money to address these.
- I would like to have seen the proposed increase put at 0.5% as much investment will be needed as the area recovers from the pandemic
- I think someone has to pay for Covid and recovery. I would have had a 3% increase
- Inflation is running at 7.5% and if 0% is implemented then people will lose out both in services and increase in staff wages etc
- With inflation so high, I think there should be a rise to pay for services.
- Happy for Council Tax to be increased to further invest in Services
- Services will have to be cut and how can you achieve your recover plan with reduced revenue
- Services need to be paid for.
- Can you really afford not to increase council tax. Looking from the outside, you seem to be fire fighting on all areas.
- Council Tax always goes up and we need to pay for services we require.
- With the good settlement from WG, now would have been a good time to set a very modest increase in the precept to try and claim back some of the lost ground over the past years
- Follow the normal procedure and use any surplus towards your own community proposals.
- There is not a bottomless pit available to the council and to get more out, you have to put more in.
- We need to maintain the reserves so an inflation level increase is needed
- A small increase in council tax will allow a positive impact on local services e.g to support increase payments to social care staff and to increase care provision in local communities
- The council need the money, so an inflationary rise would not be unexpected.
- Not manageable for families we pay highest in most of wales
- If an increase freeze is going to affect how some services will be carried out, or effect potential benefits to those employed by NPTC, then I disagree. However, we have one of the UK's highest council taxes, and our bins aren't even collected consistently
- More work needed on fixing roads and pavements, also more Police needed.
- Don't have money
- NPT Wastes council tax money if anything it should decrease.
- Need to reduce council tax!! Need discount for un-employed. NPT is one of the poorest counties with the highest tax!

2.2 Best Start in Life (Budget - £700,000)

This proposal would increase community based and specialist youth service provision, early intervention and prevention activities (including educational psychology and key worker support for children and young people affected by the pandemic), extra support for children with additional learning needs and an increase in adult community learning provisions to support people in the journey back to work.

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life'

Figure 7: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life'?' (base: 471):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 20 responses, as follows:

- Money should be used to reduce Council Tax
- These services should be already in place. Use existing funding more effectively. If it doesn't work don't fund it.
- THEY SHOULD BE DOING THIS ANYWAY
- I think it's a drop in the ocean - this should have more investment. I'd like to know the number of children and young people in the area who this could impact on and work out how much that means for each child, my feeling is that it would probably amount to £100 each. You need more trained staff, more resources at the very least and that £700,000 is not going to go far is it? Especially as I imagine those same resources have probably had cuts over the last few years so if we're lucky we'll just be getting back to where we were a couple of years ago. You're laying lip service to improvement.
- I feel the youth service provision is adequate.
- is this amount not enough, we have a freeze on council tax this year but spending too much will only make an increase next year
- If people can't provide a good start for their children then they shouldn't be having them.
- You should concentrate getting people back into work, some have lost jobs,
- 700,000 sounds a lot of money. But how much is that per capita or per area
- Older people have had no help. Yet help out with the kids.
- More important issues that need addressing
- The so called support teams that are employed are part of the problem - they are not doing what they should and should be held accountable to their leaders. More money may partly pay for services - money does not solve all the problems - people who are not really fulfilling their responsibilities should be replaced. Youngsters are being penalised but the poor lack of guidance and this will have a wider impact on the future
- Wasting more money instead of lowering bills
- There is lots of support for those in some of these categories already.
- Invest to help working people and mental health.
- 700,000 is far from enough compared with places like Cardiff, NPT gets missed out and underfunded by the Welsh government
- Not only young need support. Older people also need support.
- Not enough money to help children from the valleys.
- More people should put something by for a 'rainy day'. Some spend more on groceries than i earn in a week.
- Invest in the services already available and make them better - re-branding same services wasting money

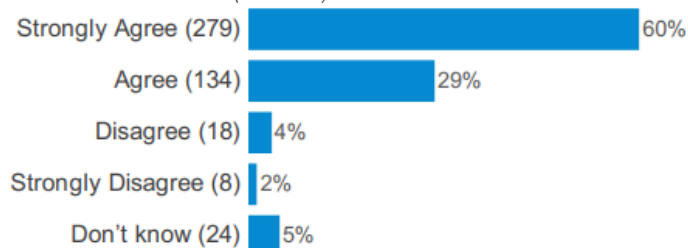
2.3 Thriving and Sustainable Communities (Budget - £1.2 million)

One of the key messages from 'Let's Talk' was how much people value the environment and neighbourhoods where they live and work. In the pandemic, the council has had to re-prioritise neighbourhood services to ensure continuity of priority services like refuse and recycling collection. To re-address the issue it's proposed a range of proposals are

developed to deliver a county borough wide range of highly visible projects to ‘catch up, clean up and green up’ our neighbourhoods.

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £1.2 million in services to support ‘Thriving and Sustainable Communities’

Figure 8: Responses to the question ‘how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £1.2 million in services to support ‘Thriving and Sustainable Communities’? (base: 463):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 20 responses, as follows:

- REDUCE Council Tax instead
- Review the existing expenditure before further investment.
- It would be interesting to know how many staff are still currently deployed on refuse and recycling. The staff who work on Neighbourhood services are noticeable in their absence from tasks such as litter picking, grass cutting and general tidying up of our local area. This was apparent before the pandemic and still continues. Perhaps having local bylaws for the dropping of litter would be a great idea and save the employment of staff to pick it up or not in NPTs case. Prevention is better than cure.
- Think it's important, but there are higher priorities..
- surely you have been doing this anyway with the constant council tax increases where has the money gone??
- A huge amount of investment that could be less in order for other areas to benefit
- Why is there a need for an additional £1.2 million?
- I feel this money could be better spent on more realistic things in the short term, Like the care sector and energy bills everyone is facing
- spend it all now approach will leave us in financial trouble next year
- I feel our services are enough at the present and the money could be used to help in other areas
- Again, 1.2 mill. Sounds a lot. what is it costing to send plastics, paper and cardboard glass to distribute our recycling to brake down further.
- Waste of funds. Volunteers been doing the work
- More money not always the answer. Real informed people are needed
- Let's hope all rubbish gets collected properly and not left in streets on collection day
- Waste of money reduce council tax instead
- We have no faith in the council to make the correct decisions regarding finances. It's a waste of money
- this needs to be looked into as it is a very wasteful cost
- Need more investments
- Money better spent elsewhere
- More effort should be put into renewable energy, the refuse and recycling in the local area has been running fine.

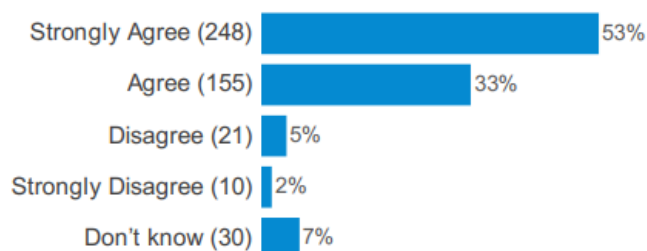
2.4 Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills (Budget - £200,000)

It is proposed strategies be developed in relation to both culture and environment, leisure and tourism so further proposals can be developed in relation to jobs and skills.

The 2022/23 budget pressure schedule includes for additional long term funding to provide additional support for economic development and regeneration which will be key for supporting existing businesses as well as attracting further inward investment into the county borough.

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposal to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills'?

Figure 9: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills'? (base: 464):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 22 responses, as follows:

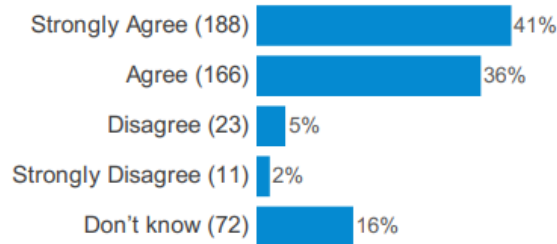
- Too little given the other investment being made.
- As per previous reasons
- Should be more as the figure will not do much in culture and heritage and you have already removed £800k from our own heritage here in the Dulais Valley as Cefn Coed. We need proper investment in our valley communities.
- I would agree but there need to be predetermined outcomes to gauge the effectiveness of the proposals rather than just throwing money at it. How will success or improvement be determined?
- This budget is laughable. What on earth is going to be achieved with this across such a large remit - is that £50k for Culture, £50k for Heritage, £50k for Jobs and £50k for skills? Even with my most optimistic hat on I don't think this budget is going to make a jot of difference as the budget for culture has been slashed again and again hasn't it? As a library user I firmly believe that if all of that budget (and more) were invested in the library service they could impact positively on ALL those areas.
- Outsource this, currently large areas are used as dumping grounds and until enforcement happens why waste more money
- Should be more, this will bring in more jobs, investment in the area and have a positive effect
- I think £100,000 from the Best Start could be transferred to here.
- Needs a larger budget due to lack of jobs
- more funding needed
- NEEDS TO BE MORE MONEY ON GETTING PEOPLE INTO EMPLOYMENT
- I personally think that the council would need to invest a bit more money here if the budget allowed
- Unfortunately this isn't enough to make a lasting impact on Jobs/skills
- 200k is well below the money needed to achieve objectives
- If the cultural places are not making money, why keep them open?
- The amount is not enough.
- Again - it used to be a career/or employment with/for the council was a job for life (maybe still is) but with poor standards of the people put in place in these very important posts. I think it always starts at the top so if it isn't filtered through to frontline no point throwing more money after bad.
- More needed
- More money needs to be invested here to support actions that will increase the resilience of our natural environment.
- 200,000 is not enough, it needs to be a higher level for improvement of this Area, compared with Cardiff and Swansea, NPT area is stunning
- It needs to be a larger amount. One of the borough's assets is its heritage, culture and natural beauty, which has not been utilised in the last few years.
- Needs to be spent in the right place.

2.5 Covid recovery reserve (Budget - £2.8m)

In order to fund these one off investments outlined above, we are proposing to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve. This will fund the 3 proposals outlined, and leave £700k unallocated to support further investments..

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve to fund the one-off investments outlined above.

Figure 10: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposal to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve to fund the one-off investments outlined above?' (base: 460):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 24 responses, as follows:

- I would need further information before I could confirm
- Council can't afford it!
- Reserves should be used once existing expenditure has been reviewed and re-prioritised.
- Is this correct use of an Insurance reserve? This expenditure is not in respect of insurance so why should it be used for this ?
- Isn't the reserve there as an insurance? Should covid mutate and become aggressive causing a nationwide catastrophic financial meltdown and we receive a massive reduction next year. Couldnt it be be kept back until the country for definite knows where we are financially. Before we spend it on school psychologists and extra binmen, when next year we may need it for emergency care.
- we lost money before
- Provide that money to existing overstretched services no new headline grabbing services
- Once spent, reserves are gone. Better, in my opinion, to raise the addition funds through a small rise in the council tax.
- What is Covid recovery? Just get on with life and go back to normal!!
- Covid recovery should be for the people - there are many initiatives that are more business related, these should be removed.
- the welsh gov have already given enough money to help with this, dont you think we will pay for this in future years with the workers tax being increased
- There seems to be lots of pots and support for COVID recovery, we need some normality returned
- How are you going to judge which investment gets money, and which doesn't?
- What is the covid recovery reserve?
- I feel people take advantage re covid and are untruthful to gain money
- I don't feel that setting money aside for reserve purposes is necessary at present.
- I would like to know how much you have saved by your liberal homeworking policies and disuse of council offices. I am not clear on what impact COVID had on your plans. From what I can see your staff worked from home, and services reduced. Why would you need more money to reinstate existing services?
- Waste of money
- It would depend on what exactly the money was going to be spent on.
- We will only end up paying for it next year!
- Sorry no,Covid has caused a lot of problem such as future fuel bills, it should be pushed more with the British government to support NTP and it's not fair on families who have no other option than work from home, They should be better supported than being made to pay over the top bills, we have the increase in the income tax rate as well
- Spend the money on what people need now, you have enough in savings now

- If the reserve hasn't already been used then why not?
- Money was set for something should be used for that purpose.

2.6 Other views

We asked respondents 'do you have any other views on our draft Budget 2022-23 that you would like to share with us?' There were 97 responses, as follows:

- With the excess accrued from council tax increases last year because services were under pressure and government didn't offset losses (which have now been recovered and no longer in austerity) invest further in to youth services and youth clubs within the borough. This will have a positive effect on mental health of youth and the community will benefit as there will be less youth ASB due to boredom.
- Yes I believe it's time NPTCBC actually listened to us the residents of the borough, the survey is set up in a way to make your council look in the best possible way, a lot of what your saying you have said for over 10 years and the record of delivering is poor, we need what you are asking us to agree disagree etc etc on to be delivered as it's no point doing these surveys if at the end of the day you do not listen.it's time consuming for many of us, but if our views actually were taken on board and listened to then that would be something I guess.or even feedback after taking so much time to fill these surveys in would be great also.
- More support for Armed Forces, Police in area including subsidised gym/swim and access to vital support such as mental health. It has all been about the NHS and education, the police and military have been ignored when they deal with the large bulk of deaths, mental health and work related stress.
- My only concern would be whether the freeze in council tax will mean a higher increase the following financial year. If projections show this may be the case I would prefer a slight increase, to counter that impact,
- Establish a town museum asap.This should link in with the excellent potential historic sites located around Neath.
- Proactive strategy for carrying out basic tasks instead of fire fighting. Eg have a programme of clearing drains regularly rather than unblocking them when they are flooded. Divert the continual resurfacing of Neath town centre money to aid this. Just stop cars driving in the pedestrian area and balance the disabled parking and restrictions which prevent Neath being accessible. Have more regular free parking not just at Christmas. This would increase visitors to Neath
- Need to concentrate on services that the council know and have experience of providing - investments should not be made into 'possible income generating schemes'
- Council Tax should be REDUCED
- Use the money wisely
- More funding to be allocated in helping homeless people and possibly adapt council buildings and empty properties to support these vulnerable adults
- You really need to start listening to the people living in the County Borough , as what's the point in this exercise if you don't?
- Budget for culture heritage job and skills seems low. Welcome the decision to freeze council tax but more must be done. This is a massive burden on my household nearly as much as my mortgage. It is unfair and the system should be reviewed
- The commitment to review the strategic housing function over the next 12 months will inevitably lead to necessary greater ongoing expenditure on staffing and so this should be budgeted for
- Nice to be given the option to voice concerns. And that NPT as a whole is being invested in. Also as a resident and an employee, now are advertising that after 10 years finally welsh government have given us an increase in our yearly budget, but yet 10 months later we still havent had a pay rise. Its a bit of a kick in the teeth, with ever increasing gas and electric prices, could we be given our pay rise on time next year. Employees are now in debt, as we are working harder and being paid less.
- How to sustain existing usefulvoluntary organisationsocial care provision to enable independence
- The council should use the financial position it finds itself in to make wise choices about tge future of services which the community need and value and to improve infrastructure. I DO NOT support the campaign to spend£3 million plus to transfer Celtic Leisure back to the Council. This would be incredibly short sighted and a poor deal for the council taxpayer. That money needs to be used to improve services for young people and our elderly frail residents

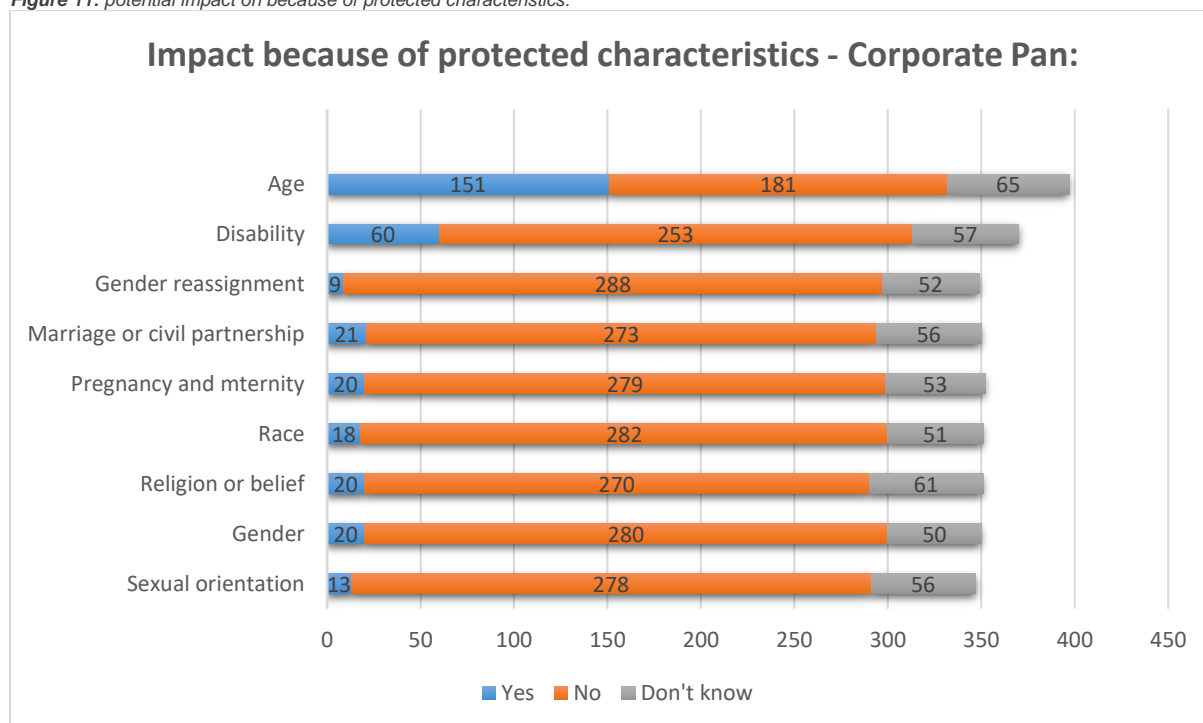
- I'm quite skeptical being in a taibach ward in Margam it feels like the councilors are non existent
- Moves to keep investing in 21st Century schools .
- The Budgets looked at are inline with previous accounts and the increasing service costs. The pandemic has changed our accounts in the past two years. If savings are made, will this go back into further services in need?
- Help small businesses
- Good to see plans for investment in important services and facilities, and a freeze on council tax after years of cuts passed on from Government
- investment has been under funded for years
- Under para 5 it states that NPTs allowance is the '18th lowest'. It should read '5th lowest'.
- I think it's disingenuous to say the freeze in council tax is due to additional funding from the welsh government - the tax should not have increased in 21/22,.
- It is generally good but would have liked a small increase in Council Tax to help fund recovery from the effects of the pandemic
- Libraries played an important part in keeping many people entertained, well read and included during lockdown, will they benefit from extra funding?
- It should not only be about investment of money - we need clear steer from all service directors about the need for co-production and council staff having a responsibility to promote change within their area's of responsibility
- I Think that more than 700k should be put into the Children's services
- As above, there needs to be a recognition of libraries as the leading hub in our local communities and this department being given a priority.
- Plans to stop the council tax increase are a good thing however, this MUST be something that continues over the following years. its funny how an election year spurs this to happen, when it didn't happen last year during the pandemic with millions in reserve. What are the plans for 2023 onwards for budget?
- Consider your staff when allocating funds - they worked to get the town through the Pandemic and have had below inflation rises for the last ten years or so!
- invest more in staff - pay increases and training
- Very concerned that NPTCBC's budget was so low compared to other Councils. I believe that we are 18th out of 22 councils. There are high levels of poverty in Neath and Port Talbot.
- Incredadr support for our libraries service
- Yes - make sure Briton Ferry gets its fair share - we pay an extortionate rate of council tax only to see funds either invested in Neath or Port Talbot
- I would like to see further investment into SEN provision, this does not appear anywhere in the draft proposal
- Please could you make sure not to spend any of our Money on the Climate Change Scam, or any other Political Correctness? Thank you
- Do we have the staffing capacity to deliver plans set out in the budget? or will there be a recruitment drive in order to deliver what the council can. The pandemic has had a huge affect on children and young people with their mental health especially those who have been unable to return to school. There seems to be a gap in services for this chort, due to staffing levels and funding. If we want to help re build our communities and labour market, we also need to invest in those who have struggled during the pandemic.
- i don't think the £200,000 mentioned previously will go very far.
- Financial covid recovery support for SME's and Micro business not just the large businesses within PT
- I'd like to see a higher proportion of the budget directed towards Environment in order to allow more investment into nature recovery. In the budget lines for Environment there is no mention of budget for management of important wildlife sites. Decarbonisation could be achieved much more efficiently than with electric cars, through recovery of sites such as peat bogs
- Not enough emphasis on the real effect issues scheduled to hit everyone locally and nationally in the next 12 to 18 months
- The budget proposals seem positive providing they are attributed to the correct investments. Too often money is spent on projects that are wasteful and not managed effectively. It is important investments are prioritised and managed properly to ensure they stay within budget.
- £200k doesn't seem like much money for jobs and skills and culture and heritage. It is a wide area to cover
- Cancel all expenditure on factory schools.
- Mental health issues in wales have gone up yet funding has gone down. More investment is very urgent in this current climate

- No, it's anyone's guess how these things turn out and there's likely to be some disguised motivations anyway.
- what about disabilities
- Vital the Council continues to prioritise Education and Social Care
- you need more money to recover from covid as i feel it will be around for a few years yet to come you need to save jobs and keep economy going
- Council tax is a very unfair tax. My bill is higher than other people living in Chelsea and other rich areas. I am a carer for my wife yet our council tax bill is £244 per month. Millionaires pay a lot less - it is very unfair
- What about leisure services and other facilities for older people?
- So long as it's directed to projects with measurable outcomes and these are monitored
- As a single parent that works I feel saddened that I only live on benefits wage. My council tax shot up. And 66p taken from every £1 after earning a tiny £292 a month. Also need registered childminders in the Glynccorwg area.
- Invest in child and family support services and children safeguarding
- Keep our Jewel in the Crown Aberafan Beach clean and safe.
- as long as the budget is used where most needed the plans should go ahead,
- Help the retired people who have been given nothing yet provide so much free service. Savings the council does not see.
- Improve the town centre. Get people back using/spending facilities in the town centre.
- The money you have set aside for the best start in life does not seem like it will be enough
- I agree to not increasing council tax due to the financial climate post Covid however, people need to appreciate that if they want good services within their community, they have to pay for them. There is a need for people to have a greater understanding about what the council has to pay for.
- I feel you are devaluing the need for our childrens wellbeing support and that should be inline with the sustainability budget not less than.
- See previous comments on the Welsh language (Although I am a fairly good Welsh language speaker, I disagree with using money to promote Welsh. It should be allowed to sink or swim on its own merits, The money would be more useful used for other things. I am NOT anti-Welsh language, but it must support itself.)
- Reduce council tax one of the highest in whole uk
- Again the TOWNRIDER minibus transport. Withdrawn for lockdown 2 years ago. Yet the valleys transport has continued throughout. :(
- As it is the first time in a decade that there is not gap, would it be possible to air on the side of caution for this year and keep some of the money in reserves in case we are back to the normal funding gap we have experienced over the last decade. That way we have a safety net in case there is a shortfall next year and if there isn't a shortfall we can spend money on more of the things we would have liked to do this year.
- Reduce council tax to more manageable level in keeping with other local authorities
- Investment is needed in the leisure centres. They are underutilised and could be used as community hubs and hBringing members of Celtic Leisure on to the decision making board would inspire innovation a how the centres can be better used, better occupied and have more appeal to the wider community. Poverty, fuel poverty in particular needs to be brought to the forefront of plans to help. All council run facilities are warm when open, most have unused rooms. There must be a way they can serve their communities.
- More investment in green innovation and jobs
- Recent analysis of the state of nature in NPT and the resilience of its ecosystems do not paint an optimistic picture. This will need funds to promote action.
- Council tax should be reduced to fall in line with other boroughs in wales
- You have 3 one-off investments listed and none of them are focused on dealing with the climate & ecological crises. You either believe there is an emergency or you don't. Welsh government are getting it (at least partially) but I can't see NPTCBC rising to the challenge before them any time soon. Please read and digest the Carbon Budget report for NPT produce by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research - you have a long way to go to get where NPT needs to be to remain within it's fair share of the UK carbon budget. You need to start treating this issue with the urgency it demands otherwise nothing else you are talking about will matter in just a few years time.
- It says something when £100,000 is reserved to support working from home and only £15,000 on antisocial behavior.
- To increase budgets you should also look at where money is going and is it going in the right areas. Also there may be a lot of money being wasted. Who is looking at this and checking that money is being well spent and the council is getting value for money?

- Decisions on areas important to me, such as car parking need a wider discussion. It continues to intrigue me that car parking fees, or indeed car parking policy is subject to so little analysis and scrutiny
- In the Culture and Heritage budget section neither Agree options permit comments. Our response is contingent on 'Culture' includings Arts specifically - linking explicitly to the vital role of the Pontardawe Arts Centre. It doesn't seem a lot of money compared to other proposals and we will need confidence coordinated investment (including capital) will follow. It does offer the opportunity to link up areas such as art/environment/leisure/tourism for better outcomes of investment.
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- Get people back in offices as quick as you can.
- Put more money in to cleaning up Neath especially it's very high litter content everywhere. I phone weekly to highlight hit spots. More money on youth antisocial behaviour and keeping our neighbourhood safe especially from drug dealing and arson attacks. Where I live by the Gnoll antisocial behaviour has escalated and so has arson in the park
- Investigate job corruption at management level
- We need cleaner streets. More business down the beach - there is nothing to do there
- Reduce single person discount on Council Tax to 50%. 2 people living together would pay 50% each, yet 1 person pays 75% - this is an increase for single people - currently Council Tax is more a year than a full time minimum wage
- Investment is greatly needed in parks - new, better equipment especially. Re-opening previously closed off parks would be a huge asset. Skewen Park is very popular, we could & should have the same in Cwmavon. Leisure services need to be a priority.
- Some money could be used to fix the roads in and out of Cwmafan i.e. Depot Rd!
- Light up the main footpaths. Cwmavon - Oakwood, Cwmavon - Age Concern would both benefit from some mild lighting
- Q13a should invest a lot more
- Q10a - it is good there is a freeze as long as services are not cut. Should NPT residents have a say on how the additional monies can be spent
- How about cutting moneys paid to councillor who go from one meeting to another on the same day being paid for each meeting.
- Freeze Council tax for about 10 years! Highestin wales and much of the UK?
- Not at this time
- The Knowle and Victoria Gardens are 2 examples of the great things that can be done, and are very well enjoyed by most. Thank you for that. M,J Palmer
- Investing money to better skill the population - must be a good idea. Reduce council tax; discount for un-employed 'Homemakers'. Before/after school clubs in all NPT schools - i.e Cwmavon has none! Free school meals.
- Strongly agree to invest additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life' - Because the facilities in the area are currently very poor. Strongly agree to invest additional £1.2million in services support 'Thriving and Sustainable communities - Any investment is needed because current services are very poor. Strongly agree to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills' - Need the investment.
- Little emphasis on elderly support! But good luck!
- Strongly agree that there should be a 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23 - Council tax should be based on income ratio to adults per household. Q14 comment - I don't know until informed exactly where it should be allocated.
- I'm a single mum with two teenage daughters who are both doing apprenticeships so i get no help with my council tax=x and find it so expensive, so a 0& increase is a great help to me.
- I want to start back attending groups within my local community

We asked respondents if our draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 or Draft Budget 2022-23 would have an impact on them and/or their families because of any protected characteristics. A summary of the responses is outlined below:

Figure 11: potential impact on because of protected characteristics:



If respondents answered 'yes', we asked them to tell us why. There were 91 responses, as follows:

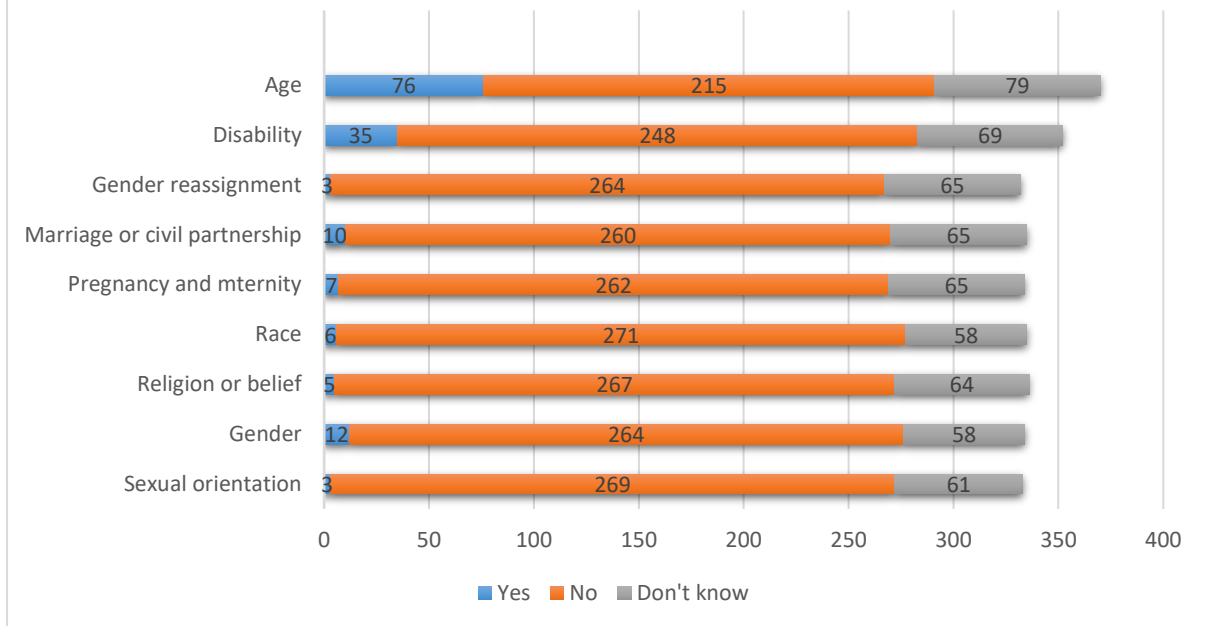
- Children in education
- Please make better provision for children and young people with disabilities.
- Disabled people have been forgotten about, only certain religion count now.
- More of interest within the town would increase footfall and benefit all businesses.
- Lack of services affect mobility and transportation
- Older age group seem to be low on priority needs
- At my age I want to feel safe and supported when I have newborn who I want to join me in speaking welsh and help his father to join in.
- Working class people have no incentive, children that go to school and get by don't get rewarded, children who are disruptive and excluded get support and taken on trips.
- Improve facilities for young people so we aren't giving them fuel the reasons they give now. Building the resilience of our youth is key to everyone's future.
- Less homeless and drunks in town centre, maintain our heritage and culture as it should be, maintain our parks and woodland would just give a better quality of life irrespective of who I am.
- School age child
- I am a retired older woman caring for a partner with early stage of dementia. Much caring work falls on the shoulders of women like me, We need support and opportunities outside of the house.
- Heading towards retirement age
- school age
- It might provide additional opportunities for employment in the NPT area. Better transport links. More access to services for local people.
- I'm over 65!!!!
- I'm a pensioner and can't afford to pay further increases in council tax
- Faculties available for retired people.
- I have a child and am expecting a second. The plan will impact my family with regards to childcare, free school meals, and spaces in Welsh medium education
- Of working age. So a positive impact
- Our children would benefit from the short and long term proposals.

