



## **C O U N C I L   S U M M O N S**

**To all Members of Council**

**You are hereby summoned to attend a**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**to be held at 2.00 pm on**

**26 April 2023**

**in the**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER/VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS  
(HYBRID MEETING)**

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

**Webcasting:** This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to be filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

**--- A G E N D A ---**

### **PART A**

1. Mayor's Announcements
2. Leader's Announcements
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Council (Pages 5 - 14)

5. Public Question Time.  
*Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services [democratic.services@npt.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@npt.gov.uk) no later than noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10 minute period.*

## **PART B**

6. Audit Wales - Annual Audit Summary 2022 and Presentation (Pages 15 - 26)
7. 2023-2024 Strategic Change Programme Working in Partnership for Our People, Our Places and Our Planet. (Contained within the Corporate Plan 2022-2027) (Pages 27 - 84)
8. Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan (Pages 85 - 142)
9. Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028 (Pages 143 - 246)
10. Standards Committee Annual Report (Pages 247 - 272)
11. Shadow Cabinet (Pages 273 - 280)

## **PART C**

12. Notice of Motion under Section 10 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) the Council's Constitution
13. Questions from Members, with Notice, under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules
14. Urgent Items  
*Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Mayor pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.*



**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre  
Port Talbot**

**Thursday, 20 April 2023**

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## COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**2 March 2023**

**The Mayor:** Councillor R. Wood

**The Deputy Mayor:** Councillor C. Williams

**Councillors:** A.R. Aubrey, T. Bowen, W. Carpenter, H.C. Clarke, C. Clement-Williams, M. Crowley, A. Dacey, H. Davies, H. Davies, O.S. Davies, R. Davies, S.E. Freeguard, C. Galsworthy, N. Goldup-John, W.F. Griffiths, S. Grimshaw, J. Hale, S. Harris, M. Harvey, J. Henton, S.K. Hunt, J. Hurley, C. James, C. James, N. Jenkins, J. Jones, L. Jones, R.G. Jones, S. Jones, C. Jordan, D. Keogh, S.A. Knoyle, E.V. Latham, C. Lewis, D. Lewis, A. Llewelyn, A.R. Lockyer, R. Mizen, K. Morris, S. Paddison, S.M. Penry, D.M. Peters, C. Phillips, R. Phillips, S. Pursey, S. Rahaman, P.A. Rees, S. Renkes, S.H. Reynolds, A.J. Richards, P.D. Richards, P. Rogers, M. Spooner, S. Thomas, D. Whitelock, C. Williams, L. Williams and R.W. Wood

**Officers in Attendance:** S. Curran, C. Furlow-Harris, C. Griffiths, A. James, A. Jarrett, H. Jones, K. Jones, C. Owen, N. Pearce, C. Saunders, M. Shaw, A. Thomas, Thomas and J. Woodman-Ralph

**Representatives of the Translation Service:** Nerys Hurford

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1. **Mayor's Announcements**

There were none.

2. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader of Council reminded Council that on St David's Day last year the Council condemned the horrific war waged on Ukraine by Vladimir Putin and the Russian Government.

He stated that many people have lost their lives over the past year, whole communities have been ravaged by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and many people have fled from their homes to find a place of safety. There have also been wider impacts arising from the weaponisation of energy in particular, adding to the hardship people were already experiencing.

The Leader stated that he was proud of the role that Neath Port Talbot Council has played in offering humanitarian support to Ukrainians who have made their way to our county borough and was proud too of the warm welcome and continuing support provided by people from all sections of our communities. He added that he has been humbled to hear Ukrainian people speak of the welcome they have received and more importantly that they feel safe here.

Council were asked to once again confirm their support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Council held a minutes' silence in tribute to those who have lost their lives in this terrible war and to those who continue to have their lives disrupted by Putin and the Russian Government.

### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Mike Harvey: In relation to Agenda Item 6 2023/24 Revenue Budget Proposals, Agenda Item 7 Council Tax 23/24 and Agenda Item 8 Capital Strategy and

Capital Programme 23/24 and 25/26 as he is employed by South Wales Police.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Council**

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

5. **Public Question Time.**

No public questions were received.

6. **2023/2024 Revenue Budget Proposals**

Councillor Simon Knoyle, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Social Justice introduced the report which had been commended to Council from Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

It was clarified that on page 17, the number 6 was missing from the sentence... 'Leisure Services listed at Appendix...' and on page 37, 'Reason for Proposed Decision' should read 'to determine the Budget for 2023/24'.

The Chief Finance Officer, the Finance Team the Chief Executive and the Corporate Directors were thanked for all the work they have undertaken in developing the budget report being considered at Council today.

It was explained that this budget had been set against the back drop of extreme circumstances including inflation running at 10%, the war in Ukraine, the cost of living crisis and the ongoing rise in energy costs. But also against the backdrop of regeneration projects such as the £330m Wildfox resort, the £400m Global Centre for Rail Excellence and the Freeport bid as well as successful bids to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund worth approximately £28m.

It was detailed that the budget includes a £4.25m commitment to 'Clean up and Green Up' going towards street cleansing, play equipment and improving the public realm. The budget also commits to protecting jobs with no cuts to services proposed.

It was noted that budget reflected the positive inherited prudent financial position which allowed this budget to provide assurances to the work force, residents, trade union colleagues and members.

It was explained that 12 face to face roadshows had been held in an attempt to engage with communities as well as online social media engagement and traditional paper copies of the consultation distributed. Examples were given as to how the feedback from the consultation exercise had been taken into account and that for example the planned increase to fees and charges has dropped from the planned 10% in line with inflation to 5% as well as implementing a 2 year expansion to the welfare rights service.

Council was reminded about the ongoing work in partnership with trade union colleagues to lobby Welsh Government for a better and fairer settlement.

It was detailed that the budget aims to drive forward the working towards five key pillars:

Maintaining a clear focus on a recovery from Covid.

Supporting our Communities through the Cost of Living crisis.

Facilitation and enabling economic growth.

Delivering Welsh Government policy priorities.

Ensuring a sustainable and stable council.

In order to so it was explained that it is proposed to take £3.5m from General Reserves which leaves the Council Reserves balance at £16.2m which is considered healthy. The Medium Term Financial Plan allows the reserves to be at 4% of the net revenue budget which would allow the reserves to be at the level of £14.4m but due to uncertainty around energy prices and other unknowns it was considered prudent to preserve head room and propose the £3.5m utilisation of reserves only.

The proposed increase to Council tax was 4.5%.

Concern was raised on the consultation model, as well as the lack of detail included in the budget documentation to address issues such as rising energy costs, income generation.

It was raised that renewable energy needs to be investigated and considered as a priority for the Council against the back-drop of the rising energy costs that are being faced.

It was suggested that due to the ongoing severity of the Cost of Living crisis, the proposed Council Tax increase should be reduced and the use of reserves should be maximised.

Following on, it was highlighted that any reduction in Council Tax and reducing general reserves would not be prudent or sustainable going forward into future years.

An amendment was put to Council and there followed a request for a recorded vote on the following amendment, which received the requisite support in accordance with the requirements of Section 14.5 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution- Rules of Procedure.

*Recommendation 4 - In relation to the setting of Council Tax levels for 2023/24 Council are asked to approve that:*

*Council Tax in 2023/24 will increase by 2% as opposed to the 4.5% as detailed in the report with the gap of 2.5% being funded from the general reserve (representing an additional sum of £1.500m being taken for 2023/2024). Therefore, the total amount of general reserves to balance the budget is £5.000m i.e. £3.500m plus £1.500m. The 2023/24 Band D equivalent for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will then be £1693.22*

For the Amendment:

Councillors: A.Aubrey, C.Clement Williams, M.Crowley, O.Davies, C.Galsworthy, M.Harvey, C.James (Cathy), L. Jones, R.Jones, D.Keough, E.V Latham, A.Lockyer, S. Grimshaw, R. Mizen, S. Paddison, S. Penry, S. Pursey, P. Rees, S. Renkes, S. Reynolds, P.Richards, S.Thomas, D.Whitelock, L.Williams, S. Freeguard, S.Rahaman.

Against the Amendment:

Councillors: T.Bowen, W.Carpenter, H. C.Clark, A.Dacey, H.Davies (Hayley), H Davies (Heath), R.Davies, N.Goldup-John, W.Fryer Griffiths, J.Hale, S.Harris, J.Henton, S.Hunt, J.Hurley, C.James (Chris), N. Jenkins, J.Jones, S.Jones, C. Jordan, S. Knoyle, C.Lewis, D. Lewis, A. Llewellyn, K. Morris, M. Peters, C. Phillips, R. Phillips, A. Richards, P.Rogers, M. Spooner,

Abstention:

Councillors: R. Wood, C. Williams (Chris)

As a result of the above, the amendment fell and there followed a request for a recorded vote on the substantive recommendation contained in the circulated report, which received the requisite support in accordance with the requirements of Section 14.5 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution- Rules of Procedure.

For the recommendation:

Councillors: T.Bowen, W.Carpenter, H. C.Clarke, A.Dacey, H.Davies (Hayley), H Davies (Heath), R.Davies, N.Goldup-John, W.Fryer Griffiths, J.Hale, S.Harris, J.Henton, S.Hunt, J.Hurley, C.James (Chris), N. Jenkins, J.Jones, S.Jones, C. Jordan, S. Knoyle, C.Lewis, D. Lewis, A. Llewellyn, K. Morris, M. Peters, C. Phillips, R. Phillips, A. Richards, P.Rogers, M. Spooner

Against the recommendation:

Councillors: A.Aubrey, C.Clement Williams, M.Crowley, O.Davies, C.Galsworthy, M.Harvey, C.James (Cathy), L. Jones, R.Jones, D.Keough, E.V Latham, A.Lockyer, S. Grimshaw, R. Mizen, S. Paddison, S. Penry, S. Pursey, P. Rees, S. Renkes, S. Reynolds, P.Richards, S.Thomas, D.Whitelock, L.Williams, S. Freeguard, S.Rahaman.

Abstention:

Councillors: R. Wood, C. Williams (Chris)

**RESOLVED:**

Having given due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment:

1. That the revenue budget proposals and arrangements as per appendix 1 of the report for 2023/2024 be approved.
2. a) The following matters be 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 (Executive Functions) applicable for the financial year 2023/2024

-Fees and Charges (Executive Functions) 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.

**b)** The following matters be delegated to the appropriate Corporate Director following consultation with the Council Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant non-executive committee

- Fees and Charges (Non Executive Functions) applicable in 2023/24

- 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

3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Performance and Social Justice to make any amendment necessary through the use of general reserves as a consequence of any variation between the Welsh Government Final Settlement and the provisional settlement.

4. That the Council Tax 2023/2024 will increase by 4.5% and the Band D equivalent for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council will be £1,734.72

7. **Council Tax 2023/2024**

Cllr Simon Knoyle, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Social Justice introduced the report setting out the calculations and necessary resolutions to be passed in relation to the setting of the level of Council Tax for 23/24 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

**RESOLVED:**

a) That any expenses incurred by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council in performing in part of its area, a function performed by a Community Council, elsewhere in its area, are treated as the Authority's general expenses be approved.

b) That the levy of the Swansea Bay Port Health Authority is treated as a general expense be approved.

c) That the amounts detailed in the circulated report and associated appendices as calculated in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 be approved.

8. **Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2023/2024 to 2025/2026**

Cllr Simon Knoyle, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Social Justice introduced the report setting out the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Capital Strategy be approved.

That the Capital Programme for 2023/24 ad detailed in Appendix 2 be approved.

That the delegation arrangements set out in the report be approved.

9. **Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy, and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy**

Cllr Simon Knoyle, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Social Justice introduced the report setting out the Council's Treasury



Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2023/24.

**RESOLVED:**

- That the Treasury Management Strategy be approved
- That the Annual Investment Strategy be approved
- That the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy be approved
- That the Prudential Indicators Policy be approved.

10. **Changes to Committee Membership**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report which was to authorise changes to the allocation of seats on council committees and outside bodies to the political groups as detailed in the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** That the changes to the membership of committees as detailed in the circulated report be approved.

11. **Notice of Motion under Section 10 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) the Council's Constitution**

No notices of motion were received.

12. **Questions from Members, with Notice, under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules**

No questions were received.

13. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

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**CHAIRPERSON**

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COUNCIL

26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023

### JOINT REPORT OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER – H JONES

### HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – S REES

#### Matter for Information

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Audit Wales – Annual Audit Summary 2022**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To receive a presentation from Gillian Gillet (Financial Audit Manager, Audit Wales) on the Annual Audit Summary.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The Annual Audit Summary being presented to Council, attached at Appendix 1, sets out the work completed by Audit Wales since the last Annual Audit Summary was issued March 2022.
3. **Summary of work undertaken by Audit Wales:**
  - a. **Audit of Neath Port Talbot's 2021-2022 Accounts** – Every year the Auditor General audits the Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for. On 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements for 2021-2022.
  - b. **Continuous Improvement** - The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure

2009 duties for the financial year 2021-22, as saved by an order made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Audit Wales Certificate of Compliance for the audit of the Council's assessment of performance 2021-2022 was issued in December 2021 and presented to Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

- c. **Assurance and Risk Assessment Review** – Audit Wales have reviewed the arrangements put in place by the Council to secure value for money in the use of its own resources.

The work included the Council's arrangements in relation to the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021, carbon reduction plans and its financial position.

4. **Other Inspectorates** - Audit Wales also consider the reports of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn as well as any subsequent actions taken by the Council in response. No reports have been issued relating to Neath Port Talbot Council since the last Annual Audit Summary in March 2022.
5. **Local Government Studies** - As well as local work at each council, each year Audit Wales also carries out studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money. Since the last Annual Audit Summary, the following reports have been published:
- Joint working between Emergency Services (January 2022)
  - Direct Payments (April 2022)
  - 'Time for Change' – Poverty in Wales (November 2022)
  - 'A missed Opportunity' – Social Enterprises (December 2022)
  - 'Together we can' – Community resilience and self-reliance (January 2023)
6. **On-going Work** - The Annual Audit Summary also sets out planned work for 2022-23, which includes:
- Assurance and risk assessment work:
    - Recovery Planning
    - Capital programme management
    - Use of performance information – with a focus on service user feedback and outcomes

- Setting of well-being objectives
- Thematic review – Unscheduled Care. This review covers the health and local government sectors
- Thematic review – Digital
- Local risk work - Scrutiny review

### **Financial Appraisal**

7. The programme of local audit and improvement assessment work undertaken by the Audit Wales during the period has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

8. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes.

### **Valleys Communities Impact**

9. No implications.

### **Workforce Impact**

10. There are no workforce impacts.

### **Legal Impact**

11. The Auditor General is required to conduct local government value for money studies and assess compliance with the remaining requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

### **Risk Management**

12. The findings of Audit Wales are a key input into the Council's corporate governance arrangements and the areas identified for improvement work inform the Annual Governance Statement and the associated improvement action plan.

### **Consultation**

13. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendation**

14. For Council to note the content of the Annual Audit Summary 2022.

## **Appendices**

15. Appendix 1 – Audit Wales – Annual Audit Summary 2022

## **List of Background Papers**

16. None

## **Officer Contact**

17. Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer  
E-mail: [h.jones@npt.gov.uk](mailto:h.jones@npt.gov.uk)

Sheenagh Rees, Head of People & Organisational Development  
E-mail: [s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk)

Caryn Furlow-Harris – Strategic Manager – Policy & Executive Support  
Email: [c.furlow@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.furlow@npt.gov.uk)

Louise McAndrew – Corporate Strategic Planning & Governance Officer  
Email: [l.mcandrew@npt.gov.uk](mailto:l.mcandrew@npt.gov.uk)

## Neath Port Talbot Council Annual Audit Summary 2022

This is our audit summary for Neath Port Talbot Council. It shows the work completed since the last Annual Audit Summary, which was issued in March 2022. Our audit summary forms part of the Auditor General for Wales' duties.



More information about these duties can be found on our [website](#).

### About the Council

#### Some of the services the Council provides



#### Key facts

The Council is made up of 60 councillors who represent the following political parties:

- Welsh Labour 25
- Independent 16
- Plaid Cymru 12
- Dyffryn Independent 2
- Labour and Co-operative Party 2
- Welsh Liberal Democrat 2
- Green 1

The Council spent £311.8 million on providing services<sup>1</sup> during 2021-22<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> We define spending on services as the cost of services charged to the general fund from the Expenditure Funding Analysis, less any Housing Revenue Account cost of services, plus precepts, levies and debt interest.

<sup>2</sup> Source: 2021-22 Statement of Accounts

## Key facts

As at 31 March 2022, the Council had £104.8 million of useable financial reserves<sup>3</sup>. This is equivalent to 33.6% of the Council's annual spending on services<sup>4</sup>.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough has 15% of its 91 areas considered to be within the most deprived 10% of areas in Wales, this is the fifth highest of the 22 unitary councils in Wales<sup>5</sup>.

The population of Neath Port Talbot County Borough is projected to increase by 5% between 2020 and 2040 from 143,600 to 150,800, including a 2% decrease in the number of children, the working-age population to remain the same, and a 25% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over<sup>6</sup>.

## The Auditor General's duties

### We completed work during 2021-22 to meet the following duties

- **Continuous improvement**  
During 2021-22, the Auditor General had to assess whether the Council had met its performance reporting requirements in relation to 2020-21.
- **Audit of Accounts**  
Each year the Auditor General audits the Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.
- **Value for money**  
The Auditor General examines whether the Council has put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and he has to be satisfied that it has done this.
- **Sustainable development principle**  
Public bodies need to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives. The Auditor General must assess the extent to which they are doing this.

<sup>3</sup> We define useable financial reserves as reserves usable for revenue costs, where the purpose is not protected by law. This is the total of the general fund, earmarked reserves and schools' balances. It excludes Housing Revenue Account reserves, capital receipts and capital grants unapplied.

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2021-22 Statement of Accounts

<sup>5</sup> An area in this context is defined as a 'Lower Super Output Area'. Source: Stats Wales

<sup>6</sup> Source: Stats Wales



## What we found

### Audit of Neath Port Talbot Council's 2021-22 Accounts



**To meet the Auditor General's duties we complete specific projects, but we also rely on other audit work, and the work of regulators such as Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn (the education inspectorate). We take the findings of our audit work into account when assessing whether the Council has put in place arrangements to secure value for money. Our findings and conclusions are summarised below.**

Each year we audit the Council's financial statements.

#### **For 2021-22:**

- given the continuing slippage arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and national issues relating to the disclosure of infrastructure assets, the Welsh Government provided flexibility for both the accounts preparation and the audit deadlines, extending the latter from 30 November 2022 to 31 January 2023.
- the Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements on 13 January 2023.
- the Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report were prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance. They were also consistent with the financial statements prepared by the Council and with our knowledge of the Council.
- the quality of the draft statements presented for audit on 30 May 2022 was generally good.
- a number of changes were made to the Council's financial statements arising from our audit work, which were reported to the Governance and Audit Committee in our Audit of Financial Statements Report in January 2023.
- in addition to the Auditor General's responsibilities for auditing the Council's financial statements, he also has responsibility for the certification of a number of grant claims and returns. Our work to date has not identified any significant issues.
- the Auditor General issued the certificate confirming that the audit of accounts for 2021-22 has been completed.

#### **Continuous improvement**

The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 duties for the financial year 2021-22, as saved by an order made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

## Assurance and risk assessment review

We reviewed the arrangements the Council has put in place to secure value for money in the use of its resources. Our work focused on the following aspects of the Council's arrangements:

- The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021
  - Arrangements for Self-assessment and Panel Assessments
  - Arrangements for the Consultation Duty and Participation Strategy
  - Arrangements for the changes to Governance and Audit Committees
  - Arrangements for establishing Corporate Joint Committees
  - Use of the General Power of Competence
- Carbon reduction plans
- Financial position

Our findings from this work are set out in:

- [Audit and Risk Assessment Progress Update \(October 2022\)](#)
- [Assurance and Risk Assessment Progress Update – Carbon Reduction \(November 2022\)](#)
- [Assurance and Risk Assessment 2021-22 – Financial Position Update \(January 2023\)](#)

## **Other inspectorates**

We also consider the reports of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn as well as any subsequent actions taken by the Council in response. However, CIW and Estyn have not issued any reports relating to Neath Port Talbot Council since our last Annual Audit Summary in March 2022.

## **Local government studies**

As well as local work at each council, each year we also carry out studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money. Since the last annual improvement report, we have published the following reports:

### **Joint working between Emergency Services (January 2022)**

This report examines whether emergency services in Wales are working more closely together to make better use of resources. Joint working across emergency services to make best use of resources is not a new concept. Emergency services have been working closely together to provide a better service to the public for many years. Innovative partnership initiatives have saved money, reduced local response times and have contributed to protecting the public. Despite this, there are growing expectations from government policy and legislation that collaboration needs to happen more deeply and quickly to ensure front line services can meet the challenges facing 21st century Wales. Overall, we concluded that blue light emergency service collaboration is slowly growing but requires a step change in activity to maximise impact and make the best use of resources.

### **Direct Payments (April 2022)**

Direct Payments are an alternative to local-authority-arranged care or support and can help meet an individual's or a carer's need. They aim to give people more choice, greater flexibility and more control over the support they get. Our report looked at how Direct Payments help sustain people's wellbeing and whether they are improving quality of life. We also looked at how local authorities manage and encourage take up of Direct Payments and whether these services present value for money. We found that Direct Payments are highly valued, with the people we surveyed acknowledging that they help them remain independent. But we also found that managing and supporting people to use Direct Payments varies widely resulting in service users and carers receiving different standards of service.

### **'Time for Change' – Poverty in Wales (November 2022)**

Poverty in Wales is not a new phenomenon and tackling poverty, particularly child poverty, has been a priority for both the Welsh Government and councils in Wales. The current cost-of-living crisis means that more people are being affected and families who have been living comfortably are moving into poverty for the first time. Many of the levers that could be used to alleviate poverty are outside of Wales's control. The Welsh Government adopted a Child Poverty Strategy in 2011, but this is out of date and the target to eliminate child poverty by 2020 was dropped. Councils and partners are prioritising work on poverty, but the mix of approaches and a complicated partnership landscape mean that ambitions, focus, actions, and prioritisation vary widely. The Welsh Government makes significant revenue funding

available but, due to the complexity and nature of the issues, the total level of spend is unknown, and no council knows the full extent of its spending on alleviating and tackling poverty. The short-term nature of grant programmes, overly complex administration, weaknesses in guidance and grant restrictions, and difficulties spending monies means that funding is not making the impact it could. Councils find it hard to deliver preventative work because of the sheer scale of demand from people in crisis.

## **‘A missed Opportunity’ – Social Enterprises (December 2022)**

Social Enterprises sit between the public and private sectors. They apply commercial strategies to maximise improvements in financial, social and environmental well-being, often for individual groups in society, defined communities or geographical areas. Social enterprise work in every sector of the Welsh economy and in all parts of the country and are increasingly prominent in Welsh Parliament legislation. While local authorities claim they value Social Enterprises, few have mapped their activity and most authorities do not know the scale of provision within their area. Less than a third of local authorities consider themselves to have a proactive and supportive relationship with Social Enterprises and none have a dedicated strategy or policy that charts how they intend to promote and grow the sector. As a result, local authorities are missing out on the potential for Social Enterprises to help deliver services that can improve people’s quality of life. Current procurement and commissioning arrangements often unintentionally discourage Social Enterprises to engage because they are overly bureaucratic. Social value – the added value that commissioning processes can deliver – does not feature as a key driver for many local authorities. Most local authorities are not delivering their responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and effectively promoting Social Enterprises.

## **‘Together we can’ – Community resilience and self-reliance (January 2023)**

At a time when there is likely to be further reductions in public spending, local authorities are showing an increasing interest in encouraging and growing community resilience; equipping people to do more for themselves and be less reliant on the state. While 19 of the 22 local authorities are prioritising community resilience, too often the work is poorly defined and the actions that underpin plans are narrowly focussed. Given the societal, financial and demographic challenges facing Wales there is a need to scale and speed up activity. Capacity, resources and skills are scarce, people are facing tougher choices and struggling to cope with the cost-of-living crisis. Communities and local authorities themselves also have different abilities and are starting from different places with their own unique challenges to overcome. We highlight positive practice and examples of how others are seeking to address the challenge of enabling people to be less reliant on local authority services and how they are supporting and enabling this transition.

## Ongoing work

We also looked at the key challenges and opportunities facing the Council. These could have an effect on the Council's ability to meet its legal obligations in relation to the sustainable development principle and the use of its resources.

- Ongoing 2021-22 work:
  - Springing Forward Thematic review – Workforce
  - Springing Forward Thematic review – Assets
- Our planned work for 2022-23 includes:
  - Assurance and risk assessment work:
  - Recovery Planning
  - Capital programme management
  - Use of performance information – with a focus on service user feedback and outcomes
  - Setting of well-being objectives
  - Thematic review – Unscheduled Care. This review covers the health and local government sectors
  - Thematic review – Digital
  - Local risk work – Scrutiny review

The Auditor General is independent of government and was appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the Senedd.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, fire and rescue authorities, national parks, and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies, assesses compliance with the remaining requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and may undertake special inspections under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Senedd Commission, and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

Audit Wales is the non-statutory collective name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are separate legal entities with their own legal functions, as described above. Audit Wales is not a legal entity.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COUNCIL

26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTORS GROUP

#### Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

**2023-2024 Strategic Change Programme**  
**Working in Partnership for Our People, Our Places and Our Planet**  
**(Contained within the Corporate Plan 2022-2027)**

#### Purpose of Report

1. To present an updated Strategic Change Programme for the period 2023-2024. The Programme was presented to Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> April where it was approved and referred to Council for formal adoption.