- My parents are now past retirement age and may soon be looking to access services for the elderly.
- Opportunities for young people - training, jobs.
- I work fulltime and i'm also a carer for my disabled partner
- positive impact for the young people we foster
- Better recognition and support for Gender Reassignment is needed.
- I have two 'tweenage' children who will benefit from many of the initiatives as they move towards adulthood, plus we all benefit when society is healthy and prosperous.
- Schemes being introduced for children within NPT are fantastic and my children will benefit from activities and events
- I am 60 plus and I work look after my grandchildren and my elderly parent this means I am interested in ensuring that NPT is an authority that addresses the needs of all ages for myself children father and grandchildren. In relation to work in social services I also understand the needs of the population of NPT and what matters.
- Provide a safer, greener and more prosperous County Borough for people of all ages
- each point will effect people depending on their age as young children would be more interested in education and parks being built whereas older people would be more interested in jobs
- young children
- Leisure, safety and regeneration of town centres so important for an ageing population
- My son is 12
- It will improve the quality of my life since I do not travel far out of Neath and its surroundings.
- More services for elderly, might need help with partnership, church might need help to stay open, regarding sex, more male orientated activities such as Men's Sheds.
- This survey question is particularly stupid. Given the terms used and the reliance on jargon there is a very wide interpretation on what almost anything could mean and what would be the actual outcomes of the strategy whether that be in the short term or longer. It is quite difficult to even envisage the purpose of this questionnaire as it is quite clumsy in its design.
- Did you mean 'Negative impact' in Q8 above?
- I'm not sure I understand Q8
- I think that unpaid carers did not get a bonus from the government like paid carers did. Also so many unpaid carers lost their support during the pandemic. There should be emphasis as on unpaid carers he'll and well-being . Also young carers.carers
- make barriers less challenging
- have a 7 yr old, feel more oppurtunities should be created around school, learning and engagement activities, not necessarily just sports.
- Retirement beckons. Finance will make an impact.
- All selected will impact on mine and / or my close family's future
- I have four children. The youngest being 9 years old. He is growing up in an era/area where opportunities for play, exercise and adventure are limited. This could ultimately have an effect on his physical and mental health and possibly his capability and productivity as an adult. He is lucky as I have the means to mitigate much of the problem, but many parents haven't got that. It will have (is having) a profound effect on the young population in the area. health and wellbeing should be the highest priority for those deciding how we build the future of the area.
- i am in my 50s some works require young people.
- I am disabled and find accessibility and engagement in community programs difficult to impossible.
- I have an 8 yr old daughter
- Difficult at myage to get my head around these issues
- I am old and disabled and find it difficult to access some bus stops and crossing roads in my manual wheelchair because od inefficient dropped kerbs
- the plan affects my childrens future
- Positive impact for both children in school and parents as we all grow older when this is delivered
- I am about to have my first child
- My children will be largely affected due to them starting school
- My 25 year old son may have local opportunities for life long learning and career development with support from services.
- As set out you intend improving services to people in the community whatever age and religious beliefs
- Such policy would have good effect for the aged
- i have children in education

- Knowing what is going to happening in the areas makes it possible to plan for the future
- young family need to ensure the best start in life
- Too much Wokeness & “diversity” is anti-white racism, misandry, heterophobic, ageist, anti-Christian, and anti-merit.
- Impact on woman of anti social behaviour
- Children,grandchildren & great grandchildren live in P T & want to work, live & learn here now & in the future
- 59 and disabled
- If focussed through places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community hubs it will have a positive impact on all ages and disadvantaged groups. Recognition through investment in arts will have benefits across all society and we'd like to see this brought out more strongly.
- We have children, including a young adult with profound special needs.
- My family members find it difficult to attend church, or to simply go into town because of disability and lack of transport facilities.
- If focussed through places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community hubs it will have a positive impact on all ages and disadvantaged groups. Recognition through investment in arts will have benefits across all society and we'd like to see this brought out more strongly.
- I am getting older and may need support
- At present time there is a lot of discrimination on these topics which cause aggravation and disruption to peoples lives
- Better education leading to better job prospects for our grandchildren. Improved sports facilities and parks benefit all ages
- Prospects for our grandchildren and great grandchildren
- It's important for the younger generation to receive support with employment, skills and learning.
- I think it would help my children with their education having the best start in life.
- Both my wife and I are in our mid eighties. My wife is disabled.
- Lack of faith education at senior level. Antisocial behaviour. Litter.
- Buses need to be better to get people about.
- Looking at the draft it is impossible to say what the impact would be on those with protected characteristics, they barely get a mention so i doubt the impact of the proposals have even been considered
- I live in Neath
- Q3 - these plans would impact on my child in a positive way
- More needed for elderly and disability
- Not enough done to help disabled people of a old aged
- Brain epilepsy
- Freedom of choice
- Being aged 50+ i'm coming up to retirement in the next 10 to 15 years, if i was made redundant it would be difficult to find new employment on my age alone.
- I have parents who are getting on and are recovering from a stroke. I also have children in full time education. I have extended family with younger children.
- Q8. My problems, & many others', are the disabilities of age. Town centre planning should take these heavily into considration. E.G. short distances, short cuts, PLENTY of disabled parking. Also much improved public transport. There are more old than young citizens & we want help to remain useful, active participants in our communities which we love and value.
- I am a young person who identifies as a lesbian non binary individual, who is a pagan witch. I have, and a few family members have, a few health issues.
- I feel most of the above are discriminated against - even though, sometimes unintentionally.
- Limited income i.e. pensions
- I have an elderly relative who lives where there are hardly any transport links (buses). There's no train station + taxis are too expensive. I would like to see this change (increase bus services) to prevent isolation.

Figure 12: potential impact on because of protected characteristics:

Impact because of protected characteristics - Draft Budget:



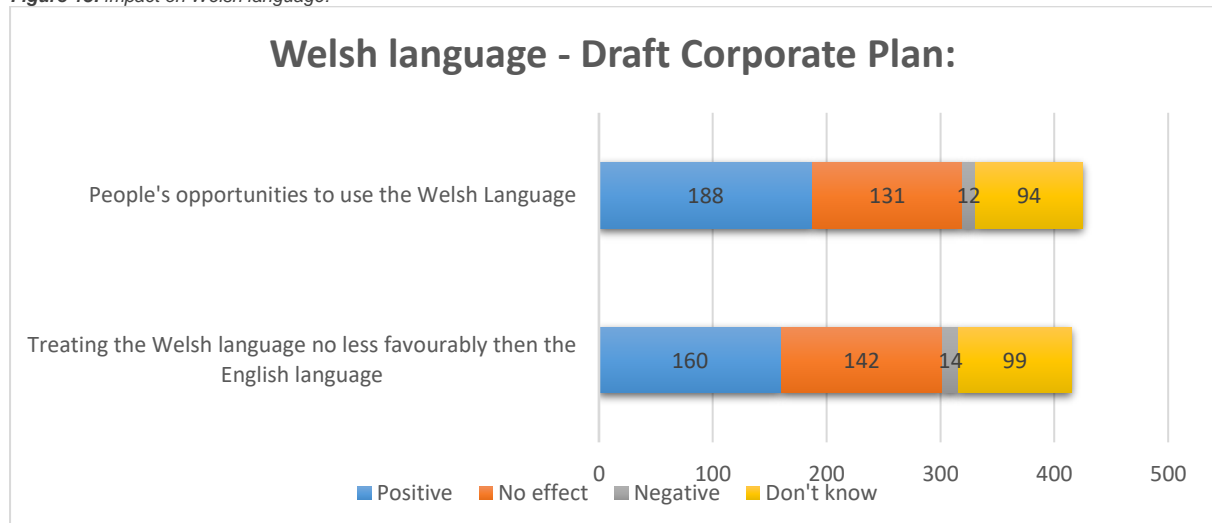
If respondents answered 'yes', we asked them to tell us why. There were 41 responses, as follows:

- Children using youth services
- I am an unpaid carer. I have a child with autism
- Adult learning can help with goals
- It will have an impact on future generations I suspect
- see previous answer
- Welsh language is a divisive element. I don't want Welsh speakers having an advantage over my grandchildren
- Positive impact
- Our children would benefit from future long term improvements.
- My daughter has ADHD and Autism so I welcome increased focus on ALN. The freeze on council tax is also very welcome, especially with increases in the price of food, fuel and utilities some of which is exacerbated by working from home for the majority of the time.
- Access to activities and events for children will benefit us as a family
- it would be more important and effect older people who understand how these budgets work
- Anything that improves the environment is welcome
- Hopefully a better future for my granddaughter
- As I get older I will need to access more of the services available.
- More funding for elderly, more for church access and for male orientated activities such as Men's Sheds.
- Pension funds. Will the council still pay a pension to it's retired workers?
- This is in no small part why communities need this extra funding. The soul has been ripped out with the removal of the centerpiece of the community.
- Benefit from childrens services, gain financially with council tax freeze
- I've said I don't know for disability - currently trying to get support for my child who has ADHD, finding it extremely difficult, hopefully the support proposed will help, but who knows? There are so many children struggling, schools have to prioritise the ones causing problems in class, leaving the other students who need support abandoned.
- Doesn't look like a lot for older people, mostly aimed at kids etc
- No mention of improvement of disabled access etc
- No council tax rise would be a big help as my business continues to recover from the pandemic, I see that as age related as it is more difficult to find the energy and motivation for rebuilding!
- I'm about to have my first child

- Npt are severely lacking educational psychologists and CAMHS services and I feel more support needs to go into this area which will impact the young peoples futures and create a happier family unit along with improvements within the education system
- Older generation needs to be one of the main priorities in your budget proposals, along with education and health
- Would help ensure recovery and positive measures as outlined in your budget plans
- young family, need cost of living break
- Anti-white racism, misandry, heterophobia, anti-Christian, & anti-merit, are rife in our woke country
- As before
- The council Tax is a massive problem for me. I pay a substantial amount more than residents in same size house living just a few miles away. im currently considering moving because i cant afford to pay it
- Help me secure a job
- It is important that young people have improved standards giving them a better lifestyle and better opportunities. We are known for being a deprived area and this needs to change
- My daughter is 17 so would benefit
- The things that matter to me are litter antisocial behaviour and preserving the town as a place worth visiting. I see this fast disappearing.
- Young children with not many outdoor play areas walkable from town.
- Treating all as equal
- I have family who will benefit from changes hopefully.
- I certainly hope the proposals would impact older people helpfully. See my other responses.
- What's this got to do with it?
- It's a pity I hadn't retired at 60 - as was the plan years ago to claim state pension.
- To old now 18/8/40

We also asked respondents what they think our draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 or Draft Budget 2022-23 will have on people's opportunities to use the Welsh Language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. A summary of the responses is outlined below:

Figure 13: impact on Welsh language:



We asked people to give the reasons for their responses. There were 168 responses, as follows:

- Peoples viewpoint on welsh language won't change because more emphasis is put on it
- I am hoping that equality and promotion is built in, but, I think we should or could tie into what other authorities are doing as lots can be done over the internet. I joined a Welsh carol singing initiative organised by menteriaith Newport this year which had people from all over the world taking part so these initiatives could be spread across all.
- We been through this many times and we don't see any real change as far as the welsh language goes really.

- Tax payer money should not be used to promote the Welsh language where children are getting left behind and vital services suffering. Rethink priorities!
- It will continue to be a choice and I feel despite a strong welsh language culture in our locality - English is still the main language
- Those that wish to learn can
- Majority of population don't want to speak Welsh
- Too much emphasis on the Welsh language. If you only speak English you face discrimination in several areas.
- Bigger things to worry about but we are Welsh and should support that
- People have the opportunity to speak Welsh, I don't see the Welsh language as a disadvantage or treated any different
- Not relevant
- We are in a transition period to being a bi-lingual nation, it will take a generation or so to stabilise.
- Too much emphasis being placed on Welsh Language by Welsh Assembly, therefore restricting talent and expertise from non Welsh speakers.
- We have both welsh and English schools in our locality
- You've said you're addressing this issue, but I'm not sure if it will have any impact. None of the shops -including the supermarkets- have bilingual signs for example.
- The welsh language can only thrive if it is supported through education starting with young children.
- Welsh is part and parcel of Welsh culture and ought to be celebrated.
- Encouraging use of the language
- There is not a high proportion of Welsh spoken routinely within NPT, promoting and supporting Welsh Language will make little difference to the residents that do not use Welsh Language currently or are unable through various reasons to learn the language to a conversational level. There is already choices for Welsh Language speakers and most signage and documents are bilingual.
- Encourage everyday use of Welsh and celebrate it as part of our culture. This is more important than complying with technical requirements
- The Welsh language isn't used much in neath port talbot and another area could receive the attention given to the Welsh language that is more important
- We are Welsh- so the language should be promoted at all times.
- If you want to transition to a global effort, by forcing Welsh Language will have a negative impact
- Welsh language needs to be used, or it will be lost. I believe the commitment to this, is a positive.
- Waste of time and money
- Includes plans to provide for Welsh language in both the 'Best start in life' and 'our Environment, Heritage and Culture'
- because its only lip service. it needs to take a lead and i don't speak welsh but would like to hear more of it.
- I believe the Welsh language SHOULD be taught in all Welsh schools from an early age all the way through!
- I am a Welsh speaker and believe that there has been a massive decrease in Welsh use in the local community. Sad. Can we recover? Doubtful.
- Welsh is our native language and should be encouraged in all schools.
- Shopping local is likely to lead to more Welsh being spoken
- the plan, and wesp is too weak. The language in the valley will erode, and it will be because of the council's lack of vision and care.
- English speaking schools have less opportunities with learning Welsh and I believe if this was encouraged more when I and other adults were in school then it would have benefited us. Many adults wish they were able to speak Welsh or even attended a Welsh school.
- English is the business language of the world so Wales must focus on this to provide the best living standards for its citizens. There are other better choices for a second language such as Chinese..
- Any opportunity to promote our language and heritage is positive
- By raising the profile of and opportunities to learn Welsh the language will have a much stronger chance of thriving in our community
- Particularly in education there are plans to increase Welsh medium schools
- A lot of people these days do not use the Welsh language I can't see it becoming more popular

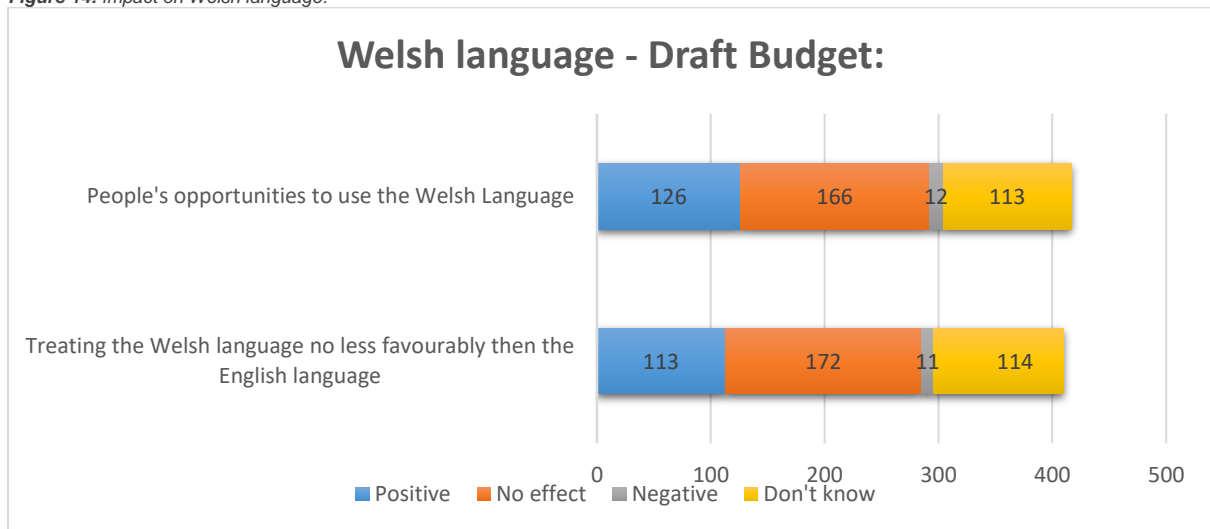
- The use of the Welsh language looks to be promoted in the plan and I can see no negative impact suggested.
- The language should be promoted as much as possible.
- I believe in promoting the Welsh language but what I find extremely time consuming and frustrating is having to scroll through endless Welsh to get to the English. The majority of people in Wales use English as their first language so I believe it would be more beneficial to put the English first in correspondence then the Welsh rather than the other way around.
- Neath has a shortfall of Welsh speakers compared to some of its neighbouring counties.
- To use the language you first have to understand it. We lack a single point of contact for opportunities to learn and develop the Welsh from beginners to fluency, just as we lack a single point of contact for access to learning in general.
- Allowing opportunities to train in Welsh and becoming more confident will encourage more people to use it as part of their daily life
- Opportunities to learn are already available, however its encouraging individuals to join without having to react to numbers in a class
- Emphasis on Welsh language in the cultural well being objective - acknowledging the importance
- I have mixed feelings about this. You can't force people who have lived and worked here all their lives and who have never had to speak a word of Welsh to suddenly think that the Welsh language is vital or even necessary. Our heritage is extremely important and I am glad that people care about the Welsh language and that children are learning this at school but you can't force this issue down people's throats if it has never really been that relevant in their personal or working lives.
- With investment in schools and local culture and heritage, I would hope achievement of the priorities in the Corporate Plan would have a positive impact.
- People will choose - there are plenty of opportunities to learn Welsh if a person wishes to
- brought to the forefront
- gives the language more importance
- local area is very low with Welsh speakers - so minimal effect
- No need to encourage the Welsh language - concentrate on better English and foreign languages
- The Welsh language has been lost in many communities and around the town areas of NPT. A lot of people who can speak Welsh no longer do as a result of confidence of not using it day to day. Treating the Welsh Language no less favourably than English will encourage those who can or want to learn Welsh to start using the language more often.
- Too much money and educational time spent on Welsh language, Very little chance being used locally
- There should not be discrimination on Welsh or English speakers.
- There should be no differentiation between the two.
- I think we need more opportunities to learn and speak Welsh. More mainstream cultural opportunities
- Increase in Welsh school provision will have a positive impact.
- I think unless all schools in Wales are full Welsh speaking schools then the language is not learnt properly, most people leaving English speaking schools can't speak Welsh because 1 lesson a week and text book learning is not the way to learn a language
- WESP is referenced as part of the draft plan
- I don't see Welsh language pushed enough in schools. If we want Welsh Language to have an impact it needs to be compulsory during primary and early secondary phase
- this should have been done years ago
- People can be encouraged to use the Welsh language in more subtle ways. Poetry readings / using actors like in Llancaiac Ffawr Manor (Not sure if I spelt that correctly). Perhaps something at Margham Castle - Great resource!
- The more we do the better we get! However there is still a lack of acknowledgement and implementation of the language amongst the workforce.
- I think it's a good thing
- the plan should be balanced
- The country isn't run in Welsh and more opportunities will always present themselves in English
- Unfortunately, the Welsh language is not recognized in business sectors and until that changes, there will be no effect
- happy for Welsh language to improve
- There is no provision to encourage the use of the Welsh language
- not many people actually speak Welsh in NPT

- Apart from more welsh medium schools I didn't see anything else on there relating to welsh language.
- Would like to see more support for the use of the Welsh Language
- From your previous assertions in this survey you will provide better facilities for youngsters to learn Welsh. This enriches our culture.
- No effect - I don't see big enough changes to instill lasting change.
- We need to keep the Welsh language alive
- We need to keep our language alive
- The Welsh language is consistently being promoted as part of every day life
- People will or will not speak Welsh regardless, I think it's a complete waste of resources sending out printed information as standard in both Welsh and English, I agree that Welsh should be made available, but at a request. I don't know a single person who would prefer communication in Welsh and I can't imagine how much money is wasted by printing out Welsh versions of everything for everyone!
- I don't really have an opinion on this. While I generally think learning Welsh is a good thing, it should not be at the expense of speaking other languages.
- It's not seen or recognised as essential language
- I don't think it's specific enough
- it will take generations to reimplement the welsh language
- Good ideas
- Recognition of WL within the objectives
- I dont thing many people are bothered about the Welsh language.
- i am english speaking my child went to welsh school. so i am ok with people talking in native tongue
- Not a very Welsh speaking area and there has not enough support to keep what little there was alive over many years. New appointments to the LA should be Welsh speaking or willing to learn
- You're trying to upgrade Welsh accessibility in all areas
- The Welsh school rhos afan wouldn't even accommodate my daughter who has SEN. So how can you help promote children to speak Welsh when they won't even accept children in the first place
- People should be encouraged to send their children to Welsh school
- I put positive but unfortunately many people aren't interested to learn /use welsh
- Some people are used to speaking on either Welsh or English and it's up to you what language you want to speak
- Important to preserve our language
- I find a lot of people speak Welsh and those who don't do have the option to learn it
- In line with the WG 2030 Welsh Language Strategy
- I am not welsh but people need to learn with own language
- you are wasting so much paper printing etc on bilingual information. it should be on request only
- I'm unsure how many people have the motivation to learn and use Welsh more often.
- Pessimistic about the use of Welsh, don't see much gain from previous initiatives
- We are so used to speaking English, most people wouldn't want to change.
- The Welsh language should be an integrated part of each of the main aims, as it directly impacts everything mentioned.
- Through the strategy for Welsh language education
- I think there is room for more positive effects by including more explicit commitment to the welsh language, but already the proposed changes will increase opportunities for existing welsh speakers and new welsh learners. A focus on bringing these communities together would be fantastic eg in libraries or new social spaces. Learners lack opportunities to practice their skills.
- Not sure, historically this has been a slow process.
- We are only tinkering around the edges with the Welsh laguage
- Welsh language needs to be encouraged in all ages in community
- See previous observation on the Welsh language. I am NOT anti-Welsh language, but it must support itself.
- Being a parent who is a non welsh speaker i sent my son to a Welsh School because there was transport available , if this was the case when i was of school age i think this could have encouraged more people to have gone to Welsh medium schools and therefore there would now be more welsh speakers in the community thus giving more opportunity for more to speak the language.

- The plans are still vague
- Welsh, but not a Welsh speaker, tho kids & grand kids are. Speaking it hasn't given them any better opportunities. In my opinion.
- Anything to encourage use of the Welsh language will hopefully have a positive effect. Not sure how positive though.
- What it brought and what it have to offer
- Because I am unsure of the council's commitment to the Welsh language given the fact that the old court buildings are now being used by the council when they would have been hugely beneficial to the schoolare
- Various measures cited in your Plan would have a positive impact.
- Wirh everything else that is happening, I do not think it is relevant enough
- More free classes to learn Welsh for adults.
- The Welsh language is used as a tool to bully and exclude, it is fundamentally anti-English.
- I honestly have no idea.
- I think language should be a choice and English should be treated no less favourably, which often happens.
- It states that it is going to positively promote the Welsh language
- I hope it will be positive but am not really sure, the standard of Cymraeg in some of your social media posts is not always good!
- Not specific enough to be able to see that there would be a difference.
- No comment
- This is trivial. So much poverty currently happening. Minimum wage workers struggling. What support will you be offering them!
- Investment in the Pontardawe Art Centre offers the potential to develop the Council's Welsh Language offer
- People frequently state they are embarrassed at their lack of ability to converse in Welsh, however they need to invest time to study and also need opportunities to use it in practice.
- More emphasis on cultural history
- Investment in the Pontardawe Art Centre offers the potential to develop the Council's Welsh Language offer.
- We need to move forward
- As Port Talbot is generally English I cannot see that people would want change
- Promoting the use of the Welsh language can only have a positive effect.
- It is important to promote and maintain our heritage and language.
- Keep our Welsh language going
- I think it's positive to incorporate Welsh language into daily life as it is part of where we live and who we are. It is important for it to be equal.
- As the Welsh language is going to be encouraged I think it will make a positive change.
- Societ's perceptions are difficult to change and though it is great that we continue to fight these perceptions it will always be a fight we need to continue. I hope to be proven wrong.
- English language is more widely used.
- Welsh is a language that is not used
- I think the WG initiative promotes the Welsh language well which allows council to promote it at little cost to them.
- There is insufficient detail in the plan to come to a decision on whether or not there would be an impact - what are the Council actually going to do (the detail behind the aspirations are not included in the plan)
- It benefits people to speak both languages
- I don't know anyone that speaks Welsh
- Equal to all
- Don't think people are interested in learning Welsh
- Don't speak Welsh
- No one speaks Welsh
- People have to want to engage so it means a change of mindset and societal changes
- I don't believe the Welsh language is treated less favourably at the moment so the corporate plan will have no impact
- Too much natural English speaking
- Providing increased opportunity to develop and promote the Welsh language is a positive.
- Tried to learn but found it hard.
- I think it will be great to encourage and use the Welsh language in businesses where needed and can be helpful. But good it won't be penalised for not speaking fluent Welsh.