#### Background

2. The council's Corporate Plan for 2022-2027 was published in May 2022 focusing on recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, resetting affected services, adapting to many new ways of working and the increasing demand on services and functions.
3. The Corporate Plan includes a Strategic Change Programme, which is the section that has been updated for 2023-2024. The Strategic Change Programme details key outcomes across each of the four well-being objectives to be achieved by 2027 and reflects our priorities for the coming year, providing a strategic direction for travel.
4. The medium and long term vision for the overarching Corporate Plan was informed by the 2021 Let's Talk campaign. This enabled the council to hear what was important for individuals, local businesses, community organisations and partners as we moved through the

pandemic. The Let's Talk campaign will be revisited in the coming months to find out what matters to people now which will inform a wider review of the Corporate Plan for 2024-2025.

### **Strategic Change Programme Review - 2023/2024**

5. The process to update the Strategic Change Programme for 2023-2024 has involved Senior Management Teams and officers from across the council, who have considered a number of factors when updating the priorities and the key performance measures.

These factors included the following:

- the on-going pandemic and the demand on services and functions;
  - ensuring the Corporate Plan reflects the political priorities of the current Administration;
  - latest performance data of services and functions;
  - the budget for 2023/2024 recently approved by Council and the likely budget outlook; and
  - frequent changes in the council's external environment;
6. The four well-being objectives within the Corporate Plan remain unchanged as they are still relevant and the main focus continues to be 'Recover, Reset, Renew'. Therefore the Strategic Change Programme is the only part of the Corporate Plan which has been reviewed and is attached in Appendix 1.
  7. Within the revised programme, we provide detail on some of our key achievements of 2022-2023 and priorities for delivery during 2023-2024.
  8. The Strategic Change Programme meet the statutory requirements contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.



### **Performance Measures**

9. As part of the annual review a number of performance measures contained within the Strategic Change Programme have been revised to reflect realistic expectations and available data.

### **Financial Appraisal**

10. In reviewing the Strategic Change Programme account has been taken of any budget savings/financial impacts, as part of the council's budget setting and planning process for 2023-2024. These have been incorporated into revenue and capital budgets for the financial year.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

11. During the development of the council's Corporate Plan 2022-2027 an integrated impact assessment was undertaken. As there has been no change to the main body of the Corporate Plan and the Well-Being Objectives remain unchanged the integrated impact assessment is still relevant.

### **Valleys Communities Impact**

12. The Corporate Plan and supporting Strategic Change Programme contains initiatives to support valley communities across the county borough.

### **Workforce Impact**

13. The council's Strategic Workforce Plan links to and supports the strategic priorities set out in the Corporate Plan, by identifying what the workforce needs to look like and how it needs to operate to deliver outcomes for the residents of Neath Port Talbot. The Plan helps provide the direction and to ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills and attitudes, in the right place and at the right level.

## **Legal Impact**

14. The publication of the Strategic Change Programme will meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by detailing the steps that we will take to achieve our four well-being objectives. Our well-being objectives show how the council contributes to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of Neath Port Talbot and to the seven national well-being goals contained within the Act.

## **Risk Management**

15. The council's Corporate Risk Register will be updated with any risks associated with the delivery of the work outlined in the Plan.

## **Consultation**

16. There is no requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to consult on Strategic Change Programme as no changes have been made to the well-being objectives.

## **Recommendations**

17. It is recommendation that:
  - i. Council adopt the updated Strategic Change Programme section of the Corporate Plan for the period 2023-2024.
  - ii. The Head of People & Organisational Development is given delegated authority in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive to make any further changes that are necessary prior to final publication and which do not materially change the content of the Programme.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

18. To ensure the revisions made to the Strategic Change Programme section of the Corporate Plan are approved, meeting legal duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as they relate to council corporate planning activities.

## **Implementation of Decision**

19. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

## **Appendices**

20. Appendix 1 – Strategic Change Programme 2023-2024

## **List of Background Papers**

21. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
22. Shared Purpose: Shared Future, Statutory Guidance on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, SPSF:1, SPSF2; SPSF3
23. Corporate Plan 2022-2027 Integrated Impact Assessment

## **Officers Reporting:**

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **Corporate Plan - Strategic Change Programme**

**2023/2024 Update**

**Working in Partnership for Our People, Our Places and Our Planet**

## Foreword

This document sets out the reviewed detail of the strategic change programme that will be initiated to enable the council to achieve its purpose and vision for 2023/2024. It is intended to be read alongside the Corporate Plan 2022-2027.

In May 2022 the Rainbow Coalition was formed and I am proud to serve as Leader for Neath Port Talbot Council. We want to continue in the spirit of working together, in partnership, to do our best for our communities and bring about change for the future. As a coalition we want to evolve our valleys and villages to embrace the ethos of the council, looking beyond physical regeneration to shape activity for future years. We want to utilise funding to best effect and deliver on a number of programmes already agreed during 2022/23. As well as being ambitious for our future, we know that small things matter to residents and businesses and our priorities set out in this document reflect that.

We are also committed to improving the way we communicate with residents and businesses. We will be launching a new initiative – Let's Keep Talking - this summer so we can explain what we are focusing on and taking on board suggestions, feedback and concerns to inform our future plans.

**Cllr S K Hunt, Leader of Council**

2022/2023 has been a year where we have continued to be tested by external events.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, energy and inflationary pressures, the impact on local people as a result of the cost of living crisis, alongside the continuing recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in high levels of demand for service and extraordinary pressure on council budgets. In contrast, we have also seen exciting investment opportunities for our county borough with the prospect of thousands of new jobs over the coming years and welcome capital investment.

Providing support to the incoming Rainbow Coalition and our residents, and staff, has been our top priority over this period.

In the coming year we will be focusing on delivering the plans and budgets we have put in place, continuing to support our people and ensuring the council remains sustainable.

**Mrs K Jones, Chief Executive**

## 2022/2023 Reflection

The public sector has faced a sustained period of reductions in funding levels for over ten years, the scale of austerity measures imposed by the UK Government has also seen deep cuts in services and jobs, particularly in those services delivered under discretionary powers.

Within weeks of agreeing the 2022/23 budget, Russia invaded Ukraine and what has unfolded since has materially changed our operating environment. Energy prices have soared, inflation has already reached levels not seen since the 1980's which is feeding through in terms of contract and other costs as well as contributing to a cost of living crisis across all of our communities. The combined impact of the pandemic and Brexit has also had a mixed impact across our local economy. Ongoing supply chain disruptions are adding to cost pressures. Furthermore, the labour market is far more competitive with post-pandemic unemployment rates at very low levels and more employers seeking to fill jobs than there are people looking for work.

Income levels have been impacted by the pandemic too with many residents having made significant changes to their lifestyles during the pandemic period – this is particularly affecting theatres, car parks and leisure services.

On a positive note, the county borough is seeing an unprecedented level of investor interest from existing and new investors. In recent weeks we have been informed that Neath Port Talbot & Pembrokeshire Councils were successful in their consortium Celtic Freeport bid with Associated British Ports (ABP) and Port of Milford Haven, which has the potential to create up to 16,000 new jobs and attract up to £5.5 billion of investment. This along with a number of other key achievements ensures Neath Port Talbot continues to be a place to live, work and thrive.

Good progress has been made in implementing various policy initiatives set out in Programme for Government and the associated Plaid Cymru/Labour Co-operation Agreement this year. For example, the roll out of free school meals in primary schools; and the expansion of the free childcare offer. Good progress has also been made in progressing priorities established by the Rainbow Coalition including: the allocation of additional capital funds to improve the public realm; and commencing a review of the decision to re-organise education in the Swansea Valley.

### Key Achievements for 2022-2023

Roll out of free school meals to Years 1 and 2 (ages 5 to 7)

588 children benefiting from the free childcare offer

Additional 127 Flying Start placements offered (ages 0-4)

Establishment of the Early Years Multi Agency Panel (EYMAP) to ensure appropriate provision is in place and supports transition into early years and school settings.

Extension of the School Based Counselling Service to ensure that all children from years 1-13 have access to support.

Launch of the Children and Young People's Engagement and Participation Strategy' to ensure there is active engagement and consultation during decision making processes, keeping children and young people at the heart of delivery.

Continue to make good progress on introducing the Curriculum for Wales (The Curriculum and Assessment Wales Act 2021) across Neath Port Talbot.

Increased number of Local Area Coordinators from 6 to 14 to support the community. Local Area Coordinators work with residents to make links to local support networks to improve well-being and reduce demand on care and health services

Completion of Rapid Housing Plan to tackle homelessness over the next 5 years, providing more sustainable models of accommodation and support.

Development of Heritage and Culture Strategy and Destination Management Plan for Neath Port Talbot

Introduction of £2.5m Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund

Supported 248 people into employment (full and part time)

51 individuals have taken up Modern Apprenticeships within the council, with a further 59 existing staff upskilling using apprentice funding.

£250m Wildfox adventure resort received planning approval

Celtic Freeport bid approved for the ports of Port Talbot & Milford Haven, with the potential to create up to 16,000 new jobs and attract £5.5bn of investment

£17,755,359 secured via UK Government's Levelling Up Fund for the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attraction



£32,660,854 secured via UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply programme

Following UK Government approval of the City Deal business case we have accessed £47.7m from the City Deal grant for the Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth Programme and £15m for the Homes as Power Stations Programme.

Continue to support the development of the proposal to create a Global Centre of Rail Excellence at Onllwyn

Administered over £9m of UK and Welsh Government funding via Fuel Support Scheme, Unpaid Carers Grant and Self-Isolation Scheme

Partnership developed with Warm Wales to deliver the £2m initiative to support those most impacted by the energy crisis

Several 'Warm Hubs' were identified as places within the community where people could congregate to help take pressure off their own household energy costs. The council made many of its own premises available including libraries, community centres, leisure centres and theatres. Following the introduction of the Welsh Government's Warm Hubs Fund, 26 local organisations have been further supported.

39 organisations supported through the Food Poverty Grant, amounting to £139,000 to cover costs of purchasing additional food as a result of increased demand, volunteer training costs, start-up costs for developing lunch clubs, community cafes and advice services around food poverty support.

Have delivered a balanced budget for 2023/2024 ensuring there are no disruptions to service delivery

Declared a Climate Emergency

## Our Focus for 2023/2024

As we move into 2023/2024 there are five key areas our Council will focus on, and work in partnership with, to support people, place and planet:

### 1. Maintaining a clear focus on recovery from Covid-19

As a result of Covid-19, the response period and associated policies that emerged, there are much higher volumes of demand/need presenting in social services, housing and education together with an increase in the complexity of need. It is not yet clear when the rise in demand/need will peak, nor the implications of any longer term impacts that are still to be uncovered. As the Council has many statutory duties to fulfil in relation to the people impacted, it is crucial that we can remain focused on our recovery work to avoid more cases escalating to a point of crisis when much more expensive solutions would need to be found.

Many services were impacted due to actions taken during Covid-19 response where the Council was asked to re-purpose staff, facilities and other resources to support the governments' objectives to protect the NHS and to save lives. Going forward we need to maintain our focus on addressing the consequences of these impacts throughout 2023-2024.

### 2. Supporting our communities through the cost of living crisis

At the beginning of the 2022-2023 financial year we were already seeing signs of financial hardship across communities. The energy crisis and huge increase in inflation has seen many more residents and businesses experience financial hardship as the year has unfolded. The Council has played a significant role in making sure that financial support from government reaches those eligible for that support; and the Council has now mobilised a partnership with Warm Wales, unlocking the £2million set aside at budget setting time to assist those experiencing the greatest hardship but who are unable to seek help from other sources. Additional practical support is being provided through the re-purposing of over 30 council buildings to help people access a warm place and support; we are working with partners to promote all other forms of help and support available to those who need it; and putting an increased focus at community level to seek out those most vulnerable and to connect these to help and support near where they live. The NPT Safe and Well Partnership has been re-purposed to co-ordinate the Council's work with partners and with the wider community action taking place. The immediate outlook in 2023-2024 is one of continuing hardship for residents and the Council will need to continue to play its part in supporting residents over this period.

### 3. Facilitating and Enabling Economic Growth

We are proud to be dealing with a growing portfolio of major economic development initiatives. These include: a £250 million proposed investment in an adventure resort in the Afan Valley; a £200 million proposed investment in a Global Centre for Rail Excellence in the Dulais Valley; a potential Freeport covering the port of Port Talbot and the Port of Milford Haven which would attract seed capital of £25 million and potentially £0.5 billion in retained business rates for investment in hard and soft infrastructure over the programme life cycle; a £32 million

investment programme over the remainder of this financial year and the next two financial years through the Shared Prosperity and Multiply Funds: the ongoing delivery of the City Deal programme; together with the potential to draw down significant capital funds to support innovation and housing developments and the prospect of some success with our three Levelling Up Fund bids. The Council has performed well in supporting these initiatives but will need to increase investment in its economic growth functions to secure the successful delivery of this portfolio and to maximise the benefits to local people and local supply chains.

#### 4. Delivering local and Welsh Government policy priorities

We are in the second year of the current Senedd term and in the first year of the local government term. The Welsh Government has set out an extensive programme of policy commitments that will impact on councils. Through our work to achieve our well-being objectives we are meeting the requirements set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Socio-Economic Duty. The Rainbow Coalition also has its own policy priorities which are being implemented and are included within this delivery programme that supports our Corporate Plan.

#### 5. Ensuring a sustainable Council

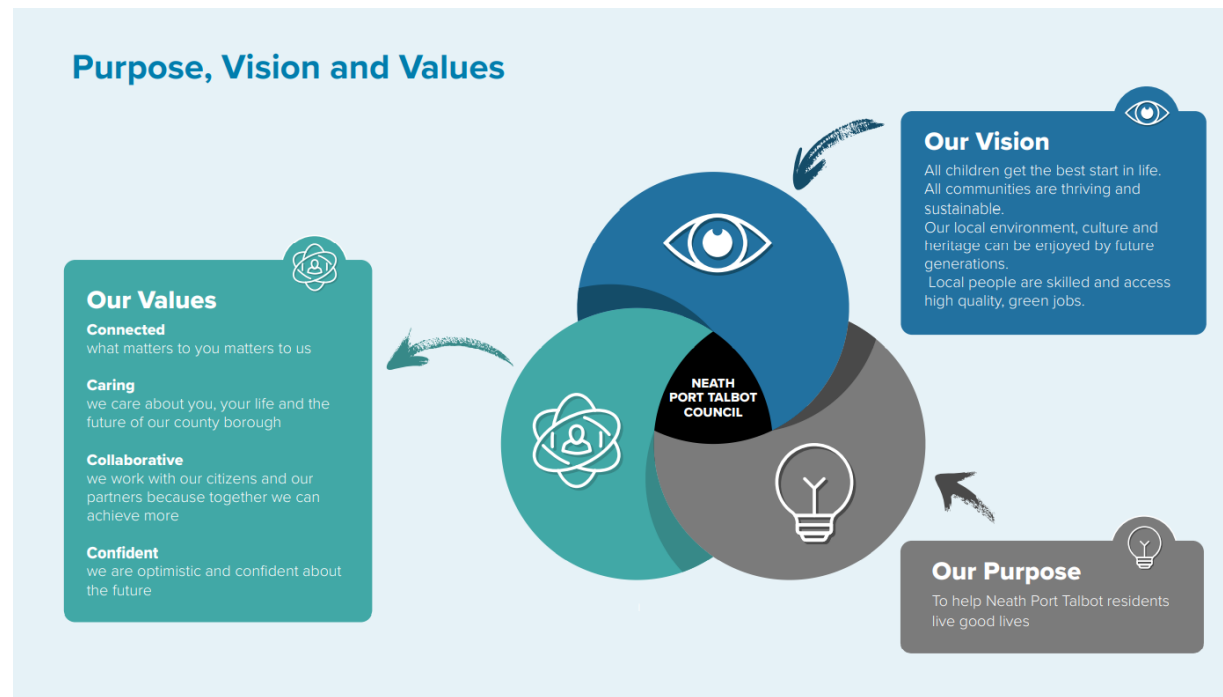
There has been a material change to the Council's operating environment over this financial year. The much changed budget outlook, the workforce constraints and the pace of change combine to challenge the existing operating model.

Over the medium term, the Council will need to pursue a robust strategy that will transform the way services and functions are delivered within a clearly defined framework of priorities, whilst also ensuring financial sustainability and good governance.

# Purpose, Vision and Values

The council's purpose, vision, values, relationships and priorities were reset and renewed taking into account:

- what matters to local people, businesses and our employees;
- the impact that we know Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis 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.



# Strategic Change Programme

Our continued commitment to the Strategic Change Programme will drive forward the work we are undertaking to achieve our vision. This is organised at three levels:

Strategic level - We will continue to implement a strategic change programme to ensure we are embracing a 'one council' strategic approach to achieving the vision. The key wellbeing objectives 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 are being 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 is aligning their service recovery plans to maximise their contribution to achieving the vision that we have set.

## Wellbeing 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;
- 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; and
- Neath Port Talbot will be a place where people want to make a life, settle and raise their own family.

## Why is this important?

Covid-19 continues to have a significant, adverse impact on children and young people as a result of disruptions to their learning during the pandemic. This impact has consequences for their social development and physical and mental wellbeing. In addition, family pressures as a result of the cost of living crisis.

35% of school aged children live in the 20% most deprived wards in Wales

28% of pupils of school age are entitled to free school meals

Attendance rates for primary schools stands at 89.17% and 85.31% for secondary schools (*academic year 2021/2022*)

334 children are currently being educated at home

In 2022 47.3% of Year 11 pupils, eligible for free meals, did not achieve a grade C or above in either English/Welsh language or mathematics/maths-numeracy

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

Almost 16% of children in our schools have a known or identified Additional Learning Need, this is decreasing due to Additional Learning Needs Reform

24% of year 11 pupils in 2022 did not achieve a C grade or above in each of English/Welsh language, mathematics/maths numeracy, and science

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

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?

We heard from almost 1,800 people during our Let's Talk 2021 campaign and they 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
- Affordable buses to access services

## Best Start in Life - Moving Forward

By 2027 we will have achieved the following outcomes:	To achieve these outcomes our key priorities for 2023/2024 are:
Worked with partners to ensure our youngest children are better prepared for transition to school	Work with the childcare sector and partners to develop a more equitable Early Years offer to ensure our youngest learners transition into school successfully.
	Work with Welsh Government and partners in the sector to increase access to childcare.
Completed the Welsh Government Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) roll out for all primary pupils	Enabled access to UPFSM for all year 3 and 4 pupils by summer term 2023, and by January 2024 for Years 5 and 6.
Enhanced facilities for young people including improved play and leisure services	Enhance free and low cost play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.
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	Work to develop parental engagement in NPT schools so that the schools are at the heart of their community.
	Ensure early help and support offer to children and families is clearly communicated.
	What matters to children and families will be at the centre of the way we plan and provide our services.
	Ensure children in need of protection are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family.
Children know and understand their rights and responsibilities	Work with schools and partners to adopt the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Participation and Engagement Strategy and support our schools to embed a framework for Children's Rights.
Progressed our Strategic Schools Improvement Programme increasing the number of 21st Century learning and teaching environments available for children and young people	Gain Welsh Government approval for the Strategic Outline Programme.
	Further progress our Band C proposals with Welsh Government.
	Conclude the review of the organisation of schools in the Swansea Valley.

Education reforms related to the curriculum and support for pupils with Additional Learning Needs that are embedded and these changes will raise standards across our education system	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).
Fully Implemented 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 raising standards across our education system	Ensure that the Local Authority (LA) and schools convert all Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) to Individual Development Plans (IDPs) within the specified timescales.
	Work with partners to ensure the Local Authority (LA) fulfils its statutory duties in delivering an equitable offer of post 16 provision for young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
	A robust quality assurance framework in place to monitor and review the impact of Individual Development Plans.
A co-ordinated approach to meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of our children and young people	Work closely with schools and partner agencies to ensure that the Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing is embedded across the Authority.
Increased number of pupils in Welsh medium schools in line with our targets within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan	Increase Nursery pupil numbers to 331 (22.8%) and Year 1 to 308 (21%)
Provided 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	Deliver the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 5 year action plan and begin to progress targets.
	Ensure regular opportunities for learners, staff and the wider community to engage in activities that increase confidence in the Welsh language and promote Welsh modern culture and history, through engagement with Siarter Iaith/ Cymraeg Campus.
	Undertake an audit to see what Welsh medium provision is available within the LA (both within school and in the community) and geographical gaps will be identified and filled i.e. provision from Urdd, PASS, Youth Service etc.
	Undertake an audit of learning opportunities for non-Welsh speaking learners, parents / carers and grandparents or those who are hesitant in the language.
	Develop a programme to ensure provision and promotion of learning opportunities for non-Welsh speaking learners, parents / carers and grandparents or those who are hesitant in the language in order to raise their confidence and assist with their children's education.
Reduced the number of children and young people excluded from school.	Work with schools and partners ensuring as many pupils as possible physically re-connect and engage with school.

Improve attendance of pupils	Improve attendance at primary and secondary phase, and a particular focus on attendance of vulnerable groups
Implemented a teaching programme so that every school is able to access the programme creating an exciting and innovative communities of teachers who can support each other and learn together	Continue to support teachers through professional learning from the time they decide to become teachers through their whole career. That NPT schools continue to grow as learning organisations. We will continue to prioritise professional learning in our directorate plan and ensure that it is at the heart of the reform agenda.
	Strive for all pupils in NPT to realise the 4 purposes because of excellent teaching.
Development a leadership programme and a long-term view of 'talent spotting' and nurturing future leaders with a programme of individual coaching and mentoring.	Work to develop inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. We will support school leaders to better articulate what they do and why they do it in the context of the Curriculum for Wales. We will support them to lead strong and inclusive schools where a culture of professional learning and collaboration is central to school improvement. NPT will produce school leaders that will be capable of supporting each other to improve and contribute to educational improvements across Wales.
More young people will have registered to vote and will be using their vote in Welsh elections	Undertake targeted key messaging with 16-17 year olds with specially designed paper and online materials for form classes.
	Continue liaison contact with internal NPT groups including the Local Area Co-ordination (LAC) support network, Community of Practice network, Travellers Liaison, Youth Council and Youth Mayor as well as the Communication, Marketing and Digital teams.
	Maintain new links and partnerships with external groups and organisations including the Regional Community Cohesion network, Your Voice Advocacy, Democracy Box, Local Muslim community groups, BAME community groups, local media, Welsh Government, Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators.
	Plan around key dates to help with promotional drives and other awareness days to aid face to face work (where possible) as well as online activity.
	Utilise traditional advertising mediums such as local radio as well as social media platforms to promote and tie in with specially designed resources supported by the Electoral Commission and Welsh Government where grant funding remains available.
Strong safeguarding and support procedures in place for children and young people	Bring forward proposals to further develop Children's Social Services.

Arrangements for supporting young people when they finish their statutory education are improved with all children going on to training, education or work	Work with partners to retain young peoples' engagement in education, employment and training and to reduce youth unemployment within Neath Port Talbot.
	Support young people leaving full-time education to move on to further training or education or work.
	Increase the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered by the council and local employers to young people.
All young people leaving care will have access to sustained appropriate accommodation	Build on our role as corporate parents and help young people leaving care to have appropriate supported transition.
Support young carers to access opportunities	Explore what more we can do to support young carers.

## Making a Difference

These performance measures will be used to demonstrate progress during 2023/2024. Using April 2022 data as a baseline we are able to track progress to date and determine our trajectory for the year ahead.

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Baseline Data – April 2022</b>	<b>Outlook for 2023/2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)</b>
Number of full day childcare places provided	2339	Increase
% of 5 year olds receiving education through medium of Welsh	18.5%	Increase
% of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language	12.70% (21/22 Academic Year)	Increase
% year 11 leavers who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)	2.41%	Decrease
% pupil attendance in primary school	89.23% (21/22 Academic Year)	Increase
% pupil attendance in secondary school	85.52% (21/22 Academic Year)	Increase
Number of pupils permanently excluded	19 (21/22 Academic Year)	Decrease
Number of pupils excluded for fixed days	2543 (21/22 Academic Year)	Decrease
Number of 16-18 year olds registered to vote	1833	Increase

## Linked Plans and Partnership

<p><b><u>Plans</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan</li><li>• NPT Local Development Plan</li><li>• NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy</li><li>• NPT Active Travel Plan</li><li>• NPT Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</li><li>• NPT Strategic Equality Plan</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Partnerships</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board</li><li>• NPT Think Family Partnership</li><li>• NPT Adult Learning Network</li><li>• NPT District Sports Council</li><li>• Partneriaeth – Regional Education Consortium</li><li>• South West Wales Regional Skills and Learning Partnership</li></ul>
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## Wellbeing 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 142,300 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;

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;

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

Working with partner organisations we have seen a significant increase in requests from residents looking for support with Personal Independence Payments (PIP), fuel payments, access to foodbanks and managing debt.

## What matters to people?

We heard from almost 1,800 people during our Let's Talk 2021 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.

## All communities are thriving and sustainable - Moving Forward

By 2027 we will have achieved the following outcomes:	To achieve these outcomes our key priorities for 2023/2024 are:
Enhanced support is given to those who are at risk or living in poverty	Make sure those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to access it and identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed.
	Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation, reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root cause of poverty.
	Work with partners to help people experiencing hardship to improve their circumstances.
	Identify how the council can bring its services closer to where people live, helping to sustain key local facilities that act as community hubs.
Worked 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. People are involved in decisions that affect them; more people are involved in community life	Further develop our work at neighbourhood level, mapping local assets (what's strong about each community) and mapping community vulnerabilities.
	Coordination of funding opportunities for communities based on place-based model/needs.
	Increase the number of people helped to connect with local information care and support networks by working with the community and other partners to identify opportunities.
	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.
	Continue to promote and develop our 'NPTBuyLocal' initiative, encouraging local people to support their local business.
	Begin to take the actions that will implement our commitment to the place making charter.
Improved the range and quality of informal and formal support for elderly and vulnerable residents, including unpaid carers	Bring forward proposals for the further development of adult and children social care services.
Worked with the community to prevent problems from happening or getting worse	Continue to work through our community safety partnership to address the problems posed by alcohol, illegal drugs, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour.
	Hold engagement events to promote community safety and crime prevention related campaigns/initiatives.