- Firmly believe all junior schools should be taught Welsh not some. Six Grandchildren - 3 fluent Welsh (Trebanos)
- Freedom of choice
- Being able to speak welsh or english would be an advantage to a firm/business if the employed someone who was bilingual.
- I am unfortunately not a welsh speaker but would love to learn and think it should be encouraged and provided for.
- Optimistoc response - don't really know!
- There is already oppourtunities to use the language, but not enough training for non-speakers.
- Everypne speaks English
- Too little too late for our generation. Hope future generations benefit
- I wish Welsh/English road signs were different coloured; by the time i've scrabbled through, i've missed direction.
- Welsh language needs to be encouraged and improved for future generations.
- Migration. English spoken more widely than Welsh in My experience
- Welsh language is being lost, so more oppourtunities for it to be spoken is positive
- It will encourage more people to learn
- If all schools taught bi-lingually Welsh/English from 4+ years, then pupils will grow up fluent in both

Figure 14: impact on Welsh language:



We asked people to give the reasons for their responses. There were 83 responses, as follows:

- Peoples viewpoint on welsh language won't change because more emphasis is put on it
- I don't think it's going to make the slightest bit of difference sorry.
- There's a chance for improvement but welsh is still seen as a optional extra in Wales
- As previously explained
- Too much emphasis on the Welsh language.
- Haven't a clue sorry
- Not relevant
- More bilingualsigns and more Welsh road signs.
- Investment in the language
- I feel there is already opportunity and NPT do treat both favourably
- People have far more pressing issues than a nice to have hobby such as learning Welsh..or any other languages..
- I do not believe the welsh language has anything to do with a financial budget, unless the translation costs are considered.
- Complete waste of time and money
- The budget includes some extra money for heritage and culture, so hopefully will benefit the Welsh language
- it would be fab if the welsh language was used more.
- I hope the effect is positive but I will not hold my breath on this matter. Sadly.

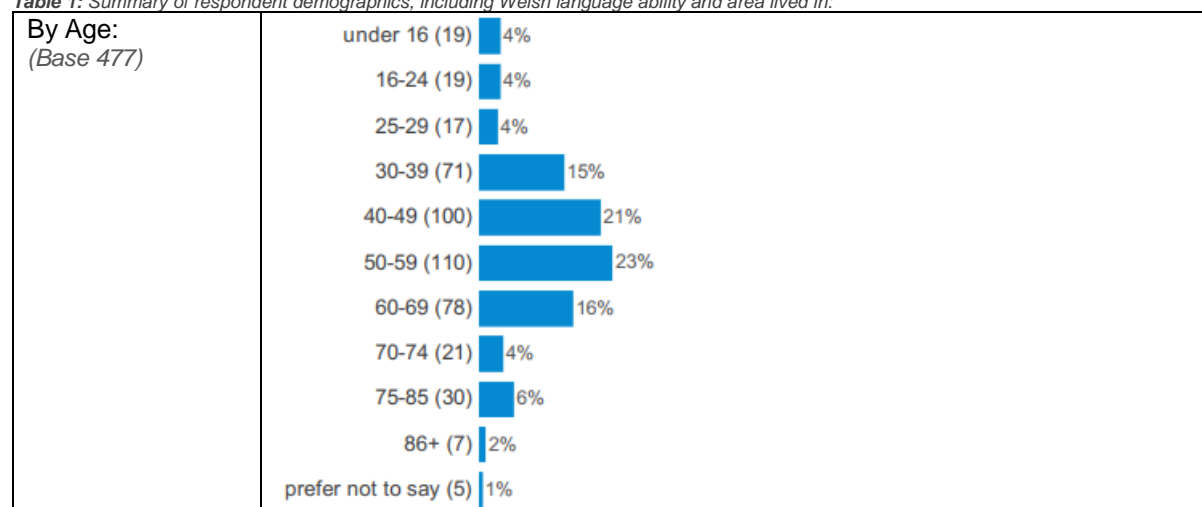
- There are excellent opportunities for promotion of our language
- Funding for Welsh medium education
- All schools need to use Welsh if the whole population is going to be able to speak Welsh in years to come
- Positive but only if individuals take the opportunity to learn
- People will choose - most don't want to speak Welsh
- more money being invested to help
- Not required
- Too much time spent on Welsh language means less education
- The Welsh language and culture need to be protected and preserved.
- More money is needed.
- due to lack of funding for culture and heritage
- Again I feel that if Welsh language is not taught compulsory in school then it will be hard for people to use it on a regular basis
- not applicable
- Welsh language should be a choice and not influenced
- I have a daughter who teaches in a Welsh medium school so I am all for using more Welsh
- Not popular in NPT
- If undertaken then there should be a positive effect
- There does not seem to be any correlation between the two
- More funds available to teach children the language.
- Good ideas
- people need to learn to keep minds free of bad thoughts. so to learn a new language is good
- This is a long term aim and there needs to be a much more focused programme
- Need to see more detail on the proposals to answer question accurately
- It's positive but ultimately up to the individual choice to want to learn /use
- It's up to you what language you want to speak
- Welsh Language, Culture & History important
- just my opinion
- Positive but more is needed as a local authority.
- Important issues , but not at the cost of improving other facilities in Neath , this issue is not a priority
- Unsure if this is a top priority for people with the current energy price worries and after effects of the pandemic.
- Non-Welsh speakers will just continue to speak English.
- Anything to improve the use of Welsh in our community is essential to the future of the language
- See my previous comments on the Welsh language (Although I am a fairly good Welsh language speaker, I disagree with using money to promote Welsh. It should be allowed to sink or swim on its own merits, The money would be more useful used for other things. I am NOT anti-Welsh language, but it must support itself.)
- There are many areas where the council fail miserably - budgets are set and budgets then lose a lot of funds because lack of real achievement goals show afterwards - I am so sorry I have no confidence in the council at all and as I am only 1 nothing that I can do that would improve our way forward even this draft that I am writing on is full of twaddle. Most people want straight talking easy to understand without finding out what this or that means. I am 78 years never used computers/smart phones etc. etc. retired at 67 yrs working for NPT Community Team. So I do know a little what I'm writing here.
- Not speaking FLUENT Welsh can be a JOB disadvantage. Town dwellers rarely use it so there is limited 'practice' available.
- Any initiatives will hopefully have a positive effect
- What it has to offer
- I'm unsure as to the council's commitment to the Welsh language as stated previously
- Your positive objectives on language parity.
- The Welsh language is used as a tool to bully and exclude
- Again - I feel that language is a choice. It is very hard to ask for English only comms.
- Past experience.
- There needs to be more definite plans made to ensure this - locally and by WG.
- seems to be mentioned frequently
- It is person choice to learn Welsh

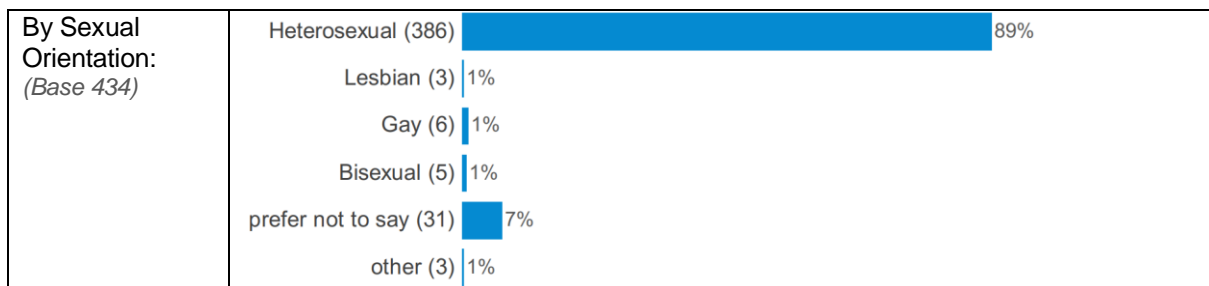
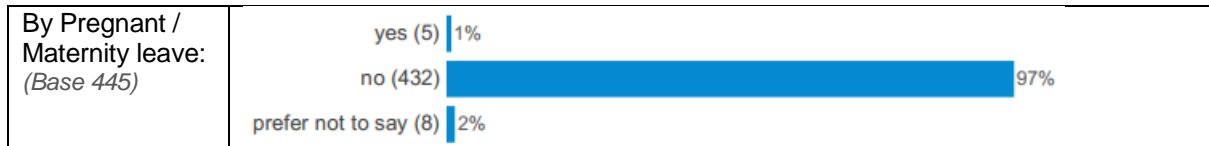
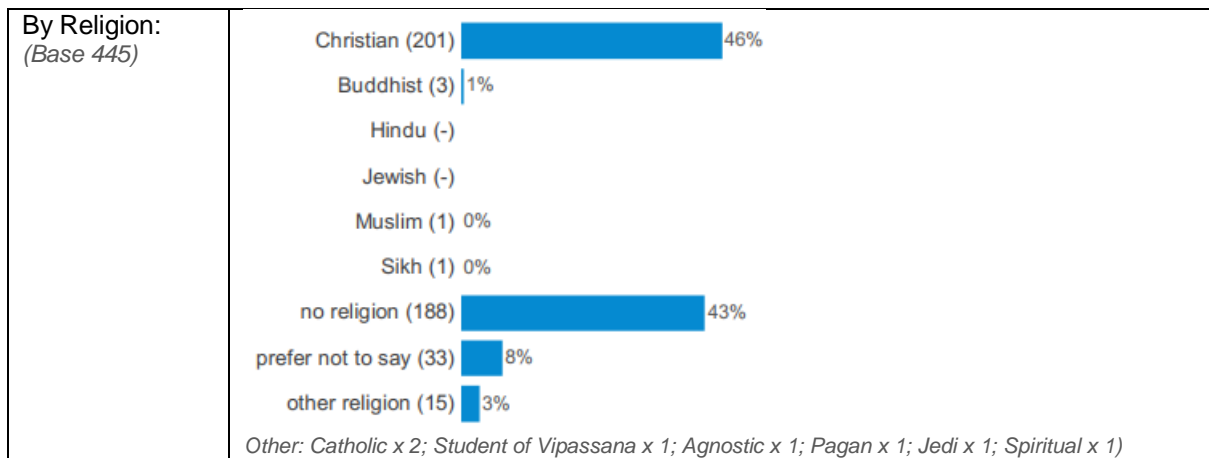
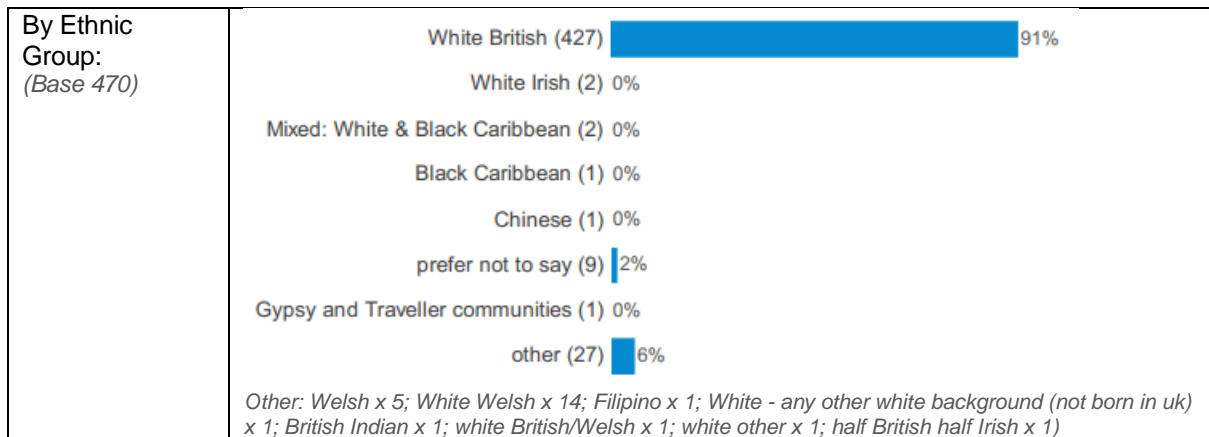
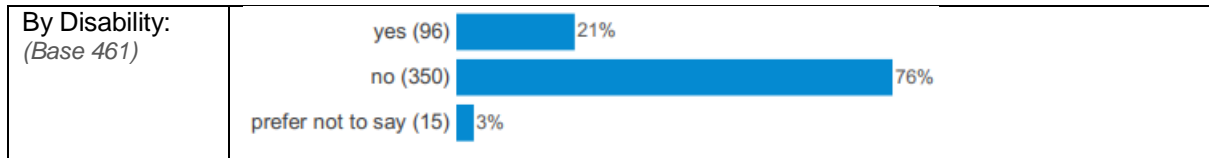
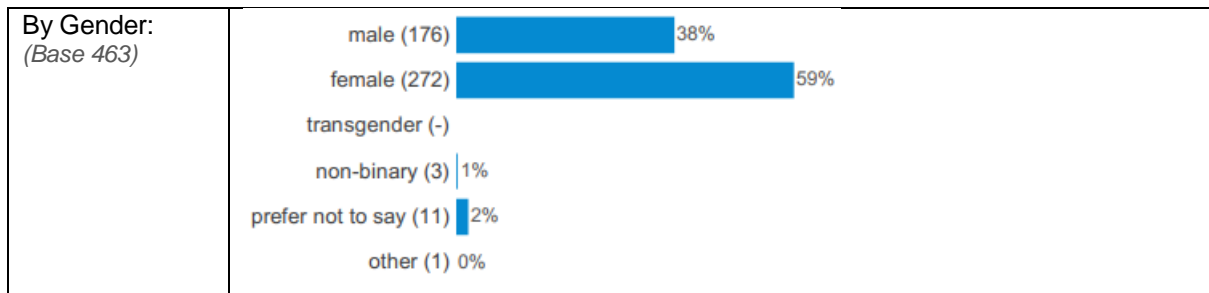
- Welsh language is extremely important to prioritise. I feel like we're often in a tick box mode where English is the focus and if Welsh is used it's not really developed. Welsh should be celebrated not kept separately. A lot more work could be done on this. .
- Cannot speak Welsh personally and most of the population are English speaking. The only advantage to being able to speak Welsh would be jobs in Cardiff Welsh Assembly.
- Promoting the Welsh language can only have a positive effect
- Society's perceptions are difficult to change and though it is great that we continue to fight these perceptions it will always be a fight we need to continue. I hope to be proven wrong.
- It's good to see the Welsh language promoted in Neath Abbey Primary School
- Welsh is not spoken here
- Everybody is equal no matter what language you speak
- Not many people in the area speak Welsh
- Don't speak Welsh
- No one speaks Welsh
- I think it's about giving people more and also equal opportunities within their skill sets to help in areas where it is needed.
- Opportunities yes but as several people of my age we spoke Welsh prior to going to infants and junior schools
- The reason for my response is that it will give favourable opportunities to both languages. People who speak Welsh, people who speak English, also people who are bilingual and speak both.
- I think that the Welsh language should be always encouraged and provided for.
- I hope the effect will be positive as it deserves to be.
- Hopefully, I don't know the extent of enthusiasm for / resistance to the Welsh language in the people of Wales
- People who want to speak Welsh; speak Welsh - those who don't, won't. Spending 1.2 million isn't going to change that. Welsh is preferred over English - and so it should be.
- Question 15 very poorly written. What's your sex orientation got to do with anything?
- Weigh up how many people want the Welsh language & why.
- Migration - English spoken more than Welsh in this area
- Particularly in relation to heritage projects
- If people speak English as a first language, it will be their choice if they want to learn Welsh. However, if schools (all of them) were bi-lingual equally in both English + Welsh from 4+ years, then Welsh will be fluent + widely spoken in Wales alongside English. I'd like to see this happen.

Who responded

The response profile to the questionnaire is summarised below.

Table 1: Summary of respondent demographics, including Welsh language ability and area lived in:





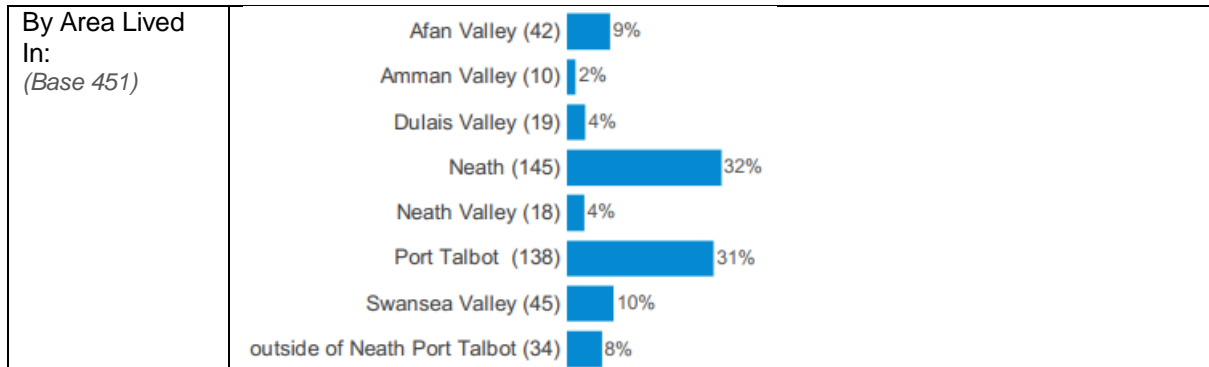
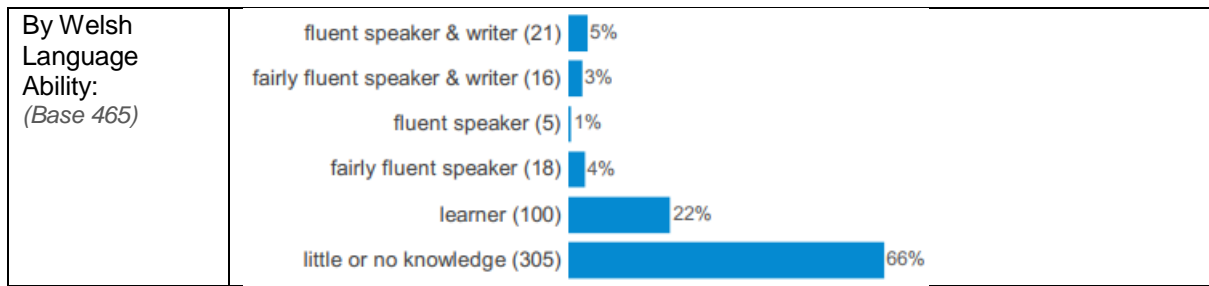
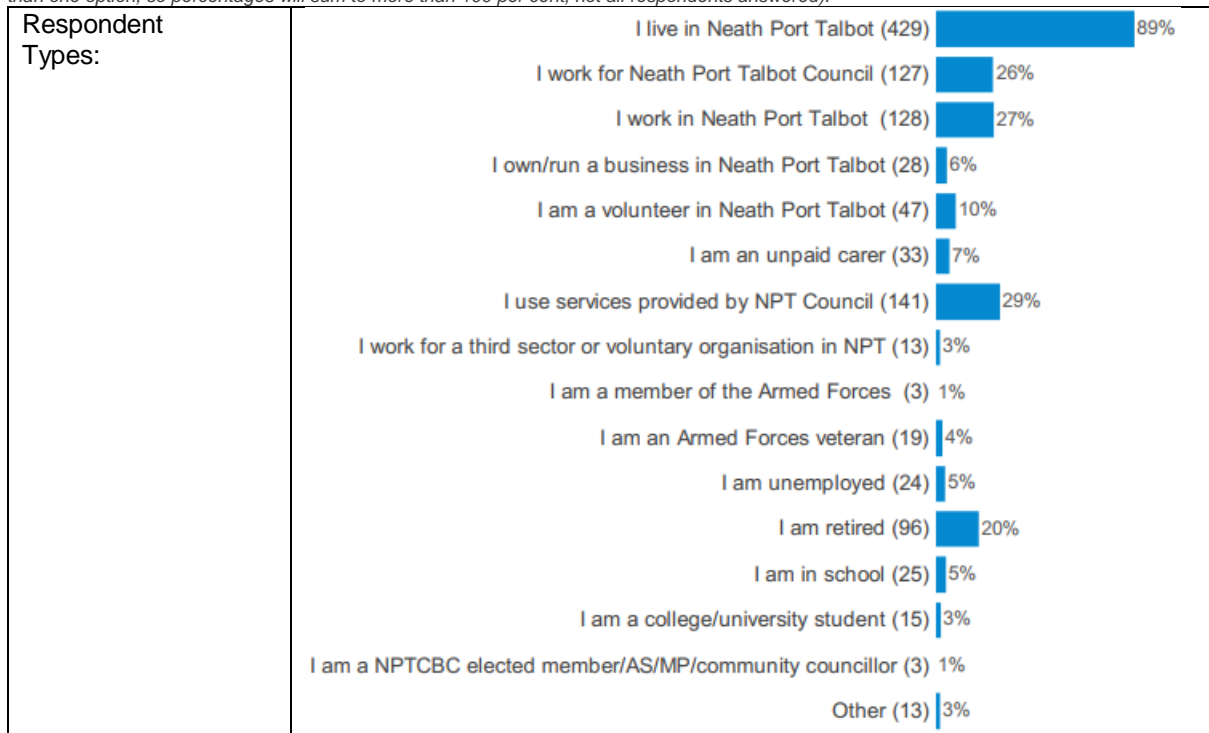


Table 2: Summary of the ways in which respondents described themselves and their relationship to NPT (NB respondents could choose more than one option, so percentages will sum to more than 100 per cent; not all respondents answered).



Responses from Groups and Partners

Three formal responses were received from:

- Natural Resources Wales (via NPT PSB)
- Pobl Group (Via NPT PSB)
- Gwynfi Mners' Community Hall

Natural Resources Wales

The last 2 years or so has been life changing for us all and we have faced and risen to enormous challenges in our personal and professional lives in delivering our "business as

usual” as well as managing the impacts of the Covid pandemic. We share your vision for continued working together as we progress through the recovery and renewal phases of the pandemic. The successful delivery of the ambitions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act relies on good collaboration and synchronicity across the public and private sectors. There are many examples where this is working well already, and we were pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in the development of the Natural and Cultural Heritage wellbeing objective of this plan. Our further comments are as follows.

General comments

By way of background to the broader picture, NRW’s State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2020 highlights that Wales has more to do in how it is managing its environment. SoNaRR sets this out as the 4 aims of sustainable management of natural resources:-

- Stocks of natural resources are maintained for future generations
- Ecosystems are resilient
- Healthy places for people
- A regenerative economy with sustainable production and consumption

Presently we are not meeting any of these aims and we have recognised that the following three key systems are where most gains are to be made:

- Energy
- Transport
- Food

Neath Port Talbot’s corporate strategy and associated plans can help influence positive action within these systems. We would encourage the sustainability question to pervade all decision making across all 4 wellbeing objectives.

Cross-cutting comments

Climate change adaptation and mitigation feature under the Natural and Cultural Heritage (NCH) objective and there is a focus on decarbonisation/renewables in the Jobs/Skills objective. The impacts of climate change, however, will be relevant across all wellbeing objectives and we must also ensure that we are resilient to the anticipated risks that a changing climate will bring. The UK Climate risk website contains useful tools for considering the risk and actions in a range of sector briefings, e.g. energy, housing, health and social care.

Best start

The natural environment can play an important part in the early years development of our children and the county offers significant opportunities for outdoor learning with added value of connecting young people to their local communities and environment. This links to the NCH action around raising awareness and interest in the local environment and environmental issues.

The links between outdoor green space and blue space/wild play opportunities and physical and mental wellbeing in young people are well documented. Action is needed to secure adequate provision of safe, accessible natural green spaces.

Thriving communities

We support the asset based approach. As above – community resilience to climate change should feature as part of the assessment.

We are pleased to see action to “clean up and green up”, recognising the important role of a high quality local environment, e.g. good air quality, accessible natural green space in place-making. Often social and environmental inequities go hand in hand - some of the most deprived communities are also areas of poorer environmental quality and will often be home to those who are most vulnerable to the risks of climate change. Targeting these areas will derive greatest benefits. In developing greater community resilience there will be opportunities to build in nature based solutions - this is highlighted in the NCH objective.

We support action around place making and high quality/low carbon housing. Active travel links, as well as improved public transport should feature as a fundamental consideration of better connectivity within and between communities.

Natural and Cultural heritage

The Biodiversity Duty Plan is referenced in linked plans, but there is perhaps merit in more overt recognition of the actions required under that plan in the actions section. This plan will also be a relevant consideration under the other objectives.

Jobs and skills

We support the focus on sustainable, well paid “green” jobs and the action to develop the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors. Part of this should see the development of the circular economy and shortening of supply chains. Interventions may provide the opportunity for delivering multiple benefits, for the economy, communities and the environment, e.g. the Pen y Cymoedd windfarm.

It is positive to see a link to provision of good transport hubs and connections between home and work. Similarly, active travel routes provide opportunities to deliver health and wellbeing, environmental as well as connectivity benefits.

The plan recognises that the natural environment of the county provides significant economic opportunities, e.g. supporting recreation and tourism. There is also a need to ensure that the environment is protected and improved (i.e. sustainable management) to secure these natural assets in the long term.

I hope you find the above useful and we look forward to future collaboration with you in taking some of the above action forwards. If you do have any queries then please get in touch.

Pobl Group

Overall – the plan is ambitious and inspiring. The four pillars around which its structured make good sense. I like the way the plan sets a long term vision for each pillar, articulates why this is necessary using data and evidence, talks to what citizens consider important ... then sets short and medium term goals to progress towards the vision.

The agenda is enormous .. feels a bit overwhelming but then its hard to find things that could be struck out . The organisational challenge will inevitably be resourcing and creating wider ownership and specific accountability. I like the fact that the council talks about partners throughout the document as the achievement of many of the aims will need a ‘shared endeavour’ approach . This is definitely the case in relation to the homes, communities and wider decarbonisation challenges.

Some of the enabling actions in the plan in terms of offering small grants to community groups to take some ownership can also be extremely powerful. With this in mind I wonder if the decarbonisation aims could embrace the education and involvement of citizens more widely beyond the Councils own carbon footprint (I may have missed this) .

The plan is very comprehensive and I don’t have much to add but would say you can count of Pobl’s to support its delivery.

A tiny point which may be a nice touch The plan is signed off by the leader and CX . It might be nice to have their pictures in there and their first names which may help citizens see the two key people behind the plan ?

Gwynfi Miners Community Hall



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL BUDGET 2022-23

Consultation Response on Council Budget.

Gwynfi Miners Community Hall welcomes the Welsh Government's proposed uplift of 8.8% for Neath Port Talbot CBC next year with subsequent annual uplifts of 3.5% and 2.4%. These are the most generous settlements that local government has received for very many years. And in this context we are particularly pleased to see that the Council leadership states:-

“We propose to increase youth and outdoor leisure services to boost the wellbeing of young people as well as providing new funding for schools to support children with additional learning needs.

We propose to strengthen support for vulnerable people, including those who have become lonely and isolated due to the pandemic and also increase the number of neighbourhood teams as part of a drive to catch up, clean up and green up towns and villages.”

In the last decade the Council has almost totally withdrawn from the provision of non-statutory services to our community. Indeed the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive and Arwelfa shows that even statutory services are not immune or protected.

Through a massive and sustained local community effort some of the services that the Council had withdrawn have been restored. This has involved local groups and individuals in the Upper Afan Valley securing £150-250,000 in grants and donations annually. This is simply not sustainable on a year by year basis. This has been achieved with minimal or no Council support. It is a time for a reset on this lack of support if we are to have thriving and sustainable communities across Neath Port Talbot.

We know from research by Sheffield Hallam University that our community has been one of the hardest hit by the effects of austerity. We also know from Public Health Wales data, that as a disadvantaged and low income community, we have borne an excessive burden of the Covid pandemic. This is acknowledged in the Council's own draft strategic plan which states:- ***“The evidence demonstrates that the poorest areas have experienced the greatest impact both in terms of health and financial impacts. Those who faced the greatest disadvantage prior to the pandemic have been hardest hit and as a consequence inequalities across Neath Port Talbot have widened. Addressing these inequalities will be a cross cutting theme across all of the recovery actions we propose to take in the short, medium and longer term.”*** However it is not at all clear in the budget proposals how this cross cutting objective will be met as there are no clear programmes identified to achieve this.