Supported the development of more community groups with an increase in the number of volunteers	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.
	Finalise the Council's Volunteering Policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer.
Developed our valleys, villages and towns	Catch up, Clean up, Green up initiative to be continued and extend work to improve the cleanliness, environment and safety of towns, villages and valleys.
	Strengthen our neighbourhood management services.
	Ensure effective engagement and communication of what is being delivered in valleys, villages and towns.
	Agree how place plans can be evolved to shape activity into the future years, ensuring such plans bring physical regeneration within the wider council offer and carefully targeting Shared Prosperity Funding and other funding sources.
	Refresh the Compact with the voluntary sector and the Charter with Town and Community Councils.
	Create place plans for the 3 towns and 2 district centres and reset town centre stakeholder collaboration arrangements to ensure effective engagement by the council.
	Agree how town centre aspirations can be developed and fed into longer term plans and funding opportunities.
Improved the quality of the public realm.	
Council staff will understand the principles of community development and have the skills and confidence to put those principles into practice	Develop a training programme for staff with regards to community development principles. Ensuring staff feel supported and confident in their delivery.
Worked with developers to increase the supply of quality, affordable and low carbon housing; helped residents to reduce the carbon emissions of their homes	Working closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to increase the number of interim and move on accommodation units.
	Implement the Rapid Housing Plan.
	Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function and increase the number of units of housing. Prioritise those in temporary accommodation in need of affordable housing and housing for those with care and support needs.

Improved digital connectivity across Neath Port Talbot	Continue to provide support to those that are unable to access the internet.
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## Making a Difference

These performance measures will be used to demonstrate progress during 2023/2024. Using April 2022 data as a baseline we are able to track progress to date and determine our trajectory for the year ahead.

Performance Measures	Baseline Data – April 2022	Outlook for 2023/2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
Number of active volunteers (Safe & Well)	12	Increase
Number of volunteer hours (Safe & Well)	New performance measure	Baseline and Monitor
Number of social and micro enterprises supported	New performance measure	Baseline and Monitor
% increase in mental wellbeing in adults	New performance measure	Baseline and Monitor
Number of people supported into employment with a long-term health condition / disability	New performance measure	Baseline and Monitor
Number of self-reported wellbeing following a period of intervention via Prevention and Early Intervention provision (Local Area Coordination, Community Independence Service or Community Connecting Team)	New performance measure	Baseline and Monitor
% of people satisfied with the local area as a place to live	66%	Increase
% of high risk victims who engage with the Independent Domestic Violence Service (IDVA)	67%	Increase
Number of people subject to the Anti-Social Behaviour Warning process	6	Decrease

Number/% of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless	60.67	Maintain
Increase in people engaged with digital technology via digital inclusion initiatives to aid their independence	New performance measure	Baseline and Monitor
% households with access to the internet	46%	Increase

### Linked Plans and Partnership

<p><b><u>Plans</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan</li> <li>• NPT Local Development Plan</li> <li>• NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy</li> <li>• NPT Active Travel Plan</li> <li>• NPT Strategic Equality Plan</li> <li>• West Glamorgan Area Plan</li> <li>• West Glamorgan Regional Carers Strategy</li> <li>• Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Partnerships</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board</li> <li>• NPT Think Family Partnership</li> <li>• West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board</li> <li>• Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services</li> <li>• Community Safety Partnership Board</li> <li>• Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – Leadership Group</li> </ul>
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### **Wellbeing 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; and
- 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. 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 2021 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

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 a place where people want to live, work, learn and spend their leisure time.

## Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations - Moving Forward

By 2027 we will have:	To achieve our vision our key priorities for 2023/2024 are:
<p>Worked with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to define a programme of flagship heritage and culture projects for the county borough; be delivering the new culture strategy</p>	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.
	Expand use of Council's What's On database to amplify community messages.
	Finalise the Heritage & Culture Strategy, agree priorities and determine partnership governance strategy.
	Promote the £2.5 million Shared Prosperity funded Heritage, Culture and Events fund and highlight opportunities to community groups.
	Continue to seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance, culture and heritage.
	Implement our Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.
	Consider the State of Nature report to determine the priorities of NPT Nature Partnership.
	Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture. Support those who have settled in NPT to promote their culture and heritage within the community.
<p>Worked 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</p>	<p>Continue to support and encourage volunteering at council owned nature sites.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Embedded the history of the local environment, heritage and nature into the curriculum and ensure all schools have access to environmental and outdoor learning opportunities</p>	Focus on supporting new school curriculum and develop opportunities out in the community for children to engage.
	Extend opportunities for children, young people and citizens to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture.

	Continue with Lost Peatlands to develop school grounds to improve biodiversity and in relation to Glyncorrwg Primary – provide a space for continued engagement with the outdoors through teacher led activities on school grounds.
Implemented our leisure strategy to improve access to high quality leisure and recreational opportunities	Complete the transfer of Celtic Leisure back to the Council by March 2024.
	Refocus the strategic business plan for leisure services delivered by the council and bring forward medium term business plan.
	Start work to set a new strategic direction for leisure and recreation.
	Improve adult participation in leisure and recreation.
Developed a clear understanding of how the environment, heritage, sport and culture can contribute to a stronger, more sustainable economy	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.
Worked with partners to establish the county borough's brand as a destination of choice across the UK and internationally; implemented and delivered our Destination Management Plan	Administer the Shared Prosperity Funded Heritage Culture Tourism and Events Fund to enable public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver priority projects as identified in the Culture strategy, Heritage strategy and Destination Management Plan.
	Deliver the Shared Prosperity Funded Destination Marketing and Pride of Place Campaign to raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and change perceptions of the area by residents and investors across the South Wales region.
	Deliver the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor Levelling Up Fund Project at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan.
	Deliver priorities for the visitor economy as set out within the new Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan.
	Strengthen the strategic approach to tourism and visitor economy.
	Agree Afan Forest Park Masterplan and strengthen partnership arrangements with Natural Resources Wales. Work closely with the Wildfox investors to maximise the benefits of that proposal.
	Create a masterplan for Aberavon Seafront.
Delivered the Dramatic Heart of Wales Destination Marketing Campaign in order to raise the profile of	Deliver compelling marketing communications activities which engage with key visitor target markets in order to encourage the growth of the visitor economy.

Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and encourage overnight stays	Provide tailored support to businesses and organisations within the tourism sector in order to encourage the growth of the tourism sector and the employment it creates.
Extended our active travel network and improved public rights of way to encourage more people to walk and cycle	Carry out further schemes to improve public rights of way to encourage more people to walk and cycle.
Increased the proportion of the council's budget spent on greener alternatives for goods and services which are sourced locally and within the region, strengthening our foundational and circular economy	Work with Cwmpas (Wales Co-op) and CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies, developers of the 'Preston Model') to review procurement supply chain strategy. Maximise the local social and economic benefits of council spend, prioritise goals and objectives for social value and community wealth building in Neath Port Talbot.
Worked 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	Drive the implementation of the Biodiversity Plan.
	Further develop the NPT Nature Partnership.
	Apply for and deliver external grant-funded projects to manage, improve and create new council sites for the benefit of nature and local communities.
	Support and encourage volunteering at council owned nature sites.
Worked 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 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.	Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture.
	Refresh the council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan supported by a fully costed action plan to enable the transition of Neath Port Talbot to carbon net zero by 2030.
	Implement measures to decarbonise the operation of the council including the council's vehicle fleet and property portfolio.
	Draft a Local Energy Plan which accords with the South West Wales Regional Energy Plan, in addition to developing a deliverable action plan which reduces the council's carbon footprint and reduces our energy consumption.
	Continue to progress the delivery of Homes as Power Station, our City Deal projects; In addition to amending the business case for the Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth programme, to secure an additional component in the form of a net zero training academy which will support the decarbonisation of our manufacturing sector and our economic aspirations associated with floating off-shore wind.

Worked with partners to further develop flood and pollution mitigation measures	Engage with key partners to scope out the possibilities of joint working in the short, medium and long term with the view to making our communities more sustainable and resilient.
Increased awareness of the climate change agenda	Increase the engagement of the workforce and citizens in the climate change agenda.
Adopted the council's new Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and begin implementation.	<p>To prepare, engage with stakeholders and undertake consultation on the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy, setting out the council's growth and spatial strategies for the county borough for 2021 – 2036, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing key issues, vision and objectives for the plan;</li> <li>• Setting out appropriate strategic options and identifying the proposed scale of future growth in population, housing and employment to be planned for;</li> <li>• Agreeing and setting out the council's preferred spatial strategy for the built development necessary to address the level of growth;</li> <li>• Identifying proposed key strategic development sites to accommodate the growth; and</li> <li>• Drafting key strategic planning policies to deliver the vision, objectives and strategy.</li> </ul>

## Making a Difference

These performance measures will be used to demonstrate progress during 2023/2024. Using April 2022 data as a baseline we are able to track progress to date and determine our trajectory for the year ahead.

<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>Baseline Data – April 2022</b>	<b>Outlook for 2023/2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)</b>
% of persons (aged 3 and over) who say they can speak Welsh	22.8%	Increase
% of people (aged 3 or over) who say they speak Welsh daily	10.1%	Increase
Total (£) external funding achieved to protect historic environment assets	New performance measure	Increase
% of pupils participating in sport three or more times a week	46%	Increase
% of pupils participated in sport in a community club at least once a week	64%	Increase
% of adults active for at least 150 minutes in the previous week	56%	Increase
% people participating in sporting activities 3 or more times a week	34%	Increase
Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience	£557,000	Increase
Number of visitors to Neath Port Talbot	Data available approx. June 2023)	Increase
Total value of grant aid awarded to local projects via the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund	New performance measure	Baseline and monitor
Total cumulative reach of destination marketing and pride of place campaigns	New performance measure	Increase by March 2025

% of waste reused, recycled or composted	66%	Increase
Kilograms of residual waste generated per person	204.37	Decrease
Area of council owned land (or within council control) used as green space, local nature reserves	820ha	Increase
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	160.8ha and 23.12km for linear habitats	Increase
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)	782ha	Increase
Number of PM10 breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot / Taibach)	27	Statutory target of 35 - Maintain

## 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
- Wildfox Liaison Committee
- GCRE Liaison Committee



## Wellbeing 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 small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) base in the county borough which benefits from well-coordinated support, premises and finance;

Transformation of major sites at Port Talbot, Baglan Energy Park and the completion of the Global Centre for Rail Excellence and Wildfox;

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;

There is a strong partnership between the council, the business community, local people and wider stakeholders; and

The designation of the Celtic Freeport in 2023 has enabled Neath Port Talbot to lead the way in delivering a green industrial revolution with economic opportunities for all residents and businesses.

## Why is this important?

The world of work is changing rapidly, disrupted by the explosion in digital technology advances, by Covid-19 causing an economic shock across the economy and changing the ways many businesses operate; and now by the response to the climate emergency; including the opportunities which are available for developing renewable energy in and around the Celtic Sea.

NPT has a distinctive industrial base, which includes the UK's largest steel producer and a wide range of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) manufacturers; and the local economy is reliant to a large extent on the activities of a small number of key industries;

With a number of strategic employment sites, 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;

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 commuting out of the county borough for jobs of more modest value;

There are over 1,138 young people claiming Universal Credit in the county borough, only 24% of these young people are actively looking for work;

23,300 people of working age are economically inactive and there are approximately 9,300 households where there is no-one in paid work;

Over 15,000 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

Opportunities for funding available through UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, Shared Prosperity Fund and the Freeport programme which will enable NPT to retain and invest business rates generated from within Freeport tax sites. The Freeport will enable the delivery of up to 16,000 high value jobs to assist in the delivery of the floating offshore wind benefits in the Celtic Sea in addition to assisting the decarbonisation of industry which accounts for 20% of our local economy.

### **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 support the recovery 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 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.

## Jobs and Skills - Moving Forward

By 2027 we will have achieved the following outcomes:	To achieve these outcomes our key priorities for 2023/2024 are:
Worked through the Corporate Joint Committee to deliver the Regional Economic Development Strategy	<p>We will work collaboratively with the region to deliver the three 'ambitions' for the South West Wales economy :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilient &amp; Sustainable</li> <li>• Enterprising &amp; Ambitious</li> <li>• Balanced &amp; Inclusive</li> </ul>
	<p>Map the economic development opportunities associated with Floating Off-Shore Wind (FLOW) and maximise those opportunities to local companies, in addition to ensuring that a skilled workforce is developed through our various academic partners.</p>
	<p>Contribute to the development of the Regional Transport Plan ensuring the transport needs and priorities for Neath Port Talbot are fully addressed. This plan will form the basis of any future grant funded submissions to enable delivery.</p>
Delivered the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) programme in Neath Port Talbot	<p>The Strategic Funding Programmes Team will lead the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) in Neath Port Talbot ensuring the local allocation of funding is maximised to deliver priority projects addressing the challenges and opportunities of the county borough as described in the regional Investment Plan.</p> <p>5 anchor projects have been approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place</li> <li>Valleys &amp; Villages</li> <li>Sustainable Communities</li> <li>Enhanced Business Support for Growth &amp; innovation</li> <li>Employability</li> </ul> <p>NPT Employability will provide a holistic joined up provision within Neath Port Talbot through a wide range of interventions. We will have a single front door service that will ensure our residents in NPT have the help, support and advice to meet their needs, as well as linking in with local businesses and the business team to access the right jobs. Sustainable Communities Growth Fund will be developed with a Growth Funding Officer in place. Youth and poverty activity will move forward.</p>

Worked with partners to take forward major development and investment opportunities and activities linked to the council's Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy	Work with key and major developments to maximise any potential supply chain opportunities, attracting inward investment and linked economic benefits, on activity such as Floating Offshore Wind, Re development of ABP Port Talbot Docks, Global Rail Centre of Excellence, Wildfox and Freeport opportunity. These range from awareness raising events, supply chain linked events and activity, linking investment enquiries, scoping low carbon opportunities, linking skills activity to relevant organisations and contacts, working across these on a strategic and operational level.
Delivered the Celtic Freeport across Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire	Set up the Freeport company and Joint Investment Board and work in partnership with consortium members to develop the outline and full Business Cases required by the Treasury, to deliver the economic development aspirations associated with the Freeport.
Ensured partnership working is robust in order to develop more green opportunities	Continue to work with regional and local partners to develop new green jobs and skills.
	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.
Targeted programmes are developed to enable local people to benefit from the employment created through new business investment	Take a collaborative approach to delivering the Supporting Business and Employability SPF projects to ensure that business and market intelligence is being used to develop employment and training programmes that meet the needs of local businesses.
Strengthen partnership arrangements at the local level to develop the economy ensuring business and communities have a strong voice in shaping future plans	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.
Employability programmes are further strengthened ensuring that all those needing help to find work can access it, including those who are hardest to reach	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.
Established a strong gateway to business support to help diversify the local economy and increase its resilience to future economic shocks by helping existing businesses to grow, establishing new-enterprises and attracting new investment to the area	Strengthen engagement with local businesses.
	Work with the Economic Forum to review the Local Economic Recovery Plan and develop a joint flexible framework for delivering and monitoring "actions" going forward.

<p>Invested and attracted investment into our principal towns, district centres and wider communities; respond to the demand for more flexible work spaces; produced a holistic Regeneration Strategy for the county borough</p>	<p>Work with the Urbanists will continue. In addition to Town Centres, remit extended to include secondary and tertiary centres e.g. Ystalyfera, GCG, Taibach. A submission has been made for SPF to develop and expand the work which has recently been funded by the Welsh Government via its 'Transforming Towns' initiative.</p> <p>This work will then form an important part of the forthcoming wider Regeneration Strategy, with emphasis on the Valleys.</p>
<p>Increased capacity within the Regeneration &amp; Economic Development team to better position the council to develop and bid for funding to support the development of the local economy</p>	<p>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; Recruit additional staff to the Regeneration team, to enable the delivery of the SPF programme.</p> <p>Establish the mechanisms to implement the actions set out in the Local Economic Development Plan and use market intelligence gained from the delivery of the SPF programme to strengthen future funding bids.</p>
<p>Improved access to sites and premises – especially in valley areas</p>	<p>Via the SPF programme, we will deliver 14 new business units in the Amman, Afan and Dulais valleys. We will also continue to explore opportunities to utilise surplus buildings.</p>
<p>Assessed the impact of the changes made to the council's operating model and bring forward proposals to repurpose assets that are surplus to requirements; this could include shared workspace hubs, hybrid office and research and development workspaces, starter units etc</p>	<p>Work in areas within Neath Port Talbot where there is the greatest economic inactivity to target business support.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
<p>Maximised Social Value and Community Benefits opportunities across the council's procurement activities to achieve economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits for local residents, businesses and communities</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Development of a procurement and social value policy in line with the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Bill (once legislation approved by Welsh Government).</p>
	<p>Work with Cwmpas (Wales Co-op) and CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies, developers of the 'Preston Model') to review procurement supply chain strategy. Maximise the local social and economic benefits of council spend, prioritise goals and objectives for social value and community wealth building in Neath Port Talbot.</p>
<p>Developed the Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station</p>	<p>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.</p>

Developed transport plans in partnership with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to support access to work, reduce emissions and serve the needs of Neath Port Talbot residents	Contribute to the development of the Regional Transport Plan ensuring that the needs and priorities of Neath Port Talbot are addressed.
	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 EV cars in the Afan, Neath, Dulais and Amman Valleys.
	Publish the regional Low Emission Vehicle Strategy to support the transition of vehicles to electric power.
	In partnership with Transport for Wales develop a proposed bus network and explore the feasibility of introducing a pilot Fflecsi bus service to complement the proposed network. This initiative will be subject to funding becoming available.
	In partnership with Transport for Wales and WG secure funding for procurement of Hydrogen fuelled vehicles and identify land for hydrogen storage and refuelling infrastructure, vehicle parking and maintenance.
Jobs Growth Wales Plus and apprenticeship programmes expanded across the county borough; with the council offering a larger number of quality placement opportunities	Develop clear pathways for local people interested in working in the council and further develop the council's employment and training offer to attract, retain and develop a high performing public service that is rooted in its communities.
	Review our HR recruitment and apprenticeship support, as well as our employability offer, so that those seeking training and/or work find it easy to access the help and support that they need.
More young people have access to opportunities to achieve a recognised qualification following completion of their statutory education	Deliver Jobs Growth Wales Plus to young people in NPT working with colleges to obtain Level 1 and 2.
	We will work to ensure Apprenticeship pathways are robust via partnership working and therefore give young people more opportunities.
	Work with young people to help them gain vocational qualifications, for example Duke of Edinburgh, CSCS, First Aid Level 2.
The council's learning and development offer is strengthened ensuring that all employees are supported to access lifelong learning opportunities and confidence to advance their careers within the council	Maximise opportunities for partnership working both internally and externally, to access additional funding. Consider SPF funding for additional resource.
	Work with local employers to increase the number of quality apprenticeship opportunities and ensure these opportunities are seen as attractive to those seeking work;

<p>Ensure we have a stronger workforce with sufficient apprenticeship opportunities for our young people and adults</p>	<p>Initiate a local skills audit to identify the future work requirement of local employers and any shortfalls in the local learning provision.</p>
<p>Partnership working is strengthened to upskill those already in work or who wish to return to work which will improve; more local people holding qualifications at Level 4+ and supported into local quality jobs.</p>	<p>NPT Employability in work support will develop initiatives through partnership working to encourage those who want to upskill or those wishing to gain qualifications at a higher level.</p>



## Making a Difference

These performance measures will be used to demonstrate progress during 2023/2024. Using April 2022 data as a baseline we are able to track progress to date and determine our trajectory for the year ahead.

<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>Baseline Data – April 2022</b>	<b>Outlook for 2023/2024</b>
Number of 16-24 year olds being supported into education, employment, training and volunteering by NPT Employability	134	Increase
Number of internal apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes	78	Increase
Number of completed training weeks for internal apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience	2844	Increase
Number of people assisted by NPT Employability achieving level 2 or higher qualification	New Performance Measure	Baseline and Monitor
Number of people who are economically inactive supported into employment	New Performance Measure	Increase
Number of individuals from jobless households supported back into work with support from NPT Employability.	New Performance Measure	Baseline and Monitor
Number of business enquires assisted resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies through Business Services	711	Increase
Business grants given as % of available funding	New Performance Measure	Baseline and Monitor
% of reduction in floor area of occupied council buildings	New Performance Measure	Decrease
High quality business space made available /or under development	498	Increase
Number of commercial premises assisted with renovations or improvement.	New Performance Measure	Baseline and Monitor

## 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
- SPF Regional Investment Plan
- Welsh Government – Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales
- Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) Plan
- NPT Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (DARE)
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan
- NPT Destination Management Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Economic Development Recovery Plan
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- Gnoll Masterplan
- Afan Forest Park Masterplan
- Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Destination Development Framework

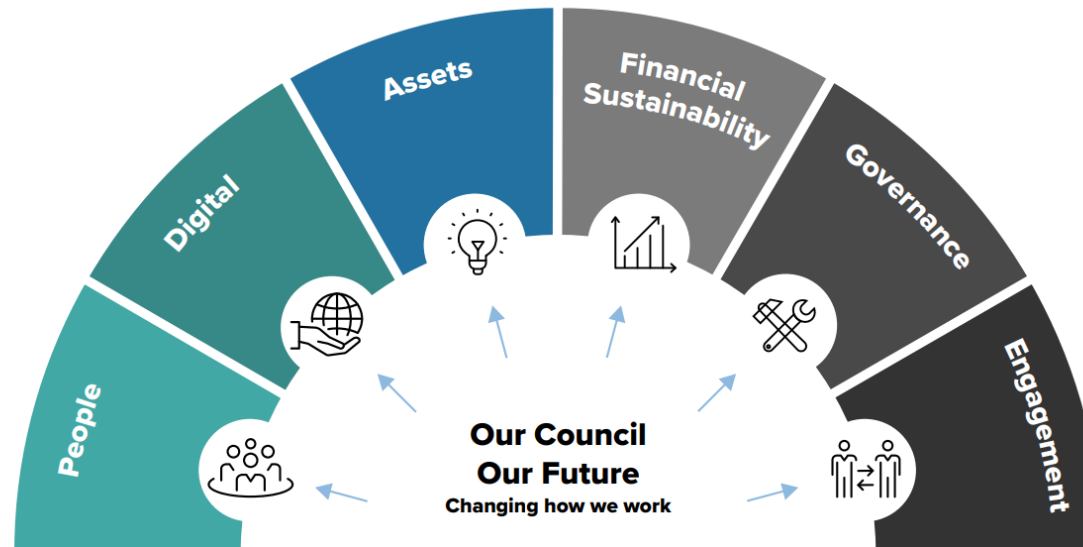
### Partnerships

- 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 Destination Management Stakeholder Group
- Aberavon Seafront Steering Group
- NPT Heritage Forum
- NPT Nature Partnership
- Port Talbot Waterfront – Enterprise Zone Partnership
- Freeport Bid Partnership
- Waterfall Country Partnership
- NPT Employer Support Group
- Neath Port Talbot Local Economic Partnership
- Homes as Power Stations Project Board
- Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth Programme Board
- Regional Learning & Skills Partnership
- Neath Port Talbot UKSPF Programme Board
- SPF Local and Regional Meetings
- Skills and Talent Providers Group - City Deal
- Adult Learning Wales Partnership
- Joint Powys & NPT Learning Skills Network Managers Meeting
- NPT/Powys Learning Skills Network Working Group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NPT Council for Voluntary Services (NPTCVS)</li><li>• Neath Port Talbot College &amp; Pembrokeshire College</li><li>• National Health Service (NHS)</li><li>• Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)</li><li>• Local Food Banks</li></ul>
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## Enabling Programme – Organisational Development

Significant organisational change continues to deliver the wellbeing 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 continues to develop the capacity and capability of the council over a 3-4 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 online face so they can enjoy the same benefits as those who are already online.
- **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.



## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Council

26<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### Report of the Head of People and Organisational Development S. Rees

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board – Well-being Plan 2023-2028**

#### Purpose of Report

1. To present the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board's Well-being Plan 2023-2028 for approval by Council.

#### Executive Summary

2. Section 36 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public services boards to:  
  
“improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals (S36(1)).
3. A public services board's contribution to the achievement of the goals must include (S36(2)):
  - a) assessing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area
  - b) setting objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution within its area to achieving those goals, and
  - c) the taking of all reasonable steps by members of the board (in exercising their functions) to meet those objectives
4. In 2022, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board published its Well-being Assessment, discharging a) above. Since then, the Board has been developing its Well-being Plan (which contains the

Board's well-being objectives). As required in the Act, the Board sought the advice of the Future Generations Commissioner when developing its Plan and subsequently initiated public consultation on a draft Plan in December 2022. The Council's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee exercised the powers vested in it by Council to scrutinise the work of the Board during the public consultation period. The draft Plan was presented to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee in March 2023 and comments have been taken into account and incorporated into the final Plan.

5. At its meeting in March 2023, the Board approved a final version of the Plan to be submitted to the parent bodies of the statutory partners within the Board – ie the Council, Natural Resources Wales, the Swansea Bay University Health Board and the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Approval of the Plan is vested in the four organisations referenced, not the Board itself. The Swansea Bay University Health Board, Natural Resources Wales and the Fire and Rescue Service have approved the Plan. All four partners must approve the Plan for it to be agreed. Subject to the Plan being agreed, the Public Services Board is responsible for publishing the Plan no later than 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

## **Background**

### **Legal Requirements – Local Well-being Plans**

6. Section 39 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out requirements for well-being plans to be prepared and published by public services boards. S39(1) states:

“a public services board must prepare and publish a plan (a “local well-being plan”) setting out its local objectives and the steps it proposes to take to meet them”

7. S39(5) states:

“A local well-being plan must include a statement -

- a) explaining why the board considers that meeting the local objectives will contribute within the area to achieving the well-being goals;

- b) explaining how the objectives and any proposed steps have been set with regard to any matters mentioned in the most recent assessment of well-being;
  - c) specifying the periods of time within which the board expects to meet the objectives;
  - d) explaining how any proposed steps are to be taken in accordance with the sustainable development principle”.
8. S39(6) requires public services boards to publish their first local well-being plan no later than one year after the date on which the next ordinary election under S26 of the Local Government Act 1972 (c.70) following commencement of the section is held. Subsequently, S7 requires each board to publish a local well-being plan no later than one year after the date on which each subsequent ordinary election under that section is held.