Our Council now faces the choice of continuing to ignore the gross and ever growing inequalities within its own boundaries or it can choose to genuinely Reset and Renew by making a greater effort to provide services and facilities in line with need, fair play and social justice. A physical infrastructure of buildings and people is needed if the Council is to be able to deliver on its draft vision of **“community support”, “early intervention and prevention”** as well as boosting tourist and local enterprise and to deliver schemes such as **“the Summer of Fun”**.

There is little point in calling for **“...a strong focus on encouraging people of all ages and from all backgrounds to adopt active lifestyles to improve physical and emotional wellbeing.”** when local facilities and staff that would facilitate this happening are not being actively supported by the Council and other statutory bodies.

If the Council is serious about its declared objective to **“Reset and Renew”** through **“investing in the recovery of our communities and our local economy”** its work must begin in those communities who have lost the most over the last decade and who have been left with the least provision.

Basic common sense demands that those with the greatest need should secure a fresh start in terms of investment rather than a continuation of the endless disinvestment and managed decline that residents in the Upper Afan Valley have experienced. Without this investment it will be impossible to restore **“Communities (that) are thriving thriving (and where) inequalities in health, economic and social outcomes have reduced.”**

We all recognise that the causes of the last decade of austerity did not start at the doors of Neath Port Talbot Council. But how the Council has responded has meant that virtually all new investment has been concentrated in the bigger urban centres and south of the M4 corridor while the areas with the greatest social need and most remote from mainstream provision have had to face cutback after cutback.

We are aware that the proposal to freeze Council Tax will be politically popular across most of the Borough not least because of the unfairly high levels in Neath Port Talbot. And it will benefit some hard pressed families. But it will not benefit severely disadvantaged families and communities who are already outside the council tax net. As such the proposal to freeze council tax is a re-distributive measure that will reduce the resources available to address current inequalities and service cutbacks. In its budgetary plans, fairness requires the Council to ensure that all residents and communities will benefit.

To begin this process of putting fairness and need at the heart of the budget process Gwynfi Miners Community Hall believes the following steps are urgently needed:-

- provide guaranteed grant support for staff in our existing community centres. Without this support it will be impossible have the facilities from which priorities such as social isolation, promoting the wellbeing of our young people or community recovery can be delivered.
- review the physical fabric of these facilities with a view to their remediation.
- provide more support for outdoor sports facilities to complement the excellent voluntary work that is already taking places.
- review existing patterns of public transport to make it easier for people to get to work, education, public services and amenities that are available to more affluent communities in urban locations..
- work with local businesses and groups to improve the tourist and leisure opportunities that exist in the Upper Afan as an important economic driver.
- invest in the good upkeep and cleanliness of our public spaces and work with the local voluntary groups that are doing excellent work in this regard.

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28th FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to:

- Consider Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's 2022/23 revenue budget including investments in services, investments from reserves and proposed council tax levels.
- Agree the principles in relation to fees and charges for Council services.

Background

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's ("the Council") net budget requirement for 2021/22 totals £316.246m and when grants and income are taken into account this means the Council's Gross Budget invests over £450m in services across the County Borough.

Every year the Council has a duty to consult and set a budget for the provision of services. This report sets out the 2022/23 revenue budget. A separate report setting out the Council's capital programme for 2022/23 to 2025/26 is also presented for members approval at today's meeting.

On the 5th January 2022 Cabinet approved a consultation process with stakeholders on the draft budget for 2022/23 including a proposed 0% freeze in Council Tax and investment from specific reserves of £2.8m to support Covid recovery initiatives.

This report sets out final budget proposals for consideration by the Cabinet.

Executive Summary

During the public consultation period 485 responses were received from members of the public. A summary of these responses is included at Appendix 6 of this report.

This report does not contain any proposed changes to the two items consulted on namely:

- Council Tax should be frozen at 2021/22 levels
- A contribution of £2.8m from reserves should be utilised to support one off Covid recovery investments

These final budget proposals do include an increase in Covid recovery investment into thriving and sustainable communities from the £1.2m included within the draft proposals to an increased allocation of £1.5m.

The proposals contained within this report are based on the provisional local government settlement as the final settlement is not due until 2nd March 2022. The Welsh Government have indicated that there will be no significant variations between the provisional and final settlement.

This report requests that authority is delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, to make any amendment necessary through the use of general reserves, as a consequence of the final settlement due 2nd March 2022.

Welsh Government Provisional Settlement

The Welsh Government's Provisional Local Government Settlement was published on 21st December 2021. On an all Wales basis the total amount of funding has increased by £437m or 9.4%.

Neath Port Talbot has received an increase in funding of £20.78m which equates to 8.8% when compared to the adjusted 2021/22 base. This increase is the 18th lowest of the twenty two Councils in Wales.

The reasons for Neath Port Talbot being towards the bottom of the settlement table are due to data changes which drive some elements of the funding formula, namely:

- Free School Meals – the number of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased but proportionately less than other Councils
- The number of benefit claimants has increased but again proportionately less than most other Councils in Wales.

Specific Grants

On a like for like basis specific revenue grants will increase from £1.142bn to £1.146bn which is a slight increase of approximately 0.4%. Many of the grants remain unchanged from 2021/22 and some are yet to be finalised.

The settlement information helpfully contains indicative grant allocations on an all Wales basis for three financial years which should remove some of the uncertainty around annual funding cycles.

A schedule of all specific grants is included in Appendix 3 of this report.

The Council's Revenue Budget

The proposed final budget included at Appendix 1 sets out the Net Budget i.e. expenditure and funding for 2022/23, which is summarised below.

	2021/22	2022/23	Change
	Original	Original	
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning	120,874	125,079	4,205
Social Services and Housing	87,276	93,640	6,364

	2021/22	2022/23	Change
	Original	Original	
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Environment	41,929	43,808	1,879
Corporate Services	18,775	20,403	1,628
Precepts and Other	50,492	55,085	4,593
Contribution from General Reserve	-3,100	0	3,100
Net Revenue Budget	316,246	338,015	21,769
Funded by:			
Welsh Government Aggregate External Finance	236,681	258,068	21,387
Discretionary Rates Relief	-387	-387	0
Council Tax Yield	79,952	80,334	382
Total Funding	316,246	338,015	21,769

Members should note that in 2022/23 Council Tax payers will fund 23.76% of the Council's Net expenditure. The majority of the funding at £258.068m or 76.24% is funded through via the Welsh Government local government settlement.

Service Overview

Neath Port Talbot County Borough covers over 170 square miles. It is home to around 141,000 people living in more than 66,000 households in communities across the County Borough. The Council provides many different services to residents and businesses. We are responsible for maintaining approximately 860 kilometres of roads, 940 kilometres of footpaths and over 19,000 street lights across the County Borough.

The following are examples of the many varied services that the Council provides on a daily basis:

- Education and schools
- Adult education
- Youth services
- Libraries including supporting community libraries
- Theatres and leisure

- Social services including homecare, residential care, supporting children and other vulnerable people with disabilities
- Highways maintenance
- Street lighting
- Building control
- Planning and economic development
- Passenger and school transport
- Waste management including refuse and recycling collections and disposal
- Food hygiene and trading standards
- Pest control
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Licensing of taxis, pubs and restaurants
- Margam and Gnoll Country Parks
- Homeless assistance
- Registration of births marriages and deaths
- Housing and Council Tax Support

The Council pays a precept of £8.5m to the Mid & West Wales Fire Authority who provides the local fire service.

Detailed information regarding proposed investments in services during 2022/23 is included within Appendix 7 of this report.

Budget Analysis 2022/23

The annual change in the budget is summarised as follows:

	£'000
Revised Guideline Budget 2021/22	316,246
Unavoidable Cost increases - Inflation, Pay awards etc	8,757
Service investments	8,810
Reduction in general contingency and other adjustments	-1,098
Medium Term Financial Strategy Equalisation Budget	2,200
Reverse the use of General Reserves in 2021/22	3,100
Budget 2022/23	338,015

The Draft Budget proposals have been subject to consultation with the public, partners, staff and trade unions and prepared in the context of the new draft Corporate Plan, based upon the following four Well-being objectives:

- Best start in life
- Thriving and sustainable communities
- Environment, heritage and culture
- Jobs and skills

The budget allows for a 1.25% pay award for all staff, together with an additional contingency of £1m. Price inflation has been allowed on a selective basis and total income receipts have been assumed to increase by 2%, as a result of changes in price and volume.

Given current inflationary pressures including the significant rise in energy costs; and the pressure these will place on wage growth; the above inflation assumptions represent a risk which will require careful monitoring during 2022/23.

A review of service investments has been undertaken and the following additional amounts have been included in the budget:

Service plan investments	£'000
Schools	750
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning	500
Social Services and Housing	2,500
Environment	613
Corporate Services	410
Other including pay contingency	1,537
Cessation of hardship fund	2,500
Total	8,810

Further details of these service investments are included in Appendix 2.

Council Tax

The draft budget for consultation included a proposal that Council Tax would be frozen at 2021/22 levels.

Following the consultation, where 90% of respondents were in agreement, it is still proposed to freeze council tax at 2021/22 levels so

at Band D council tax will remain at £1,660.02 per annum. This is in recognition of the fact that many householders in Neath Port Talbot are currently experiencing a significant increase in their cost of living.

Based on a council tax base of 48,393.68 Band D properties this will generate council tax proceeds of £80.334m or 23.8% of the Council's net Budget requirement.

Although the Council is required to state the Council Tax at Band D, approximately 79% of residents in Neath Port Talbot are charged at or below the Band C amount of £1,475.57.

Members should note that the Council Tax setting process for 2022/23 will also be completed on 1st March 2022. The Council is required to set the total Council Tax for 2022/23 incorporating the amount payable for this County Borough, the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and relevant Town and Community Council.

One off investments to support Covid recovery

To support the Council, its residents and businesses recover from the Pandemic a number of one off investment initiatives were included as part of these draft budget proposals. It was proposed that £2.8m of the insurance reserve be repurposed to deliver these investments.

Following the consultation period it is still proposed to re-purpose £2.8m as detailed above with allocations to each well-being objective being as follows:

Best start in life £700k

A number of one off in proposals will be delivered around the following areas:

- Increase in community based and specialist youth service provision
- Early intervention and prevention activities including education psychology and key workers to provide support for children and young people affected by the Pandemic
- Additional support for children with additional learning needs
- Increase in adult community learning provisions to support people in the journey back to work

➤ Support around delivering on the food poverty agenda

These proposals will be delivered through a number of short term staffing appointments. If Cabinet are minded to approve this proposal the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning will commence appropriate recruitment processes.

Thriving and Sustainable Communities £1.5m

One of the key messages from the 'Let's Talk' campaign was how much our citizens value the environment and neighbourhoods in which they live and work.

Over the course of the pandemic the Council has had to re-prioritise neighbourhood services in order to ensure continuity of priority services such as refuse and recycling collection.

In order to re-address the issue it is proposed that a range of proposals are developed to deliver a county borough wide range of highly visible projects to 'catch up, clean up and green up' our neighbourhoods.

Individual project details will be agreed at the relevant Cabinet Board(s)

Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills - £200k

It is proposed that strategies be developed in relation to both culture and environment, leisure and tourism in order that further proposals can be developed.

In relation to jobs and skills these programmes are funded in the short term. The 2022/23 service investments schedule includes for additional long term funding to provide additional support for economic development and regeneration which will be key for supporting existing businesses as well as attracting further inward investment into the county borough.

Consultation

The following engagement and consultation activities were undertaken following the approval of the Draft Report. The consultation started on 5th January and closed on 1st February 2022.

The consultation took place against the backdrop of a revised version of alert level 2 restrictions, which came into place on Boxing day 2021 to respond to the highly contagious omicron variant of Covid-19.

Arrangements were made to help ensure that the consultation was as inclusive as possible, despite the challenging situation:

- **Online questionnaire** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the Council's website. The questionnaire was live from Wednesday 5 January (following Cabinet's approval) until midnight on Tuesday 1 February 2022.
- **Email** – the email address LetsTalk@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Offline** – for public health reasons, we adapted our usual practice of making printed copies of questionnaires and reference documents available in public buildings. Instead we:
 - produced and distributed more than 1,100 printed packs and questionnaires for those who are not online. The packs contained an English and Welsh copy of the questionnaire for people to complete in the safety of their own home and return using a pre-paid envelope. These were:
 - made available at our 8 council run libraries (Neath, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Baglan, Cwmafan, Glynneath, Sandfields, Skewen).
 - distributed by Local Area Co-ordinators and members of the Community of Practice (a group made up of officers from across the council who undertake engagement activities as part of their roles)
 - distributed by The Home Library Service, whilst delivering books and information to residents who have difficulty, or who are unable to visit their local library.
 - Distributed by Tai Tarian to their Haven schemes for people over 55 - there are 15 of these schemes across the county borough in Cwmafan, Port Talbot, Sandfields, Briton Ferry, Neath, Cadoxton, Crynant, Tonna,

Glynneath, Banwen, Ystalyfera, Pontardawe (x 2),
Cwmgors, Gwaun Cae Gurwen .

- made printed questionnaires available to employees in a number of internal services including the catering and cleaning service and the Service Response Centre at the Quays

The consultation was promoted online (via: regular social media activity on corporate and service accounts, email marketing, and internal council channels); offline (via: radio, press releases, and posters); and by outreach activity via NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement.

Section 151 Officer Responsibility and Risk Management

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to report to Council on the “robustness of the estimates” used in calculating the budget requirement.

The Chief Finance Officer has made the necessary enquiries and received assurances from officers that the estimates are prudent and achievable.

A pay, pensions and general contingency of £1.5m has been set aside in the base budget to fund any variations and the risks in delivering the savings included in the budget. Should the risks be higher than this then the General Reserve and Corporate Contingency Reserve will be available to support any emergency calls.

Outlined below are a number of risk areas that will need to be actively managed during 2022/23 and into future years:

- Ongoing operational and financial implications of the Covid19 pandemic including the cessation of the Welsh Government’s Hardship fund with effect from April 2022
- Implications of Brexit
- Inflationary pressures including the impact of substantial increase in energy costs
- Adequate provision for pay award – it is likely that the inflationary and energy pressures will result in potentially higher pay inflation than budgeted for

- Recruitment and retention of staff
- Containment of expenditure within the cash limit
- Managing demand in social care including adult and learning disability services
- Continuing to work with the Health Service to reduce delays in discharge from Health Care.
- Waste management and other contractual pressures
- Ability to deliver WG recycling targets to minimise financial penalties
- Guaranteed pension payment value
- Changes in taxation
- Legislative changes
- Diminishing capital receipts
- In-year changes to specific grant funding
- Additional costs of properties declared as surplus, prior to disposal
- Variations to the number and cost of claimants for Council Tax Support
- Increase in demand for some services
- Unplanned use of the general or specific reserves
- Future years funding requirements for capital investment including City Deal, 21st Century Schools and others.
- Inclement weather impacts on services, infrastructure, communities and budget/reserves.

Integrated Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

It is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 5 for the purposes of the meeting.

Setting a balanced budget for 2022/23 will assist the Council in being able to demonstrate that it is managing its financial and operational statutory duties on a sustainable basis.

Crime and Disorder Impact

The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with “due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area”.

The Council will continue to monitor crime and disorder across the county borough with partners to ensure that the impact of these proposals is regularly reviewed.

Workforce Implications

There are no proposals for staffing reductions as part of these budget proposals. All vacant posts within the Council are now advertised externally and a recruitment task force has been established in order to deal with a number of service areas where vacancies are hard to fill.

Legal Impact

The Council has carried out both general and specific consultation on the proposals as set out in the Cabinet report of 5th January 2022.

Members should consider carefully the responses to consultation and the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Local Government Act 2003 and the Prudential Code infer a statutory requirement to prepare 3 year budgets, and to show affordability and sustainability in the decision making process.

The Welsh Government has provided indicative funding announcements beyond the next financial year. Therefore, at this stage it is prudent for budget proposals for future years to be based on the following assumptions:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
WG funding	8.8%	3.5%	2.4%%	3.0%
Pay & Pension Inflation	1.25%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
General inflation	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

Members will note that every 1% variation in WG funding equates to c£2.6m.

A comprehensive exercise to develop a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the Council will be undertaken in the Spring of 2022.

To reflect the anticipated lower settlements in 2023/24 and 2024/25 the proposals contained in this report include retaining £2.2m of the 2022/23 budget as a 'MTFS equalisation budget'. This will enable peaks and troughs over the MTFS period to be in effect smoothed.

The MTFS exercise will need to consider how to fund the increased cost of returning the provision of indoor leisure services back 'in house' following the decision of the Council's Cabinet on 1st February 2022. As set out in the Cabinet meeting and the preceding Cabinet Scrutiny Committee there are three ways (or a combination of) to close the funding gap:

- Identify permanent savings elsewhere in the Council's budget
- Generate additional income or reduce the current cost of running indoor leisure services
- Increase council tax

Fees & Charges

The budget assumes a general uplift of 2% in total income receipts, arising from a combination of variations in price and activity. Income from services and respective fees and charges will form an integral part of future year budget proposals.

Due to the divergent timing of budget and fee setting, it is recommended that decisions are delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director together with:

- For Executive Functions - in consultation with the Leader, relevant Cabinet Member and Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee,
- For Non-Executive Functions - in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of the appropriate committee

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet having due regard to the integrated impact assessment information set out in Appendix 5 consider the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1 - In relation to the revenue budget approve:

- 1a) The Council's Revenue Budget and service plan investments for 2022/23 as set out in appendix 1 and 2 of this report.
- 1b) The use of £2.8m from the insurance reserve to deliver a number of one-off investments to support Covid recovery including the recruitment of staff to deliver work around the best start in life.

Recommendation 2 - In relation to fees and charges the Cabinet are asked to approve:

- 2a) Fees and Charges Executive Functions

That the following matters are delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Council Leader, relevant Cabinet Member and Chair of the relevant Scrutiny committee:-

-Fees and charges applicable for the financial year 2022/23

-Fees and Charges which are applicable in any subsequent financial year and which, in the opinion of the relevant Corporate Director, need to be set in advance of the financial year for operational reasons.

- 2b) Fees and Charges Non Executive Function

Fees and charges for non-executive functions – that the determination of the following matters be delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Council Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of the relevant Non-executive committee

- Fees & charges applicable in 2022/23

- Fees and charges applicable in any subsequent financial year and which, in the opinion of the Corporate Director, need to be set in advance of that financial year for operational reasons

Recommendation 3 - In relation to any variation between the Welsh Government final settlement and provisional settlement Cabinet are asked to approve:

- That authority is delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, to make any amendment necessary through the use of general reserves, as a consequence of the final settlement due 2nd March 2022.

Recommendation 4 - In relation to the setting of Council Tax levels for 2022/23 Cabinet are asked to commend to Council that:

- There will be no increase in Council Tax in 2022/23 with tax levels being frozen at 2021/22 values. The 2022/23 Band D equivalent for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will remain at £1,660.02.

Reasons for Proposed Decisions

To fulfil the statutory requirement to determine the budget for 2022/23.

To provide a mechanism for dealing with any variation between the provisional and final Welsh Government settlements

To agree arrangements for setting Fees and Charges.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after consideration and approval by Council.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Revenue Budget 2022/23

Appendix 2 – Service investments

Appendix 3 – Schedule of specific grants

Appendix 4 – Reserve Schedule

Appendix 5 – Integrated Impact Assessment for Budget 2022/23

Appendix 6 – Budget Consultation Summary

Appendix 7 – Service information

Background Papers

Cabinet Report of 5th January 2022

Budget working papers 2022/23

Provisional Local Government Settlement

Consultation Responses

Integrated Impact Assessments

Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact:

Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer

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Appendix 1 – Revenue budget 2022/23

	2021/22	2022/23
	Original Budget £'000	Original Budget £'000
Directly controlled expenditure		
Schools	93,314	96,074
Other Education	27,560	29,005
Social Services and Health	87,276	93,640
Environment	41,929	43,808
Finance & Corporate Services	18,775	20,403
Total directly controlled expenditure	268,854	282,930
Levies		
Swansea Port Health Authority	46	46
Fire Authority	8,180	8,503
Margam Crematorium	1	1
Corporate Joint Committee	0	117
Contributions		
Archive Service	97	96
Magistrates Court	11	10
Other Expenditure		
Capital Financing	19,667	20,496
Council Tax Support	19,835	19,616
MTFS Equalisation	0	2,200
Contingency	2,655	1,500
Covid hardship fund cessation	0	2,500
Use of general reserves	-3,100	
Budget Requirement	316,246	338,015
Funded by		
Revenue Support Grant	188,899	206,147
National Non Domestic Rates	47,782	51,921
Discretionary Rate Relief	-387	-387
Council Tax	79,952	80,334
Total Funding	316,246	338,015

Appendix 2 – Service investments

Summary - Service investments		
Total by service		2022/23 £000
Schools		750
ELLL- Other		500
Social Services, Health and Housing		2,500
Environment		613
Corporate Services		410
Other		1,537
Hardship Fund		2,500
Total		8,810
Service	Details	2022/23 £000
ELLL - Schools	Schools - Increased provision re Teaching Assistants.	750
ELL - Other	Additional Learning Needs Investment in response to new legislation. £1m invested to date.	500

Appendix 2 – Service investments

Service	Details	2022/23 £000
Social Services, Health and Housing	Uplift in rates paid to domiciliary care, residential care, Supported Living and Direct Payments	2,500
Environment	Waste services - increased demands due to higher tonnage.	150
Environment	Highways and Streetcare budget increase - in addition to £350k provided 2021/22.	250
Environment	Decarbonisation Measures including staffing and maintenance of recharging points for electric vehicles. In addition to £50k provided in 2021/22.	100
Environment	Reduction of £300k Car Parking income in 2021/22 base budget due to ongoing impact of Covid. Income recovering over 2 years to original level in 2023/24	-150
Environment	Reduction of £300k Rental income in 2021/22 base budget due to ongoing impact of Covid. Income recovering over 2 years to original level in 2023/24	-150
Environment	Loss of red fuel grant to Council following change in legislation	50
Environment	Regeneration, Economic development and business support additional capacity. This is in addition to £100k provided in 2021/22	200
Environment	Anti-social behaviour mitigation measures	15
Environment	Environmental health transfer of post	28
Environment	Pest control fees - reduction in fees for rodent and mice visits from the current £123 for three visits to £40 for three visits	120

Appendix 2 – Service investments

Service	Details	2022/23 £000
Corporate Services	Digital Services - increased costs of Microsoft licences in 2021. Subject to updating as Digital Services review and work programme finalised.	80
Corporate Services	Digital Services - additional funding required to support over 1,500 employees now working from home.	100
Corporate Services	Emergency Planning Team - Additional Capacity to ensure the Council is able to meet its legal obligations.	200
Corporate services	CCTV-Move to 24/7 service	30
Other - Members Allowances	To meet the cost of increases in Members allowances recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel Wales (IRPW)	150
Other - Corporate Joint Committees	Contribution required towards the cost of administering a Corporate Joint Committee during 2022/23	117
Other - Hardship Fund	Will need to cover any additional costs and potential loss of income during 2022/23.	2,500
Other - Capital financing	Increase to support additional capital investment – this allocation will allow for an additional £6m of prudential borrowing.	270
Contingency	Pay contingency	1,000
Total		8,810

Welsh Government Final Settlement - Specific Grants 2022/23

Portfolio and Grant Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total Education and Welsh Language (of which below)	536,559	526,948	537,093	546,113
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) [Note 20]	172,570	158,000	158,000	158,000
Pupil Development Grant	111,030	123,000	123,000	123,000
Sixth Form Provision	98,852	98,852	98,852	98,852
Recruit Recover Raise Standards - the Accelerating Learning Programme	68,848	37,500	32,000	23,000
Additional Learning Needs [Note 21]	16,155	14,155	14,155	14,155
Transition support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller learners [Note 21]	11,000	11,000	TBC	TBC
PDG Access [Note 21]	10,454	10,454	10,454	10,454
Youth Support Grant	10,056	10,056	10,056	10,056
Teachers pay in schools	6,418	0	0	0
Reducing Infant Class Sizes Grant - Revenue [Note 22]	6,000	2,500	0	0
Local Authority Post-16 Education Provision – Adult Learning Provision	5,657	5,657	5,657	5,657
Grant to support and promote a whole school approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing	3,829	3,829	3,829	3,829
Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) Funding	3,768	3,768	3,768	3,768
Additional Learning Needs Transformation grant	3,200	1,980	1,980	TBC
Small and Rural Schools Grant [Note 23]	2,500	0	0	0
Welsh-medium immersion	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200
Elective Home Education [Note 21]	1,757	1,757	1,757	1,757
Online Individual Development Plan Grant	1,000	1000	1000	1000
SEREN	854	854	TBC	TBC
Promote and Faciliate the use of the Welsh Language	386	386	386	386

Appendix 3 – Schedule of Specific Grants

Portfolio and Grant Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Supporting adopted children in Education	27	TBC	TBC	TBC
Free School Meals [Note 24]	0	40,000	70,000	90,000
Total Climate Change (of which below)	307,218	279,841	275,137	271,229
Housing Support Grant	166,763	166,763	166,763	166,763
Bus Services Support	60,482	62,595	62,595	62,595
Mandatory Concessionary Fares	24,900	24,900	24,900	24,900
Sustainable Waste Management Grant	16,400	TBC	TBC	TBC
Food and Residual Waste Treatment Gate Fee Support	13,300	RSG	0	0
Cardiff Harbour Authority	5,610	5,400	5,400	5,400
Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700
Coastal Risk Management Programme	3,650	7,558	3,909	0
Road Safety Grant	2,900	1,900	1,900	1,900
Affordable Housing Grant	2,515	2,515	2,515	2,515
Youth Discounted Travel (My Travel Pass)	1,780	2,000	2,000	2,000
Anglesey Airport Grant Funding	800	800	TBC	TBC
Transforming Towns Revenue Programme - South East Wales	680	0	0	0
Active Travel Fund	549	0	0	0
Transforming Town Programme - North Wales	485	0	0	0
Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being in Wales Grant (ENRaW)	399	98	TBC	TBC
Implementation of measures to tackle nitrogen dioxide exceedance	373	156	0	0
Transforming Towns Revenue Programme - South West Wales	272	0	0	0
AONB Sustainable Development Fund - Revenue	250	250	250	250
Transforming Towns Capital Programme - Mid Wales	136	0	0	0
Rural Housing Enabler	60	60	60	60
Local Energy Service	55	0	0	0
South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP)	50	50	50	50

Appendix 3 – Schedule of Specific Grants

Portfolio and Grant Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Waste Planning Monitoring Report - North Wales and South East Wales	48	49	49	49
North Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP)	25	25	25	25
Smart Living	20	0	0	0
Waste Planning Monitoring Report - South West Wales	16	22	22	22
Total Finance and Local Government (of which below)	177,969	180,131	178,131	182,931
Children and Communities Grant (CCG) [Note 25]	148,401	151,631	149,631	154,431
Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief - (non-Covid Element) [Note 26]	27,700	27,700	27,700	27,700
Child Burials	800	800	800	800
Local Government Digital Transformation Fund [Note 27]	543	0	0	0
Electoral Reform Support Grant	525	0	0	0
Total Health and Social Services (of which below)	127,753	137,759	140,870	141,870
Childcare Offer	57,906	80,750	84,750	86,250
Social Care Workforce Grant [Note 28]	50,000	45,000	45,000	45,000
Early Years Intergration Transformation Grant	3,000	TBC	TBC	TBC
To fund emergency respite services for unpaid carers [Note 29]	2,940	0	0	0
Childcare Offer- Administration Grant	2,851	3,250	3,250	3,250
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	2,815	TBC	TBC	TBC
Adoption Services	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Additional Support Grant - Childcare Offer	1,510	2,000	2,000	2,000
All Wales Play Opportunities grant - Playworks Holiday project, a holiday hunger Initiative	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Foster Wales	576	559	0	0
Funding for local authorities to support age friendly communities	550	1,100	1,100	1,100