### **Preparation of the Plan**

9. In 2022, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board published its second assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in Neath Port Talbot. The assessment was informed by extensive engagement and survey work with residents and stakeholders, and consideration of relevant information such as existing data, evidence and research. The assessment took into account the findings of the ‘Let’s Talk campaign that the Council ran during the summer of 2021. It was agreed that due to the open-ended nature of the questions posed the Let’s Talk findings would be suitable to inform the NPT Well-being Assessment. The published assessment captures the strengths and assets of people and communities across Neath Port Talbot and describes the challenges and opportunities Neath Port Talbot faces now and into the future.
10. Due to the joined up approach taken to the Well-being Assessment and also partner involvement in the development of the Council’s Corporate Plan, the Public Services Board have agreed to adopt the Council’s Well-being Objectives for the 2023-28 Plan. These are:
- 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

11. At a workshop in November 2022, the Board considered a series of proposed steps for inclusion in the Plan. These are the steps the Board will take to deliver against the chosen well-being objectives. The Board recognises that there is further work to be done around the detail of the workstreams going forward and plans are in place to develop this taking a partnership approach.
12. As required by the Act (S42), the Public Services Board sought the advice of the Future Generations Commissioner on how steps could be taken to meet the above well-being objectives and received a comprehensive advice letter from the Future Generations Commissioner detailing how the Public Services Board might effectively use the five ways of working (sustainable development principle) to challenge business as usual and maximise the contribution it makes to the seven national well-being goals. A number of changes were made to the Plan as a result of the Commissioner's advice. The Board will return to the advice as the Plan is implemented to ensure it is responding to the duties contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
13. The Council's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee has been identified by Council as the Committee that will exercise the powers to scrutinise the work of the Board set out in S35 of the Act.
14. In addition to those powers, the Committee is also listed as a statutory consultee under s43 of the Act. On the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the draft Well-being Plan was presented to Scrutiny Committee for their consideration and comment. All comments made by the Committee have been taken into account by the Board when developing the final Plan.

## **Monitoring and Review**

15. The Plan will be implemented through a set of programmes / workstreams, overseen by the Public Services Board and supported by the development of a fit for purpose performance management framework. Scrutiny of the Public Services Board's work will also be undertaken by the Council's designated overview and scrutiny committee (Cabinet Scrutiny) who will hold the Board to account for delivery of the Plan.

## **Consultation**

16. To meet statutory requirements contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board (at its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022), initiated a 12 week statutory consultation period on the draft Well-being Plan (22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023).

## **Financial Appraisal**

17. There are no additional resources allocated to the Public Services Board to help implement the Plan, consequently, partners will need to work together to identify how proposed actions can be moved forward.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

18. An Integrated 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).
19. An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included in this report below in summary form only. It is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 3, for the purposes of the meeting.

20. Summary - The Public Services Board acknowledges the short-medium term focus of the steps that have been identified initially to meet the objectives and more detail of the work to be taken forwards over the short, medium and long term will be published in the Board's first annual report. Based on information contained within the Plan the Board's intention to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the Board's well-being objectives, the Welsh Government's well-being goals and meet the other statutory duties referenced in the Integrated Impact Assessment are set out. In reviewing progress it will be important that there is an ongoing assessment of the extent to which the Board's intentions are being realised.

### **Workforce Impact**

21. The four areas for focus set out in the well-being objectives will have implications for the workforces of all of the organisations who participate in the Board's work. As the well-being objectives are the same as those featured in the Council's Corporate Plan the impact should be a positive one for council staff as there will be a collaborative approach to the issues identified which will maximise the impact we are able to make.

### **Legal Powers and Duties**

22. This report sets out how the duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 placed upon the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board and the Council (as one of the statutory partners) in respect of improving local well-being have been discharged. The particular duties have been referenced in the body of this report.

### **Crime and Disorder Impact**

23. 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

objective to develop thriving and sustainable communities directly assists in discharging this duty.

### **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence**

24. The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2016 places a new general duty on local authorities to have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which increase the risk of violence against women and girls or, exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims.
25. Domestic abuse has been shown through research to be one of the factors that can create an adverse impact on the lives of children, especially in the first 1,000 days from conception. Consequently the objective to give every child the best start in life directly supports the Council's duties in this area. Additionally, work to develop thriving and sustainable communities will help to discharge duties under this legislation.

### **Risk Management**

26. Failure to approve and publish the local well-being Plan could potentially lead to the Future Generations Commissioner exercising his powers to conduct a review into the extent to which the Board (where the Leader and Chief Executive are members) are meeting duties under the Act which could lead to action also by Welsh Ministers. This could impact on the Council reputationally and also lead to additional resources being required to meet the duties.

### **Recommendation**

27. Having had regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment provided with this report, Council is asked to approve the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2023-2028.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

28. To meet legal duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 placed on the Public Services Board itself but also

the duty placed upon the Council to approve the Plan together with the other three statutory partners named in the Act.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - The Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2023-2028

Appendix 2 – The Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-being Plan on a Page 2023-28

Appendix 3 - Integrated Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

- [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
- Shared Purpose: Shared Future, Statutory Guidance on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, [SPSF1](#), [SPSF2](#), [SPSF3](#)
- [The Neath Port Talbot Well-being Assessment 2022](#)
- [Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-27](#)

## **Officer Reporting:**

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NEATH PORT TALBOT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

# WELL-BEING PLAN





## NEATH PORT TALBOT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

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## FOREWORD



***The Public Services Board is responsible for creating a well-being plan for 2023–2028. The plan will build on work already started in 2016 with a partnership of organisations striving to make a long-term difference to improve the lives of people in NPT.***

The Public Services Board have undertaken a Well-being Assessment reviewing the social, environmental, economic and cultural landscape of NPT and from this we have agreed on four well-being objectives to prioritise our work for the next five years.

### These are:

- To ensure all children get the best start in life
- To ensure all our communities are thriving and sustainable
- To ensure our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations
- To ensure there are more secure, green and well paid jobs and that skills across the area are improved

Taking into account the Well-being Assessment, future trends and other relevant data for Neath Port Talbot we have produced a series of steps we will take to help us achieve our objectives.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this Well-being Plan and taken the time to respond to our consultation. In the coming year, we will begin to implement our ideas, seeking out new ways to involve people in our work building together the Neath Port Talbot we all want.



**Cllr Steve Hunt**

Chair of Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board

Leader of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ACT



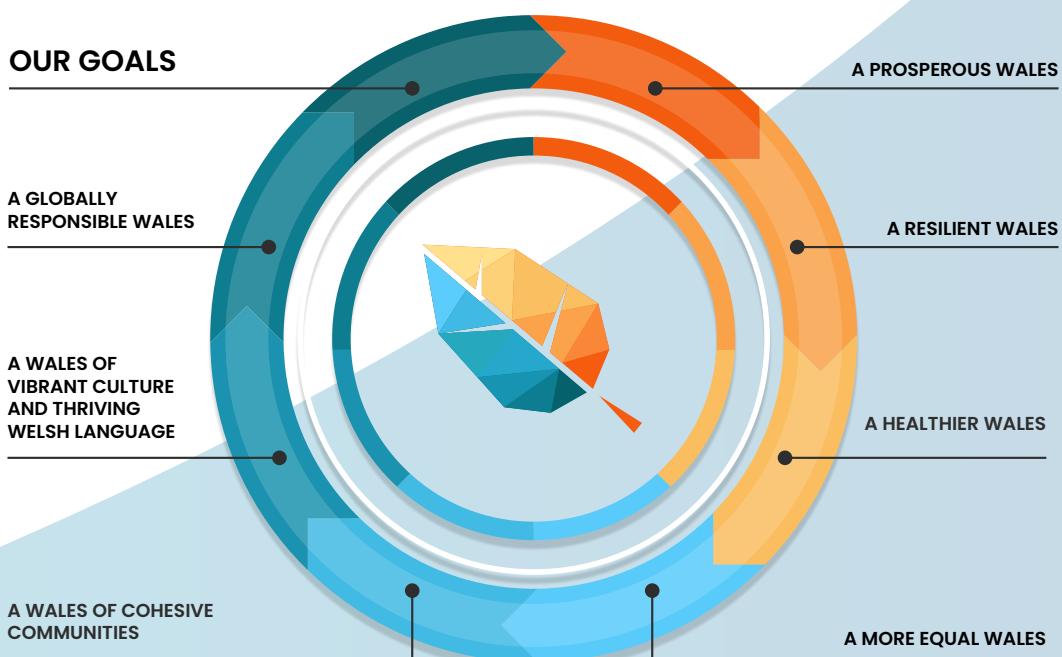
***The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. This means that the public bodies listed in the Act must do what they do in a sustainable way. To do this, the Act sets out a “sustainable development principle” which is about how the public bodies listed in the Act should go about meeting their well-being duty under the Act.***

The principle is made up of five ways of working that public bodies are required to take into account when applying sustainable development.

### These are:

- Looking to the long-term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.
- Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them.
- Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.
- Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.

The Act sets seven well-being goals. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards. The well-being goals must be considered as an integrated set of seven to ensure that the relevant links are made in the context of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.



# NPT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD



The Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board (PSB) brings together leaders and decision makers from public service organisations and the voluntary and community sector. The purpose of the PSB is to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Neath Port Talbot. By working collaboratively the PSB can get a deeper understanding of the issues that matter to residents of NPT and can deliver improvements much more effectively and efficiently. You can find out more about the PSB [here](#).

## STATUTORY PARTNERS



Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub  
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru  
Mid and West Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service



Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Resources  
Cymru Wales



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Bae Abertawe  
Swansea Bay University  
Health Board



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## INVITED PARTNERS



COEDFFRANC TOWN COUNCIL



GRŴP COLEGAU  
NPTC  
GROUP OF COLLEGES



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES  
Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
Cymru  
Public Health  
Wales



CVS  
NEATH PORT TALBOT  
CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT



Swansea  
University  
Prifysgol  
Abertawe



Neath Town Council  
Cyngor Tref Castell-nedd



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



De Cymru  
Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddau  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
South Wales



Prifysgol Cymru  
Y Drindod Dewi Sant  
University of Wales  
Trinity Saint David



Department for  
Work & Pensions



HM Prison &  
Probation Service



## BACKGROUND



Every five years, each PSB must prepare and publish a plan setting out its objectives and the steps it will take to meet them. This is called a Local Well-being Plan.

### These are:

- Local Well-being Objectives
- Steps to help us achieve the objectives
- Timescales and responsibilities
- Detail on how we will achieve the steps in accordance with the sustainable development principle



### Reflection on Previous Work

NPT PSB was first established in 2016 and its first Well-being Plan 2018-23 'The Neath Port Talbot We Want' is now coming to fruition.

### Vision

We want Neath Port Talbot to be a vibrant and healthy place where people have an equal chance to get on in life – a place where people want to live, learn, work, invest and visit for many generations to come.

We want local public services, including the Third Sector, to be effective and value for money, easy for people to use, and offer quality employment where people are valued and appreciated for the work they do. Together with citizens, we will build on our strong and cohesive communities where the rights of everyone will be respected and protected.

We want our public services to be focused on enabling people and communities to be resilient and it will be the norm for citizens to experience seamless, personalised, high quality services. Public service delivery will create the right conditions for investment that will enable the county borough to attract and sustain quality, sustainable employment for local people.

Our communities will be well connected through a first class digital and transport infrastructure and we will value and protect our natural environment, wildlife will be thriving, supporting healthy lifestyles and sustainable communities.

We will have achieved our vision when all children and young people have the best start in life; when all young people and adults have the skills and resilience to be healthy and prosperous; when people are safe and feel safe; when all of our communities are thriving and supporting the people who live there; and where people can draw on the support of neighbours and well-developed social networks.



The partnership working undertaken during this period has resulted in great benefit as different organisations have been brought together with a shared understanding of the local area and its issues.

A lot has been achieved in this cycle, including extensive mapping work and community engagement. Stronger relationships have been formed with the soft benefits of investing together and being better prepared to respond collectively to adverse events.

Rather than starting from a blank page the Board is building on the excellent work undertaken during its first five years in existence and the strong partner relations formed.

We committed to...	Since the last plan we have...
<p><b>Improve the well-being of children in their early years, including those at risk of adverse childhood experiences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created a Sandfields West Children’s Community Zone, a centre for co-ordinated activities for families.</li> <li>Secured a transformational Early Action Together grant delivering a more coherent early intervention and prevention approach to early years.</li> <li>Participated in Welsh Government’s First 1000 Days programme to identify and develop sharing protocols of families with a risk of adverse childhood experiences.</li> <li>Joined with Swansea Council in Early Years Pathfinder work piloting projects to support speech and language development and workforce development to support early years physical literacy.</li> <li>Worked to improve youth unemployment during the pandemic working with young people through employability sessions and health and well-being courses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build safe, confident and resilient communities, focusing on vulnerable people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured an Innovate and Create grant to support voluntary community groups and social enterprises.</li> <li>Worked with Neath Port Talbot communities to develop links focusing on people, place and systems.</li> <li>Held multiple community activities including open days, public meetings, and engagement with councillors.</li> <li>Held volunteer fairs and awards in the community to strengthen volunteering recruitment.</li> <li>Worked towards a system of long-term change alongside residents to identify where support is needed and maximising assets already within the community including people and places.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Create an environment where everyone can age well</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed the scale and scope of loneliness and isolation.</li> <li>Worked with the Alzheimer’s Society, raising awareness and understanding of Dementia training across the partnership.</li> <li>Linked with the Falls Prevention Group within Swansea Bay Health Board, to look at primary prevention with the RPB concentrating on secondary and tertiary prevention.</li> <li>Worked to address high cost credit and indebtedness of Tai Tarian residents including working with Alliance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Create an environment where everyone can age well</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared best practice with PSB members to support and promote health and well-being within their organisations and share developments across organisations.</li> <li>Held workshops about Staff Well-being in the workplace with Swansea Bay Health Board, Ford Motor Company and Healthy Working Wales.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Protect and enhance our green infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensively mapped green and blue space in Neath Port Talbot.</li> <li>Worked with Swansea and Carmarthenshire on a Connecting Green Infrastructure Project who took forward a new and collaborative approach to designing and delivering green infrastructure.</li> <li>Received a budget from Natural Resources Wales for projects in NPT and delivered that to support community green spaces.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase levels of digital participation and inclusion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with Digital Communities Wales, raising awareness of their Digital Inclusion Charter and worked with partner agencies to embed their approach</li> <li>Embedding the Digital Inclusion Charter provided organisational capacity across different PSB organisations. This provided a stronger starting point when digital availability and capability was required during the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>



## Well-being assessment

During 2021/22 the PSB has undertaken an extensive local assessment of well-being. The full findings can be viewed [here](#).

During the summer of 2021 Neath Port Talbot Council issued a questionnaire as part of an extensive engagement campaign. 'Let's Talk' is an open-ended consultation, acting as an opportunity for the public to talk about what matters to them. The purpose of the initial questionnaire was to find out about what mattered to people living and working in Neath Port Talbot.

The feedback was used to develop a recovery plan for the county borough. It was agreed that due to the open-ended nature of the questions posed the Let's Talk findings would also be suitable to inform the NPT Well-being Assessment. The findings of 'Let's Talk' along with local and national data and information gave us a clear picture of well-being in our area highlighting our assets and our challenges.



NPT PSB worked in collaboration with Swansea PSB and commissioned Swansea University to produce an over-arching analytical chapter to supplement the findings and provide a meaningful picture of what our information means for our communities in NPT. Elements of this work form the Summary section of the Assessment and sets out the key themes of our findings.

# SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEATH PORT TALBOT



## A PROSPEROUS WALES

**GREEN ECONOMY:** NPT remains one of the most important manufacturing locations in the UK with largest steel production complex at Port Talbot. Decarbonising important economic assets such as this to achieve the Welsh Government's Net Zero target are a significant challenge. While carbon emissions have reduced in NPT over the last decade, it is below the national average. However, there are promising opportunities for future growth linked to decarbonisation such as through Associated British Port's vision for Port Talbot Docks as a globally significant offshore wind turbine production hub.

**SKILLED WORKFORCE:** Occupations remain lower skilled compared to the UK average. We need to work together to upskill our workforce to meet the long-term demand for jobs in the area.

**PANDEMIC RECOVERY:** Employment is recovering following the pandemic, but support is needed around recruitment for growing sectors. The pandemic has given us an opportunity to rethink the way we do things and build back better in a green and just way that addresses both the climate and nature emergencies.

**CHILDCARE:** Costs can be a barrier to employment. We need to increase uptake of entitlements and support the development of this sector.



## A RESILIENT WALES

**NATURAL RESOURCE LIMITS:** We are using stocks of our natural resources at a rate which is unsustainable and that our ecosystems are under increasing pressure and threat from the impacts of climate change, land use change, invasive non-native species (INNS), pollution and over-use.

**ECOSYSTEMS:** Many of our ecosystems are not resilient to unexpected or unforeseen change. This jeopardises the ability of our natural environment to provide a number of vital well-being benefits now and in the future.

**NATURE-BASED RECOVERY:** A changing climate will likely impact on the condition and distribution of habitats and species, and degraded habitats contribute to climate change. However, by putting nature into recovery we can also tackle climate change.

**NATURAL ASSETS:** Residents appreciate and value the natural assets in NPT, but more is required to improve and recover them over the long-term.

**FLOODING AND COASTAL CHANGE:** Flooding and coastal change risks to homes, communities, businesses, infrastructure, and ecosystems are one of the top concerns of climate change in NPT.



## A HEALTHIER WALES

**CHANGING POPULATION:** There is an ongoing increase in the older population, also in single person households, which is likely to be a factor in increased loneliness and isolation. The gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy also indicates increased pressure on health and social services.

**HEALTHY PLACES:** In comparison to Wales, NPT has one of the least healthy diets and lowest levels of physical activity. Work is needed to reverse the growing trend of obesity and more can be done to make sure the places we live help us to be active and eat well.

**MENTAL WELL-BEING:** Residents of NPT reported comparatively positive mental well-being in the National Survey for Wales. However, we need to be prepared for an increase in low mental well-being and mental health conditions as the true impacts of the pandemic surface.

**HOUSING:** We need more affordable housing in NPT, with 1,037 new homes required by 2033. Encouragingly, 434 new units were built between 2018 and 2021.

**AIR QUALITY:** While there has been improvement in air quality across NPT in the last decade, it still remains an area of concern and is a key priority in order to improve the health of current and future generations.



## A MORE EQUAL WALES

**DEPRIVATION AND POVERTY:** High concentrations of deprivation and poverty remain in areas of NPT. These areas will be most impacted by the current increases in living costs. **HOUSEHOLD INCOME:** Household income has fallen across Wales during the pandemic with people on low to mid incomes more likely to be affected.

**COVID-19 IMPACT:** Covid-19 has increased inequality in general in NPT and the worst affected groups include Black and Ethnic Minorities, women and young people.

**EDUCATION:** The pandemic appears to have increased inequalities in educational attainment and the full extent of this impact may not yet be evident.

**ENVIRONMENTAL RISK:** Those most vulnerable in society are at higher risk environmental risk such as poor air quality and flooding. Climate change is expected to exacerbate these inequalities and there is a risk that responses to climate change can place disproportionate burdens on vulnerable people and communities.



## A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

**COMMUNITY SPIRIT:** Communities have pulled together during the pandemic and residents have noted the increase in community spirit and support. Communities should be supported to shape their own futures.

**SAFE COMMUNITIES:** NPT is generally considered to be a safe place to live. There has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour and violence against women, although we have seen an upward trend in cyber-crime. NPT residents are concerned about drugs in the communities.

**CONNECTED COMMUNITIES:** Whilst the towns of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe are well connected to each other and the rest of Wales, transport links in the valley areas are poor and contribute to the social and economic isolation of people living there.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:** Residents of NPT feel it is important for children and young people to have more places to go and things to do.





## A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING WELSH LANGUAGE

**PROUD HERITAGE:** People in NPT are proud of their heritage and traditional Welsh communities. We need to preserve and protect our culture, history and rich natural heritage, whilst keeping inclusivity in mind as our culture becomes more diverse and working to remove historical stigma associated with the area by promoting the area.

**WELSH LANGUAGE:** Whilst the number of Welsh speakers has declined, learning and Welsh educational opportunities are increasing. We need to provide more opportunity to use the Welsh language in NPT to increase residents' confidence.

**ARTS AND CULTURE:** Underfunding of the arts and culture has had a negative impact on the offer over the years, which the pandemic has further impacted. We know access to these things are an important factor to improving well-being.

**VOLUNTEERING:** With the increasing number of community assets (e.g. community centres, libraries and heritage sites) being run by volunteers relying on grant funding, we need to provide support to make this sustainable so that such assets are not lost.



## A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES

**RESOURCE USE AND DECARBONISATION:** NPT uses 2.5 times per person more resources than the planet can sustain. Further, NPT is a major carbon contributor in Wales and faces a challenge to balance Net Zero goals against the economic benefits brought by its high energy/emission employers.

**CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY:** NPT is a leader in renewable energy with some of the highest installed renewable energy capacity in Wales. Current projects to restore adjacent habitats such as carbon-sequestering peatlands demonstrates ways in which multiple benefits can be derived to tackle both the Climate and Nature emergencies together.

**FAMOUS PERSONALITIES:** NPT has produced world famous actors, artists and sports personalities giving us a global identity, this can be further harnessed to promote the region.

Due to the joined up approach in developing our assessment, we were able to agree to align our well-being objectives with those of NPT Council, in order to progress in an efficient way and provide overarching added value as a PSB (These are illustrated on page 13).

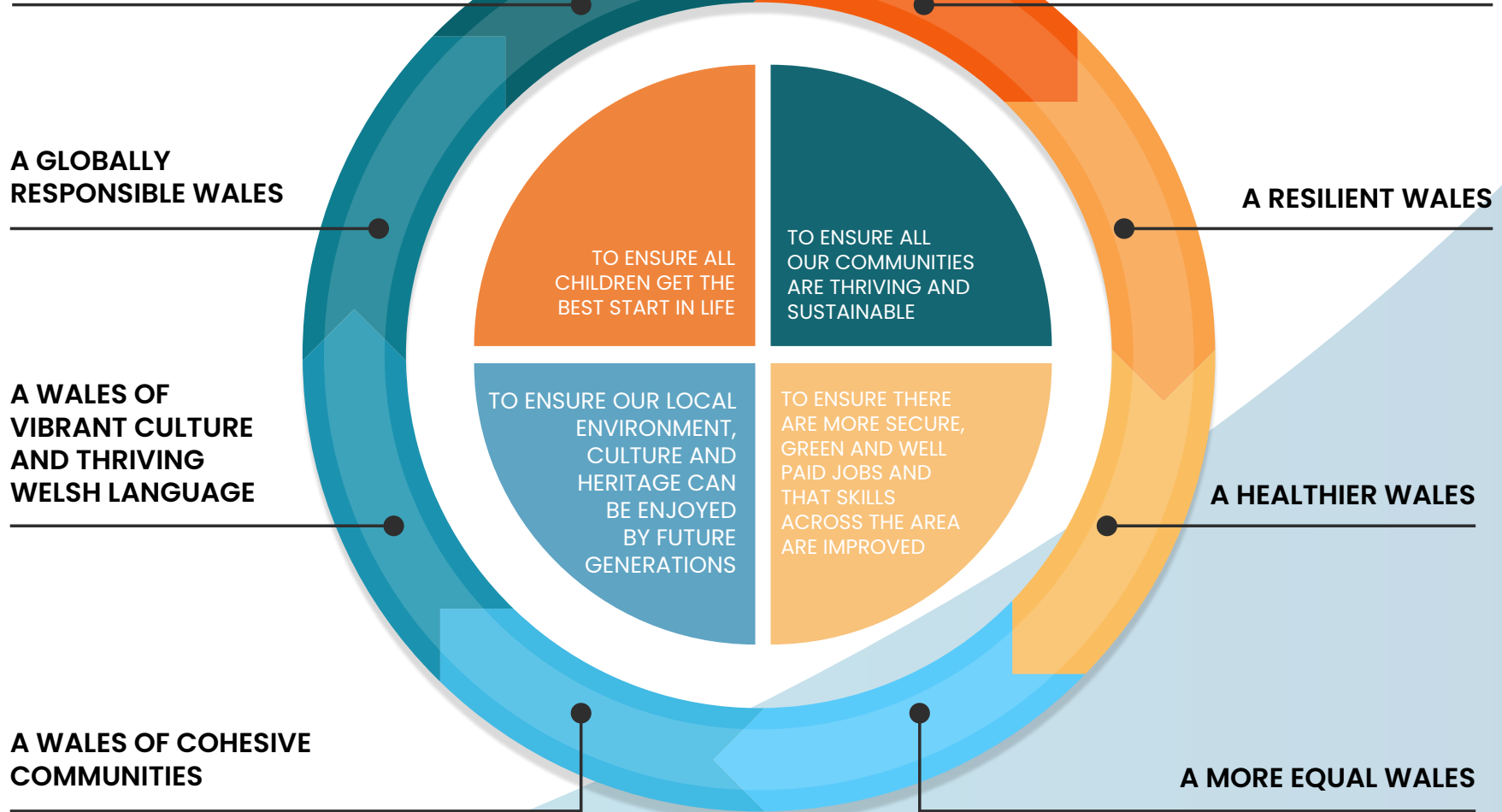


Since the completion of the Well-being Assessment, the cost of living crisis has escalated and is set to impact on all of our work going forward. This along with the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic, Brexit and the Climate and Nature emergencies present us with challenging times. We believe that by working more closely together we can maximise our resources and impact and are committed to this approach as we move towards our new Plan for the area.