Appendix 3 – Schedule of Specific Grants

Portfolio and Grant Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
National Approach to Statutory Advocacy for Children and Young People	550	550	550	550
Connected Communities, Loneliness and Social Isolation Fund	500	500	500	0
Play Wales Strategic Policy Grant	360	TBC	TBC	TBC
Implementation of the Performance and Improvement Framework	330	330	0	0
Young Carers ID card	193	150	150	150
National Adoption Service	185	185	185	185
Funding to support the placement of UASC [Note 23]	80	0	0	0
Safeguarding Boards - training	60	60	60	60
Maintenance of Wales Safeguarding Procedures	25	25	25	25
Contact Services [Note 30]	21	0	0	0
Total Mental Health and Wellbeing (of which below)	26,130	26,081	26,081	26,081
Substance Misuse Action Fund	25,063	25,063	25,063	25,063
Substance Misuse Action Fund - Complex Needs	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,018
Substance Misuse Action Fund - Naloxone	49	TBC	TBC	TBC
Total Social Justice and Social Partnership (of which below)	5,791	6,272	6,272	6,272
Period Dignity	2,501	2,501	2,501	2,501
Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - Revenue Grant	1,579	1,579	1,579	1,579
Community Cohesion	1,100	1,090	1,090	1,090
Funding in relation to Household Support Fund - tackling food poverty	500	0	0	0
Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - Perpetrator Element	111	111	111	111
Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - Needs Based Funding	0	971	971	971
Armed Forces Day	0	20	20	20
Total Rural Affairs & N.Wales, & Trefnydd (of which below)	683	970	1,682	1,664

Appendix 3 – Schedule of Specific Grants

Portfolio and Grant Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
LA Animal Health & Welfare Framework	576	970	1,682	1,664
TB Enforcement Grant	107	TBC	TBC	TBC
Total Arts and Sport, & Chief Whip (of which below)	787	288	288	288
Culture and Sports Grant	787	288	288	288
Total Economy (of which below)	53	135	5	0
Feasibility Study West Pier Swansea	20	0	0	0
Pembrokeshire County Council: Grant Support towards a feasibility study	18	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot Economic Recovery Plan	10	0	0	0
Promotional Material for Port Talbot Enterprise Zone	5	0	0	0
Event Wales Grant Scheme	0	135	5	0
Total Covid-19 Finance and Local Government (of which below)	708,853	105,000	0	0
Local Government Single Emergency Hardship fund	368,053	0	0	0
Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief (Covid Element) [Note 26]	340,800	105,000	0	0
Total Covid-19 Health and Social Services (of which below)	97,300	0	0	0
Social Care Recovery Grant	75,500	0	0	0
Child Development Fund	8,000	0	0	0
All Wales Play Opportunities grant - Winter of Wellbeing	6,000	0	0	0
All Wales Play Opportunities grant - Summer of Fun	5,000	0	0	0
Intervention fund for supporting child and family well-being to safely divert cases from child protection registration	2,800	0	0	0
Total Covid-19 Education and Welsh Language (of which below)	24,366	0	0	0
Covid Recovery Grant 2021-22	9,000	0	0	0
Local Authority Post-16 Education Provision – Learner Recovery and Progression Funding	8,770	TBC	TBC	TBC
Local Authority Post-16 Education Provision – Transition Funding	4,084	TBC	TBC	TBC

Appendix 3 – Schedule of Specific Grants

Portfolio and Grant Name	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Youth Support Grant - additional mental health and emotional wellbeing funding	2,500	0	0	0
Learner Transition (Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil)	12	TBC	TBC	TBC
<u>Total Covid-19 Climate Change (of which below)</u>	58,450	0	0	0
Bus Emergency Support	58,450	0	0	0
<u>Total Covid-19 Social Justice and Social Partnership (of which below)</u>	1,330	0	0	0
Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - COVID 19 Response	971	0	0	0
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence COVID 19 Restart	358	0	0	0
<u>Total Covid-19 Arts and Sport, & Chief Whip (of which below)</u>	145	0	0	0
Local Government Cultural Service	145	0	0	0
All Grants (excluding Covid-19 grants)	1,182,941	1,158,424	1,165,559	1,176,447
All Grants excluding Covid-19 grants, TBC and RSG transfers (for like-for like comparison)	1,141,587	1,146,471		

Appendix 4 – Reserves Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original Budget movements 2022/23	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2023 £
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning			
<u>Delegated Schools Reserves</u>			
ERVR Primary	Cr4,463	0	Cr4,463
Primary Schools	Cr4,372,665	0	Cr4,372,665
Secondary Schools	Cr2,048,586	0	Cr2,048,586
Special Schools	Cr354,365	0	Cr354,365
Middle School	Cr439,704	0	Cr439,704
Repair & Maintenance	Cr161,160	0	Cr161,160
	Cr7,380,944	0	Cr7,380,944
<u>Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Other</u>			
Margam Discovery Centre - Building Maintenance	Cr59,774	Cr57,333	Cr117,107
Additional learning needs	Cr721,000	0	Cr721,000
Equalisation Account-Education	Cr1,831,000	25,000	Cr1,806,000
Home to School Transport	Cr149,070	38,000	Cr111,070
	Cr2,760,844	5,667	Cr2,755,177
Total Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Cr10,141,788	5,667	Cr10,136,121
<u>Social Services, Health and Housing</u>			
Homecare Equipment	Cr96,756	0	Cr96,756
Community Care Transformation	Cr2,015,561	0	Cr2,015,561
Social Services Equalisation	Cr3,000,114	2,330,000	Cr670,114

Appendix 4 – Reserves Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original Budget movements 2022/23	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2023 £
Hillside	Cr430,663	0	Cr430,663
Youth Offending Team	Cr167,897	0	Cr167,897
Adoption Service	Cr500,000	0	Cr500,000
Children's Residential Placements	Cr276,000	0	Cr276,000
Social Services IT Renewals	Cr700,000	0	Cr700,000
Total Social Services, Health and Housing	Cr7,186,991	2,330,000	Cr4,856,991
<u>Environment</u>			
Transport	Cr281,541	60,000	Cr221,541
Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme	Cr87,894	81,301	Cr6,593
Local Development Plan	Cr315,014	31,890	Cr283,124
Winter Maintenance	Cr744,162	0	Cr744,162
Baglan Bay Innovation Centre	Cr177,517	100,000	Cr77,517
Renewable Energy	Cr15,746	0	Cr15,746
Environmental Health - Housing Equalisation	Cr168,000	35,000	Cr133,000
Workways - NPT	Cr252,491	0	Cr252,491
Environment Equalization	Cr643,461	273,278	Cr370,183
Metal Box	Cr876,418	776,418	Cr100,000
Air Quality Monitoring	0	0	0
Operating Account -Equalisation	Cr36,043	0	Cr36,043
Vehicle Tracking	Cr92,186	0	Cr92,186
Vehicle Renewals	Cr1,700,047	Cr1,196,081	Cr2,896,128
Total Environment	Cr5,390,520	161,806	Cr5,228,714

Appendix 4 – Reserves Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original Budget movements 2022/23	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2023 £
<u>Corporate Services</u>			
Elections Equalisation	Cr350,139	Cr15,000	Cr365,139
Health & Safety/Occupational Health	Cr40,501	0	Cr40,501
Development Fund for Modernisation	Cr168,032	0	Cr168,032
IT Renewals Fund	Cr933,394	400,000	Cr533,394
Corporate Equalisation	Cr497,236	104,500	Cr392,736
Building Capacity	Cr155,295	84,000	Cr71,295
Voluntary Organisation	Cr33,300	0	Cr33,300
Total Corporate Services	Cr2,177,897	573,500	Cr1,604,397
<u>Corporate Other</u>			
Insurance	Cr4,060,768	0	Cr4,060,768
Covid recovery	Cr2,800,000	0	Cr2,800,000
Swansea Bay City Deal	Cr333,786	112,786	Cr221,000
Income Generation	Cr1,043,252	0	Cr1,043,252
Members Community Fund	Cr342,114	0	Cr342,114
Community Resilience Fund	Cr1,750,000	0	Cr1,750,000
Housing Warranties	Cr220,000	0	Cr220,000
Pantteg Landslip	Cr500,000	0	Cr500,000
Waste	Cr393,152	0	Cr393,152
LAWDC Contingency	Cr813,444	0	Cr813,444
DARE	Cr2,000,000	0	Cr2,000,000

Appendix 4 – Reserves Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original Budget movements 2022/23	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2023 £
Digital Transformation	Cr1,170,000	0	Cr1,170,000
Schools IT Equalisation (HWB)	Cr400,000	0	Cr400,000
Corporate Contingency	Cr4,414,000	996,000	Cr3,418,000
Treasury Management Equalisation	Cr9,140,803	325,000	Cr8,815,803
Service Resilience	Cr2,000,000	944,722	Cr1,055,278
Organisational development	Cr4,407,523		Cr4,407,523
Accommodation Strategy	Cr2,273,580		Cr2,273,580
Total Corporate Other	Cr38,062,422	2,378,508	Cr35,683,914
<u>Joint Committee</u>			
Workways - Regional	Cr154,419	0	Cr154,419
Environment Legacy Reserve (SWTRA)	Cr59,728	0	Cr59,728
Substance Misuse Area Planning Board	Cr34,847	0	Cr34,847
WB Safeguarding Board	Cr108,304	0	Cr108,304
Intermediate Care pooled fund	Cr28,429	0	Cr28,429
Total Joint Committee	Cr385,727	0	Cr385,727
Total All Earmarked Reserves	Cr63,345,345	5,449,481	Cr57,895,864
General Reserve	Cr20,150,694	0	Cr20,150,694
TOTAL ALL REVENUE RESERVES	Cr83,496,039	5,449,481	Cr78,046,558

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015**
- **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**
- **Environment (Wales) Act 2016**

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Budget 2022/2023
1a	Service Area: Services as identified across the directorates
1b	Directorate: All
1c	Summary of the initiative: This Integrated Impact Assessment relates to the Council's budget proposals for 2022/23. The Draft Budget proposals included proposals to invest £8.8m in services, a freeze in Council Tax levels and the use of the insurance reserve to fund Covid recovery work of £2.8m. The Council is legally required to produce a balance budget. In setting its budget the Council utilises funding received via the financial settlement from the Welsh Government including share of Non Domestic Rates, additional grants for specific service areas along with income from council tax.

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

	<p>Investing significantly in services which protect the most vulnerable within the County Borough, as reflected in the Council’s wellbeing objectives, has been a top priority for the Council over recent years and 2022/23 is no different.</p> <p>The Council’s budget settlement from the Welsh Government for 2022/23 was the highest in recent history at 8.8% which has allowed the Council to freeze Council Tax levels for 2022/23.</p>
<p>1d</p>	<p>Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Residents of Neath Port Talbot.</p>
<p>1e</p>	<p>When and how were people consulted? Due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic consultation took place online only. The consultation was promoted via the Council website and various social media channels. Consultees were asked to complete an on line questionnaire, in addition any responses received via letter or email were also considered.</p> <p>The consultation period commenced on 5th January 2022 and ended on 1st February 2022. A separate briefing was held with Trade Unions in order to provide clarification on the proposals.</p>
<p>1f</p>	<p>What were the outcomes of the consultation? There were 485 on line responses received to the consultation. In addition written correspondence via email was received from four organisations. In addition various comments were made on social media which are not counted in the above numbers. It should be noted that any responses made via social media channels were directed to the link to the online consultation.</p>

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Of all respondents completing the equalities questions:

- **61% of respondents were women**
- **91% of respondents were from a White British background**
- **18% of respondents considered they had a disability**
- **45% of respondents stated they had no religion**
- **64%of respondents had little or no knowledge of Welsh while 5% were fluent/fairly fluent Welsh speakers/ writers/readers**

There was overwhelming support for all of the proposals consulted on with a minimum of 75% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with each proposal.

Changes to original proposals

The only change to the original draft proposals is to increase the one off Covid recovery investment in thriving and sustainable communities to £1.5m from £1.2m.

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?
<p>Service areas collect and more importantly utilise data on service users as part of the ongoing development and delivery of individual services. In addition to the number of people using the service other relevant information such as age, sex, disability, etc., is also collected which in turn informs policy development and service provision.</p> <p>Information is collected through a variety of methods ranging from application forms and reviews, to satisfaction surveys and consultations.</p>

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3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a protected characteristic?

Protected Characteristic	Why will it have this impact?
Age Disability Gender reassignment	The settlement for 2022/23 was better than anticipate allowing for increased investment in services of £8.8m and a freeze on council tax.

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

<p>Marriage & civil partnership</p> <p>Pregnancy and maternity</p> <p>Race</p> <p>Religion or belief</p> <p>Sex</p> <p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>The Council is committed to prioritising investment in schools and educating children by increasing its investment in schools as demonstrated by a 3.5% increase in the Delegated Budgets for Schools.</p> <p>An increase in funding for other Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services will help to protect services to vulnerable families and children through the provision of additional support for learners as well as funding increased capacity following the roll out of the Additional Learning Needs Legislation.</p> <p>Investment in children’s and adult social services, including additional monies from Welsh Government specific grants will continue to support people with learning disabilities and general provision towards care package costs. This investment will improve service provision to children and the elderly. Any specific changes to services will be the subject of separate impact assessments.</p> <p>Positive impacts are likely with timely and effective interventions in relation to social services allowing potential service users to identify and access community provision to meet their needs at an earlier stage. This could help extend an individual’s independence and reduce social isolation while delaying access to social services.</p> <p>The impacts of the proposed council tax freeze will benefit all households across the County Borough many of whom are seeing an increase in their cost of living</p> <p>Post Consultation</p> <p>There was overall support for all of the proposals consulted on.</p>
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Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.

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b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	Why will it have this impact?
<p>To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p> <p>To advance equality of opportunity between different groups</p>	<p>The Council continues to be aware of its position as employer, provider and commissioner of services and to this end strives to ensure its ability to meet its legal obligations.</p> <p>The Council is responsible for delivering a wide range of services to people across the County Borough. During 2021/22 the impact of Covid19 has affected all aspects of our community and services. These include educating our children, caring for the</p>

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

To foster good relations between different groups	elderly and vulnerable, maintaining our infrastructure, waste collection and disposal, providing monies to families entitled to free school meals and grants to businesses. These are just some examples of traditional and new services that the Council has delivered over that past year and into 2022/23. Access to some services such as Social Care Day and Respite services, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, conducting Marriage Services etc. have been reduced but will return as the Government reduces restrictions and economic recovery commences.
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.

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4. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	Whilst it is unlikely that the proposals will in themselves have significant impact on community cohesion in the short term there is a likelihood that long term impacts could be possible with changes to services.
Social Exclusion	Whilst it is unlikely that the proposals will in themselves have significant impact on social exclusion in the short term there is a likelihood that long term impacts could be possible with changes to services.

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Poverty	<p>Research studies previously conducted by Sheffield Hallam University demonstrate that areas within the county borough are disproportionately and negatively affected by the UK Government’s welfare benefits changes and this continues to be the case.</p> <p>The Council continues to work in partnership to mitigate the impact of the welfare benefit changes and ongoing budgetary uncertainty.</p> <p>The Council continues to work on an anti-poverty agenda including:</p> <p>Anti-poverty strategy -development of a multi-agency strategy to outline what needs to be done to improve the lives of those living on a low income in Neath Port Talbot.</p> <p>Free School Meals payments to families – Throughout school closures during the Coronavirus pandemic the Council has -paid £19.50 per week directly into the bank accounts of parents with children eligible for free school meals.</p>
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Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.

5. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language		✓		The Council currently has relatively small numbers of staff with Welsh language skills. Opportunities for staff to use their language skills will continue to be promoted and training will continue to be made available.
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally	✓			The Council is committed to the principles as embodied in the Welsh Language Measure (2015) and the standards in particular will continue so that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.

6. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity				Unknown. There is no clear route to demonstrate either positive or negative impact on biodiversity.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				Unknown. There is no clear route to demonstrate either positive or negative impact on the resilience of ecosystems.

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Future impacts assessment will benefit from the biodiversity service assessments which are currently being undertaken to help determine what, if any, impacts service areas have on biodiversity. The assessments will help inform where services areas will be required to undertake specific assessments when appropriate to determine the extent and any mitigating actions of future changes to service/policy, etc. as part of delivery of the Biodiversity Duty Plan

7. Wellbeing of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	The current budget proposals have been prepared during a Coronavirus pandemic. Work will commence during Spring 2022 to prepare a medium term financial strategy to cover the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 to show affordability and sustainability in the decision making process. This medium term strategy will be aligned with a new Corporate Plan which will detail Council priorities in the short, medium and long term.
ii. Prevention – preventing problems	Proposals have been developed to help prevent intensifying current financial issues in the future. By preparing a medium term budget outlook the Council is

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

<p>occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>mindful of the need to deliver statutory functions as well as considering its wider service provision which contribute to the wellbeing of its citizens.</p> <p>Proposals include protection for some services that enable early intervention and prevention activities that reduce demand on public services whilst promoting wellbeing, for example in social services.</p>
<p>iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>Preparation of a new Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial plan will include collaboration with partners. During the Coronavirus pandemic the Council has effectively partnered with a wide variety of organisations and future plans will build on these relationships.</p>
<p>iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>There has been limited involvement of people in preparing the budget proposals as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The consultation has been communicated as widely as possible which has resulted in over 440 responses received.</p>
<p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p> <p>Council’s wellbeing objectives</p>	<p>Additional funding has been provided to a number of service areas which are reflected in the Council’s well-being objectives; to improve the well-being of children and young people; to improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough and to develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved.</p> <p>The financial settlement and the specific grants that underpin Council services are key to the delivery of the Council’s wellbeing objectives thereby having a positive impact.</p>

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

	The proposals will help ensure the business of the Council is managed to maximise the long term benefit for the citizens of Neath Port Talbot (the crosscutting objective relating to governance and resources).
Other public bodies objectives	It is possible to demonstrate the alignment between the Council’s Corporate Plan, the Public Services Board Plan and other key planning arrangements which will ensure a more holistic approach to improving outcomes over the lifetime of all plans.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
--	-------------------

Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Equalities	<p>There are positive impacts in relation to the early intervention and prevention work in social services predominantly for older and disabled people. There are also positive impacts arising from an increase to the schools delegate budget of 3.5%</p> <p>The proposal to freeze Council Tax and invest £2.8m to support Covid recovery initiatives will impact positively on all households in the County Borough.</p>
Welsh	<p>The budget proposals do not include any reductions in staff numbers so there should be limited impact on the Welsh language. Opportunities remain for staff to use their language skills will and further training will be made available and promoted.</p>
Bio	<p>There is no clear route to demonstrate either positive or negative impact on biodiversity or the resilience of ecosystems.</p>
WBFG	<p>The Council has worked hard to strike the right balance in its budget proposals for 2022/23 given the fact that we find ourselves in a global pandemic. This has included increases in funding for some services that enable early intervention and prevention activities that reduce demand on public services whilst promoting wellbeing; protection for integrated services that have been established to deliver more joined up services for citizens; protection for services that have a long term impact on sustainability; and protection for key collaborative arrangements. The areas that have received additional funding are reflected in the four Well-being objectives that the Council has set.</p>

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Overall Conclusion

The Council has ensured that its consultation has been available to the widest range of people taking into account the Coronavirus pandemic.

A process has been undertaken whereby the potential impacts of the various budget proposals upon the general population and the various protected characteristics have been considered as part of the decision making process. This work will continue for proposals which are still under consideration and monitoring will also continue, to ensure any adverse impacts upon citizens are acknowledged and acted upon appropriately.

As stated previously all proposals were supported by over 75% of respondents

In 2022/23 the Council will be investing an additional £8.8m in service improvements, will freeze Council Tax at 2021/22 levels and invest £2.8m in one-off Covid recovery initiatives.

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11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
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Appendix 5 –Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Undertake public consultation on draft budget proposals	Chief Finance Officer	Between 5th January 2022 and 1st February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation responses received
Consider consultation responses and amend proposals where appropriate	Senior Management Teams	During and at the conclusion of the consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised budget report, including any proposed amendments, for consideration at Cabinet, Cabinet Scrutiny and Council

Appendix 6 – Budget consultation summary

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL'S DRAFT BUDGET SETTING PROCESS 2022/23

Background

On 5th January 2022, Cabinet authorised officers to consult members of the public and other stakeholders on the Draft Budget for 2022/23 inclusive of a proposal to freeze Council Tax for 2022/23

The report also included a proposal to use £2.8m from the insurance reserve to support one off Covid recovery initiatives.

Introduction

The consultation took place against the backdrop of a revised version of alert level 2 restrictions, which came into place on Boxing day 2021 to respond to the highly contagious omicron variant of Covid-19. Arrangements were made to help ensure that the consultation was as inclusive as possible, despite the challenging situation:

Consultation objectives

- To provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views to the budget setting process
- To find out if people agree or disagree with the proposals and the reasons
- To provide a mechanism for people to make comments and suggestions linked to specific proposals
- To ensure that the consultation was available to as many residents and organisations as possible taking into account the circumstances surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic.

This report summarises the main themes from the responses received during the consultation.

Public consultation – methodology

The following methods were used:

Appendix 6 – Budget consultation summary

- **Online** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the Council's website. Respondents were not asked to identify themselves, but were asked to indicate why they were interested in the Council's Budget setting process and their postcode. The questionnaire was live from January 5th 2022 until 1st February 2022.
- **Corporate social media accounts** – during the consultation a number of posts were published on the Council's corporate Twitter (@NPTCouncil and @CyngorCnPT) and Facebook Neath (Port Talbot CBC and Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot) accounts to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage people to respond. These posts were monitored for comments on the draft budget proposals.

The consultation was promoted via:

- The Council website homepage – via the 'top tasks' and 'top visited' areas and a dedicated web page
- The Council's corporate social media accounts
- Press coverage generated by cabinet reports and press releases

Public Consultation Responses - Questionnaires

A total of 485 completed questionnaires were received during the consultation period.

About the respondents

Of the 485 responses:

- 429 stated that they live in Neath Port Talbot
- 141 stated that they use services provided by Neath Port Talbot Council
- 128 stated that they work in Neath Port Talbot
- 47 stated that they are a volunteer in Neath Port Talbot
- 127 stated that they work for Neath Port Talbot Council
- 33 stated that they are a carer

(NB. for this question respondents were asked to select all of the categories that applied to them, some selected more than one answer, therefore the number of responses is greater than the number of respondents)

The geographical spread of respondents was:

Appendix 6 – Budget consultation summary

- Neath – 145 respondents
- Port Talbot – 138 respondents
- Dulais Valley – 19 respondents
- Swansea Valley – 45 respondents
- Neath Valley – 18 respondents
- Afan Valley – 42 respondents

The age profile of the respondents is shown below:

- 16-24 - 19 respondents
- 25-29 – 17 respondents
- 30-39 - 71 respondents
- 40-49 - 100 respondents
- 50-59 - 110 respondents
- 60-74 - 99 respondents
- 75-85 – 30 respondents

Consultees were asked the following questions:

How do you feel about the proposal that there should be 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23%?

Responses were as follows:

Strongly agree – 77%
Agree – 13%
Neither agree nor disagree – 3%
Disagree – 5%
Strongly disagree – 2%

Respondents who disagreed/strongly disagreed provided 26 comments with some disagreeing because they thought there should be a reduction in council tax with others commenting that there should be an increase to pay for additional services.

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £700,000- in services to support the ‘Best start in life’?

Responses were as follows:

Appendix 6 – Budget consultation summary

Strongly agree – 60%
Agree – 29%
Neither agree nor disagree – 6%
Disagree – 3%
Strongly disagree – 2%

We asked residents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £1.2m in services to support ‘Thriving and Sustainable Communities’?

Strongly agree – 60%
Agree – 29%
Neither agree nor disagree – 5%
Disagree – 4%
Strongly disagree – 2%

We asked residents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £0.2m in services to support ‘Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills’?

Strongly agree – 53%
Agree – 33%
Neither agree nor disagree – 7%
Disagree – 5%
Strongly disagree – 2%

We asked residents how they feel about the proposal to re-purpose £2.8m of the insurance current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve to fund one off investments.

Strongly agree – 41%
Agree – 36%
Neither agree nor disagree – 16%
Disagree – 5%
Strongly disagree – 2%

Appendix 6 – Budget consultation summary

Public Consultation Responses – Letters and Emails

Four written responses were received, all were generally supportive of the budget proposals.

Public Consultation – Social Media Comments

Of the comments made on posts about the budget consultation, the main issue raised via Facebook was the level of Council Tax in Neath Port Talbot.

Consultation with other stakeholders

To ensure that the consultation was accessible to as many stakeholders as possible the following stakeholder engagement sessions took place:

- Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 5th January 2022
- Staff Council – 10th January 2022
- Third Sector – 20th January 2022
- Town and Community Councils – 27th January 2022

Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning (ELLL)

The directorate has a net budget of £125.079m, of which £96.074m is delegated to schools, and £29.005m is allocated for other Education services.

As part of this investment the Council provides

- Education to almost 21,200 pupils from nursery age to post 16
- Specialist support and education to over 5,000 pupils
- Up to a million nutritious school meals and transports over 4000 pupils to school buildings cleaned by our staff
- Investment in 21st century schools to improve learning environments and provide state of the art facilities for the benefit of pupils and the wider community
- Support and champion the needs of vulnerable pupils and families to enable them to become more resilient
- A library service that issues over 300,000 books to the citizens of the county borough and supports community libraries
- A youth service that engages with over 6,000 young people with a further 2,000 adults benefiting from our community learning provision
- Theatres that present over 200 cultural events per annum and host over half a million visits to Margam Park. Our leisure services contract also enables over a million visits per annum to leisure centres and swimming pools

Schools – The Council is committed to prioritising investment in schools and to educating our children. Today's Budget shows that commitment by increasing its investment in Schools by an extra £2.760m (+3.52%) to £96.074m. The projected gross budget (including specific grants) for schools is circa £98m. This includes providing additional funds to cover the full year effect of the September 2021 pay award, a 1.25% pay award for 2022 and £750k to increase support for learners.

Other – The Council will be investing £29.005m in other Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services, a net increase of £1.445m from the 2021/22 revised budget. This includes £500k (Appendix 3) provided to cover pressures, helping to protect services to vulnerable families and children with investment of £500k for work associated with the implications of Additional Learning Needs legislation

Social Services Health & Housing (SSH&H)

The directorate has a net budget of £93.640m, in addition, grant and income boosts the total gross expenditure for Social Services Health and Housing to £132m.

As part of this investment the council provides

- Support for 270 looked after children. This has reduced significantly from a high of some 502 in 2012 and includes foster care placements and adoptions.
- Elderly services via home care to over 719 service users, and 544 residential care users
- Services to some 720 people with mental health, physical and learning disabilities
- Social worker support work is being provided to over 3,900 adults or people with disabilities and a further 1,000 families through our children Social work team.
- Supporting people arrangements for some 1,790 clients.

Children Services – In 2022/23 the Council will continue to prioritise and make a significant investment of £23.261m in Children Services. The service continues to improve and has managed safely a reduction in the number of looked after children within the County Borough.

Adult Services – The Council will be investing £56.164m in Adult Social Care Services.

Management support including social work costs - The Council is maintaining its investment in social workers in order to support clients across Children and Adult services with a budget of £13.3m.

Housing Services – The gross investment in Housing Services totals £9.754m of which Supporting People at £6.496m receives the largest budget share with further investment in housing grants, housing options and homeless services.

As members will note the budget provides new funding of £2.5m from the council for pressures as set out in Appendix 3, to fund the uplift in rates paid to domiciliary care, residential care, supported living and direct payments

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 encourages all Councils to maximise people's independence by providing support to people to live independently at home, encourage the provision of respite opportunities and appropriate care packages. The Council is progressing this work, and various changes are being incrementally made to services and budget provision.

Community services continue to be developed in partnership with Health, in order to reduce the number of people requiring hospital, residential and nursing care. Work continues to be undertaken through the social work teams to review the needs of individuals to enable people to be as independent as possible.

Environment (ENVT)

For 2022/23 the Council will be investing £43.809m in Environment Services, an increase of £1.879m on the current year's revised budget. In addition, grant and income boosts the gross expenditure for Environment to £75m.