# OUR WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES



## OUR GOALS







**Well-being Objective 1: All children have the best start in life**

When looking at improving general well-being in our area it makes perfect sense to start at the beginning and focus on our future generations. In our Well-being Assessment people felt very strongly about their children’s education and social interaction opportunities, particularly after time missed during lockdown. We know that a high number of children in NPT have Additional Learning Needs. We also recognise a direct link to poverty and deprivation which minimises opportunity later in life. By working together to give our children the best possible start and support we aim to improve life chances and move towards an increasingly thriving and sustainable NPT. A ‘Best Start in Life’ does not just apply to the early years but will cover the period from conception to age 25 years.



**Well-being Objective 2: All our communities will be thriving and sustainable**

Our Well-being Assessment reinforced our knowledge that we have strong close-knit communities in NPT. This was particularly evident during the Covid-19 pandemic when communities pulled together and supported each other in crisis. This a strength we want to build on, however, we are also aware that deprivation is a deep-rooted issue in NPT and there are concentrated areas in the most deprived category of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. The impact of deprivation is likely to worsen over the coming years as levels of poverty increase (e.g. food and fuel), affecting the lowest income families. The UK economy is in crisis. The pandemic had already left a legacy of increased inequality and this is now being compounded by increases in the cost of living. There is an urgent need for the PSB to work collaboratively to alleviate the financial hardship and consequential impact on wellbeing that is being experienced by a growing number of people across NPT. Communities are already mobilising to help those facing hardship, the PSB can support this community action by using its resources and reach into communities to enable people to be aware of the help and support available and how to access it. The PSB recognises the important work of the Community Safety Partnership(CSP) in managing and responding to the key issues being faced in NPT in terms of crime and safety, and that the partnership is committed to working together to achieve sustainable reductions in crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour. The CSP have recently reviewed their priorities and agreed that the top five priorities going forward are anti-social behaviour, community cohesion, substance use, VAWDASV and Crime Prevention. The CSP recognises that is also committed to engaging with the public and communities on what matters to them, addressing problems in a collaborative way and sharing successes. In this way the CSP will be agile in responding to new or emerging issues. The CSP is also acutely aware of new emerging duties to the CSP which will need to be reflected in the priorities or actions of the CSP. The PSB will support this work as part of a contribution to its Well-being Objectives.



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

Neath Port Talbot’s extensive natural and cultural heritage is valued and appreciated by residents. It is integral to our sense of belonging and connection to the place – the “Dramatic Heart of Wales”. Our heritage is an asset which supports our local economy, helping to attract inward investment and generating value through voluntary action. At the same time, we know that we face a dual nature and climate crisis. Evidence shows that some of this change is now irreversible and if we are to avoid even more extreme temperatures, widespread extinctions and further decline of the condition and distribution of our local ecosystems then urgent and transformative change is needed at the global, international and local level. It is critical that we build a nature positive approach into finding our way out of Covid and now the current economic crisis As was clearly demonstrated through the covid pandemic, and supported by evidence in the wellbeing assessment, healthy and resilient natural resources underpin our health and well-being. Our communities rely on the capacity of nature to provide a healthy environment and protect us against hazards. The WBA also highlighted that low-income areas are associated with lower quality housing and education, poor diet, and less access to good quality green space, and active travel.



**Well-being Objective 4: There are more green, secure and well-paid jobs and skills across the area are improved**

The Well-being Assessment provides an interesting insight into NPTs unique economy and its impact on the people that live and work here. Despite an increase in employment poverty remains evident in most parts of Neath Port Talbot, and latest statistics show that all wards within the county have at least 15% of its children living in poverty. Following the pandemic, household incomes have dropped and there has been an increase in the number of economically inactive individuals who have lost confidence and are finding it more difficult to access support. There is an opportunity for partners to work together and maximise the impact of investment in the area and support our workforce to upskill looking at sustainable solutions and approaches. The goal of this objective will be to achieve a skilled and well-educated population in an economy that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.



Within the following pages we have set out the steps we will take to help us achieve our well-being objectives and improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Neath Port Talbot. We recognise there is further work needed to develop specific, measurable and time bound actions.

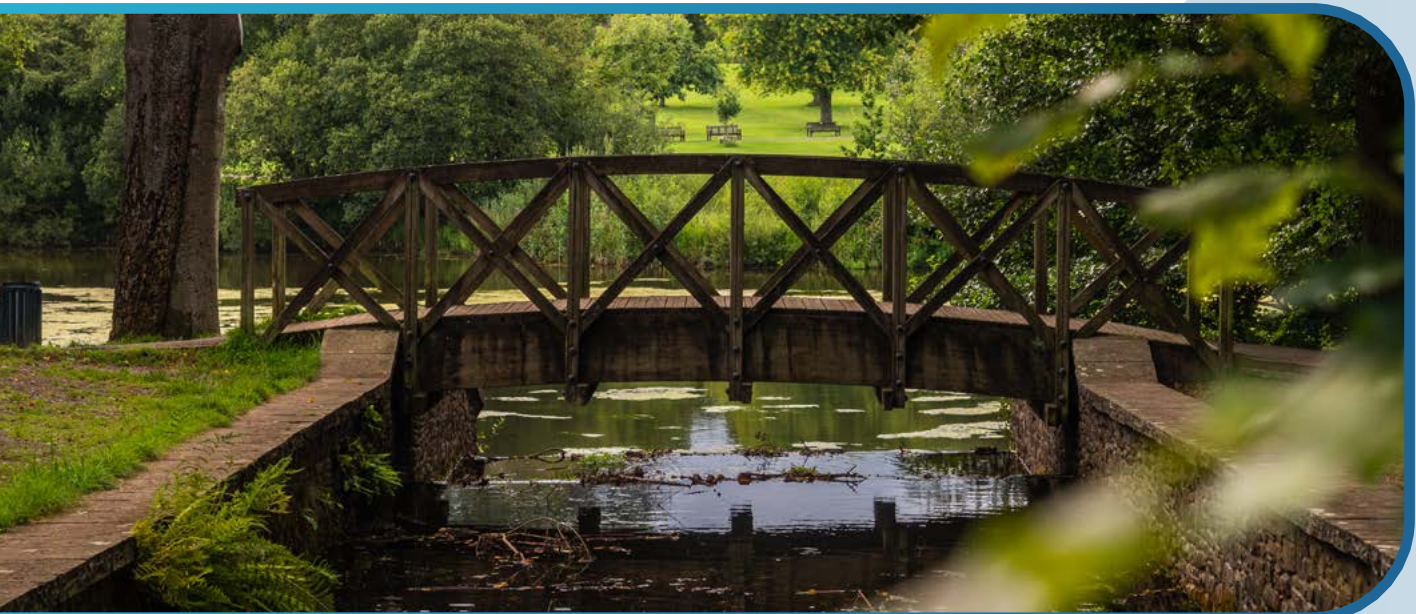
This work will be a priority for the Board and these actions will outline how our objectives will be achieved and the difference we are making.

The detail of the timeframes relating to the work underpinning each of the steps will be further developed with a balance between delivering for the short term and in the context of priorities for the longer term.

The Board is fully committed to ensuring that all work undertaken will impact on all four of the well-being objectives. We will take an integrated approach when carrying out steps avoiding working in isolation or 'silos' in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

For example, it is important that we understand that our long term social and economic wellbeing is underpinned by environmental wellbeing, and how societal and economic decisions are impacting on our environmental wellbeing.

As a Board we are also committed to a 'Health in All Policies' approach and understand that inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in society and the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age – leading to differential levels of vulnerabilities. In order to improve health and well-being reducing health inequalities will be integral to everything we do.



# WHAT WE WILL DO



WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 1: ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE BEST START IN LIFE

WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 2: ALL OUR COMMUNITIES WILL BE THRIVING AND SUSTAINABLE

WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 3: OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND HERITAGE CAN BE ENJOYED BY FUTURE GENERATIONS

WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 4: THERE ARE MORE GREEN, SECURE AND WELL-PAID JOBS AND SKILLS ACROSS THE AREA ARE IMPROVED

<b>Steps</b>	We will work together to:			
<b>Take a co-ordinated approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of our children and young people so they are able to flourish and thrive</b>	There is currently a duplication of services for children and young people, we need better co-ordination of these so that all needs can be met. Families need to be able to easily access these services and a 'no wrong door' approach should be embedded. There needs to be better alignment with ongoing regional work in this area. By undertaking earlier joint planning of new work streams we can utilise grant funding more efficiently. There is evidence of emerging well-being needs in children and young people following the Covid pandemic and a collaborative approach is needed to address this.			
<b>Ensure that when our youngest children start school they are confident and ready to learn</b>	Data indicates that on entry to school, children in NPT have weaker skills than their peers in many other areas and there is a direct link to poverty and deprivation. A high number of children in NPT have Speech, Language and Communication needs. On assessment into school data indicates high numbers presenting literacy, language and communication skills below that of chronological age, similarly for personal, social and developmental skills. We need to work together as partners to support transition from Early Years settings into school whilst planning for a new curriculum and meeting our duties under the Additional Learning Needs reform. Families must be supported to access funded programmes such as Flying Start and the Childcare offer and play opportunities need to be increased in our area for children of all ages. We are now seeing the impact of the pandemic, many of our youngest pupils will not have had the experiences to develop key skills and a joined up approach is needed to support these children.			
<b>Ensure better alignment of early intervention services in order to meet the needs of our children, young people and their families</b>	We are seeing a significant increase in demand for our early intervention and prevention services and the needs presented are becoming increasingly complex. Services commissioned, such as those that sit under the Families First Grant, were not intended to deal with the level of need being seen and we need to ensure that these services sit appropriately between the universal offer and statutory services. There is currently duplication of early intervention services across sectors, along with gaps in services for higher level need not accessing statutory services. We need to work together to understand what the universal offer is from partners and to review transition and pathways across services. A co-ordinated approach for support for pupils with ALN or emerging needs is needed.			
<b>Support and advise our school leavers to increase access to employment, education or training</b>	Not all of our children and young people will thrive on a traditional academic pathway. We need to work together as partners and support the development of vocational pathways in order to reduce the number of young people leaving school and not entering and staying in further education, training or employment.			
<b>Long term</b>	<b>Prevention</b>	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Involvement</b>
By investing in our early years we are supporting the long term well-being of our area, impacting on all our well-being objectives.	We want to prevent childhood issues from escalating and requiring intensive support so our children can move towards adulthood feeling confident and supported.	By supporting our children to have the best start in life we are impacting on all our well-being objectives and looking forward to a thriving and sustainable NPT.	We cannot achieve these steps as single agencies. Collaboration is key to making a difference in our children's lives.	We are committed to enabling our children and young people to have a voice. Their involvement in our work will be essential if we are to make a difference.

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Steps	We will work together to:
<p>Make sure those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to access it</p>	<p>Whilst the overall position has worsened in terms of outcomes, there have been a number of policy initiatives that will benefit some people experiencing poverty. This includes: the extension of free school meals for some children of primary school age; the expansion of child care facilities; to name but two. We need to ensure people entitled to this support are aware of it and receive it.</p>
<p>Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed</p>	<p>By working closely with our residents and communities we will be able to identify where anyone is being left behind or unable to get the help they need. We will then work together as public services to help address this.</p>
<p>Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation prior to the pandemic and reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root causes of poverty now</p>	<p>The PSB supported work around addressing poverty in NPT which initiated by NPT Council and supported by the Bevan Foundation prior to the pandemic. This was disrupted before programmes were initiated. As well as responding to the immediate humanitarian emergency, the PSB needs to revisit the earlier work and reset the strategic objectives and actions to counteract root causes of poverty based on the position as it is now.</p> <p>The Bevan foundation is an independent charity that develops lasting solutions to Wales' most challenging problems. As an organisation it has key expertise in this field and can help us to identify the levers that we can have an impact on as partners.</p>
<p>Collaborate with our communities, to reduce crime, the fear of crime and to make our communities safer and more cohesive</p>	<p>The Partnership will work together to tackle the following in a cohesive and joined-up way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour</li> <li>• Community Cohesion</li> <li>• Substance Use (through the Western Bay Area Planning Board)</li> <li>• Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (through the VAWDASV Leadership Group and Regional Commissioning Group)</li> <li>• Crime Prevention (inc. Acquisitive Crime &amp; Engagement)</li> </ul> <p>A new Anti Social Behaviour Leadership group will be established reportable to the CSP to ensure that these issues are understood and are addressed in a cohesive way. The NPT VAWDASV Leadership group has responsibility for the delivery of the current and new VAWDASV strategy (Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities).</p> <p>The Western Bay APB has responsibility for the commissioning, development and delivery of the substance use services, and is coterminous with the CSP. The APB fulfils the responsibilities of the CSP in respect of substance use, but at a regional level. Key priorities for the APB are to deliver its new integrated public health model, learn from the Western Bay Drug Commission, and ultimately reduce the harms caused by substance use including reducing drug related deaths.</p> <p>We will provide support for those from ethnic minority backgrounds in Neath Port Talbot and to help make our community a more inclusive place while building relationships with those from these backgrounds. We will continue to develop initiatives, activities and information sharing to engage with our diverse communities and promote community cohesion in Neath Port Talbot working closely with the BME Community Association. We will identify and report on community tensions, themes and potential impact on cohesion affecting the communities of Neath Port Talbot, to support, reassure and protect the public.</p> <p>Through the Community Safety Tasking Group operational community safety activities, concerns and engagement activities are discussed and coordinated; shared priorities agreed and solutions sought; and matters identified to report/escalated to the CSP.</p>

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Long term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement
<p>There is a short term crisis and steps that can be taken to avoid more people experiencing crisis. Longer term the PSB needs to reflect on the key messages and actions from the 3 Horizons Workshop on the cost of living crisis and become clearer about the levers it is able to influence to contribute to a structural reduction in poverty – this will contain preventative and reactive measures.</p>	<p>By working with people and hearing from those who provide the front line support the PSB will better understand the root causes of poverty and then be better placed to identify what it can influence directly and where it needs to influence others to act.</p>	<p>The actions support all four wellbeing objectives which have been designed to be interrelated.</p>	<p>The steps commit to the widest collaboration not just amongst PSB organisations, but the community, people with lived experience, front line workers, the private and third sectors.</p>	<p>Central to these actions is a commitment to co-production through working with people who have lived experience and those who provide the front line services.</p>



Steps	We will work together to:
<p>Take collaborative action to tackle the climate emergency (adaptation and mitigation)</p>	<p>Neath Port Talbot is the largest contributor to CO2 in the UK, skewed by the emissions from the steelworks. It also has the highest capacity for onshore renewables in Wales. We are in a position to take collective action as a PSB and could impact on this step by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing carbon use to net zero by 2030, working together to share good practice and collaborative approaches to carbon reduction plans and actions</li> <li>• Increasing carbon literacy within the County and influencing positive behaviour change</li> <li>• Identifying and mitigating the key risks presented to the people and communities of NPT by climate change, e.g. through nature based solutions such as- urban green infrastructure, carbon sequestration and storage through habitat management, woodland creation, and peatland restoration</li> </ul>
<p>Take collaborative action to tackle the nature crisis and improve the health of our ecosystems</p>	<p>Whilst the county has extensive natural environment, the <a href="#">Wellbeing Assessment</a> highlights the depleted condition of many of NPTs rich mosaic of habitats and associated wildlife are under threat. We can work together to combat this by:</p> <p>Ensuring that in all our decision-making processes we consider how we will maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. For example, this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having regard to the actions identified in the NPT Local Nature Partnership’s Nature Recovery Action Plan,</li> <li>• Improving access to and management of publicly owned land for biodiversity benefit;</li> <li>• Influencing policies/allocations in the Revised Local Development Plan and supporting implementation;</li> <li>• Developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy to highlight opportunities and issues within the county around public access to greenspace and opportunities for new and improved spaces,</li> <li>• Building nature into partner strategies, policies and service delivery;</li> <li>• Managing pressures from Invasive species</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling greater volunteering opportunities on nature projects by identifying key partners (e.g. NPTCVS) to support the coordination and communication between projects and environmental volunteering groups to develop a sustainable source of support for delivery of actions, whilst increasing public awareness and skills</li> <li>• Raising the profile of biodiversity and the role that all PSB partners have in tackling the nature crisis</li> <li>• Identifying the positive action that needs to be taken by each of the PSB partners and demonstrating what progress has been made in delivering these actions</li> <li>• Ensuring everyone has the required knowledge, skills and behaviours which equip them to be able to support and embed nature-based solutions in everyday activities</li> </ul>



<p>Take collaborative action to identify the interdependencies between actions around maintaining and enhancing resilient communities and a resilient natural environment</p>	<p>The PSB recognises that our communities and environment need to be resilient to the challenges that the climate and nature emergencies will present to their health and wellbeing and that this cuts across all PSB objectives. We need to maintain and enhance the capacity of our local nature to provide healthy food, clean water, air, energy and protect us against hazards such as flooding and extreme temperature.</p> <p>In order to create sustainable jobs, sustain a more resource efficient economy and maintain healthy, active, sustainable and connected communities, the PSB will work with partners and communities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a programme of training for PSB partners around climate and nature emergencies, to develop a more integrated understanding of inequalities, environmental risks and hazards and to explore opportunities for nature based solutions to alleviate these inequalities and ensure that the transition to a Net Zero Wales is carefully managed to be both equitable and fair.</li> <li>• Provide support between PSB partners around the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Planning process, build on existing evidence and spatial mapping of identified shortfalls in the provision of green infrastructure (active travel, green/blue spaces, urban trees) to identify opportunities to improve access for all.</li> </ul>			
<p>Encourage engagement and participation in cultural activities and the celebration and preservation of our cultural assets</p>	<p>Neath Port Talbot is an area rich in culture and history, with important and diverse built and natural heritage, a strong volunteer network, and a range of community festivals. Despite this, it has a lower than Wales average participation in arts, culture or heritage activities. The new curriculum for Wales has four main aims which align with the PSB's own objectives (Ambitious and capable learners; enterprising and creative; ethical and informed citizens; healthy and confident). Some of the ways we could progress this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging young people through delivery of the new school curriculum, particularly around increasing Welsh citizenship and the concept of global citizenship</li> <li>• Providing more opportunities to use and to learn our Welsh language and promoting its importance to our culture</li> <li>• Supporting and facilitating community led action, volunteering and showcasing good examples, e.g. community run libraries, community environmental projects, and local history / friends groups who contribute significantly to the preservation and promotion of our historical assets (tangible &amp; intangible) throughout the borough</li> <li>• Improve community cohesion and reducing social isolation by investing in the development of cultural resources, reducing barriers to accessing these resources and encouraging participation in community action and development</li> </ul>			
<p>Long term</p>	<p>Prevention</p>	<p>Integration</p>	<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Involvement</p>
<p>We need to take and sustain action, understanding and addressing systemic root causes and securing transformational change.</p>	<p>By working together we can help to prevent and reverse escalation of climate change and loss to our biodiversity.</p>	<p>It was clear when analysing the findings of the assessment that our natural environment impacts every aspect of our well-being and is integral to every one of our objectives .</p>	<p>No single partner can effect change alone. We are committed as a Board to working together and taking equal responsibility to address this objective.</p>	<p>Everyone has a part to play in this objective. We will involve our communities in our workstream decisions and support them to help maintain and enhance their local area.</p>



Steps	We will work together to:	
Develop Circular and Foundational economies and promote local people and businesses to spend more money in NPT	<p>In response to the Covid-19 pandemic a multi agency Economic Partnership has been established in NPT. This partnership recognises the opportunity to work together and develop more progressive and sustainable economies for the area.</p> <p><b>A Circular Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible.</li> <li>• Aims to tackle global challenges as climate change and biodiversity loss by eliminating waste and pollution, circulating products and materials, and the regeneration of nature.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Foundational Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is that part of the economy that creates and distributes goods and services consumed by all (regardless of income and status) because they support everyday life. There is an opportunity for us as public services to ensure that more of our public spend directly benefits the people in our area.</li> <li>• Also provides essential employment and income for many households within our most deprived communities; and with wealth generated from these businesses generally staying in the local community it is important that we adopt a collaborative approach to supporting the sector.</li> </ul>	
Encourage a regenerative local economy where the impacts of production and consumption are reduced	<p>If we are to secure our future wellbeing then we need transformative change in our Food, Energy and Transport systems and to move to a more regenerative economy which safeguards our natural resources. The PSB could play its part in this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and maximising opportunities for local skills training and employment associated with green recovery in NPT, e.g. scientists, ecologists, engineers, countryside and conservation managers, as well as artisanal skills needed for maintenance of heritage assets</li> <li>• Determining our economic “green” recovery path, having equity at the heart of decision making and addressing the nature and climate emergencies in tandem</li> <li>• Carrying out a sustainability audit (resource and energy use, waste management) to identify opportunities for synergies, sharing best practice and opportunities for waste reduction and using partner sites and assets to develop renewables</li> <li>• Promoting the creation of a sustainable food system, the development of local supply chains and the promotion of local produce</li> <li>• Supporting the development of a sustainable transport system, with an emphasis on active travel options and striving for equitable access for all</li> <li>• Highlighting links and enabling opportunities to connect production, consumption and healthy eating</li> </ul>	
Increase the number of apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement opportunities in the local area and support more people to access them	<p>Through the Economic Partnership, there is an opportunity to formalise “a coordinated, joined-up approach to delivering skills training to the workforce and preparing residents for employment”, i.e. Apprenticeships to support the low-carbon economy, developing work experience opportunities, and increasing links between education and business providers, especially in relation to careers advice.</p>	



Support more people to achieve the necessary level qualifications linked to the skills that local employers need now and in the future	In general, occupations in NPT remain lower skilled compared to the UK average. There is an opportunity for partners to work together to upskill our workforce to meet the long-term demand for jobs in the area, ensuring that people have the opportunity to achieve the appropriate level of qualifications needed.			
Ensure local businesses, local people and communities have maximum benefit from external major investment for the area both existing and planned	With several potential investments on the horizon for NPT we are committed as partners to working together to support and facilitate these investments and ensure that residents and businesses in the local area feel the benefit. This also applies to existing investment in the area that we will continue to support and collaborate with as much as possible. There is an opportunity to focus on the progressive procurement of goods and services to support business growth and the delivery of local social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing.			
Long term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement
We intend to look as far ahead as possible ensuring we have the right skills for future jobs, developing our economy in a green and sustainable way.	Action is needed to reverse the downward trajectory of spiralling poverty by exploring the root causes and taking collaborative action .	The economy impacts across all of our well-being objectives and there are explicit links with our environment objective in terms of work going forward.	This is key to progressing our local economy. We are committed to working together as partners and also with our private sector businesses.	Broad involvement will be needed to progress this objective, from individuals and communities to small businesses and large manufacturers whose input will be crucial for success.

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# GOVERNANCE



In order to make best use of resources the Board are committed to using existing partnerships where possible to drive this work. The structure below demonstrates the partnerships, many of which are well established with long-standing working relationships, that will be responsible for leading on the well-being objectives and steps on behalf of the Board. Representation on these partnerships is included below and will be subject to change as workstreams develop. We believe this approach will help to avoid duplication and build on existing work and relations. It is important to reiterate that whilst this governance structure will help us drive the steps we have set out in the Plan, it is the Board's intention that every workstream will impact on all our well-being objectives and that no element of this Plan should be taken forward in isolation.

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## Best start in life

**Children and Young People's Partnership**

- Neath Port Talbot Council
- Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services
- Department of Work and Pensions
- NPTC Group of Colleges
- Swansea Bay University Health Board

## Thriving and sustainable communities

**Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership**

- Neath Port Talbot Council
- Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services
- Third Sector organisations
- Local community groups

**Community Safety Partnership**

- Neath Port Talbot Council
- South Wales Police
- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- National Probation Service

## Environment, culture and heritage

**Environment Group**

- Natural Resources Wales
- Neath Port Talbot Council
- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- South Wales Police
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- TATA Steel
- Coastal Housing
- Tai Tarian
- Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services
- Swansea University

**Culture and Heritage Partnership**

The membership of this group will be developed alongside the new Culture and Heritage Strategy for Neath Port Talbot

## Secure, green and well-paid jobs and improved skills

**Local Economic Partnership**

- Neath Port Talbot Council
- Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services
- South Wales Police
- Natural Resources Wales
- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- Housing Associations
- NPTC Group of Colleges
- University of South Wales
- Local Business and community groups
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Welsh Government

**Local Nature Partnership**

The NPT Nature Partnership is made up of representatives from a wide range of organisations plus individuals with an interest in local wildlife and land management

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION



On publication of this Plan a priority for the Board will be to hold a series of workshop sessions to develop Outcome Delivery Plans using a Theory of Change methodology. These Plans will also be referred to as Logic Models and will give us the opportunity to clearly consider the complexities of the issues we are facing, ensuring that all our stakeholders will be involved in the process of identifying existing evidence, assumptions, and associated risks.

We believe that taking the time to complete this process will ensure we develop a clear agreement of our ultimate aims and how we will achieve them and help form a detailed plan for monitoring progress and evaluating success.

These Logic Models will outline how we are considering long term outcomes and will form part of the annual reporting process. Involvement will be key to the development of these Logic Models and will be embedded throughout the process. We intend to monitor a range of high level indicators to check our progress, some examples of which are below. These are likely to develop and change as our monitoring process progresses.