As part of this investment the council provides various services including:

- Maintaining 860 kilometres of roads, 940 kilometres of footpaths and 15,000 road signs
- 3.3m recycling collections per year
- 1.6m refuse collections per year
- 19,000 lighting units throughout the county borough
- Repairs to 270 potholes per month
- Clean over 30,000 gullies a year
- Maintain 1,900 culverts, 1,800 retaining walls and 425 bridges
- Public protection via issuing Environmental Health statutory notices
- Assist 52 unemployed people into work and 16 into volunteering or paid work experience.
- Provide business Support and advice to over 600 businesses, including 207 start-up enquiries, (9 months to Dec 2021)
- Property services management for industrial units and workshops across the county borough

Appendix 7 – Service Overview

New investment of £700k is provided for 2022/23 including £150k to cover increased tonnages for waste services; £250k for street care services; £200k for increase capacity to support our towns and regeneration projects; £100k to build up our Decarbonisation capacity and extra electric charging points; £120k to reduce the charge for pest control visits relating to rodents and mice.

There are no proposed reductions in funding for 2022/23.

Corporate Services (CORP)

For 2022/23 the Council will be investing £20.403m in Corporate Services. This includes an additional £630k to fund identified pressures, as outlined in Appendix 3.

During the Covid pandemic many corporate services have transformed the way they work both from home and to deliver front line services. New IT systems have been developed to pay grants to businesses, free school meals payments to parents, payments to those self isolating from Covid19, increased payments to residential and domiciliary care providers and their staff. Laptops and other devices have been rolled out to teachers and school children to allow them to access learning from home.

The Council's governance arrangements were amended to enable on-line meetings, and new processes introduced to pay suppliers, identify and reclaim additional Covid19 related costs and income loss and to work with Welsh Government and other partners.

Other Budget Provisions

A budget provision of £8.656m has been provided for levies and contributions to external bodies. This is an increase of £321k on 2021/22 with the largest amount being payable to the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority at £8.503m.

The capital financing budget is set at £20.496m to fund the repayment of debt borrowed by the Council to fund its capital programme. In addition, £19.616m has been provided to fund the Council Tax Support Scheme in line with Welsh Government requirements. The budget will provide

Appendix 7 – Service Overview

financial support to more than 16,500 of the most financially disadvantaged council tax payers in the county borough.

The budget also includes a contingency provision of £1.5m to cover general cost pressures and pay and pensions.

A budget of £2.5m has been set to fund Covid related pressures that may arise when the hardship fund and loss of income fund ceases in March 2022.



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28th FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

HUW JONES

MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2024/25

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Capital Strategy

2. The Capital Strategy sets out the Capital Programme planning process, governance and financial sustainability considerations. It also needs to be read in conjunction with the Council's Treasury Management Policy and helps to determine the amount of capital investment built into the Council's budget. The Council's Capital Strategy appears in Appendix 1 of this report.

Updated Capital Programme for 2021/22

3. The original Capital Programme totalled £80.170m, the updated programme for 2021/22 currently stands at £78.834m with the major

variations having been reported to Cabinet and Council as part of the ongoing budget monitoring arrangements.

Welsh Government Capital Settlement 2022/23

4. The total Provisional Capital Settlement on an all Wales basis has decreased from £781.881m to £733.072m on a like for like basis; with amounts still to be confirmed for a small number of grants in the Climate Change, Economy, Social Justice and Social Partnership and Mental Health and Wellbeing portfolios. The Un-hypothecated base budget of the Capital Settlement for All Wales has reduced from £177.837m to £150m.

Neath Port Talbot – General Capital Funding

5. The amount of funding included in the 2022/23 settlement is £7.488m with £3.055m paid as a capital grant and the remaining £4.433m treated as supported borrowing with an allowance included in the revenue settlement to pay for the debt charges.
6. In addition to the funding provided by the WG the Council also budgets for the use of £1.3m per annum to underpin the Capital Programme being made available via capital receipts arising from the sale of council assets.
7. The Council has also built into its revenue budget proposals additional funding to facilitate an increase in prudential borrowing over the next two years. As a result the total prudential borrowing for 2022/23 and 2024/25 will be £5m per annum which will then reduce back down to £2m per annum.
8. This increase is to ensure that urgent health and safety and infrastructure improvement projects can be delivered without jeopardising the delivery of the remaining capital programme.
9. The table on the following page sets out the amount of funding available to the Council to distribute to capital projects.

Projected Capital Programme Funding to underpin the NPT Capital Programme

	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
WG Base Funding	8,918	7,488	9,000	9,250
Capital Receipts	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300
Prudential Borrowing	2,000	5,000	5,000	2,000
Total Available Funding	12,218	13,788	15,300	12,550

10. The table below sets out the distribution of the above mentioned funding to service areas:

Service	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 '000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Education	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Schools ICT – HWB Grant Sustainability	150	200	250	250
Leisure	150	150	150	150
Margam Castle Stonework Repairs	100	200		
Highways and Engineering Maintenance	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625
Additional Highways Improvements	275	275		
Environment Street scene Improvements	500	500	500	500
Additional major engineering works		250	1,000	
Flood Prevention Initiatives – Continuation of 2020/21 projects	250			
Match funding for grants (including flood prevention)		500	500	500
Neighbourhood Improvements	150	150	150	150
Pavilions	100	100	100	100
Regeneration	2,275	2,275	2,275	2,275
Aquasplash Toilet		50		
Match Funding – Former Plaza	150	100		
Match Funding – Former Crown Foods	250			

Disability Access	150	150	150	150
Health & Safety	850	850	850	850
Social Services	150	150	150	150
Disabled Facilities Grants	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Civic Accommodation Modernisation	150			
Covid Recovery - Catch Up, Clean Up, Green Up Capital Works		750	750	
Decarbonisation Strategy (DARE) including Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	100	250	250	250
CCTV Replacement	150			
Income Generation Proposals	50	250	250	250
Contingency	543	913	2,250	1,250
Total	12,218	13,788	15,300	12,550

11. The current budget allocations to Education, Leisure and Social Services provide important investment to maintain buildings infrastructure including roofs, heating, lighting etc. The investment in Highways and Neighbourhood improvements will maintain transport, bridges and other structures.
12. Included within the programme for the first time is an allocation of £1.5m over two years to fund Covid recovery works. These works will help to catch up, clean up and green up the County Borough. Specific details of the work to be undertaken will be reported and agreed through the relevant Cabinet Board.
13. The proposed allocations above also include an initial allocation to deal with urgent health and safety work to Margam Castle. Any additional work will be the subject of a further report and business case.
14. Where allocations are proposed for the following service areas:
 - Education
 - Leisure
 - Pavilions
 - Health and Safety
 - Social Services

It is recommended that Cabinet provide delegated authority to the relevant Corporate Director in conjunction with the Director of Environment and Regeneration to determine resource allocations to individual projects.

15. In relation to the Highways and Engineering works programme it is proposed that individual projects should be agreed at the relevant Cabinet Board.

Additional Capital Funding

16. In addition to the funding provided by WG the Council's capital programme is supplemented by projects funded from other sources which include:

- Prudential Borrowing
The Council only enters into prudential borrowing arrangements when it can demonstrate that it is prudent, sustainable and affordable to do so. In order to minimise the revenue costs associated with prudential borrowing the Council will look to first utilise other available sources of funding such as capital receipts.
- Specific Grants
Funding provided for specific projects from various sources such as European Funding, Welsh Government Departmental Budgets, Heritage Lottery fund etc. As is the nature of this type of funding there is less availability and certainty for the latter years of the Capital Programme.
- Other sources
Various other smaller sources including specific reserves, private sector investment etc.

Major Investment Initiatives

17. The following paragraphs detail some of the major investment initiatives being delivered across the County Borough.

21st Century Schools

18. The Council is currently progressing with the second phase of 21st Century Schools investment known as Band B, this phase will see a further c£80.5m invested in new schools.
19. The Band B programme includes the following major investments which will help the Council deliver on its aspiration to deliver 21st Century Education:
 - Construction of the new Secondary School in Cimla replacing the current Cefn Saeson Comprehensive with a budget of £29.3m. Pupils started to occupy the new buildings in June 2021, three months ahead of originally planned.
 - Construction of a new single site Primary School in Longford replacing the three separate sites of the existing Abbey Primary with a budget of £10.495m. An additional £555k Childcare Offer has been also been awarded, taking the total school investment to £11.05m.
 - Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur Phase 3 – the addition of a new build block comprising six extra classrooms and 3G rugby pitch provision at the North campus. The project has a budget of £9m.
 - Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley – construction of a new English-medium primary school for boys and girls aged 3-11 years. The new build 21st Century facility will accommodate circa 630 full-time pupils and 140 part-time nursery age pupils which will provide a stimulating teaching and learning environment in state of the art facilities.
20. Childcare Offer Funding

The Council has been awarded £4.140m to facilitate and support the delivery of additional childcare facilities across the County Borough over 4 years (19/20 – 22/23). Facilities have already been developed at three schools (Abbey Primary, Rhos Primary and Waunceirch Primary) along with a facility in the new Neath Town Centre Development. Works is scheduled to start at YGG Blaendulais and Cwmavon in 22/23.

21. School Capital Maintenance

The Council was awarded £2.3m in additional grant funding from the Welsh Government in 2020/21 for investment in School buildings and improving ventilation. This grant displaced Council funded projects in 2021/22 with a subsequent re-investment in new projects in 2023/24.

22. County Borough Regeneration

The Council continues to invest significantly in regeneration projects across the County Borough. The next phase of the re-development of Neath Town Centre will be completed in 2022/23. The re-development will provide a new shopping and leisure complex on the site of the former multi storey car park.

23. City Deal

The UK Government has approved Neath Port Talbot's Business Case 'Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth' and Homes as Power Stations (HAPS).

The 'Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth Programme' totals £58.83m with £47.7m being contributed from the City Deal Grant. The balance of the funding is due from other public sector funding (£5.63m) and private sector funding (£5.5m).

The Homes as Power Stations Programme totals £505.5m with £15m being contributed from the City Deal Grant. The balance of the funding is due from other public sector funding (£114.6m) and private sector funding (£375.9m).

The Programme has been developed around four interlinked themes:

- **The Technology Centre** – An energy positive building on Baglan Energy Park providing flexible office space for start-up companies and indigenous businesses, with a focus on the innovation, ICT and R&D sectors. The excess energy from solar and other renewable technologies will be converted into hydrogen at the nearby Hydrogen Centre to be used to fuel hydrogen vehicles.
- **National Steel Innovation Centre** that aims to support the steel and metals industry in Port Talbot and Wales – with the aim of reducing the carbon footprint of the steel and metals industry, and increasing the sustainability of the industry, linking in to the Circular Economy.

- **Decarbonisation** – To assist with the delivery of decarbonising the City Region, a number of core projects will be undertaken in collaboration with a number of public, private and academic partners including the FLEXIS research operation. These projects include a hard-wired electrical link between the Swansea Bay Technology Centre and the nearby Hydrogen Centre, as well as an electrical charging infrastructure route map. Encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles, this includes the development and implementation of an electric vehicle charging network that meets the demands of residents, businesses and visitors. New charging stations will contribute to solving Wales' lag in electrical vehicle charging infrastructure and coverage compared to the rest of the UK. Air quality modelling and real-time monitoring will also be introduced to enable better informed air quality decisions in future. This project will include data analytics to identify correlation with pollution sources, evaluation of intervention measures, and area wide, real-time data with significantly more geographic detail than is currently available.
- **Industrial Futures** – This will address the gap between demand and supply for businesses and available land in the Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone, with a hybrid building providing production units as well as office space to support start-ups and indigenous businesses - especially those in the innovation and manufacturing sectors. There will also be laboratory space supported by Industry Wales for spin-outs to monetise research and development projects, as well as land remediation, flood defence work, construction of access roads and upgrading of highways. A Property Development Fund will also be made available to support the viability of private sector schemes to develop buildings in the Enterprise Zone.

Impact of future developments and schemes

24. The capital programme as outlined in this report reflects known planned expenditure and financing. It is clear however that there are significant potential developments which are currently under consideration which may have a significant effect on the Council's capital programme and capital expenditure during the period covered by this report. There will be a requirement in future years to make specific financial provision in the Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme to fund such investments.

25. The capital programme is updated and approved as part of the quarterly budget monitoring process and any additional commitment approved by Council will be incorporated as approved.

Summary

26. The Council places great emphasis on the importance of capital investment as a means of regenerating our Communities and providing modern and safe buildings and infrastructure. Capital investment does not only lead to improved facilities and services but creates jobs and economic benefits for the citizens of Neath Port Talbot.
27. Members will note that the Council is investing £70.415m in 2022/23 and over £150m over the next three years. Details of the individual projects being delivered can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

The following investments are being targeted for 2022/23:

- Completion of the build of the new Primary school which will replace Abbey Primary.
- Completion of the build of the third phase of works at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera (WMN).
- Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley commencement of the construction of a new English-medium primary school for boys and girls
- Continue with the development of the activity investment proposal at Margam Park.
- Progression with Pontardawe Arts Centre Cinema.
- Progress with the regeneration programme including Neath Transport hub and the completion of the Neath Town Centre redevelopment.
- Continued investment in Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Investment in school buildings and ICT.
- The Council's Waste Facility at Crymlyn Burrows will be remodelled as a Transfer Station with enhanced recycling capacity and facilities to accommodate the Council's expanding recycling operation.
- City Deal – Commencement of the homes as power stations and the remainder of the supporting innovation and low carbon growth projects.
-

Financial Impact

28. All financial impacts are detailed within the body of the report. Additional revenue and capital funding provision will need to be built into future years' budgets once project confirmation and external grant funding are confirmed.

Integrated Impact Assessment

29. This report does not require its own Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). However, as individual projects are being developed, the requirement for individual IIA's will be considered and completed as necessary. The Council will ensure that all capital investment is in line with legislation and best practice and aim to improve sustainability on our infrastructure.

Workforce Impacts

30. The capital funding meets the cost of a number of posts across the Council.

Legal Impacts

31. There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

Risk Management

32. Many of the works included in the capital programme alleviate/mitigate risks faced by the Council. The capital programme is seen as an important part of the Council's risk management processes. There are significant risks which may require a future revision of the capital programme. In particular due to:-

- Urgent capital maintenance requirements
- Additional costs arising from any additions to the capital programme
- Capital financing charges arising from additional unsupported borrowing which cannot be met from existing revenue budgets
- A reduction in the availability of external grants to supplement the Council's own funding of the capital programme
- Capacity to deliver the Capital Programme Projects
- Investment in major programmes such as City Deal and 21st Century Schools

Consultation

33. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

34. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- **Approve** the Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix 1
- **Approve** the Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix 2 to this report.
- **Approve** the delegation arrangements as set out in paragraph 12 of this report.

and commend this report to Council for final approval.

Reasons for proposed decision

35. To approve the Authority's Capital Programme in line with the Constitution.

Implementation of decision

36. The decision is proposed for implementation after consideration and approval by Council

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Capital Strategy

Appendix 2 - Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25.

List of background papers

Local Government Settlement 2022/23

Officer Contact

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Capital Strategy

Purpose of the Capital Strategy

The Capital Strategy is intended to provide a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services; an overview of how the associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Capital Programme Planning Process

The Capital Programme is a key component in assisting the Council to deliver its three well-being objectives:

- To improve the well-being of children and young people.
- To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough
- To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved

In order to assist in delivering these objectives the Programme prioritises a number of key areas:

- Maintenance of existing capital assets. This work is prioritised using the various Asset and Risk Management Plans in place
- Regeneration of the County Borough. Great emphasis is placed on this area and the subsequent benefits investment brings in relation to the economy and jobs. The Capital Programme allocation is used as a means of leveraging in external funding in the form of grants and private sector investment to ensure maximum benefits to the citizens of the County Borough
- Disabled Facilities Grants. These are seen as a key driver in ensuring that people can remain living in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Transformation Initiatives. Transformation of services such as the 21st Century Schools Programme are delivered via prioritised capital investment.

The Council does not enter into or incur capital expenditure funded by borrowing for purely commercial reasons i.e. with the sole intention of making a profit.

Governance Arrangements

Delivery of the Capital Programme is overseen by the Council's Capital Programme Steering Group (CPSG) under the chair of the Chief Finance Officer. The group consists of a number of Heads of Service and other Council officers and meets regularly to consider progress along with any emerging pressures. The CPSG is not a decision making body, all decision around resource allocation are taken by the Cabinet.

An updated version of the Capital Programme is formally approved by Cabinet and Council on a quarterly basis as part of the Council's budget monitoring and scrutiny arrangements.

Future Financial Sustainability

The revenue implications of Capital Spending plans are incorporated into the Council's Forward Financial Planning process. The cost of borrowing (principal and interest) to finance spending plans are calculated using prudent assumptions around interest rates to ensure they are affordable. Any revenue implications for Service's as a result of capital investment decisions will need to be built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

Capital Programme - 2022/23 to 2024/25															
	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25		
	Funded by			Funded by			Funded by			Funded by			Funded by		
	Budget	NPT	External	Budget	NPT	External	Budget	NPT	External	Budget	NPT	External	Budget	NPT	External
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Service															
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning	31,860	11,013	20,847	24,300	6,479	17,821	25,869	18,239	7,630	14,045	5,537	8,508	2,860	1,860	1,000
Environment	39,501	25,389	14,113	43,315	19,895	23,420	37,357	21,022	16,335	39,487	10,701	28,786	17,171	7,400	9,771
Social Services, Health and Housing	7,152	6,883	269	5,528	4,967	561	5,081	4,800	281	3,431	3,150	281	3,431	3,150	281
Other Services	1,114	1,114	0	1,465	1,407	58	1,195	1,195	0	890	890	0	890	890	0
Contingency	543	543	0	220	220	0	913	913	0	2,250	2,250	0	1,250	1,250	0
Total	80,170	44,942	35,228	74,828	32,968	41,860	70,415	46,169	24,246	60,104	22,528	37,576	25,603	14,550	11,053
Funded by															
WG - General Capital Funding	19,402	19,402		12,517	12,517		20,178	20,178		10,330	10,330		10,550	10,550	
WG - Additional £5.010m General Funding	1,613	1,613		30	30		0	0		0	0		0	0	
Capital Receipts	3,161	3,161		2,778	2,778		401	401		0	0		0	0	
Prudential Borrowing	19,075	19,075		15,182	15,181		22,502	22,502		9,977	9,977		3,000	3,000	
Specific Reserves / Revenue	1,692	1,692		2,461	2,461		3,088	3,088		2,221	2,221		1,000	1,000	
External Grants	35,228		35,228	41,860		41,860	24,246		24,246	37,576		37,576	11,053		11,053
Total	80,170	44,942	35,228	74,828	32,968	41,860	70,415	46,169	24,246	60,104	22,528	37,576	25,603	14,550	11,053

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25		
	Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by	
		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning															
Capital Maintenance	1,365	1,365		1,175	0	1,175	1,308	1,308		1,100	1,100		1,100	1,100	
Schools ICT - HWB Grant Sustainability	832	150	682	732	50	682	604	604		250	250		250	250	
Additional Maintenance & Improvements				13	13										
Capital Maintenance for Schools (previous year grants)	4,229	4,229		743		743	6,376	6,376							
<u>21st Century Schools - Band B</u>															
Cefn Saeson Comprehensive	5,157		5,157	3,881	2,191	1,691	1,017	1,017							
Abbey Primary	6,023	169	5,854	7,300	313	6,986	674	674		50	50				
Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur (North Campus) Final Phase	5,158	1,794	3,364	5,361	2,747	2,614	716	716							
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley				100		100	8,731	3,581	5,150	12,495	3,987	8,508	1,360	360	1,000
<u>Welsh Medium Provision</u>															
<u>Classrooms and Childcare</u>															
YGG Pontardawe	250		250	726		726									
YGG Tyle'r Ynn	800		800	765		765									
YGG Cwmllynfell	400		400	431		431									
<u>Infant Class Size Improvements</u>															
YGG Rhos Afan	935		935	425		425									
<u>Childcare Offer</u>															
Small Grant Pot - independent providers	277		277	298		298									
Small Grant Pot - COVID Recovery				70		70									
YGG Castell Nedd	250		250												
YGG Blaendulais	998		998				998		998						
Rhos Primary	580		580	632		632									
Cwmavon (site to be identified)	1,000		1,000				1,000		1,000						
<u>Flying Start</u>															
Maintenance & IT (various childcare settings)				127		127									

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25		
	Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by	
		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000
Leisure Investment	150	150		68	68		224	224		150	150		150	150	
Margam Orangerie Improvement Works				46	46										
Margam Park Activity Investment	2,586	2,586		248	248		2,337	2,337							
Margam Park Stonework Repair	100	100		526	526		320	320							
Furzmill Pond Margam				102	102										
Pontardawe Arts Centre Cinema	770	470	300	35		35	1,343	1,083	260						
All Wales Play Opportunity				235		235									
ELLL Other				262	177	85	222		222						
Total	31,860	11,013	20,847	24,300	6,479	17,821	25,869	18,239	7,630	14,045	5,537	8,508	2,860	1,860	1,000

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25			
	Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		
		£'000	NPT		External	£'000		NPT	External		£'000	NPT		External	£'000	NPT
Environment																
Highways and Engineering Maintenance	1,625	1,625		1,815	1,815		2,136	2,136		1,625	1,625		1,625	1,625		
Environment - Streetscene Works	535	535		378	378		821	821		500	500		500	500		
Public Highways Refurbishment Grant				776	22	754										
Additional Highway Improvements - Water Street	275	275		15	15		535	535								
Additional Highway Works (various locations)				157	157		295	295								
Additional major engineering works (subject to business cases - Norton Terrace, Bevans Terrace, Tonmawr Gabions)							250	250		1,000	1,000					
Covid Recovery - Catch Up, Clean Up, Green Up Capital Works							750	750		750	750					
Decarbonisation Strategy (DARE)							250	250		250	250		250	250		
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	100	100														
Electric Vehicle Charging Facility							1,065	751	314							
Drainage Grants																
Rock Street, Caenant Terrace & Grandison Brook				523		523										
Small Scale Works Grant				333	50	283										
Resilient Roads Fund - Castle Drive Cimla				100		100										
Natural Flood Management Scheme - Gnoll, Brynau and Preswylfa site				85		85										
Varteg Road Culvert Remediation – Construction				798	120	678										
Cwrt Clwdyi Gwyn Channel Remediation 20/21				99		99										
Match funding for grants (including flood prevention							500	500		500	500		500	500		

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25		
	Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by	
		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000
Transport Grants															
Local Transport Fund - Cymmer Carriageway Improvements 2021/22				340	50	290									
Local Transport Fund - Neath Integrated Transport Hub 2021/22				313		313									
Road Safety Grant				599		599									
Safe Routes In Communities				455		455									
Active Travel				916		916									
Major Bridge Strengthening															
Aberdulais Bridge Repair															
A474 Vale of Neath Bridge	289	289					289	289							
Cymmer Viaduct Design Work				20	20		10	10							
Flood Recovery Bryn to Goytre Cycleway Slip				216		216									
Coal Tip Safety				552		552									
Flood and Coastal Risk Projects															
Aberafan Promenade				2	2		14	14							
Flood Prevention Initiatives	250	250					80	80							
Neighbourhood Improvements	150	150		195	195		285	285	150	150		150	150		
Pavilions	100	100		110	110		174	174	100	100		100	100		
Disability Access	200	200		164	69	95	242	242	150	150		150	150		
Health and Safety	1,100	1,100		536	223	313	850	850	850	850		850	850		
Street Lighting	1,211	1,211		1,247	1,247		100	100							
Vehicle Replacement Programme	355	355		1,725	1,713	12	588	588	2,221	2,221		1,000	1,000		
Additional Recycling Initiatives	40	40		105	105										

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25		
	Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by	
		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000
<u>Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station</u>															
Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station Site Improvements	4,060	4,060		850	850		4,460	4,460		255	255				
Circular Economy Fund - Solar Panel Roof Project	500		500				500		500						
Circular Economy Fund - Recyclables Baler	178		178				355		355						
Circular Economy Fund - Bag Opener and Plastic Film Separator	400		400				440		440						
Pantteg Landslip Remediation Works															
<u>Other</u>															
Southern Access Road & Ffordd Amazon Stage 2				259	259										
New Lift PT Multi Storey Car Park				70	70										
Milland Road Footbridge							100	100							
Conservation Management Plan (Various Parks)				15		15									
Allotment Support Grant				34		34									
Physical Regeneration				77	77										
Caru Cymru				15		15	15				15				
Cwmgors Roof				85	85										
Members Community Fund				15	15										
Parking Machines (Various Location)				59	59										
Employment and Business Start Up Space	485	485		1	1		485	485							
Community Self Build Housing	150	150					150	150							
Neath Strategic Hub	250	250					250	250							
Valleys Task Force	83		83	146		146	74		74						
Vale of Neath Hub at Resolven Canal Car Park				16	16										
Destination Management Plan Match Funding at Gnoll Country Park	50	50		48	48										
Destination Management Plan Match Funding at Afan Forest Park	258		258	539	159	380	20	20							
Aquasplash Upgrade (Phases 1 & 2)	250	250		527	407	120	120	120							
Maintenance - Structures and Council Owned Tips	63	63		8	8		128	128		0					

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25			
	Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		Budget	Funded by		
		£'000	NPT		External	£'000		NPT	External		£'000	NPT		External	£'000	NPT
Regeneration																
Match Funding & Feasibility for WG & UK Government Funding Streams							1,580	1,580		2,125	2,125		2,275	2,275		
Neath Town Centre Redevelopment	10,490	7,490	3,000	11,652	7,490	4,162	1,683	1,683								
Harbourside Strategic Employment Sites	3,434	1,414	2,020	3,253	1,147	2,107	350	350								
Former Crown Foods Site Re-development	200	200		505	5	500	1,460	1,460								
Former Plaza Re-development	3,556	2,000	1,556	4,044	1,708	2,336	100	100								
Former Port Talbot Magistrates Court Refurbishment	100	100		100	100											
8 Wind Street Neath - Conversion to offices	100	100		696	475	221										
6 Station Road, Port Talbot	167	167					167	167								
Neath Transport Hub	700	700		5	5		695	695	0							
Commercial Property Grant	275	275		60	60		215	215		150	150					
Property Enhancement Grant	800	300	500	868	336	532										
Place Making Grant				625		625	173		173							
City Deal																
Technology Centre	5,268		5,268	5,547		5,547										
SWITCH				100		100	6,450		6,450	13,200		13,200	250		250	
Hydrogen Stimulus							1,500		1,500	500		500				
Air Quality Monitoring				85		85	415		415							
Low Emission Vehicles (LEV)							500		500							
Advanced Manufacturing Production Facility				1		1	749		749	9,850		9,850	6,400		6,400	
Property Development Fund							2,385		2,385	2,115		2,115				
Homes as Power Stations				50		50	2,465		2,465	3,121		3,121	3,121		3,121	
Other Regeneration Projects	1,455	1,105	350	384	225	159	140	140		75	75		0			
Total	39,501	25,389	14,113	43,315	19,895	23,420	37,357	21,022	16,335	39,487	10,701	28,786	17,171	7,400	9,771	

Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Original 2021/22			Revised 2021/22			Original 2022/23			Original 2023/24			Original 2024/25		
	Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by		Budget £'000	Funded by	
		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000		NPT £'000	External £'000
Social Services, Health and Housing															
Capital Maintenance	305	305		182	182		300	300		150	150		150	150	
Disabled Facilities Grants	4,784	4,784		3,000	3,000		4,400	4,400		3,000	3,000		3,000	3,000	
Hillside Secure Unit	1,637	1,637		1,648	1,648		100	100							
Enable - Support For Independent Living				235		235	281		281	281		281		281	
Social Services - Other Schemes				161	46	115									
Warm Home - Boiler Scheme	426	157	269	303	91	212									
Total	7,152	6,883	269	5,528	4,967	561	5,081	4,800	281	3,431	3,150	281	3,431	3,150	281
Other Services															
Schools IT Replacement	300	300		182	182		300	300		300	300		300	300	
Vehicle Replacement	340	340		300	300		340	340		340	340		340	340	
Information Technology and Agile Working	24	24		74	74										
Civic Accommodation Modernisation	250	250					250	250							
Food Poverty Grant				58		58									
CCTV Replacement	150	150		295	295		31	31							
Income Generation Proposals	50	50		27	27		274	274		250	250		250	250	
New electrical supply to the Quays				500	500										
Council Chamber Ceiling Works				30	30										
Total	1,114	1,114	0	1,465	1,407	58	1,195	1,195	0	890	890	0	890	890	0
Contingency	543	543		220	220		913	913		2,250	2,250		1,250	1,250	
Grand Total	80,170	44,942	35,228	74,828	32,968	41,860	70,415	46,169	24,246	60,104	22,528	37,576	25,603	14,550	11,053



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

CABINET

28th February 2022

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Wards affected – All

Monthly Budget Monitoring Report 2021/22 – As at end of December 2021

Background

This report sets out the Council's projected budget position based on information available as at 31st December 2021. The forecast is based on a number of assumptions around activity levels over the remaining three months of the financial year.

The report does not assume any additional 'one off' grant funding as this cannot be forecast with any accuracy however it must be acknowledged that there is a likelihood that additional funds will be received between 31st December and the end of March which will change this position.

Summary Financial Position

The Cabinet meeting of 24th November was presented with a report which outlined the fact that this year's budget was projected to underspend by £8.3m. At that meeting Cabinet agreed to transfer £7.2m into reserves which left a residual underspend of £1.1m

At the aforementioned meeting of 24th November I reported to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet that the projected underspend was likely to increase by the end of the financial year.

At present it is forecast that the £1.1m residual underspend referred to above has now increased to an estimated £6.5m. This will reduce to £2.3m if the proposed reserve transfers included in this report are agreed.

Cabinet should note that the vast majority of underspends included in this report are 'one off' due to either additional grant funding received or a temporary reduction in demand for certain services. They do not, in the main, represent structural base budget underspends which are available to re-invest elsewhere.

In relation to the one off grant funding Welsh Government ministers have confirmed that a significant proportion of the funding received has been as a consequential from UK Government and has been provided since December 2021. The Chancellor continues to refuse appropriate flexibilities around the use of the reserve to the Welsh Government and other devolved legislatures hence the need to passport on to local government.

A summarised outturn position by Service area is included at Appendix 1 of this report. Detailed explanations are included below.

Directorate Reports

The attached Directorate reports indicate the service areas where significant variances against the budget are projected.

Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning

The main variances (>£50k) are:

Specific School Contingencies £627k overspend

The local authority has been ordered to pay £1.045m in settlement costs as a result of losing an Employment Tribunal relating to a specific school. In addition, the school have incurred £365k in relation to suspension and investigation costs this financial year.

These costs will be partially offset by a backdated NNDR rebate of £557k and £200k which was included in the base budget to support a fall in secondary school meals income, but is no longer required due to WG extension of the Hardship Fund until March 2022.

School meals £120k Underspend

A budget pressure provision for £96k within this service will no longer be required as claims to the WG loss of income fund have been confirmed until March 2022

Out of County Placements £340k underspend

£128k of the under spend relates to the Independent Sector Placements budget. The costs to ELLL have reduced as the Health Board have agreed to part-fund two placements and the WG Hardship Fund is funding another. The base budget also included a contingency to cover additional inter-authority placements.

Two reserve requests are included in this report in relation to this underspend:

- A request to transfer £200k into a reserve to establish a contingency for out of county placements; and
- A request to transfer £128k into reserves to fund ongoing School Based Counselling (SBC) therapy costs

Pension and Early Retirement £180k underspend

The management of change budget covers costs associated with staff leaving under the Council's voluntary redundancy (VR) scheme. Based on current projections a £125k underspend is predicted on this budget. The remaining £55k is due to a decrease in the recharge from Swansea Council pensions.

Home to School Transport £82k Underspend

Underspend due to the cost of some routes being shared with other local authorities and internally with Social Services. A request to transfer £38k into the Home to School Transport reserve is included in this report, as there is one less school day in 2021/22 than originally budgeted for.

Support for pupils with Additional Learning Needs £443k Underspend

The base budget included £430k core funding to support schools with ALN reform implementation. In December, WG confirmed that they would now be providing grant funding for this. The original core funding is no longer required in year so a request to transfer £393k into an ALN reserve, to support future pressures associated with the new ALN Act, is included in this report.

Strategic schools improvement programme (SSIP) £60k underspend

This relates to the vacant SSIP Manager post, it is anticipated the post will be filled before March 2022

Management & Administration £58k Underspend

There are currently two vacant posts within the secretarial and admin unit, we anticipate that one of these posts will be filled shortly

Community safety £66k Underspend

The original contribution from reserves is no longer required as spend has been lower than anticipated

The Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning budget is currently forecast to underspend by £917k which will reduce to £130k if the proposed reserve transfers are agreed.

Social Services Health & Housing

The main variances (>£50k) are:

Children & Family Services – Social Work £224k underspend

The underspend is due to grant income from the social care recovery fund, working together project and family intervention fund, this is partially offset by an increased cost of direct payments and spot purchases (£205k) in the child care disability team.

Children's Social Residential Care - £510k underspend

The under spend is due to additional income from the social care recovery fund, Covid hardship fund and Swansea Bay UHB towards the cost of high cost placements. The budget is based on 11 children, there are currently 16 in residential care, this number is expected to reduce by three in the new year. Step down provision is being explored for a number of placements.

A £840k contribution to reserves is requested to fund Covid recovery work in 2022/23, which includes additional temporary posts, therapy work and a crisis bed provision.

Supported Accommodation - £147k underspend

The current budget is projected to underspend due to the increase provided by WG in the Housing Support Grant. A review of service need

is currently being undertaken to assess future provision and options on best use of this projected underspend.

Internal Fostering Service £362k underspend

The underspend is due to projected savings on staff costs due to in-year vacancies, savings on car allowances and lower number of in-house foster placements (169) compared to the provision in the budget (200).

Adoption Service £186k

Based on the latest forecast of adoption placements in 2021/22, NPT will need to make an additional contribution of £186k to the regional adoption service.

External Foster Placements £247k overspend

The over spend is due to greater number of external foster placements during the first half of the year and a greater number of high cost mother and baby placements. The projection includes a contingency of £50k for new placements. It should be noted that overall the Fostering service is showing a net underspend of £114k.

Child & Family Management £65k underspend

Savings on legal costs

Central Services £145k underspend

The underspend is due to savings on staff costs

Business Support Services £82k underspend

The underspend is due to savings on staff costs

Community Care - Social Work £96k overspend

Community care social work has been transformed into area based multi-disciplinary teams. The community occupational therapists (COT) have transferred from the community resource team, see corresponding underspend below. A virement is requested to transfer £416k from community resource team to fund the transfer of staff

Elderly Residential Care £193k underspend

Occupancy levels at homes reduced significantly during the pandemic, due to a combination of reduced demand for placements and Public Health Wales rules that mean care homes must be COVID19 free for 28 days before they can accept any new placements. The projection includes £45k for new placements. As Members are aware the WG Hardship Fund provides an additional £50 per week to residential care

providers, this funding is guaranteed until the end of March 22, although has tapered off from October. A void top up payment is also available for those care homes where occupancy is below 90%, this funding is in place until the end of March, but started to taper off from September.

Domiciliary Care £953k underspend

The underspend is due to vacancies in the in-house service and reduction in placements in the external domiciliary care market. External providers have received a 10% uplift to their rates from the 1st of October to help attract and retain care staff, this has been funded from the Covid recovery fund. There is no allowance for new placements, because the current trend, shows external hours provided are decreasing each month. The WG Hardship fund provides an additional £1 per hour to domiciliary care providers, this funding is guaranteed until the end of March 22.

£720k is requested to transfer into reserves to fund the cost of the digital switch in assistive technology by 2025.

Community Resource Team £695k underspend

The under spend is due to savings on staff costs, the community occupational therapists have transferred to the social work teams. Virements are requested to transfer £416k to domiciliary care and £57k to the community mental health team budgets.

Other Community Care/Direct Payments £124k underspend

The budget was based on 79 clients, only 61 elderly clients are currently receiving a direct payment, with similar service user levels projected for the remainder of the financial year.

Learning Disabilities (LD) – External Placements £734k underspend

The demand for LD services has been less than anticipated due to the pandemic, resulting in the projected underspend.

Community Independence Service £132k underspend

The underspend is due to savings on staff costs

Transport £83k underspend

Savings on transport have arisen due to the temporary closure of many day services.

Mental Health (MH) – External Placements £294k overspend

The over spend is a result of more MH placements than was provided for in the budget. The projection includes £50k for new placements

Housing Advice/Supported Tenancies £127k underspend

The underspend is due to savings on staff costs

The Social Services and Housing budget is currently forecast to underspend by £3.8m which will reduce to £2.3m if the proposed reserve transfers are agreed

Environment

Highways Reactive £99k overspend

Due to essential works at Skewen that cannot be recovered from the Coal Authority.

Transport support £70k underspend

A £60k reserve transfer planned for 2021/22 is no longer required it is therefore requested to put this back into reserves.

Community Transport Unit £118k

A request to put this underspend into reserves to fund future purchase of electric vehicles is requested further on in this report

Car Parking - £176k underspend

This is due mainly to staff car parking and enforcement-WG have confirmed that we are able to reclaim our loss of income to March 2022.

Refuse - £75k overspend

This is due to increased equipment costs and labour

Waste disposal - £184k underspend

During the 2020/21 financial year there was a reduction in the unit price being received for sale of recycling products and some items such as cardboard which were usually income generating were incurring costs for disposal. The 2021/22 budget was set on the assumption that these trends would continue. However, this is a volatile market and both cardboard and food waste are no longer incurring costs for disposal and are generating income instead resulting in a significant anticipated reduction in the net costs of waste disposal

Civic buildings £62K overspend

This overspend is due to increased electricity costs at the Quays civic building

Non Operational Land £157K under spend

Due to additional income from the Welsh Government loss of income claim.

Metal Box £388K under spend

Funding planned to fund capital costs at the Metal box no longer required as Welsh Government grant has been applied for

Estates £85K under spend

Due to additional income from the Welsh Government loss of income claim.

Building Maintenance £65K overspend

Due to increased commodities costs within the service

Baglan Bay Innovation Centre £100K underspend

Due mainly to income from the hardship fund to be transferred into reserve to fund running costs in 2022/23 while new tenants are being found.

Planning £229K underspend

Due to extra income which will be requested to be put into reserves for future use

Economic Development £260K underspend

A reserve transfer requested earlier on in the financial year will not be required until 2022/23

Assets and Energy £313K underspend

Original reserve request of £250k no longer required

European Unit £100K overspend

A reserve request further below in this report is requested to fund consultant's costs for round two of the levelling up funding

The Environment budget is currently forecast to underspend by £1.8m which will reduce to £329k if the proposed reserve transfers are agreed.

Corporate Services

Housing Benefits - £148k underspend

This is due to two vacant posts not being filled, along with additional Housing Benefits admin fee income which wasn't originally budgeted for.

Assessments - £59k underspend

This is due to 2 vacant posts within the service.

Directorate Management - £69k underspend

This is due to staff savings as part of the Director of Finance retiring, along with a reduction in the ex. District Pensions projected spend.

The Corporate services budget is currently forecast to underspend by £636k which will reduce to £257k if the proposed reserve transfers are agreed

Central Budgets

Council Tax Support - £767k underspend

The cost of Council Tax Support is currently projected to be lower than the budget by £767k. Members will be aware that this budget was increased as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process in anticipation that there would be a surge in demand as a result of the pandemic. Thankfully this increase in demand has not materialised.

Central Contingency and Management of Change – £504k underspend

At present no pressures that cannot be contained within the directorate guidelines have been identified resulting in a combined underspend.

Council Tax Collection £1.1m underspend

Council Tax collection rates are now back at the same level as they were pre-pandemic. As a result it is anticipated that the amount of income collected will exceed the original estimate by c£1.1m.

Virements

The following virements are proposed for approval by Cabinet.

Dir.	Service Area	Transfer To £	Transfer From £
SSH	Community care-social work	416,140	
SSH	Community resource team		473,080
SSH	Community mental health team	56,940	
Total		473,080	473,080

Reserve movements

The following reserve movements are proposed for Cabinet to consider and approve if deemed appropriate.

<u>Dir.</u>	<u>Value to / (from) £</u>	<u>Reserve</u>	<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Reason</u>
ELLL	(38,000)	Margam Discovery centre	Margam Discovery Centre	Agreed reduction due to COVID of money paid into renewal fund by Field study council
ELLL	38,000	Home to school transport	Home to school transport	To account for one less school day in 2021/22 due to Easter. Additional day will fall into next financial year
ELLL	66,000	Corporate contingency	Community safety	Original reserve contribution not required in year due to savings
ELLL	393,000	Additional Learning Needs Reserve *New	Behaviour support strategy	Additional grant money received and will be used to offset existing expenditure
ELLL	328,000	Additional Learning Needs Reserve *New	Out of county placements	Delay in placement of children due to COVID

<u>Dir.</u>	<u>Value to / (from) £</u>	<u>Reserve</u>	<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Reason</u>
FCS	23,000	Corporate equalisation	Legal Services	To fund City deal expenditure in 2022/23
FCS	28,000	Building capacity and capability	Scrutiny	Cancellation of original reserve-no longer required
FCS	13,000	Building capacity and capability	Corporate Strategy	Cancellation of original reserve-no longer required
FCS	315,000	ICT renewals	ICT	Cancellation of original reserve-no longer required
SSH	840,000	Transformation	Residential Care-External provision	To fund covid recovery work in 2022/23
SSH	720,000	Transformation	Domiciliary Care	To fund the cost of digital switch in assistive technology
ENV	260,000	Corporate contingency	Economic Development	Additional grants to business no longer required in 2021/22
ENV	(100,000)	Corporate contingency	European Unit	£150k of original reserve £250k required in future years for levelling up bids
ENV	250,000	Dare reserve	Asset management	Original contribution request not needed until 22/23
ENV	50,000	Environmental equalisation	Pollution control	Money required in 2022/23 to fund temporary food analyst post
ENV	50,000	City Deal	City Deal	Delays in expenditure due to pandemic
ENV	(200,000)	Corporate Waste	Waste disposal	Aftercare costs at Giants grave

<u>Dir.</u>	<u>Value to / (from) £</u>	<u>Reserve</u>	<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Reason</u>
ENV	38,000	Asset recovery	General Environmental Health	Funding for one off post not required
ENV	17,000	Equalisation	Coastal protection	To fund scheme at Jersey Quay in 2022/23
ENV	162,000	Equalisation	Planning Development control	Scheme at Jersey Quay to be carried out in 2022/23
ENV	130,000	Transport	Transport Support	Vehicle purchases delayed until 2022/23
ENV	60,000	Transport	Community services transport unit	Additional grant funding received
ENV	85,000	Metal box	Estates	Ongoing work to be funded by a WG capital grant
ENV	140,000	Metal box	Non Operational land	Ongoing work to be funded by a WG capital grant
ENV	388,000	Metal box	Metal Box	Ongoing work to be funded by a WG capital grant
ENV	63,000	Metal box	Asset Management	Ongoing work to be funded by a WG capital grant
ENV	100,000	Baglan Bay Innovation Centre	Baglan Bay Innovation Centre	Underspend due to hardship claims continuing for 21/22
ENV	25,000	Local Development Plan	Policy	Funds not required in 2021/22
TOTAL	4.244m			

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment as this report summarises the Council's financial position

Valleys Communities Impacts

No Impact

Workforce Impacts

No Impact

Legal Impact

No Impact

Risk Management Impact

No Impact

Consultation

This item is not subject to external consultation

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- **Note** the contents of this report in relation to the current projected budget outturn position.
- **Approve** the virement set out in the main body of this report.
- **Approve** the reserve movements detailed in this report.

Reason for Proposed decision

To update the Council's budget for virements and reserve movements, in accordance with the Council's constitution.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary Outturn Position

Appendix 2 – Reserve Schedule

Background Papers
Budget Working Papers

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Appendix 1 – Summary Outturn Position

Summary 2021-22						
	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Projected Outturn	(Under) / Over	Proposed Reserves	(Under) / Over after Reserves
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning – Schools	93,314,000	93,314,000	93,314,000	0	0	0
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning – Other	27,560,000	27,560,000	26,642,995	-917,005	787,000	-130,005
Social Services Health & Housing	87,276,000	87,276,000	83,427,834	-3,848,166	1,560,000	-2,288,166
Environment	41,929,000	41,929,000	40,081,521	-1,847,479	1,518,000	-329,479
Corporate Services	18,775,000	19,075,000	18,438,690	-636,310	379,000	-257,310
Directly Controlled Expenditure	268,854,000	269,154,000	261,905,040	-7,248,960	4,244,000	-3,004,960
Swansea Bay Port Authority	45,767	45,767	45,767	0		0
Fire Authority	8,179,504	8,179,504	8,179,504	0		0
Margam Crematorium	1,000	1,000	600	-400		-400
Archives	96,798	96,798	96,797	-1		-1
Magistrates Court	11,485	11,485	11,484	-1		-1
Capital Financing	19,667,439	19,667,439	19,667,439			0
Council Tax Support	19,834,579	19,834,579	19,067,579	-767,000		-767,000
Pay & Pension Provision	1,400,000	1,100,000	0	-1,100,000		-1,100,000
Contingency	825,077	825,077	-59,000	-884,077		-884,077
Salary sacrifice	-70,000	-70,000	-70,000	0		0
Management of change	500,000	500,000		-500,000		-500,000
Service resilience Fund	0	0	2,000,000	2,000,000		2,000,000
Contribution from General Reserve	-3,100,000	-3,100,000		3,100,000		3,100,000
Net Budget Requirement	316,245,649	316,245,649	310,845,210	-5,400,439	4,244,000	-1,156,439

Appendix 1 – Summary Outturn Position

Summary 2021-22						
	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Projected Outturn	(Under) / Over	Proposed Reserves	(Under) / Over after Reserves
RSG	-188,898,504	-188,898,504	-188,898,504	0		0
NNDR	-47,781,525	-47,781,525	-47,781,525	0		0
Discretionary rate relief	386,684	386,684	386,684	0		0
Council Tax	-79,952,304	-79,952,304	-81,072,304	-1,120,000		-1,120,000
Total Funding	-316,245,649	-316,245,649	-317,365,649	-1,120,000	0	-1,120,000
Total Overspend / (underspend)				-6,520,439	4,244,000	-2,276,439

Appendix 2 – Reserve Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2021 £	Approved Reserve Movements to September 2021 £	Current Projected Balance @ 31st March 2022 £	Additional Requests to December 2021 £	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2022 £
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning					
<u>Delegated Schools Reserves</u>					
ERVR Primary	Cr5,925	1,462	Cr4,463	0	Cr4,463
Primary Schools	Cr4,372,665	0	Cr4,372,665	0	Cr4,372,665
Secondary Schools	Cr2,048,586	0	Cr2,048,586	0	Cr2,048,586
Special Schools	Cr354,365	0	Cr354,365	0	Cr354,365
Middle School	Cr439,704	0	Cr439,704	0	Cr439,704
Repair & Maintenance	Cr161,160	0	Cr161,160	0	Cr161,160
	Cr7,382,406	1,462	Cr7,380,944	0	Cr7,380,944
<u>Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Other</u>					
Margam Discovery Centre - Building Maintenance	Cr47,774	Cr50,000	Cr97,774	38,000	Cr59,774
Equalisation Account-Education	Cr1,893,000	62,000	Cr1,831,000	Cr721,000	Cr2,552,000
Home to School Transport	Cr111,070	0	Cr111,070	Cr38,000	Cr149,070
	Cr2,051,844	12,000	Cr2,039,844	Cr721,000	Cr2,760,844
Total Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Cr9,434,250	13,462	Cr9,420,788	Cr721,000	Cr10,141,788
<u>Social Services, Health and Housing</u>					
Homecare Equipment	Cr86,756	Cr10,000	Cr96,756	0	Cr96,756
Community Care Transformation	Cr455,561	0	Cr455,561	Cr1,560,000	Cr2,015,561
Social Services Equalisation	Cr2,000,114	Cr1,000,000	Cr3,000,114	0	Cr3,000,114

Appendix 2 – Reserve Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2021 £	Approved Reserve Movements to September 2021 £	Current Projected Balance @ 31st March 2022 £	Additional Requests to December 2021 £	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2022 £
Hillside	Cr430,663	0	Cr430,663	0	Cr430,663
Youth Offending Team	Cr167,897	0	Cr167,897	0	Cr167,897
Adoption Service	Cr500,000	0	Cr500,000	0	Cr500,000
Children's Residential Placements	Cr276,000	0	Cr276,000	0	Cr276,000
Social Services IT Renewals	Cr700,000	0	Cr700,000	0	Cr700,000
Total Social Services, Health and Housing	Cr4,616,991	Cr1,010,000	Cr5,626,991	Cr1,560,000	Cr7,186,991
<u>Environment</u>					
Transport	Cr151,541	60,000	Cr91,541	Cr190,000	Cr281,541
Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme	Cr125,894	38,000	Cr87,894	0	Cr87,894
Local Development Plan	Cr290,072	58	Cr290,014	Cr25,000	Cr315,014
Winter Maintenance	Cr744,162	0	Cr744,162	0	Cr744,162
Baglan Bay Innovation Centre	Cr77,517	0	Cr77,517	Cr100,000	Cr177,517
Renewable Energy	Cr15,746	0	Cr15,746	0	Cr15,746
Environmental Health - Housing Equalisation	Cr137,000	7,000	Cr130,000	Cr38,000	Cr168,000
Workways - NPT	Cr252,491	0	Cr252,491	0	Cr252,491
Environment Equalization	Cr763,087	348,626	Cr414,461	Cr229,000	Cr643,461
Metal Box	Cr356,418	156,000	Cr200,418	Cr676,000	Cr876,418
Air Quality Monitoring	Cr85,000	85,000	0	0	0
Operating Account -Equalisation	Cr36,043	0	Cr36,043	0	Cr36,043
Vehicle Tracking	Cr92,186	0	Cr92,186	0	Cr92,186
Vehicle Renewals	Cr2,321,235	621,188	Cr1,700,047	0	Cr1,700,047

Appendix 2 – Reserve Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2021 £	Approved Reserve Movements to September 2021 £	Current Projected Balance @ 31st March 2022 £	Additional Requests to December 2021 £	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2022 £
Total Environment	Cr5,448,392	1,315,872	Cr4,132,520	Cr1,258,000	Cr5,390,520
<u>Corporate Services</u>					
Elections Equalisation	Cr335,139	Cr15,000	Cr350,139	0	Cr350,139
Health & Safety/Occupational Health	Cr40,501	0	Cr40,501	0	Cr40,501
Development Fund for Modernisation	Cr168,032	0	Cr168,032	0	Cr168,032
IT Renewals Fund	Cr933,394	315,000	Cr618,394	Cr315,000	Cr933,394
Corporate Equalisation	Cr597,236	123,000	Cr474,236	Cr23,000	Cr497,236
Building Capacity	Cr197,295	83,000	Cr114,295	Cr41,000	Cr155,295
Voluntary Organisation	Cr33,300	0	Cr33,300	0	Cr33,300
Total Corporate Services	Cr2,304,897	506,000	Cr1,798,897	Cr379,000	Cr2,177,897
<u>Corporate Other</u>					
Insurance	Cr5,998,621	Cr862,147	Cr6,860,768	0	Cr6,860,768
Swansea Bay City Deal	Cr112,786	Cr171,000	Cr283,786	Cr50,000	Cr333,786
Income Generation	Cr1,120,252	77,000	Cr1,043,252	0	Cr1,043,252
Members Community Fund	Cr662,114	320,000	Cr342,114	0	Cr342,114
Community Resilience Fund	Cr2,000,000	250,000	Cr1,750,000	0	Cr1,750,000
Housing Warranties	Cr220,000	0	Cr220,000	0	Cr220,000
Pantteg Landslip	Cr500,000	0	Cr500,000	0	Cr500,000
Waste	Cr393,152	0	Cr393,152	0	Cr393,152
LAWDC Contingency	Cr1,013,444	0	Cr1,013,444	200,000	Cr813,444

Appendix 2 – Reserve Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2021 £	Approved Reserve Movements to September 2021 £	Current Projected Balance @ 31st March 2022 £	Additional Requests to December 2021 £	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2022 £
DARE	Cr2,000,000	250,000	Cr1,750,000	Cr250,000	Cr2,000,000
Digital Transformation	Cr1,170,000	0	Cr1,170,000		Cr1,170,000
Schools IT Equalisation (HWB)	Cr400,000	0	Cr400,000		Cr400,000
Corporate Contingency	Cr4,741,000	553,000	Cr4,188,000	Cr226,000	Cr4,414,000
Service Resilience	0	Cr2,000,000	Cr2,000,000		Cr2,000,000
Treasury Management Equalisation	Cr8,901,803	Cr239,000	Cr9,140,803	0	Cr9,140,803
ER/VR	Cr4,407,523	0	Cr4,407,523	0	Cr4,407,523
Accommodation Strategy	Cr2,273,580	0	Cr2,273,580	0	Cr2,273,580
Total Corporate Other	Cr35,914,275	Cr1,822,147	Cr37,736,422	Cr326,000	Cr38,062,422
<u>Joint Committee</u>					
Workways - Regional	Cr154,419	0	Cr154,419	0	Cr154,419
Environment Legacy Reserve (SWTRA)	Cr59,728	0	Cr59,728	0	Cr59,728
Substance Misuse Area Planning Board	Cr34,847	0	Cr34,847	0	Cr34,847
WB Safeguarding Board	Cr108,304	0	Cr108,304	0	Cr108,304
Intermediate Care pooled fund	Cr28,429	0	Cr28,429	0	Cr28,429
Total Joint Committee	Cr385,727	0	Cr385,727	0	Cr385,727
Total All Earmarked Reserves	Cr58,104,532	Cr996,813	Cr59,101,345	Cr4,244,000	Cr63,345,345
General Reserve	Cr20,035,694	Cr115,000	Cr20,150,694		Cr20,150,694

Appendix 2 – Reserve Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2021 £	Approved Reserve Movements to September 2021 £	Current Projected Balance @ 31st March 2022 £	Additional Requests to December 2021 £	Proposed Balance @ 31st March 2022 £
TOTAL ALL REVENUE RESERVES	Cr78,140,226	Cr1,111,813	Cr79,252,039	Cr4,244,000	Cr83,496,039

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

28th FEBRUARY 2022

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED – ALL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with information in relation to delivery of the 2021/22 Capital Programme.

Background

2. On 8th March 2021 Council approved its Capital Programme for 2021/22; the report detailed planned Capital Expenditure totalling £80.170m for the financial year. This was updated at the Cabinet Meeting of 24th November 2021 to £82.410m.

The purpose of this report is to update Members as to the delivery of this Programme and to seek approval for a further updated budget position.

Targeted Achievements

3. As Members are aware the following achievements are being targeted during this financial year:
 - Progression of the Council's Band B 21st Century Schools programme;
 - Cefn Saeson – completing and opening of a new replacement 11-16 School in the Cimla area of the County Borough. The school was opened to pupils in June 2021.

- Abbey Primary – progressing the construction of a new primary school to replace the current Abbey Primary which is based across three sites in Neath Abbey, Skewen and Longford.
 - Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Phase 3 – progressing the addition of a new build block comprising six extra classrooms and 3G rugby pitch provision.
- Progress the regeneration programme including Harbourside, Neath Town Centre Redevelopment, Plaza, and the Technology Centre
 - Further investment of £3m into Disabled Facility Grants to assist people to live at home and investment of over £3m in Schools Capital Maintenance and Highways and Engineering Maintenance improvements.
 - Redevelopment works at Hillside Secure Unit.
 - Remodelling of the Council’s Waste Facility at Crymlyn Burrows as a Transfer Station with enhanced recycling capacity and facilities to accommodate the Council’s expanding recycling operation.

Changes to the approved Budget

4. The updated Capital Programme now totals £78.834m with the main changes proposed being:
 - 2021/22 grant approvals of £2.393m have been received predominantly relating to the City Deal and Coal Tip Safety.
 - The 2021/22 budget for the Abbey Primary 21st Century Schools project has been increased from £6.533m to £7.844m to reflect the progression of works on site. The £1.311m increase in budget has been re-profiled from 2022/23.
 - The 2021/22 budget for the Welsh Medium project at YGG Pontardawe has been increased by £500k to appoint a new

contractor. A variation request for additional funding has been submitted to Welsh Government.