### Examples of outcomes/ indicators:

<b>Examples of well-being scores</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % Low Birth Weight</li><li>• % smoking at 36 weeks</li><li>• % breastfeeding at 10 days</li><li>• % up to date with vaccinations</li><li>•</li><li>• % children "school ready"</li><li>• % children of a healthy weight at age 5 years</li><li>• % children age 5 years with good oral health</li><li>• % children in poverty</li> <li>• Number of young adults with NVQ4+ level education</li><li>• Number of older adults in education</li><li>• Number of young people not in education, employment or training</li><li>• Number of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of reception year</li> <li>• Number of households in fuel poverty</li><li>• Number of households with food insecurity</li><li>• Number of households with problem debt</li><li>• Unemployment rate</li><li>• Number of individuals using food banks</li><li>• Number of individuals seeking support from Citizen's Advice</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of properties (homes and businesses) at medium or high risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.</li> <li>• Dwellings with adequate energy performance (%)</li> <li>• Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution in the air.</li> <li>• People attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year (%)</li> <li>• People participating in sporting activities three or more times a week (%)</li> <li>• People satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need (%)</li> <li>• People who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area (%)</li> <li>• Employment rate for permanent and non-permanent employment (%)</li> <li>• Unemployment rate (%)</li> <li>• Long-term unemployment rate (%)</li> <li>• Youth unemployment rate (%)</li> <li>• Economic activity rate (%)</li> <li>• Economic inactivity rate (%)</li> <li>• Employment rate by disability status (%)</li> <li>• Proportion on Universal credit (%)</li> <li>• Median pay (£)</li> <li>• In-work poverty (%)</li> <li>• Earning at or above the Welsh Living Wage (%)</li> <li>• Apprenticeships (%)</li> <li>• Sickness absence (%)</li> <li>• Average gender pay gap</li> </ul>
<b>Renewable Energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of renewable energy equipment installed</li> <li>• Proportion of energy generated from renewable sources</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition of SAC and SPA species features on sites in Wales</li> <li>• State of Nature - Species and Habitats on the Section 7 Priority in Wales list.</li> <li>• Status of Priority species distribution</li> <li>• Marine Strategy Framework Directive - Abundance of marine species groups</li> </ul>
<b>Air Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of sensitive habitat area exceeding critical loads for acidification and eutrophication, Wales</li> <li>• Change in background ozone concentration</li> </ul>
<b>Climate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Territorial emissions of greenhouse gases by sector (million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent)</li> <li>• Total number of properties (residential and non[1]residential) at high or medium risk of flooding from rivers and the sea</li> </ul>

<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WFD water bodies failing objectives because of changes to flows and water levels.</li> <li>• % freshwater water bodies achieving good or high overall status</li> <li>• Bathing water quality</li> <li>• % Coastal and Estuarine water bodies achieving good or high overall status</li> <li>• % of tests of public water supply failing to meet national standards</li> <li>• % designated bathing waters complying with the Bathing Water Directive</li> <li>• Annual pollutant emissions to air</li> </ul>
<b>Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of flytipping incidents recorded by the LA</li> <li>• Tonnage of waste reused/recycled/composted</li> </ul>
<b>Soils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration of carbon and organic matter in soil</li> </ul>
<b>Access to healthy green spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % landscapes evaluated as outstanding or high quality in relation to visual and sensory benefits</li> <li>• % of population who visit the outdoors at least once every 4 weeks</li> <li>• % of population who have volunteered with an environmental group at least once in the last 12 months</li> <li>• % of population who undertake Moderate or High Physical Activity for a total of 150 minutes per week through outdoor recreation</li> <li>• Active travel routes (total distance)</li> <li>• Number Users of active travel routes</li> </ul>



## GETTING IN TOUCH



The Public Services Board is committed to finding new and more effective ways of involving local people in its work.

We would like to hear what you think of our Well-being Plan. If you would like to contribute to our work or have any suggestions on how to improve the well-being of people in Neath Port Talbot we would like to hear from you. Please send your comments to the Public Services Board, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ or email [psb@npt.gov.uk](mailto:psb@npt.gov.uk)

Visit the Public Services Board website: [www.nptpsb.org.uk](http://www.nptpsb.org.uk)





NEATH PORT TALBOT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

# WELL-BEING PLAN



## ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE BEST START IN LIFE

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER TO:



Take a co-ordinated approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of our children and young people so they are able to flourish and thrive.



Ensure that when our youngest children start school they are confident and ready to learn.



Ensure better alignment of early intervention services in order to meet the needs of our children, young people and their families.



Support and advise our school leavers to increase access to employment, education or training.



## ALL OUR COMMUNITIES ARE THRIVING AND SUSTAINABLE

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER TO:



Make sure those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to access it



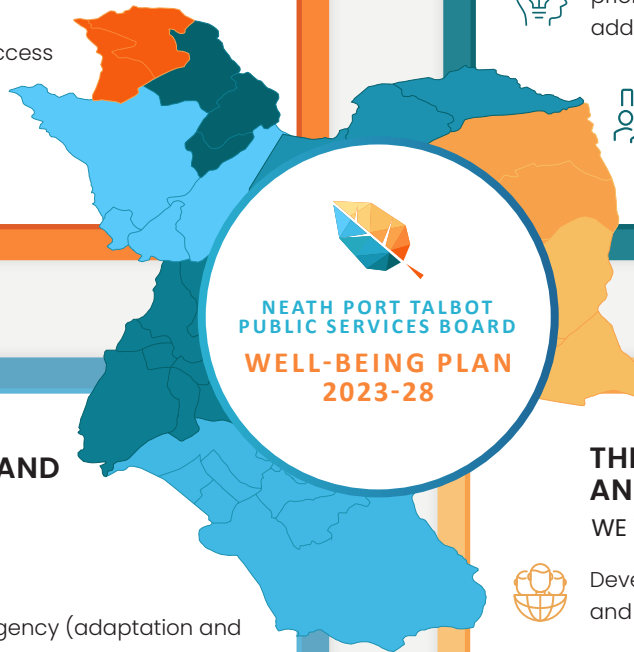
Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed.



Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation prior to the pandemic and reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root causes of poverty now.



Collaborate with our communities, to reduce crime, the fear of crime and to make our communities safer and more cohesive.



NEATH PORT TALBOT  
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

WELL-BEING PLAN  
2023-28

## OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND HERITAGE CAN BE ENJOYED BY FUTURE GENERATIONS

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER TO:



Take collaborative action to tackle the climate emergency (adaptation and mitigation).



Take collaborative action to tackle the nature crisis and improve the health of our ecosystems.



Take collaborative action to identify the interdependencies between actions around maintaining and enhancing resilient communities and a resilient natural environment.



Encourage engagement and participation in cultural activities and the celebration and preservation of our cultural assets.



## THERE ARE MORE SECURE, GREEN AND WELL PAID JOBS AND THAT SKILLS ACROSS THE AREA ARE IMPROVED

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER TO:



Develop Circular and Foundational economies and promote local people and businesses to spend more money in NPT.



Encourage a regenerative local economy where the impacts of production and consumption are reduced.



Increase the number of apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement opportunities in the local area and support more people to access them



Support more people to achieve the necessary level qualifications linked to the skills that local employers need now and in the future.



Ensure local businesses, local people and communities have maximum benefit from external major investment for the area both existing and planned.



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## 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	Vanessa Dale / Emily Zepeda	PSB Coordinator	November 2022
Version 2	Vanessa Dale	PSB Coordinator	April 2022

### 1. Details of the initiative

	<b>Title of the Initiative: Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2023-2028</b>
<b>1a</b>	<b>Service Area:</b> Whole Council
<b>1b</b>	<b>Directorate:</b> Chief Executive's Office
<b>1c</b>	<p><b>Summary of the initiative:</b></p> <p>To meet the statutory duties in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Public Services Board (PSB) has developed a local Well-being Plan. The Well-being Plan sets out the Public Services Board's long term vision for Neath Port Talbot as well as the well-being objectives that will form the basis of action over the next 5 years (2023-2028).</p>
<b>1d</b>	<p><b>Is this a 'strategic decision'?</b></p> <p>The Plan sets out the long-term vision in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sustainable development principles and short and medium term steps for partnership working to reach the vision.</p>
<b>1e</b>	<p><b>Who will be directly affected by this initiative?</b></p> <p>The Plan is focused on improving the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of all people in Neath Port Talbot.</p>

	<p>The Plan has prioritised the following areas: to give children the best start in life; for all communities to be thriving and sustainable; to ensure the local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations and to ensure more secure, green and well paid jobs and improve skills across the area.</p>
<p><b>1f</b></p>	<p><b>When and how were people consulted?</b></p> <p>The Plan was informed by the Well-being Assessment undertaken in 2022. This was written jointly by partners in the PSB. It also took into account feedback from the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Let's Talk Survey, which was consulted as below:</p> <p>Summer 2021 – Let's Talk campaign, phase 1</p> <p>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</p> <p>A formal, public consultation on the content of the draft plan took place from 5<sup>th</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> 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> <p>The Well-being Assessment also received responses to the consultation that ran between 7<sup>th</sup> April and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022. There were 28 responses received. Most consultation responses were received from people aged between 30 and 70 years of age; 15% of those who completed the question identified themselves as having a disability; 95% recorded themselves as of white origin; about 65% of responses were from females and 31% from men, with some choosing not to answer the relevant question. Detailed responses were also received from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales.</p> <p><b>The Well-being Plan</b></p>

The NPT PSB Editorial Sub-Group designed a general public consultation exercise which provided a wide range of interested bodies and the general public the opportunity to comment on the draft objectives and the draft steps identified by the Public Services Board.

The consultation was promoted via:

- The Council website homepage and the dedicated Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board web page
- A press release was issued by the Council on behalf of the Public Services Board
- The link to the online consultation was shared with Public Services Board partners to disseminate via their own established communication channels (e.g. via social media and websites).
- Several groups received face to face presentations including Town and Community Councils, the Youth Council and local Neighbourhood Forums.

The Well-being Plan was also scrutinised by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

The 12 week statutory consultation period of the Plan consultation opened on the 22nd December 2022 and closed on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The majority of those completing the survey were aged 40-59 although 15% of respondents were aged 16-24. 18% said they were fluent or fairly fluent in Welsh and 34% were learners. 17% of those who completed the survey identified themselves as having a disability. 87% recorded themselves as of white origin; about 62% of responses were from females and 28% from men, with some choosing not to answer the relevant question.

We asked respondents how they thought the Plan would affect people's opportunities to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. 26% thought the Plan would have a positive effect, but 48% thought there would be no effect. Many useful comments were received on this topic which will feed into the work of the Board going forward.

Detailed responses were received from the Future Generations Commissioner, Welsh Government, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Natural Resources Wales, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, NPT Local Nature Partnership and Neath Port Talbot CVS.

**1g** **What were the outcomes of the consultation?**

Consultation focused on providing a wide range of interested bodies and the general public the opportunity to comment on the draft objectives and the draft steps identified by the Public Services Board. A total of 61 responses were received (54 via questionnaire and a total of 7 written responses).

The draft Well-being Objectives had already been extensively consulted on during the development of the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27. We asked respondents if they had any final thoughts on the objectives, 48% chose to leave a comment. There was general support for the objectives as being a good range of issues for focus and there were plenty of helpful suggestions on things we could do to help us achieve them. People generally wanted to see a bit more detail around how they will be achieved in practice.

Respondents were asked to rate the proposed steps according to how important they were to them. **Develop appropriate academic and vocational pathways for young people to ensure all our school leavers have access to education, employment or training opportunities** was rated of the highest importance with 85% said it was 'Very Important' and 14% said 'Quite Important'. This was followed by **Make sure those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to access it** 73% Very Important and 18% Quite Important, and **Increase the number of apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement opportunities in the local area and support more people to access them** with 73% Very Important and 20% Quite Important.

71% of respondents chose to leave comments on the draft steps and the vast majority of these were positive and helpful. These comments will feed into the work of the Board going forward.

51% had suggestion on how residents could be better involved in the work of the Board and several have left contact details.

Several changes were made to the Plan following the detailed comments received including two extra steps being added. A point was included in the Culture and Heritage step to note the Board's commitment to promoting the Welsh language and supporting more opportunities for people to use it.

Further detail was provided on what the Board will do next in terms of developing the actions and monitoring and evaluation. A structure was included showing the groups and partnerships responsible for delivery of the Plan.

## 2. Evidence

### What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

The Public Services Board's second Local Assessment of Well-being was published in 2022. This is an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in Neath Port Talbot and was developed and by the Public Services Board (available [here](#)).

The assessment was informed by extensive engagement and survey work with residents and stakeholders including the findings of the Councils Let's Talk campaign, and consideration of relevant information such as existing data, evidence and research.

The published assessment captures the strengths and assets of people and communities across Neath Port Talbot and describes the challenges and opportunities Neath Port Talbot faces now and into the future.

The Board is continuing to build on the evidence gathered in the Well-being Assessment by:

- mapping issues and assets in the community;
- adopting an Asset Based approach to focus on identifying, building on and mobilising personal assets, local assets and resources;
- ensuring sufficient data sharing protocols are in place to facilitate relevant, safe and timely data sharing between agencies; and,
- identifying local knowledge and experience to build supportive groups and networks to develop opportunities for meaningful and sustainable engagement with the community.

The Board will also be systematically updating the datasets included in the well-being assessment and adding new evidence to the assessment to inform the Board's future work.

Involvement will be a key focus of the Board going forward and will underpin all our evidence.

## 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>The Plan aims to address inequalities whilst also exploring in more detail the opportunities and challenges facing people from different backgrounds across the communities of Neath and Port Talbot, starting with areas where there is the highest concentration of demand being placed on public service agencies.</p> <p>There is a strong emphasis on building social capacity within communities to ensure they are thriving and sustainable. Targeted approaches, based on evidence, are expected to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged children and families.</p> <p>The work to investigate and tackle the root causes of poverty across the County Borough will aim to reduce inequality for all groups.</p> <p>The environmental focus of the Board will aim to reduce inequality in terms of access to quality green space whilst the focus on jobs and skills will improve equality of opportunity for all groups.</p> <p>A more detailed profile of outcomes achieved will be developed as work progresses which will provide deeper insight into whether there are differences across groups who share other protected characteristics. This further detail will help to address the acknowledged limitations of the well-being assessment exercise.</p>
Disability	✓			
Gender reassignment	✓			
Marriage & civil partnership	✓			
Pregnancy and maternity	✓			
Race	✓			
Religion or belief	✓			
Sex	✓			
Sexual orientation	✓			

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

The Public Services Board acknowledges that more detailed actions are needed around the steps that have been identified to meet the objectives. When the Board publishes its annual report more detail of the work the Board will be seeking to take forward over the short, medium and long term will be available.

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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?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	✓			<p>We have settled on four well-being objectives which, taken together, have the potential to bring about sustainable and long term improvements to the well-being of the population as a whole but also to reduce the inequalities between people and communities.</p> <p>The Well-being Plan aims to bring about long lasting improvements in the health and well-being of the people who live in the borough, in particular taking forward the work that is identified in the Well-being Plan to reduce the gap between those who have the most and those who have the least.</p> <p>Although the plan addresses the well-being of everyone there is an emphasis on the most vulnerable within our county borough, and those who share other protected characteristics such a race, gender reassignment and religion.</p> <p>While the central feature of the proposals is to reduce inequalities across protected characteristics it also acknowledges and seeks to address the impact of other forms of inequality, such as poverty in all its guises.</p> <p>The Public Services Board has been reviewing the key findings of the well-being assessment and has identified the need to reduce inequality and to strengthen</p>
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	✓			
To foster good relations between different groups	✓			

				communities as priorities within its work programme. There is work ongoing to develop the specific focus of the Board's work.
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**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

Through deeper analysis of our population as work progresses, the Board should be better placed to identify if people face discrimination or disadvantage due to any or a combination of protected characteristics and consequently be also better placed to identify any further interventions that would eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Through its work the Board will be in a position to not only identify the steps it can take, but to also identify the impact of wider agencies on equality of opportunity between groups and to make representations to such agencies to advance equality.

**4. Socio Economic Duty**

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	<p>Evidence shows that socio-economic inequalities in health may be narrower in places with better access to green spaces, compared to those with poorer access. The Board also recognises that our communities and environment need to be resilient to the challenges that the climate and nature emergencies will present to their health and wellbeing and this cuts across all the well-being objectives.</p> <p>The Plan targets action at the most disadvantaged children and young people and those who are experiencing poverty. As more detailed insight is developed across the whole of the Plan, opportunities to promote equality and reduce inequality will become clearer.</p>
Negative/Disadvantage	
Neutral	



**What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome**

**5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	✓			<p>It is anticipated that the objectives, both individually and cumulatively, will have a positive impact in promoting and protecting community cohesion.</p> <p>There is clear recognition of the importance of building social capacity and community cohesion as part of a strategic approach to improving the well-being of the populations prioritised in the Plan. This is outlined in the step relating to community safety which will be led by the Safer NPT Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>As more detailed mapping of assets and analysis of challenges progresses, community tensions or risks to community cohesion will be better understood as will the opportunities to build upon those factors which support strong community cohesion.</p>
Social Exclusion	✓			<p>The plan aims to help reduce social exclusion faced by many of our residents whether as a result of financial, health, education or technological barriers.</p> <p>However, the Board is realistic and appreciates that whilst it has the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of many people, there are wider issues that</p>

			<p>will need to be addressed outside of the Board to bring about more significant and sustained impacts on social exclusion.</p> <p>This is reflected in the setting of the well-being objectives by the Board where members of the Board explicitly considered whether it had a focus and potential to make a difference, and where it did not.</p>
Poverty	✓		<p>The Board is acutely aware of the current pressures on our population due to the cost of living crisis being experienced. The work around thriving and sustainable communities will take a focus on poverty, ensuring residents are aware of and can access necessary support. It will also take a long term focus further investigating the root causes of poverty in our area to identify the areas that the Board has the potential to impact on the most.</p>

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

**Community Cohesion**

The Board made significant efforts to engage a very diverse range of stakeholders during the public consultation period and was disappointed at the limited response.

The Board intends to examine different ways to meaningfully engage with people on a continuous basis. This will assist in promoting community cohesion, identifying and responding to risk and threats to community cohesion.

**Social Exclusion**

For the Board to continuously reflect where there is a need to highlight issues that require attention by wider agencies.

**Poverty**

As stated above the Board will take a collaborative approach to identifying and addressing, where possible, the root causes of poverty in the County Borough.

## 6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language			✓	The use of Welsh and support of Welsh culture was a key feature for people’s well-being as identified in the Well-being Assessment.
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally			✓	The Board is committed to promoting the Welsh language and increasing opportunities for people to use it and when considering different communities in NPT, appreciates that there are characteristics that make places unique. As the Board develops deeper insight as to what matters in different places it is anticipated that the way the Board can support protection and promotion of the Welsh language and culture will become clearer.

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

The Board will need to ensure that there is explicit consideration of opportunities to strengthen Welsh language and culture across the area as it takes its work programme forward. This will be progressed under the step around culture and heritage specifically but also across all the well-being objectives and the work of the Board.

## 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 Plan states that the Board will <b>‘take collaborative action to tackle the nature crisis and improve the health of our ecosystems’</b> .
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	✓			<p>As partner agencies we have agreed to consider how we will enhance and maintain biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems in all our decision making processes, and there are specific examples given on how this might be done.</p> <p>There is more work to do to develop the detail of the work activities, however, the Board intends that a theme within the work will be to raise knowledge and understanding of the importance of the environment and how individuals can contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.</p> <p>The Board will work closely with the NPT Local Nature Partnership in this area and will continue to be informed by the expertise within that group.</p>

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
The Board will work closely with the NPT Local Nature Partnership to raise awareness and increase understanding of the challenges faced around biodiversity and to identify opportunities for collaborative action.

### 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
<p>i. <b>Long term</b> – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead</p>	<p>The Well-being Assessment considers future trends within each chapter and aims to identify the long term opportunities and challenges that could impact upon well-being. The four objectives selected by the Board were identified as areas where the Board could refocus work towards earlier intervention and preventative approaches where it is considered there will be positive long term benefits to well-being.</p> <p>The last few years have proved to be a difficult period to forecast the future and public services have been reacting to immediate pressures and need. As we progress the Plan the Board will look to gain a deeper insight into the way people experience community life and the things that matter to them now and for the future. Our strategies to secure long term changes will emerge as we immerse ourselves in deeper insight and learning.</p> <p>By focusing on giving every child the best start in life, we believe we will start to break the cycle of deprivation and disadvantage. More young people will grow up and become confident and active citizens, realise their potential, enjoy better well-being and be well placed to bring up their own children in healthy environments.</p> <p>The work within communities will also improve community cohesion, which we believe will sustain communities into the future.</p> <p>Work around the climate change emergency will amongst other things support public services to achieve net zero carbon by 2030, ensuring our environment is preserved for our future generations to enjoy.</p> <p>We plan to look as long term as we can when it comes to jobs and skills so our workforce is ready to fulfil the jobs we need locally.</p> <p>We will further refine this information as the detail of the work we plan to do over the short, medium and long term becomes clearer.</p>
<p>ii. <b>Prevention</b> – preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>There is a clear and strong emphasis across all four objectives to prevent problems in the first instance and when this is not possible to intervene as early as possible to stop things getting worse. The prevention element is most clear in the objective <b>All our children will have the</b></p>

	<b>best start in life</b> , and in the steps around the climate and nature emergencies but is also evident throughout the Plan.
iii. <b>Collaboration</b> – working with other services internal or external	<p>The development of the Well-being Assessment and the Plan has been a collaborative effort by all those involved in the Public Services Board. We have built on the good relationships formed since our inception in 2016 and have advanced our understanding of the opportunities we have to make a difference, identifying a wider range of stakeholders who can contribute to the work of the Board.</p> <p>The Board has shown an active interest in the well-being work other PSBs are undertaking, has been involved in regional and national events and closely collaborated with Swansea PSB around emerging issues that impact across the region.</p>
iv. <b>Involvement</b> – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population	<p>Since the inception of the first Well-being Assessment process the Board has involved a wide cross-section of stakeholders in undertaking its duties.</p> <p>A partnership approach has been taken to consultation on both the Assessment and the Plan and the Board have utilised the findings of engagement work undertaken by all partners, including the Council's Let's Talk campaign and NRW's Nature a Ni. Partner agencies have facilitated the consultation process via their existing networks and resident groups.</p> <p>We seek to involve citizens in the co-production of the interventions required to bring about sustainable change. Strengthening this involvement will be a key feature of our development work as the plan moves into its implementation phase.</p>
v. <b>Integration</b> – making connections to maximise contribution to:	<p>Each of the four objectives will help the Board maximise its contribution to the national well-being goals. It is clearly stated in the plan that the work under each step will contribute to all four well-being objectives and no workstream should be delivered in isolation.</p> <p>During the consultation on the draft plan there was broad support from all partner organisations for the Board's proposed vision and objectives. Following the publication of the Plan there will be more opportunities for individual organisations to consider how their own well-being objectives align with and support the well-being objectives of the Board.</p>
<b>Council's well-being objectives</b>	There is clear alignment between the objectives as the PSB has adopted the Council's well-being objectives.

<b>Other public bodies objectives</b>	<p>The plan is required to be signed off by the four statutory partners of the PSB by their respective boards before being published, hence the following partners will have reviewed the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service</li> <li>Natural Resources Wales</li> <li>Neath Port Talbot Council</li> <li>Swansea Bay University Health Board</li> </ul>
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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.

<p>The Plan is and will continue to be a work in progress. Whilst the Board has identified the steps it will take to deliver on the objectives, there is more work to do around the detailed practical actions that the Board will take over the short, medium and long term.</p> <p>The Board has stated its intention to adopt a Theory of Change methodology to monitor and assess progress. This will give us the opportunity to clearly consider the complexities of the issues we are facing, ensuring that all stakeholders will be involved in the process of identifying existing evidence, assumptions, and associated risks. The Board believes that taking the time to complete this process will ensure we develop a clear agreement of our ultimate aims and how we will achieve them and help form a detailed plan for monitoring progress and evaluating success.</p> <p>We intend to monitor a range of high level indicators to check our progress, some examples of which are included in the Plan. These are likely to develop and change as our monitoring process progresses.</p> <p>Scrutiny of the Board’s work will be undertaken by the Council’s designated Scrutiny Committee who will hold the Board to account for the delivery of the Plan and bringing about the changes we want to see which will improve the well-being of the people of Neath Port Talbot</p> <p>An annual report will be prepared and published no later than July 2024 demonstrating what the Public Services Board has achieved over the period May 2023-May 2024 whilst also providing more detail on the work the Board intends to take forward over the medium and long term and the measures that will be employed to evaluate progress.</p>
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## 10. Assessment Conclusions

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

	Conclusion
<b>Equalities</b>	
<b>Socio Economic Disadvantage</b>	
<b>Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty</b>	
<b>Welsh</b>	
<b>Biodiversity</b>	
<b>Well-being of Future Generations</b>	There is potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities to maximise contribution to achieving each of the wellbeing objectives and the Welsh Government's well-being goals and promote equality with regard to some groups.

### Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **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 Public Services Board acknowledges there is more detail needed around the steps that have been identified to meet the objectives and more detail of the work to be taken forwards over the short, medium and long term will be published in the Plan's first annual report.

The Board has demonstrated that it has given reasonable consideration to the various statutory duties referenced in this assessment and there are also steps identified that can assist the Board in increasing opportunities to make a positive impact and to reduce any potential negative impacts. The Board sought the advice of the Future Generations Commissioner during the development of the Plan and has explicitly identified how it is acted on that advice. The Board has also undertaken extensive engagement and whilst acknowledging limited response, there were no objections registered with the Board regarding the vision and proposed well-being objectives.

There are no obvious reasons that should prevent the Council from approving the Plan at this time with further opportunity for review at the time the first Annual Report is available. The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee has powers that can be used to ensure the Board is held properly to account for taking all reasonable steps to meet the sustainable development duties when progressing its work.

## 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?
A Theory of Change methodology will be adopted to further determine the detail around action and how this will be measured.	PSB partners	Ongoing but captured in the Annual Report	Evidence of the further detail obtained and clear plan for monitoring progress outlined.