- £800k of the £1.650m 2021/22 budget for Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station site improvements has been re-profiled to 2022/23 to reflect the works on site.
- The 2021/22 Disabled Facilities Grants budget of £4.4m has been reduced to £3m with the reduction of £1.4m being re-profiled in 2022/23 to reflect the works being carried out.
- A budget of £565k had been included in 2021/22 under Regeneration Other Match Funding Feasibility. This has now been fully re-profiled into 2022/23 for WG & UK Government Funding Streams

Note:

- In December 2021 Welsh Government announced grant allocations of £2.326m for schools capital maintenance and improving ventilation. This grant will displace Council funded projects in 2021/22 with a subsequent re-investment in new projects in 2022/23

Further details of the Budget changes are shown at Appendix 2.

Impact of COVID

5. The Covid pandemic has resulted in increased costs for some contracts due to the requirement to provide increased facilities on sites i.e. additional welfare provision to facilitate social distancing. Currently these increased costs are being met from existing budget resources.

2021/22 Capital Expenditure

6. Details of Capital Expenditure as at 31st December 2021 is outlined in Appendix 1 of this report

Financial Impact

7. All relevant details are set out in the body of the report.

Valleys Communities Impact

8. The Capital Programme provides investment in assets across the County Borough.

Workforce Impacts

9. There are no workforce impacts arising from this report.

Legal Impacts

10. There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

Risk Management

11. The capital programme is actively managed by managers and the Capital Programme Steering Group to comply with all relevant planning conditions, legislation, regulations and health and safety.

Consultation

12. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that:

Cabinet approve and commend to Council:

- The updated proposed 2021/22 budget totalling £78.834m including the budget changes as set out in Appendix 2.

Cabinet note:

- The position in relation to expenditure as at 31st December 2021.

Reason for Proposed Decision

14. To comply with the Councils constitution in relation to budget virement, re-profiling between financial years and to update the Council's Budget projections for 2021/22.

Implementation of Decision

15. The decision is proposed for implementation immediately after consultation with the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and determination by Council.

Appendices

16. Appendix 1 – Details of Capital Expenditure to 31st December 2021.
Appendix 2 – Details of Budget Changes to 31st December 2021.

List of Background Papers

Capital Programme working files

Officer Contact

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Capital Budget and Spend 2021/22 to date

	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Budget £'000	Actual @ 31.12.21 £'000
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning			
Abbey Primary	6,533	7,844	5,129
Cefn Saeson	4,898	4,898	2,583
Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur (North Campus)	5,636	5,636	4,117
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley	0	100	24
Capital Maintenance - ELLL	1,383	1,245	529
Capital Maintenance for Schools Previous Years Grants	1,090	743	501
Welsh Medium School Grant - YGG Pontardawe, YGG Cwmllynfell & YGG Tyle'r Ynn	1,422	1,922	1,370
Infant Class Sizes Grant - YGG Rhosafan	748	425	305
Childcare Offer Grant - Small Grants Pot, YGG Castell Nedd & Rhos Primary	1,300	1,000	603
Leisure Investment	142	68	40
Margam Orangery Upgrading Works	46	46	35
Margam Park Activity Investment	248	248	199
Margam Park Stonework Repairs	620	646	348
Schools & Leisure Maintenance - Additional Maintenance and Improvements	13	13	16
Pontardawe Arts Centre Cinema	60	35	7
HWB IT for Schools	1,136	1,136	437
Flying Start - Health & Safety Compliance/IT Equipment/COVID Recovery (various childcare settings)	46	127	21
Furzemill Pond, Margam Park	102	102	151
Ysgol Hendrefelin - Cruyff Basketball Court	170	170	155
All Wales Play Opportunity	235	235	20
Music Support Resources	0	232	0
Other – Education & Leisure	82	82	63
Environment			

	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Budget £'000	Actual @ 31.12.21 £'000
Highways and Engineering Maintenance	2,318	1,906	1,365
Additional Highway Works (Highways Refurbishment Grant)	754	776	776
Additional Highway Improvements	275	15	1
Additional Highway Works	452	157	148
Drainage Grants	1,825	1,838	780
Resilient Roads Fund - Castle Drive Cimla	0	100	0
Flood Recovery Bryn to Goytre Cycleway slips	0	217	1
Local Transport Fund (multiple locations)	653	653	121
Road Safety (multiple locations)	560	599	196
Safe Routes in Communities (multiple locations)	455	455	337
Active Travel Fund (multiple location)	916	916	168
Flood & Coastal Risk Projects - Aberavon & Brunel Dock	15	2	2
Flood Prevention Initiatives	59	0	0
Additional Recycling Initiatives	105	105	96
Major Bridge Strengthening - A474 Neath	289	0	-6
Health & Safety	562	536	241
Neighbourhood Improvements	170	170	153
Pavilions	184	110	13
Disability Access	256	256	70
Street Lighting	1,347	1,247	891
Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station - site improvements	1,650	850	262
Vehicle Replacement Programme	1,500	1,725	1,176
Environment Street Scene Works	673	469	132
Maintenance - Structures and Council Owned Tips	137	8	0
Coal Tip Safety	0	552	80
Regeneration: Harbourside Infrastructure	3,603	3,253	2,037
Regeneration: Plaza Redevelopment	3,556	4,044	3,581
Regeneration: Port Talbot Magistrates Court	100	100	-30
Regeneration 6 Station Road	167	0	0
Regeneration: Mardon Park	0	90	0

	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Budget £'000	Actual @ 31.12.21 £'000
Regeneration: Aberafan Seafront Aquasplash Upgrade (Phases 1 & 2)	567	527	327
Regeneration: Employment & Business Start Up Space	50	1	0
Regeneration: Neath Town Centre Redevelopment	11,352	11,652	7,818
Regeneration: 8 Wind Street – Conversion to Offices	696	696	614
Regeneration: Crown Buildings /Roofing Development	865	665	21
Regeneration: Neath Transport Hub	700	700	2
Regeneration: Property Enhancement Development Grant	927	927	570
Regeneration: Place Making Grant (Property Enhancement)	1,125	625	7
City Deal: The Technology Centre	5,417	5,547	4,570
City Deal: SWITCH Building at Harbourside	0	100	8
City Deal: Advanced manufacturing production facility at Harbourside	0	1	0
City Deal: Air Quality Monitoring	0	150	85
City Deal: Hydrogen Stimulus	0	0	0
City Deal: Homes as Power Stations	0	50	0
Regeneration: Afan Forest Park	459	459	486
Regeneration: Valleys Task Force	233	233	0
Regeneration: Gnoll Country Park	48	48	12
Regeneration: Commercial Property Grant	275	60	12
Regeneration: Community Self Build Housing	150	0	0
Regeneration: Other	1,172	320	118
Other - Environment	674	565	342
Social Services Health & Housing			
Capital Maintenance	332	182	93
Hillside Secure Unit Improvement Works	1,647	1,647	662
Efficiency & Warm Homes	548	548	215
Enable – Support for Independent Living	235	235	141
Disabled Facilities Grants	4,400	3,000	1,801

	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Budget £'000	Actual @ 31.12.21 £'000
Other – Social Service & Housing	111	161	154
Other Services			
School IT/ Vehicle Financing	450	425	320
CCTV Replacement	246	246	29
Civic Accommodation Modernisation	250	0	0
Food Poverty Grant	58	58	14
Information Technology & Agile Working	74	74	133
Electrical Supply for the Quays and SRC	275	500	166
Income Generation Proposals	50	0	0
Council Chamber Ceiling Works	0	30	0
Contingency	533	300	0
Total	82,410	78,834	47,964

Proposed Capital Budget Changes for approval

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
Approved Budget as at 30th September 2021	82,410	
Budget Changes		
Abbey Primary	1,311	Budget re-profiled from 2022/23 to reflect progress of works on site
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley	100	Project approved, new grant awarded
Capital Maintenance - ELLL	-138	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Capital Maintenance for Schools Previous Years Grants	-347	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Flying Start - Health & Safety Compliance/IT Equipment/COVID Recovery (various childcare settings)	81	Additional grant awarded
Infant Class Sizes Grant - YGG Rhosafan	-323	Reduction of budget to reflect cost of works on site
Leisure Investment	-74	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Margam Park Stonework Repairs	26	Budget re-profiled from Health & Safety
Music Support Resources	232	New grant awarded
Pontardawe Arts Centre Cinema	-25	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Welsh Medium School Grant - YGG Pontardawe, YGG Cwmllynfell & YGG Tyle'r Ynn	500	Additional grant applied for, awaiting decision from WG
Highways and Engineering Maintenance	-440	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Additional Highway Improvement	-260	Re-profiled to 2022/23

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
Additional Highway Works	-295	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Additional Highway Works (Highways Refurbishment Grant)	50	See above
Coal Tip Safety	552	New grant awarded
Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station - site improvements	-800	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Drainage Grants	13	Additional grant awarded
Environment Street Scene Works	-204	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Flood & Coastal Risk Projects - Aberavon & Brunel Dock	-13	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Flood Prevention Initiatives	-59	Reduction in requirement of match funding for drainage grant/re-profiled to 2022/23
Flood Recovery Bryn to Goytre Cycleway slips	217	New grant awarded
Health & Safety	-26	Budget re-profiled to Margam Park Stonework Repairs
Maintenance - Structures and Council Owned Tips	-129	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Major Bridge Strengthening - A474 Neath	-289	Re-profiled to 2022/23 to reflect works
Pavilions	-74	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Resilient Roads Fund - Castle Drive Cimla	100	New grant awarded
Road Safety (multiple locations)	39	Additional grant awarded
Street Lighting	-100	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Vehicle Replacement Programme	225	Increase in budget to reflect vehicles being purchased
Regeneration 6 Station Road	-167	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Aberafan Seafront Aquasplash Upgrade (Phases 1 & 2)	-40	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Commercial Property Grant	-215	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Community Self Build Housing	-150	Re-profiled to 2022/23

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
Regeneration: Crown Buildings /Roofing Development	-200	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Employment & Business Start Up Space	-49	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Harbourside Infrastructure	-350	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Mardon Park	90	New grant awarded
Regeneration: Neath Town Centre Redevelopment	300	Budget moved from below to fund the new childcare setting in the Neath Town Centre Development
Childcare Offer Grant - Small Grants Pot, YGG Castell Nedd & Rhos Primary	-300	See above
Regeneration: Place Making Grant (Property Enhancement)	-111	Budget allocated to Plaza Redevelopment for Property Enhancement works
Regeneration: Place Making Grant (Property Enhancement)	-389	Reduction of budget to reflect grants being awarded
Regeneration: Plaza Redevelopment	488	Additional grant awarded
Regeneration: Other (Heritage Works)	-65	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Other (Match Funding & Feasibility for WG & UK Government Funding Streams)	-565	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Other (Public Realm Boots)	-85	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Regeneration: Other (Sustainable Living Grant)	-138	Reduction in grant award
City Deal: Advanced manufacturing production facility at Harbourside	1	New grant awarded
City Deal: Air Quality Monitoring	150	New grant awarded
City Deal: Homes as Power Stations	50	New grant awarded
City Deal: SWITCH Building at Harbourside	100	New grant awarded
City Deal: The Technology Centre	130	New grant awarded
Other – Environment (Cymmer Viaduct)	-10	Re-profiled to 2022/23

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
Other – Environment (Milland Road Footbridge)	-100	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Capital Maintenance Social Services Health & Housing	-150	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Disabled Facilities Grants	-1,400	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Other - Social Services (Intermediate Care Fund)	50	Additional grant awarded
Civic Accommodation Modernisation	-250	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Council Chamber Ceiling Works	30	New project
Electrical Supply for the Quays and SRC	225	Increase in budget to reflect works on site
Income Generation Proposals	-50	Re-profiled to 2022/23
School IT/ Vehicle Financing	-23	Reduction in budget to reflect IT equipment/vehicles being purchased
Contingency	-233	Re-profiled to 2022/23
Updated Budget	78,834	

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

28th February 2022

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY, AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2022/23.
2. Treasury Management is defined as:
"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks".

Introduction

3. The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

4. The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer-term cash flow surpluses.

Reporting Requirements

5. The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporates a variety of policies, estimates and actuals; details of which are outlined below.
6. Prudential and Treasury Indicators and Treasury Strategy (this report)

The first and most important report covers:

- the capital plans (including prudential indicators);
- a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (how capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
- the Treasury Management Strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organized) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

7. A Mid-year Treasury Management Report (prepared after 1st October)

This will update Members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether the treasury strategy is meeting the strategy or whether any policies require revision.

8. An Annual Treasury Report

This provides details of the actual performance for the previous financial year and provides a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy. This report must be considered by Members by 30th September of the following financial year.

Scrutiny Arrangements

9. The above reports are required to be scrutinised before being recommended to Council. These arrangements are detailed in the scheme of delegation as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23

10. The strategy for 2022/23 covers two main areas

Capital issues

- the capital plans and the prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy.

Treasury management issues

- the current treasury position;
 - treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
 - prospects for interest rates;
 - the borrowing strategy;
 - policy on borrowing in advance of need;
 - debt rescheduling;
 - the investment strategy;
 - creditworthiness policy; and
 - the policy on use of external service providers.
11. These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, Welsh Government MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and Welsh Government Investment Guidance

Capital Prudential Indicators

12. Capital Expenditure

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Council's capital expenditure plans. The table below summarises these plans and how they are being financed:

	2020/21 Actual £'000	2021/22 Revised £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000
Capital expenditure	58,769	74,828	70,415	60,104	25,603
<u>Resourced by:</u>					
Capital receipts	936	2,778	401	0	0
Grants & contributions	46,304	54,407	44,424	47,906	21,603
Reserves & DRF *	1,245	2,461	3,088	2,221	1,000
Borrowing	10,284	15,182	22,502	9,977	3,000

NB * DRF means Direct Revenue Financing

13. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The second prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's indebtedness and so it's underlying borrowing need.

The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the indebtedness. The table below shows the projected CFR movements:

CFR	2020/21 Actual £'000	2021/22 Revised £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000
Opening Balance	342,874	343,055	348,091	359,745	358,078
Add:					
Expenditure to be funded by borrowing	10,284	15,182	22,502	9,977	3,000
Less: Minimum Revenue Prov. (MRP)	(10,103)	(10,146)	(10,848)	(11,644)	(12,174)
Est. Closing Balance	343,055	348,091	359,745	358,078	348,904

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

14. The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet service activity and the Council's capital strategy.
15. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.
16. The Council's treasury portfolio position at 31st March 2021 comprised:

Table 1	Principal	
<u>Borrowing</u>	£m	£m
Fixed rate funding	PWLB 232,598	
	Market 62,500	
	Other 6,515	
	301,613	
Variable rate funding	0	
	301,613	
Other long term liabilities		0
<u>Gross Debt</u>		301,613
<u>Total investments</u>		52,500

17. Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well-defined limits. One of these is that the Council needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the Capital Financing Requirement.
18. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and there is no indication that it will not do so in future as detailed below:

	2020/21 Actual £'000	2021/22 Revised £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000
Actual gross debt at 31 st March	301,613	310,612	283,961	281,817	275,405
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	343,055	348,091	359,745	358,078	348,904
Under / (over) borrowed	41,442	37,479	75,784	76,261	73,499

Treasury Indicators: Limits relating to borrowing

19. The Operational Boundary

This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed.

	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Operational Boundary	373,055	423,958	422,291	413,117

20. The Authorised Limit

A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Authorised Limit	393,055	443,958	442,291	433,117

21. Upper limits on fixed and variable interest rate exposure

This identifies a maximum limit for fixed and variable interest rates based upon the total debt position

	2021/22 to 2024/25 £'000
Upper Limit on Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	443,958
Lower Limit on Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	
Upper Limit on Variable Interest Rate Exposure	221,979
Lower Limit on Variable Interest rate Exposure	0

22. Maturity structure of borrowing

These gross limits are set to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing	2021/22 Estimate %	Upper Limit %	Lower Limit %
Under 12 months	9	15	0
12 months to 2 years	2	15	0
2 to 5 years	3	40	0
5 to 10 years	5	60	0
10 years +	81	100	15

Prospects for Interest Rates

23. The Council has appointed Link Asset Services as its treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The following table gives Link’s projected view.

	Mar22	Jun22	Sep22	Dec22	Mar23	Jun23	Sep23
Bank Rate	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
5 yr PWLB	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30
10 yr PWLB	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
25 yr PWLB	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60
50 yr PWLB	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40

Borrowing Strategy

24. The cheapest borrowing will be internal borrowing by running down cash balances and foregoing interest earned at historically low rates. However this strategy can only be used as a short term measure therefore consideration will be given to entering into external borrowing during 2022/23.

25. The following types of loan arrangement will be considered (in no particular order):

- Temporary borrowing from the money markets or other local authorities.
- Short dated borrowing from the market or PWLB.
- Long term fixed rate market or PWLB loans.

Changes to PWLB lending rules during 2020/21 now mean that Local Authorities can no longer borrow at preferential rates if they intend to borrow (from any source) to fund investment specifically for the purpose of generating a profit. This Council will not be borrowing for this purpose.

26. The general aim of this treasury management strategy is to ensure the affordability of capital investment within the ongoing revenue budget, to ensure that the credit risk is managed effectively when comparing borrowing costs and investment holdings and returns.

27. The Council will continue to examine the potential for undertaking early repayment of some external debt to the PWLB in order to

reduce the difference between its gross and net debt positions. However, the introduction by the PWLB of significantly lower repayment rates than new borrowing rates in November 2007, which has now been compounded since 20th October 2010 by a considerable further widening of the difference between new borrowing and repayment rates, has potentially meant that large premiums would be incurred by such action and such levels of premiums are unlikely to be justifiable on value for money grounds. This situation will be monitored in case these differentials are narrowed by the PWLB at some future date.

28. Members should note that to date during 2021/22 the Council has taken out the below new loan:

Lender	Date	Amount (£000)	Rate	Period
PWLB	7 th Dec 2021	10,000	1.37%	50 Year

29. It should also be noted that during the year the Council repaid £1m of principal repayments to the PWLB.

Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need

30. The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates, and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.

Debt Rescheduling

31. As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, there may be potential opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the current treasury position and the size of the cost of debt repayment (premiums incurred).
32. The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:

- the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings,
 - helping to fulfil this Treasury Management Strategy, and
 - enhance the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).
33. Consideration will also be given to identify if there is any potential for making savings by running down investment balances to repay debt prematurely as short term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on current debt.
34. No rescheduling is anticipated in 2022/23. If rescheduling does take place it will be reported to the Cabinet Board, at the earliest meeting following its action.

Annual Investment Strategy

35. The Council's investment policy has regard to the Welsh Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance") and the CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2017 ("the CIPFA TM Code"). The Council's investment priorities will be security first, portfolio liquidity second, then return.
36. In accordance with the above, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Council has below clearly stipulated the minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for inclusion on the lending list. The creditworthiness methodology used to create the counterparty list fully accounts for the ratings, watches and outlooks published by all three ratings agencies with a full understanding of what these reflect in the eyes of each agency. Using Link's ratings service potential counterparty ratings are monitored on a real time basis with knowledge of any changes notified electronically as the agencies notify modifications.
37. Further, the Council's officers recognise that ratings should not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and that it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets.

38. Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.
39. The aim of the strategy is to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which will also enable diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk.
40. The intention of the strategy is to provide security of investment and minimisation of risk.
41. Investment instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed in Appendix 2 under the 'Specified' and 'Non-Specified' Investments categories. Counterparty limits will be as set through the Council's Treasury Management Practices Schedules.

Creditworthiness Policy

42. The Council receives creditworthiness information from Link Asset Services. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:
 - credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies
 - Credit Default Swop (CDS) spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings
 - sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries
43. All credit ratings are monitored on a daily basis. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings of money market organisations as announced by all three agencies through its use of the Link's creditworthiness service.
 - If a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.
44. Council Officers are able to use this creditworthiness information to help support their decision making processes along with other market information and data available.

45. The approved investment criteria are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report and have not changed from those previously approved by Members.

Country Limits

46. The Council will only invest in Banks in countries where the sovereignty rating is AA+ or higher, with the exception of the UK which currently has an AA- rating. The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in Appendix 2. This list will be added to or deducted from by officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy.

Investment Strategy

47. **In-house funds:** The Council currently manages its surplus funds in-house. The core balance, available for strategic investment is estimated to be in the region of £30m. The remaining cash balances are mainly cash flow derived and available for short term investment only.

48. Investments will accordingly be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (up to 12 months). The Council policy will allow investments up to a maximum of £25m for periods of more than 1 year and up to 5 years, and this will be considered when decisions on investing surplus funds are made.

Investment return projections.

49. The recent increase in the Bank of England Base Rate has lead to an improvement in the investment return projections. The suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to about three months during each financial year are as follows:

- 2022/23 1.00%
- 2023/24 1.25%
- 2024/25 1.25%
- 2025/26 1.25%
- Later years 1.50%

Investments greater than 365 days

50. The Council is required to set a limit on the total value of investments with a duration greater than 365 days. This limit is set with regard to the Council's liquidity requirements. The proposed limit is set out at £25m.
51. Members should note that the updated Treasury Management Code of Practice now requires Local Authorities to report on investments over 365 days as opposed to the previous practice of over 364 days.

End of Year Investment Report

52. Members will receive a report on the actual 2021/22 investment activity as part of the Annual Treasury Report by 30th September 2022.

Policy on the Use of External Service Providers

53. The Council uses Link Asset Services as its external treasury management advisers. The Council's previous contract was with Capita Asset Services but this business was purchased by Link Asset Services during 2017/18. Our current contract ends 30th June 2022 where it is anticipated that we will extend the contract.
54. The Council recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.
55. However it is recognised that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Council.

Role of the Section 151 Officer

56. The Chief Finance Officer is the designated Section 151 Officer for the Council. The specific responsibilities of the S151 Officer are set out below:

- to recommend treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance.
- submitting regular treasury management policy reports
- submitting budgets and budget variations
- receiving and reviewing management information reports
- reviewing the performance of the treasury management function
- ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function
- ensuring the adequacy of internal audit, and liaising with external audit
- recommend the appointment of external service providers.

Minimum Revenue Provision

Introduction

57. Capital expenditure is generally expenditure on assets which have a life expectancy of more than one year e.g. buildings, vehicles, machinery etc. It would be impractical to charge the entirety of such expenditure to revenue in the year in which it was incurred therefore such expenditure is spread over several years in order to try to match the years over which such assets benefit the local community through their useful life. The manner of spreading these costs is through an annual Minimum Revenue Provision.

58. The council is required to approve its MRP policy for the forthcoming financial year ensuring that “prudent provision” is made.

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2022/23

The Council’s MRP policy for 2022/23 is detailed below:

MRP Policy – Supported Borrowing

59. The Council is required to make arrangements for the repayment of debt which it considers to be a ‘prudent provision for the repayment of debt’. In relation to capital expenditure funded by supported borrowing the MRP policy will be to write down the debt over a 50

year period on a straight line basis, this is broadly consistent with the lives of assets funded and maintained by supported borrowing.

MRP Policy – Prudential Borrowing

60. Expenditure will be subject to MRP on the basis of asset life and using the equal annual instalment or annuity methods as appropriate.
61. Estimated life periods will be determined by the Chief Finance Officer under delegated powers. To the extent that expenditure is not on the creation of an asset e.g. computer software and is of a type that is subject to estimated life periods that are referred to in the guidance, these periods will generally be adopted by the Council. However the Council reserves the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.
62. Where some types of capital expenditure incurred by the Council are not capable of being related to an individual asset, asset lives will be assessed on a basis which most reasonably reflects the anticipated period of benefit that arises from the expenditure, as determined by the Chief Finance Officer.
63. Where the Council provides capital funding to a third party the MRP charge will be calculated as if the Council incurred the capital expenditure itself i.e. over the expected life of the asset.
64. The Council will apply the Minimum Revenue Provision to the accounts in the financial year following which the asset becomes operational.

Affordability Prudential Indicators

65. The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework a prudential indicator is required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. This indicator shows the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances.

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2022/23 Original Estimate	2023/24 Original Estimate
Financing Cost / Net Revenue	6.74%	6.39%	6.16%	6.08%

Financial Impact

66. All financial impacts are detailed within the body of the report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

67. There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment for this report.

Workforce impacts

68. There are no workforce impacts resulting from this report.

Legal impacts

69. The report deals with the Council's legal requirements as set out in Local Government Act 2003.

Risk management

70. Compliance with the strategies outlined in this report should be sufficient in terms of managing risks in this area.

Recommendation

71. It is recommended that Cabinet commend to Council the approval of the following Strategies and Policies as set out in this report:

- Treasury Management Strategy
- Annual Investment Strategy
- Minimum Revenue Provision Policy
- Prudential Indicators

Reasons for proposed decision

72. To approve the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and MRP Policy as required by the Local Government Act 2003 and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017).

Implementation of decision

73. The decision is proposed for implementation immediately after consultation with the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and determination by Council.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scheme of Delegation
Appendix 2 - Investment Criteria

List of Background Papers

CIPFA – Treasury Management in the Public Sector Code of Practice
CIPFA – Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017)
Treasury Management Working Papers

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Scheme of Delegation

Area of Responsibility	Council/ Committee	Frequency
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy	Cabinet for approval by Full Council	Annually before the start of the year
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy – mid-year report	Cabinet	Mid-year
Treasury Management Strategy / Annual Investment Strategy / MRP policy – updates or revisions at other times	Cabinet for approval by Full Council	Periodically
Annual Treasury Outturn Report	Cabinet	Annually by 30 th September after the end of the year
Treasury Management Monitoring and Performance Reports	Cabinet and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee	Quarterly
Treasury Management Practices	Cabinet for approval by Full Council	Amendments to be reported annually
Scrutiny of Treasury Management Strategy	Cabinet and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee	Annually

Specified Investments

	Minimum 'High' Credit Criteria	Funds Managed	Max Amount	Max Duration
Term deposits				
Term deposits - Debt Management Office	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	1 year
Term deposits – local, police and fire authorities	N/A	In-house	£10m	1 year
Term deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1	In-house	£15m	6 months or 185 days
Callable deposits				
Callable deposits – Debt Management Agency deposit facility	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F2	In-house	£10m	
Callable deposits - UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+ or F1	In-house	£15m *	
Term deposits – non UK banks	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£5m	6 months or 185 days

* Where necessary this limit may be temporarily exceeded with the Authority's bankers only.

Other specified investments are as follows:

1. The UK Government – in addition to the Debt Management Account facility, there are UK Treasury Bills or Gilts with less than 1 year to maturity.
2. Supranational Bonds of less than 1 year duration – there are two categories:
 - (a) multilateral development bank bonds such as European Investment Bank Bonds
 - (b) a financial institution that is guaranteed by the UK Government such as The Guaranteed Export Finance Company.
3. Pooled Investment Vehicles (such as Money Market funds) that have been awarded a high credit rating agency.

Specified investments are considered low risk assets where the possibility of loss of principal or investment income is small.

The Council has not utilised these types of investments in the past but is currently investigating the merits for doing so.

Non-Specified Investments:

A maximum of £25m will be held in aggregate in non-specified investments. All non-specified investments will be sterling denominated, as reflected below:

Maturities in excess of 1 year

	Minimum Credit Criteria	Funds Managed	Max. Investment	Max. Maturity Period
Fixed term deposits with fixed rate and fixed maturity				
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	5 years
Term deposits – local authorities	NA	In-house	£10m	5 years
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch long-term rating A	In-house	£10m	5 years
Term deposits – Non UK banks	Fitch long-term rating A	In-house	£3m	5 years
Term deposits – building societies	Fitch long-term rating A	In-house	£3m	5 years
Fixed term deposits with variable rate and variable maturities				
Callable deposits	Fitch long-term rating A	In-house	Criteria as above	

Approved Countries for Investments

At present the Council has the ability to invest in the countries as set out below; the Council will take account of all information if making investments in Non-UK banks.

The Council will only invest in Banks where the sovereignty is AA+ or higher, with the exception of the UK which has a AA Sovereign Rating. Should the UK sovereignty rating reduce further the Council will immediately review its investments but will continue to invest in UK institutions in line with the agreed strategy and a report will be forwarded to Members for consideration.

Based on latest available rating:

AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- USA

AA+

- Canada
- Finland

AA

- France
- United Arab Emirates

AA-

- UK

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