## 12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Vanessa Dale	PSB Co-ordinator		20/04/2023
Signed off by	Sheenagh Rees	Head of People and Organisational Development		20/04/2023

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Council

26th April 2023

### Report of the Head of People and Organisational Development

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028

#### Purpose of Report

1. To present the draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028. The draft Strategy was presented to Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> April where it was approved and referred to Council for formal adoption.

#### Executive Summary

2. The draft Public Participation Strategy for 2023-2028 (attached at Appendix 1) outlines the council's objectives, approach and mechanisms for encouraging and enabling public participation, together with information on how local people can influence decision-making.
3. It has been developed following the Statutory Guidance on Public Participation Strategies, made under section 44 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and informed by the NPT Citizens' Panel, the NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement and public consultation.
4. This will be the first Public Participation Strategy for Neath Port Talbot Council.

#### Background

5. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires councils to encourage local people to participate in their decision making. This includes where councils are making decisions in

partnership with another principal council or in conjunction with another individual or body such as a local health board.

6. The Act requires local authorities to publish, consult on, and regularly review a public participation strategy. These strategies are required to set out:
  - i. ways of promoting awareness among local people of the council's functions;
  - ii. ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails;
  - iii. ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the council;
  - iv. ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the council about a decision before, and after, it is made;
  - v. arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees);
  - vi. ways of promoting awareness among members of the council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

7. In line with the Statutory Guidance on Public Participation Strategies, made under section 44 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the draft Strategy has been informed by stakeholder groups including residents, employees and elected members.

8. Prior to formal consultation

The initial scoping, mapping of existing participation and drafting of key information for the strategy was undertaken by an officer working group, including representation from Legal Services, Corporate Policy, Communications, Democratic Services, Digital Services and Electoral Services.

9. The working group worked with the NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (NPT CoP) to further develop the baseline of what is already in place, what works well and where the

gaps are and identify potential gaps and aspirations for 'what we could do better'. The NPT CoP also contributed to the overarching objective and approach for the strategy.

10. In October 2022, the NPT Citizens' Panel were asked to complete a questionnaire to provide an indication of:
  - how much residents currently participate in the council's decision-making process;
  - which mechanisms for participation they are aware of; the level of interest in participation opportunities;
  - to what extent those who have participated feel their involvement allowed them to have a genuine impact on the decision(s) made; and
  - what the council could do to improve public involvement in our decision-making processes. The feedback from this informed the action plan for the draft strategy.
11. There were 71 responses from the Citizens' Panel to this initial questionnaire. The feedback from this was used in the preparation of the Draft Participation Strategy prior to consultation, so does not form part of the consultation data in this report.
12. Consultation
13. Following approval by Cabinet on Wednesday 30 November 2022, the public consultation ran from 5th December 2022 until Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
14. Activities included:
  - Online questionnaire - a self-completion questionnaire was published online.
  - Offline – paper questionnaires, and reference copies of the Draft Public Participation Strategy, together with feedback boxes for completed questionnaires were made available in public buildings across the county borough. These included Civic Centres, council run and community libraries, and Celtic Leisure venues amongst others. The questionnaire was a replica of the online version and responses were entered into the survey software for analysis.
  - The Draft Public Participation Strategy was also discussed at Democratic Services Committee on Monday 13th February 2022 and NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement on 15<sup>th</sup> February.

15. The consultation was promoted via:

- the council's website on the consultation pages [www.npt.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.npt.gov.uk/consultations)
- posters and at libraries, Celtic Leisure venues, civic centres and other public buildings across the county borough
- the council's corporate social media accounts
- press coverage generated by cabinet reports and press releases

### **Public Consultation Responses - Summary:**

16. Fifty people responded to the public consultation.

- 49 respondents gave an opinion on the overarching objective. Of these 42 strongly agreed / agreed with the overarching objective (this represents 86% of those who answered the question or 84% of all the people who responded to the survey). Overarching objective:  
*“to encourage and support people to participate in the council's decision-making by undertaking our activities in ways that are inclusive and accessible, reflect the diversity of our communities, are responsive and meet the requirements of the relevant legislation and guidance (The Equalities Act 2010; The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act; The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act (2014); The Welsh Language Standards; The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.”*
- 37 respondents (74%) strongly agreed / agreed the strategy will help the council to promote awareness among local people of the council's functions (6 or 12% didn't know)
- 33 respondents (66%) strongly agreed / agreed the strategy will help the council to promote awareness among local people of how to become a member of the council, and what membership entails (8 or 16% didn't know)
- 40 respondents (82%) strongly agreed / agreed the strategy will help the council to promote access for local people to information about council decisions (4 or 8%) didn't know)
- 37 respondents (74%) strongly agreed / agreed the strategy will help the council to promote processes so that local people can make representations to the council about a decision before, and after, it is made (6 or 12% didn't know)
- 37 respondents (74%) strongly agreed / agreed the strategy will help the council to promote arrangements to bring views of

the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (5 or 10% didn't know)

- 39 respondents (78%) strongly agreed / agreed the strategy will help the council to promote awareness among the benefits of councillors using social media to communicate with local people (5 or 10% didn't know)

17. We asked respondents a set of questions on how far they agreed that each of the actions in the draft action plan is the right thing to focus on to achieve the six requirements set out in section 4 of this report.

18. There was a high level of agreement from respondents that the activities are the right things to focus on. More than 65% of all those who responded to the questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed with every action, with the exception of the following:

**Actions to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves**

Action	No of respondents who agree / strongly agree	% of those who answered the question	% of all who responded to survey
Ongoing review of the effectiveness of the voting awareness raising campaigns for elections and to build upon these campaigns ahead of the Local Government Elections 2022, ensuring wider partnerships arrangements are taken forward to allow engagement with wider audiences	36	75%	62%
Liaise with Group Leaders to suggest they appoint Diversity Champions for each political group	31	65%	58%
Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election	32	68%	64%
Support the Welsh Government's and Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW)	18	38%	36%

commitment to explore Resettlement grants or 'parachute payments' payments for Members who lose their seats at election			
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**Actions to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations**

Action	No of respondents who agree / strongly agree	% of those who answered the question	% of all who respondents to survey
Consider how we develop these as a more formal mechanism for the online community to participate in consultations and engagement campaigns	32	76%	64%
Review and update the Scrutiny Public Engagement Strategy particularly with respect to hybrid meetings	30	71%	60%
Review and update the council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy	31	74%	62%

**Actions to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees**

Action	No of respondents who agree / strongly agree	% of those who answered the question	% of all who respondents to survey
Continue the webcasting of meetings as specified under the 2021 Act, develop a hybrid meeting policy and ensure availability of translation facilities for Full Council meetings to be conducted bilingually and any other meetings required in legislation	31	76%	62%
Provide detailed training to chairs of scrutiny committee on ways in which they can engage	29	71%	58%



the community in the scrutiny process			
Promote the use of scrutiny on social media channels	26	66%	52%

**Actions to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors**

Action	No of respondents who agree / strongly agree	% of those who answered the question	% of all who responded to survey
Member Seminars	31	76%	62%

19. 39 people responded to the question ‘Could NPT Council do more to improve public involvement in our decision-making?’ Of these:
- 27 (69% of those who answered this question or 54% of all those who took part in the questionnaire) said yes,
  - 2 (5% of those who answered this question or 4% of all those who took part in the questionnaire) said no; and
  - 10 (26% of those who answered this question or 20% of all those who took part in the questionnaire) didn’t know.
20. Recurring themes in the open text responses included:
- the need for information to be accessible (both in terms of being easy to understand and accessible formats)
  - the need to close the loop in terms of letting people know how their feedback has influenced decisions
  - the need to make provision for people who are not online
  - the need to review the Citizens’ Panel and the effectiveness of this
  - the need to avoid jargon
  - suggestions that the council should consider setting up people’s assemblies
  - the need to include some face-to-face engagement
21. All of the above points have been addressed in the action plan of the strategy.
22. The discussion with the NPT CoP highlighted that some stakeholder groups with protected characteristics would be interested in becoming more involved in decision-making, e.g. as members of the Citizens’ Panel, and specific arrangements would need to be put in

place to enable them to do this. In response, the action plan has been amended under requirement 3 to include an action to *review and further develop the Neath Port Talbot Citizens' Panel, and in conjunction with the relevant stakeholder groups, identify appropriate arrangements to enable members of stakeholder groups with protected characteristics to participate.*

23. A consultation report outlining the findings from the consultation is attached at Appendix 3.

### **Financial Appraisal**

24. The cost of developing and implementing the Strategy will be met from existing service budgets and resources.
25. An enhanced approach may require the commitment of resources and officer time from other service areas in future.
26. The Strategy will ensure that the council complies with legislation avoiding a potential adverse cost implication for non-compliance or retrospective challenges to council decisions

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

27. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a
  - relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; *and*
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.”
28. Section 1 of the Equality Act requires that public bodies when making strategic decisions, have due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.
29. An in-depth Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) was undertaken to accompany the draft Public Participation Strategy when Cabinet was asked for permission to consult. This has been updated in light of responses to the consultation. It is essential that Members read

the IIA which is appended to this report (Appendix 2).

### **Valleys Communities Impact:**

30. There are no impacts in respect of this item.

### **Workforce Impact**

31. The Public Participation Strategy will support officers involved in the decision-making process by ensuring a corporate and coordinated approach to participation, involvement and engagement.

32. By working towards shared objectives and embedding a consistent approach, we aim to ensure our public participation activities are of a consistently high standard, leading to more robust decisions that have considered the needs and interests of stakeholders.

### **Legal Impact**

33. The publication of the final strategy will meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 by setting out how the council encourages local people to participate in its decision making, the steps we will take to improve public participation, and how we will measure progress.

### **Risk Management**

34. The council's Corporate Risk Register will be updated with any risks associated with the delivery of the work outlined in the Strategy following its approval and adoption by council.

### **Recommendations**

35. Having had due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that:

- i. Council adopt the Public Participation Strategy for the period 2023-2028.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

36. To ensure the Council meets legal duties set out in The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021) as they relate to council participation activities.

## **Implementation of Decision**

37. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

## **Appendices**

38. Appendix 1 – Neath Port Talbot Council Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-28
39. Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment
40. Appendix 3 – Consultation Report

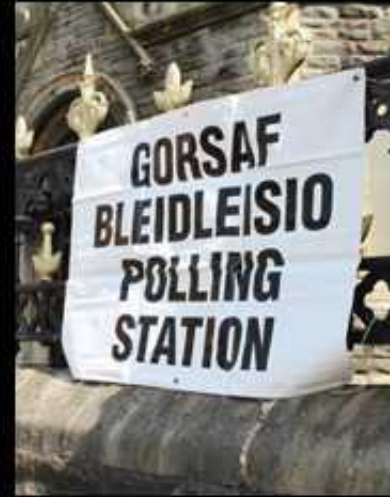
## **List of Background Papers**

41. Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the 2021 Act)
42. The Equalities Act 2010
43. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
44. The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act (2014)
45. The Welsh Language Standards
46. Report of the Head of People and Organisational Development to Neath Port Talbot Cabinet - Wednesday 30 November 2022 - Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028

## **Officer Reporting:**

Sheenagh Rees, Head of People and Organisational Development, Tel no: 01639 763315, Email: [s.rees5@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk)

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# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

2023-2028

This document is also available in Welsh and Easy Read.



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council



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7. How can you influence decision-making?
8. Mechanisms to encourage and support local people to participate in our decision making?
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10. Monitoring and evaluation



# Part A - Context

## 1. Introduction

**Democracy is something to be valued and nurtured. At a local government level this means a commitment to listen to all voices, for those voices to be heard and to work together with our communities to explore and resolve issues of concern, promote and recognise achievements and face new challenges together.**

Our council is strongly committed to fostering a culture of partnership with local people and communities, encouraging and supporting them to participate in our decision making, and keeping them informed about how their participation has influenced decisions.

We already have a strong record of working in partnership, often in challenging circumstances, demonstrating the benefits of close collaboration, and focusing on achieving long-term improvements in the well-being of our communities.

In 2021 we ran a campaign to help us understand how the pandemic has impacted on different parts of our county borough and what matters most to local people as we take forward our recovery work.

Almost 1,800 people from all backgrounds and ages engaged with the campaign, with a mix of on-line and off-line surveys, supplemented by focus groups in our five valleys.

Capturing stakeholders' views and opinions at a very early stage in our planning enabled us to shape our well-being objectives and associated actions on what matters locally. It is our firm intention to continue to engage with people as we implement, review and refine the plan over the coming years.

Public Participation is, however, much wider reaching than engagement and consultations activities alone.

There are many ways for individuals, groups and organisations to participate in decision-making, for example formal consultations, public meetings, petitions, standing for council and citizens panels etc.

No single mechanism is the key to developing a partnership approach between communities and the council that serves them.

This strategy sets out how we will encourage and support people to participate in our decision-making.

We appreciate that participation is a voluntary activity and not everyone will want to be involved, but we hope you find this strategy informative in terms of the processes behind our decision-making, where to find information, how you can get involved and the benefits of doing so, enabling you to have a say in what we do and how we do it.



Cllr Steve Hunt  
Leader of Council



Mrs K Jones Chief  
Executive

## 2. What is the Public Participation Strategy?

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the Act”) requires local authorities to publish, consult on, and regularly review a public participation strategy to encourage local people to participate in their decision making. This includes where councils make decisions in partnership with another council or in conjunction with another individual or body such as a local health board.

This Public Participation Strategy supports the priorities in our Corporate Plan 2022-2027 and reflects our values by setting out how we will encourage and enable local people and communities in Neath Port Talbot to be actively involved in decisions that affect them.

It is a four year strategy, from 2023 to 2027, that outlines the council’s objectives, approach and mechanisms for encouraging and enabling public participation, together with information on how local people can influence decision-making. These are set in the context of six requirements identified in the Statutory Guidance on Public Participation Strategies, to demonstrate how we currently or plan to:

1. promote awareness among local people of the council's functions;
2. promote awareness among local people of how to become a member of the council, and what membership entails;
3. facilitate access for local people to information about council decisions;
4. promote and facilitate processes so that local people can make representations to the council about a decision before, and after, it is made;
5. provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees;
6. promote awareness among councillors of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people

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**Our Values**

**Connected**  
what matters to you matters to us

**Collaborative**  
we work with our citizens and our partners because together we can achieve more

**Caring**  
we care about you, your life and the future of our county borough

**Confident**  
we are optimistic and confident about the future



### 3. Why is Participation important

Informed decision-making comes about when we engage with people and communities, rather than making assumptions about what people think, want and feel.

Therefore, whilst the council has a legal duty to encourage and facilitate participation, our commitment goes beyond this as we recognise that effective public participation plays a key role in providing better outcomes - both for the council and the people we serve.

#### **Benefits of participation for people and our communities:**

- an opportunity to influence and shape policy and services
- making a contribution to better decisions because decision-makers have more complete information
- being heard and valued as citizens
- better awareness and understanding of the decision-making process, decisions and outcomes
- supports people to be actively involved with policy making and service planning from an early stage

#### **Benefits of participation for the council:**

- Learning from people and communities about their attitudes, needs, and what matters to them
- Fulfilling our 'connected', 'caring', 'collaborative', and 'confident' values
- Services and policies informed by actual need and/or demand
- Different ideas and perspectives
- More robust decisions that have considered the needs and interests of stakeholders
- Stakeholders have a better awareness and understanding of the decision-making process, decisions and outcomes
- Opportunity to build trust between the council and local communities
- Demonstrating a commitment to public participation in line with the relevant legislation and guidance

Achieving the above relies on participation being an integral part of our work across the council. By working towards shared objectives and embedding a consistent approach we aim to ensure our public participation activities are of a consistently high standard.

## 4. How we developed the strategy?

Following the Statutory Guidance on Public Participation Strategies, made under section 44 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, we involved a number of stakeholders in developing the draft strategy.

### Officer working group

The initial scoping, mapping of existing participation pathways and drafting of key information for the strategy was undertaken by an officer working group, including representation from Legal Services, Corporate Policy, Communications, Democratic Services, Digital Services and Electoral Services.

### NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement

We worked with the NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (NPT CoP) to further develop the baseline of what is already in place, what works well and where the gaps are and identify potential gaps and aspirations for 'what we could do better'. The CoP also contributed to the overarching objective and approach for the strategy.

The NPT CoP was established in 2019 and membership has grown to 60+ council officers and representatives from partner organisations who regularly engage with specific stakeholder groups as part of their work. The purpose of the CoP is to provide a vehicle for members to work more smartly and in a more collaborative way to ensure that everyone in our communities can have the opportunity to have their say on the decisions that affect them. It is intended to provide a professional and respectful forum for members to share experiences and knowledge on involvement and engagement issues in a spirit of mutual learning and peer support.

### NPT Citizens' Panel

We circulated a questionnaire to the NPT Citizens' Panel. Launched in January 2020, the panel is made up of more than 500 residents from across the county borough and actively involves them in decision making at a very early stage, so they help shape proposals before these go out to wider public consultation.

The aim of the questionnaire was to get an indication of how much residents currently participate in the council's decision-making process; which mechanisms for participation they are aware of; the level of interest in participation opportunities; to what extent those

who have participated feel their involvement allowed them to have a genuine impact on the decision(s) made; and listen to any suggestions as to what the council could do more to improve public involvement in our decision-making processes.

There were 71 people responses and the themes from these have helped to inform the Action Plan for this strategy. Themes included:

- Most respondents don't know that they can get involved in decision making (or that we want them to), not all of those who do know that they can get involved know how to go about doing this
- Some feel that council engagement is just box ticking/lip service and we're not really interested in engaging (there is a perception that decisions have already been made)
- We don't 'close the loop', so for those who have completed surveys/engaged previously they don't see the outcomes of that engagement (there is a mixed response with regards to this, some think that if we don't do what they want/suggest then we haven't listened - perhaps because we aren't explaining why we make certain decisions; others seem keen to see survey reports, but don't know where to find them)
- There are a number of comments to indicate that respondents don't feel that our decision making is transparent
- Some people don't know who their councillor is, or where to find out – the same goes for council meetings, respondents aren't aware that papers are public and/or that members of the public are able to attend meetings
- Most are aware of the website, but there are a few comments that mention we don't do enough for people who are not online.

## Part B - Draft Public Participation Strategy

### 5. Our Objectives and Approach

We aim to be open and responsive to the needs of local people and communities. This includes engaging them in participative processes by which they can influence and help shape policy and services. That said, all decision making is subject to constraints, so it is important to manage expectations. To help achieve this we will aim to **inform** people about how our decision-making process works, **engage** them to participate and provide **feedback** on how their participation influences our decision(s).

**Our Overarching Objective** is to encourage and support people to participate in the council's decision-making by undertaking our activities in ways that are inclusive and accessible, reflect the diversity of our communities, are responsive and meet the requirements

of the relevant legislation and guidance (The Equalities Act 2010; The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act; The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act (2014); The Welsh Language Standards; The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).

**Our Approach** - in keeping with the council's commitment to a rights-based approach to participation, involvement and engagement, we will follow the principles of:

- **Accessibility** – we will adapt what we do for different audiences, ensuring that our activities are made available in the formats and language(s) that people need. In addition, we will make the most of the opportunities that digital technology presents to enable our communities to participate in decision making, but equally, we are aware that digital technology is not available to or the preference of everyone and we will make provision for this.
- **Inclusivity and Non-discrimination** - We will be sensitive to the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 - age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
- **Empowerment** – we will endeavour to make sure our communities can be part of our decision making process, enable them to influence meaningful change, and demonstrate back to them that their voices have been heard.

In line with the National Principles for Engagement produced by Participation Cymru, our participation, involvement and engagement activities will also be:

- **Sustainable** – not just based on 'one-off' meetings
- **Practical** – not too bureaucratic
- **Honest** – so people can give their feedback about their experiences and share ideas
- **Responsive** – so people will know they have been listened to and taken seriously
- **Creative** – so people can help design improvements to services our participation, involvement and engagement activities will be:
- **Transparent and well communicated** – to help build a trusting environment

To ensure our consultation and engagement activities are fair and lawful, they will be designed to reflect the four Gunning Principles:

- Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage
- Sufficient reasons must be put forward for any proposal to permit “intelligent consideration” and response
- Adequate time is given for consideration and response
- The product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account by the decision maker(s)

## 6. How the Council Operates

The council delivers a wide range of services to a population of 144,386. It has 60 Councillors (or Members) elected every five years. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their electoral divisions. The overriding duty of councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.

Councillors follow a code of conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. Their key roles are:

- **Cabinet decision-making:** councillors attend full meetings of the council, and some may have specific roles in relation to policy making, delivery of services and use of resources
- **Scrutiny of decisions:** councillors may serve on scrutiny panels, or committees which scrutinise existing policies and service delivery
- **Regulatory functions:** some council committees, such as those that deal with planning and licensing applications, have a quasi-judicial role
- **Representing their ward:** representing and meeting with the residents and interest groups within their ward and dealing with issues that they raise. In addition, councillors may attend community council meetings and serve on forums through which local issues can be discussed between elected members, council officers and the wider community

Councillors may also be involved in other areas, such as the development of new policies for the council

The council has officers working for it to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services. Some officers have a specific duty to ensure that the council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely. A code of practice governs the relationships between officers and members of the council.

### Meetings Overview

The Council operates under the executive council system. This is where fellow councillors elect a Leader of the Council at every annual general meeting (AGM) and up to 9 fellow County Borough Councillors to sit on the Cabinet. The majority of the decisions of the Council will be taken by either Full Council, Cabinet or at a Cabinet Board which will have decision making responsibility in a number of specific areas.

More information on the committee structure can be found at [www.npt.gov.uk/cabinetboards](http://www.npt.gov.uk/cabinetboards)

### **Council or “Full Council”**

Council is a meeting of all 60 elected members, chaired by the Mayor with the Deputy Mayor as Vice Chair. It has responsibility for the council’s functions which are not covered by the Cabinet. The Council decides upon the political management framework and how councillors should be allocated to other committees both internally and externally.

It is also the role of Council to agree the council budget for the forthcoming year and agree policy framework, appoint the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and agree any changes to the constitution which the council must abide by.

### **The Executive or Cabinet**

The Executive is another name for the 10 Cabinet Members of Neath Port Talbot Council. It includes the Leader and 9 other councillors, all appointed annually by Council. The Cabinet meet as a whole to make decisions as well each Cabinet Member having their own portfolio of services.

Cabinet make the main, overarching decisions for the council. In addition to Cabinet, there are 3 Cabinet Boards:

- Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board
- Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Cabinet Board
- Social Care, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board

Cabinet has to make decisions which are in line with the council’s overall policies and budget. Any decision which is outside the budget or policy framework must usually be referred to Full Council.

### **Scrutiny Committees**

Scrutiny Committees were introduced to ensure a greater number of Councillors were involved in influencing Council policy and service improvements, and provided checks and balances on the decisions taken by the Cabinet. In Neath Port Talbot there are four Scrutiny Committees – one for each Cabinet Board above. Their role is to scrutinise decisions or to present new ideas to the Cabinet and Cabinet Boards for them to make decisions on. There is also currently 1 Scrutiny Sub Committee - Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Sub Committee, which has been established to scrutinise our policy and resources functions

Each Scrutiny Committee is made up of up to 16 councillors from political parties within the council membership, which mirrors the overall political composition of the council. The Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee also includes Co-opted Parent Governors and two Co-opted Representatives of the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Dioceses.

Scrutiny Committees work together to ensure accountability, openness and transparency – their main roles are:

- Pre Scrutiny (this involves considering decisions to be taken by Cabinet and Cabinet Boards before they are made)
- Performance (this involves monitoring how services are performing)
- Policy and Partnership (this involves considering the impact of policies and holding partners of the Council to account)
- Post Scrutiny (this involves considering the impact of decisions after they have been made)

There is also currently 1 Scrutiny Sub Committee:

- Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Sub Committee which has been established to scrutinise our policy and resources functions.

Scrutiny Committees usually hold their meetings on a 4 or 6 weekly basis. The meetings are open to the public except when private items are being discussed (e.g. where individual personal or financial information is being considered).

### **Regulatory Committees**

There are a number of Regulatory Committees which are decision making forums that the council has to have by law. These include:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Appeals Panel                             | • Personnel Committee                  |
| • Democratic Services Committee             | • Planning Committee                   |
| • Governance and Audit Committee            | • Registration and Licensing Committee |
| • Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee     | • Special Appointments Committee       |
| • Licensing and Gambling Acts Sub Committee | • Standards Committee                  |

### **How do committees decide what issues to consider?**

The majority of committees have a forward work programme, which is publicly available [[www.npt.gov.uk/26159](http://www.npt.gov.uk/26159)]. The forward work programmes are developed in a number of ways:

- Officers of the council will populate them with issues that arise, are scheduled for completion or because there is a legislative requirement to review the current policy.

- The chair of the committee will also include items that they consider important to the committee or have been brought to their attention, e.g. items that members of the public have asked the committee to consider.

### **How can you see what is to be debated at a meeting?**

Meeting papers are published on the council website [link] at least three clear working days before every meeting of the Council, Cabinet or Scrutiny. A small number of paper copies of the agenda and reports will be made available at the meeting for members of the public. These include:

- An agenda with the location, date and time of the meeting as well as a list of items that the committee is to debate.
- Reports giving details as to why each decision needs to be made, background information relating to the issues of the topic and a recommendation as to what decision should be taken.

For every meeting of the Council a set of minutes will be prepared and agreed at the next meeting of that particular committee. The minutes will act as a true record of the proceedings at a particular meeting. The council will make available for inspection for a period of 6 years any agendas, minutes and reports of a committee of the council.

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Most Council meetings are also recorded and published in an archive for residents to watch at a later date on the Council's YouTube page. More information and recording of meetings is available on our website [[www.npt.gov.uk/24746](http://www.npt.gov.uk/24746)].

## **7. How can you influence decision-making?**

### **Voting**

Voting in elections is an important way to make your voice heard. Local Government Elections take place every five years and by voting you can effect change on a local level and have your say on who represents you and the area in which you live on the council.

The relationship between a councillor and their electorate is two way – in return for your vote, they must try to represent you in the best way possible.



To vote in elections you need to be over the age of 16 and your name must be on the Electoral Register. You can register online at [www.gov.uk/register tovote](http://www.gov.uk/register tovote)

## Stand as a councillor

There are many reasons why you might decide to stand as a councillor – you may already be active in your community, be committed to a particular political party or want to influence change in your community and the county borough.

To stand for election to the county borough council you must be over 18, be a British, Commonwealth or European citizen and meet one of the following four criteria:

- You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector within the local authority area.
- Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises within the local authority for the whole 12 months previous to the day of nomination and election.
- Your main or only place of work has been within the local authority area for the whole 12 months previous to the day of nomination and election.
- You have lived within the local authority area for the whole 12 months previous to the day of nomination and election.

You can also stand for election to community and town councils in Neath Port Talbot.

The full elections to the County Borough Council and Community and Town Councils took place in May 2022. Vacancies can arise during the term of office for all councils and these are promoted on the NPT Council website [www.npt.gov.uk/elections](http://www.npt.gov.uk/elections) as well as in the local area.

## Attend a meeting

Most of the meetings of Council, together with the Cabinet, Cabinet Boards and other Committee meetings, are open to members of the public to attend and observe the proceedings and debate taking place, except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed.

Most meetings are held in Port Talbot Civic Centre, but you can also observe meetings live via Microsoft Teams. You will need to pre-register to be part of the virtual public gallery and can do this by emailing [democratic.services@npt.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@npt.gov.uk) by 12 noon the day before the meeting. Committee dates and times of forthcoming meetings can be found on our website [www.npt.gov.uk/democraticprocess](http://www.npt.gov.uk/democraticprocess).

## Add an item to an agenda for discussion

There are two ways that a member of the public can encourage a committee to consider an item and have it added to the agenda of a future meeting.

- Any member of the public can contact the chair of a committee and request that they add an item to the forward work programme for future discussion
- Attend a meeting of the relevant committee and request at the meeting under the item forward work programmes that an item is added for future consideration.

## Submit a question to Council

Under the council's Protocol for Speaking at Council Meetings [\[link\]](#), a period of up to 15 minutes in each meeting is allowed for public questions.

Any person (other than Members or employees of the Council) who lives or works in Neath Port Talbot may ask questions of Cabinet Members or of the chairs of committees of the Council.

To ask a question, notice must be given in writing or via email [\[Democratic.Services@npt.gov.uk\]](mailto:Democratic.Services@npt.gov.uk) no later than 5pm, two working days before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must specify the person to whom it is to be put (by name or title).

Where the questioner indicates that they wish to ask their questions in Welsh, Welsh translation will be sought for that particular question and answer. In the event that Welsh language translation is not available, this will be discussed with the questioner and alternative arrangements will be considered/sought.

The number of questions an individual can ask in a municipal year is limited to two (to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to attend such meetings). In the event though that a person wishes to attend a meeting to ask a question over and above these two occasions, they are entitled to request it.

An answer may take the form of:

- a verbal answer given by the person to whom the question is addressed or another person nominated by them;
- where the desired information is in a publication of the council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to Members of the Council.

## **Submit views to scrutiny committees**

Members of the public are welcome to attend any of the Scrutiny Committees. If you have a particular interest in a topic, you can contact your local councillor or the Scrutiny Team on 01639 763194 or [democratic.services@npt.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@npt.gov.uk)

Members of the public may also be invited to inform and provide information to specific inquiry groups. More information can be found at [www.npt.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.npt.gov.uk/scrutiny)

## **Contact your local councillor**

You can contact your local councillor to discuss issues within your ward. If you are not sure who your councillor is, a list of the county borough councillors and their contact details is available on the council's website [www.npt.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.npt.gov.uk/councillors), alternatively you can get this information by contacting the council on 01639 686868.

## **Submit a comment or complaint**

Neath Port Talbot Council considers all comments, compliments and complaints as an invaluable source of information about the services we provide. If you want to tell us about something we have done well, if there's something you want to feedback about or if you would like to make a complaint we are always glad to hear from you.

You can make a complaint in any of the following ways:

- On our website [www.npt.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.npt.gov.uk/complaints)
- Email: [contactus@npt.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@npt.gov.uk)
- By letter - Neath Port Talbot Council, Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA12 1PJ
- Phone: 01639 686868 - ask to be transferred to the service your feedback

You can give us feedback in whatever format (large print, Braille, on tape or disc) or language you wish.

## Petitions

Creating or taking part in a petition is one way individuals, community groups and organisations can influence the council's decision making. We welcome petitions as a way in which our residents can make their views known and request that action be taken.

The Council has a petition scheme which sets out the procedures in respect of petitions and how they will be considered. This is available online at <https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/17201/petition-scheme.pdf?v=20220330120728> .

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Petitions are documents (digital or physical) that contain details of issues of importance to communities and/or the county borough as a whole, outline for a proposed course of action and are signed by people who are in support of this.

A petition has the ability to:

- Raise awareness of an issue;
- Bring about a change in Council Policy or a different way of delivering services
- Prompt members of the Council to take further action, for example asking questions at Full Council
- Lead to, or influence, a debate at a meeting of the Council

Before submitting a petition you should first check with you local councillor to see if the council is already acting on your concerns and whether the council is the most appropriate body to receive your petition.

The Council's response may also depend on the number of people who have signed the petition. The table below sets out the thresholds:

Number of Signatories	Response
20-100	Response from the relevant director/head of service (treated as standard correspondence)
101-500	Response from the relevant Cabinet Member
500+	Referred for debate at a meeting of Full Council or the relevant Cabinet/Cabinet Board/Committee

## Public Consultation and Engagement

The council has always consulted with local people on a wide range of policies and proposals, but our ‘Let’s Talk’ campaign in 2021 represented a fundamental shift from our traditional approach to engagement.

Instead of presenting a draft proposal for comments, we posed a series of questions designed to help us properly understand the impact of Covid-19 on our communities, what matters to people today and for the future, and how we can continue the spirit of collaboration that developed through the pandemic.

We developed a draft recovery plan based on the responses, then consulted on this to ensure that we had properly understood and reflected what people told us. Capturing the views and opinions of local businesses and residents at a very early stage in our planning enabled us to shape our well-being objectives and associated actions on what matters locally.

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.

Information on current and future consultations is available on our website at [www.npt.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.npt.gov.uk/consultations)

## NPT Citizens’ Panel

The Council values the views of all residents in the county borough and wants them to be able to contribute to policy and service development. The Citizens’ panel will make it easier for our residents to give us feedback on our work and contribute in our decision making at a very early stage.

You can join the Citizens' Panel if you are over 16 years old and live in Neath Port Talbot County Borough.

As a member of the Citizens' Panel you will receive emails where you will be invited to participate in online surveys. There will be no more than 12 surveys per year on a range of issues affecting people and services in Neath Port Talbot County Borough. If you are interested in joining we'd love to hear from you. More information can be found at [www.npt.gov.uk/citizenspanel](http://www.npt.gov.uk/citizenspanel).

## **NPT Council Employees and Trade Unions**

Neath Port Talbot Council Employees and Trade Unions are key stakeholders in terms of how we deliver services. Our work in social partnership with the Trade Unions is a reflection of our fair working practices, inclusivity and diversity.

A high percentage of our employees live in the county borough (around 70%) and our front line employees are our closest link with members of the public, so their participation in decision making is important.

Page 170 We regularly engage with employees, through both employee focussed consultation and engagement campaigns and by encouraging them to participating in our public consultation and engagement exercises (which always include provision for them to indicate their status as an employee of the council).

A new Employee Communications and Engagement Strategy is being developed. This will provide a framework for employee participation, involvement and engagement, ensuring a corporate and coordinated approach.

## **Public Services Board**

The Welsh Government passed a law in 2015 called the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Act requires a Public Services Board to be set up in each local authority area in Wales.

The Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board (PSB) was established in May 2016 to bring together local organisations and strengthen the way they work together to improve the well-being of the people who live in our county borough.

The PSB is a partnership of local public and voluntary organisations from across the area, including:

- **Statutory partners:** Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council; Swansea Bay University Health Board; Mid and West Wales Fire; Natural Resources Wales

- **Invited participants:** NPT Council for Voluntary Service; Higher Education Funding Council for Wales; South Wales Police; University of Wales Trinity St David; Tai Tarian; Welsh Government; National Probation Service; Public Health Wales; Wales Community Rehabilitation Company; Community Councils and Town Councils; Job Centre Plus; Police and Crime Commissioner; NPT Group of Colleges

In line with the Act, the Board assessed the social, economic, environmental and cultural state of well-being across the area. To understand how well-being could be affected, the PSB collects a large amount of information about the strengths of people and communities and described the challenges and opportunities Neath Port Talbot faces now and in the future. This information was used in the Well-being Assessment, which was published in May 2017.

The Board is committed to actively seeking the views and opinions of residents about all policies and decisions made, and about how we can make improvements in the future.

The Board wants to create a Neath Port Talbot where people will have the best chance to get on in life. There many things we can be proud of in Neath Port Talbot, but they recognise there are big challenges too. The Board has explored where they can make the biggest difference and have consulted local people and have now settled on six priorities that they will work on over the next couple of years. The local Well-being Plan explains what these priorities are, how work will start on these priorities and how local people and organisations can get involved with this work.

More information can be found at [www.npt.gov.uk/psb](http://www.npt.gov.uk/psb).

## Youth Council

NPT Youth Council is a group of young people from the county borough aged between 11 and 25 who go that extra mile to champion Children's Rights by empowering young people to have a say and influence change in decisions affecting their lives.

The Youth Council meets with decision-makers at a local level to amplify their voices, enrich decision-making processes, share perspectives and participate as active citizens, volunteers, campaigners, and facilitators of change. As part of its work, the Youth Council meets with elected members every three months and petitions councillors effectively on behalf of young people living in Neath Port Talbot.

Youth Council members also get involved in their communities and in democratic processes regionally and nationally. They have representation on BAYouth (Swansea Bay University Health Board Youth Advisory Panel), the UK Youth Parliament and are Young Ambassadors with Public Health Wales and the British Youth Council.

They have made a measurable impact over the years as passionate advocates for those who are vulnerable or less able to speak for themselves through creating opportunities for young people to participate as elected members and have a voice e.g. LGBTQ+, BAME, Looked after Children and Young Carers.

Democratic Youth Council Elections are held every two years. Creating opportunities for special interest groups to participate is key, and the 2019 - 2021 youth council maintains a vibrant, inclusive and representative body within NPTCBC.

If you are interested in joining then please contact NPT Youth Service on 01639 763030 or [youth.service@npt.gov.uk](mailto:youth.service@npt.gov.uk)

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**Social Media**

Social media has become a mainstream tool for councils and councillors to inform and engage with the communities they serve.

The council has a number of corporate and service specific social media accounts. These provide valuable insight from our communities, but going forward, we need to consider how we develop these as a participation mechanism for the online community to participate in consultations and engagement campaigns.

You can follow the council on:

- Twitter - @NPTCouncil; @CyngorCnPT
- Facebook - @NPTCouncil; @CyngorCnPT
- Instagram - NPT Council
- LinkedIn - Neath Port Talbot CBC
- YouTube - Neath Port Talbot CBC

The number of councillors with a presence on social media is growing. As a councillor, there are additional things to consider when using it, including the Code of Conduct, managing expectations and workload. The council provides training and guidance to councillors



in how to use social media to their advantage when councillors are first elected and provide ongoing update to various issues throughout the year.

## 8. Mechanisms to encourage and support local people to participate in our decision making?

There are already a number of mechanisms the council currently has in place to encourage and support local people to participate in its decision making. These have been set out under each of the six requirements listed on page 3:

### **Requirement 1: Promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors**

Page 173	<p><b>purpose</b></p> <p>To share information about the council’s functions and services so that residents are informed about how the council works so that when the participate, they can give informed opinions</p>
<p><b>what we already have in place to fulfil this</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan and associated strategies that are publicly available <a href="http://www.npt.gov.uk/corporateplan">www.npt.gov.uk/corporateplan</a></li> <li>• Council Website <a href="http://www.npt.gov.uk">www.npt.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Modern.Gov</a> – Democracy Section of website where residents can access the agenda and minutes of meetings or look up decisions</li> <li>• Live streaming of some meetings and access to recorded footage of meetings that can be viewed by the public online</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Meetings of the Council, Cabinet and the various committees.</li> <li>• Utilising the opportunities for engagement and awareness raising and the educating of a ‘role of a Councillor’ through Key Stage 3, the welsh baccalaureate and citizenship lessons within schools and linking in with any new curriculum provided</li> <li>• NPTCBC Social Services’ Co-production Statement of Intent – links to the West Glamorgan Co-production Strategy</li> </ul>

**Requirement 2: Share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves**

<b>purpose</b>	To enable and encourage people to stand for council, representing the people in their own communities and across the county borough.
<b>what we already have in place to fulfil this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website, <a href="#">Council and Democracy Pages</a></li> <li>• Become a Councillor Page</li> <li>• Full training and induction programme to support members and ongoing training and support</li> <li>• Regular member seminars to ensure members are updated and engaged on developments</li> <li>• Allowance for members posted on Council website</li> <li>• Strategic Equality Plan and Well Being Objectives – Neath Port Talbot Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>• NPT Youth Mayor</li> <li>• NPT Youth Council</li> </ul>

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**Requirement 3: Provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council**

<b>purpose</b>	To help build on the culture of partnership by ensuring people are aware of forthcoming decisions, opportunities to participate in these and how their participation influences our decision-making
<b>what we already have in place to fulfil this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website <a href="http://www.npt.gov.uk">www.npt.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Modern.Gov</a> - democracy section of website where residents can access the agendas and minutes of meetings, or look up decisions</li> <li>• Consultation and surveys</li> <li>• The Council uses data to inform proposals, including data from external sources and partners where appropriate.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council works closely with partners to share information about decisions and engage with residents more effectively.</li> <li>• The Council works with community groups to ensure that information about decisions is shared, and a range of viewpoints are heard.</li> <li>• The Council uses mechanisms to engage with disadvantaged groups and equalities interests e.g. Youth Council, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic forums, disability groups etc.</li> <li>• The Council routinely engages with citizens on key corporate decisions e.g. the budget and medium term financial plan</li> <li>• The Council has regular mechanisms to engage with the public including the citizens panel</li> <li>• NPTCBC Social Services' Co-production Statement of Intent – links to the West Glamorgan Co-production Strategy</li> </ul>
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**Requirement 4: Provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the Council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations**

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<b>purpose</b>	To encourage people to participate by making sure they are aware of the different ways they can provide their views, so that they can choose the mechanism which most suits them.
<b>what we already have in place to fulfil this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website <a href="http://www.npt.gov.uk">www.npt.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• Digital forms</li> <li>• Comments, Compliments and Complaints policy and regular reporting of comments received</li> <li>• Consultation and surveys</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.modern.gov.uk">Modern.Gov</a> - democracy section of website where residents can access the agendas and minutes of meetings, or look up decisions</li> <li>• The Council works with community groups to ensure that information about decisions is shared, and a range of viewpoints are heard.</li> <li>• Petition Scheme</li> <li>• Public Speaking at Council Meetings</li> <li>• Scrutiny Public Engagement opportunities</li> <li>• NPTCBC Social Services' Co-production Statement of Intent – links to the West Glamorgan Co-production Strategy</li> </ul>

**Requirement 5: Arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty of bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees**

<b>purpose</b>	To inform people about the role of scrutiny and how they can get involved
<b>what we already have in place to fulfil this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the public are welcome to attend Scrutiny Committees.</li> <li>• If members of the public have a particular interest in a topic, they can contact their local councillor or contact the Scrutiny Team</li> <li>• Members of the public may also be invited to inform and provide information to specific inquiry groups.</li> <li>• The Scrutiny committees set a forward work programme as to when they meet and what they will be considering</li> </ul>

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**Requirement 6: Promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to Councillors**

<b>purpose</b>	to encourage councillors to use social media to inform and engage with their communities by making them aware of the benefits of using, whilst supporting them to use it as effectively as possible, and in a way that does not leave them open to legal challenge, personal risk or reputational risk
<b>what we already have in place to fulfil this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media channels (corporate and service specific)</li> <li>• Welsh Local Government Association - Guidance for New Councillors - 'Improving Digital Citizenship – Research and Best Practice'</li> <li>• Social Media Training for elected members</li> </ul>

**9. The NPT Council Public Participation Strategy Action Plan**  
**Building on our existing mechanisms for public participation**

**Requirement 1: Promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors**

**Actions**

Publish a final version of the Public Participation Strategy

Publish a Guide to the Democratic Process and how the Council makes decisions

Ensuring the Council's forward plan supports public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly

Promote Welsh Government's Guidance / materials for 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales. Explore Web-based platforms.

Elections and Education Directorate to explore other potential avenues through school forums / youth councils / career fairs.

Continue to engage with schools (subject to pandemic), including links with school councils and youth councils

Liaise with local community groups, school governors and other such organisations to ensure links with 'Becoming a Councillor page' are promoted.

Meet with stakeholders face to face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and the issues that matter to them.

Continue webcasting of meetings as specified under the 2021 Act and develop a hybrid meeting policy and ensure availability of translation facilities for Full Council meetings to be conducted bilingually and any other meetings required in legislation.

Further promote the development of members' annual reports under section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as a means of promoting awareness of the council's functions and the role of elected members

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**Requirement 2: Share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves**

**Actions**

Continue with hybrid meetings that allow Councillors to attend and participate in meetings from any location with an internet connection

Ensure that information for potential councillors is available and fit for purpose

Ongoing review of the effectiveness of the voting awareness raising campaigns elections and to build upon these campaigns ahead of the Local Government Elections 2022, ensuring wider partnerships arrangements are taken forward to allow engagement with wider audiences

Liaise with Group Leaders to suggest they appoint Diversity Champions for each political group

Review areas of training and development which can be made available online, core set of training materials which can be used for all Members
Promote job-sharing by executive leaders and other office holders
Ensure that members undertake health and safety training, lone working training and other personal safety measures
Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election
Support the Welsh Government's and IRPW's commitment to explore Resettlement grants or 'parachute payments' payments for Members who lose their seats at election
Reviewing meeting times to have more flexibility to suit the committee Members
Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow the feedback to be reviewed to support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office. The survey feedback will help to deliver a positive and diverse environment for future Members to undertake their roles
Explore feasibility of workshops in schools on this to raise aspirations and educate on the role of elected members
Explore feasibility of 'Member for a day' experience (like work experience) and/or some case studies on the role of elected members and what the impact they can have – perhaps linked to Local Democracy Week

**Requirement 3: Provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council**

<b>Actions</b>
Continue to move towards participative approaches to engagement which empower citizens and place decision making in the hands of communities and individuals
Build on the use of technology to increase the reach of engagement activity
Have due regard for Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Citizen Engagement Scheme in all of our consultation and engagement activities
Campaign to raise awareness of the mechanisms in place for local people to get involved in decision making (including how to where to find out who your local councillor is, how to view papers for council meetings, how to attend council meetings etc.)
Develop effective and inclusive consultation and engagement exercises that set reasonable expectations about what can and cannot be changed as a result
Review and further develop the Neath Port Talbot Citizens' Panel, and in conjunction with the relevant stakeholder groups, identify appropriate arrangements to enable members of stakeholder groups with protected characteristics to participate
Let people know how their feedback helped influence decisions e.g. 'You said...we did'

Identify opportunities to increase our reach into communities through partnership working
Ensure that when important decisions are made, robust and reliable information and stakeholders’ feedback is made available to decision makers
Explore the views of the public about which of the council’s committees they consider should be broadcast live
Further develop the NPT Community of Practice on involvement and Engagement to ensure a coordinated approach to consultation and engagement
Ensure officers are adequately equipped with the necessary skills and tools to design consultations, collect feedback in a timely way and accurately interpret the results
Develop a Consultation and Engagement Toolkit to ensure a corporate and consistent approach to all activities
Develop systems and processes for collating all consultation and engagement feedback from across the Council in a central resource, to form a reliable, robust and more comprehensive picture of what people in Neath Port Talbot think, need and want
Develop a forward planning process/consultation calendar
Improve analysis, interpretation and sharing of information to inform decision making, utilising the agreed technology (i.e. Snap Software)
Keep up-to-date with any relevant changes in legislation and exploring examples of innovation and good practice
A Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model
Ensure that information is accessible to all – e.g. friendly tone, easy read etc.

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**Requirement 4: Provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations**

<b>Action</b>
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
Develop a better understanding of the demographics of residents who regularly provide feedback, so that any gaps in representation can be identified.
Consider how we develop these as a more formal mechanism for the online community to participate in consultations and engagement campaigns
Embrace the use of digital discussions
Meet with stakeholders face-to-face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and issues that matter to them

Review and update the Scrutiny Public Engagement Strategy particularly with respect to hybrid meetings
Review and update the council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy
Implement the council's duty under section 90 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to consult local people on performance
A Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model
Continue to develop more meaningful and innovative forms of engagement to allow residents to participate and be involved in co-production.
Provide training for staff so that they understand what effective participation looks like. Provide a framework or model - e.g. Lundy and raise awareness of the Gunning Principles.
Develop a framework for how we monitor participation opportunities to ensure quality and consistency, and measure the impact they have.

**Requirement 5: Arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty of bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees**

<b>Actions</b>
Publish a Guide to the Democratic Process and how the council makes decisions
Ensure information on the council website is accessible
Ensure the council's forward plan supports public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly
Continue the webcasting of meetings as specified under the 2021 Act and develop a hybrid meeting policy and ensure availability of translation facilities for Full Council meetings to be conducted bilingually and any other meetings required in legislation
Provide detailed training to chairs of scrutiny committee on ways in which they can engage the community in the scrutiny process
Promote the use of scrutiny on social media channels
A Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model

**Requirement 6: Promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors**

<b>Actions</b>
Member Induction and Training



Social media safety training to be delivered to members through the Member Induction Programme and built upon during their term of office
Develop our social media channels as a platform to ask questions and share views
Embrace the use of digital discussions
Member Seminars
The Education Participation and Engagement Strategy will include information and processes for digital engagement

## 10. Monitoring and Evaluation

We will continually monitor our progress against the actions in the strategy against the following measures:

<b>Requirement 1: Promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of views of meetings</li> <li>Website traffic data</li> <li>Satisfaction surveys on the Council website.</li> </ul>
<b>Requirement 2: Share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality and diversity data for elected members</li> </ul>
<b>Requirement 3: Provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of people on the Citizens' Panel, and how accurately this represents the profile of residents in the county borough in terms of protected characteristics</li> <li>The number of responses per consultation</li> <li>The number of hits to the 'have your say' webpage</li> <li>Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area (National Survey for Wales and local data)</li> </ul>
<b>Requirement 4: Provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the Council, including</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of comments, compliments and complaints received</li> <li>Participation rates in consultations and surveys</li> <li>No. of viewers of online meetings</li> </ul>

<p><b>comments, complaints and other types of representations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor equalities and diversity data concerning residents who have provided feedback</li> <li>• Level of participation and engagement in the scrutiny process;</li> <li>• levels of responses to consultation</li> <li>• No. of views of meetings including live and YouTube</li> </ul>
<p><b>Requirement 5: Arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty of bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records of the number of the public attending scrutiny committees</li> <li>• Records of the members of the public invited to attend and make representations to scrutiny committees</li> <li>• Number gaining access to scrutiny papers and online recordings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Requirement 6: Promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % completion of training modules</li> <li>• % attendance at Members Seminars</li> </ul>

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Progress against the Strategy will be reported through our Annual Self-Assessment Report.

This strategy will be reviewed and subject to formal consultation by the council following local government ordinary elections, however this document is a living document and will be reviewed by council officers on a regular basis to establish how the council can further enhance its participation programme.

## 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 2	Anita James	Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Manager	13.3.23

### 1. Details of the initiative

	<b>Title of the Initiative: Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028</b>
<b>1a</b>	<b>Service Area:</b> Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement
<b>1b</b>	<b>Directorate:</b> Chief Executive's
<b>1c</b>	<p><b>Summary of the initiative:</b></p> <p>The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the Act”) requires councils to encourage local people to participate in their decision making. This includes where councils are making decisions in partnership with another principal council or in conjunction with another individual or body such as a local health board. The Act requires local authorities to publish, consult on, and regularly review a public participation strategy. These strategies are required to set out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions;</li> <li>II. ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails;</li> </ol>

	<p>III. ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council;</p> <p>IV. ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made;</p> <p>V. arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees);</p> <p>VI. ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people. The draft Public Participation Strategy for 2023-2028 outlines the council's objectives, approach and mechanisms for encouraging and enabling public participation, together with information on how local people can influence decision-making</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot Council's Draft Public Participation Strategy has been developed in line with our wellbeing objectives, as well as the legislation set out in the Act. It supports the priorities in our Corporate Plan 2022-2027 and reflects our values by setting out how we will encourage and enable local people and communities in Neath Port Talbot to be actively involved in decisions that affect them. It outlines how people can influence the council's decision-making, the mechanisms already in place to encourage and support local people to participate in our decision making and an action plan to build on these.</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council exists to serve and represent the interests of its citizens and communities and is strongly committed to fostering a culture of partnership with local people and communities, encouraging and supporting them to participate in our decision making, and keeping them informed about how their participation has influenced decisions.</p>
<b>1d</b>	<p><b>Is this a 'strategic decision'?</b> Yes, the draft strategy sets out the Council's approach to public participation</p>
<b>1e</b>	<p><b>Who will be directly affected by this initiative?</b> Everyone who lives, works in and/or visits Neath Port Talbot</p>
<b>1f</b>	<p><b>When and how were people consulted?</b> Following the Statutory Guidance on Public Participation Strategies, made under section 44 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, we involved a number of stakeholders in developing the draft strategy, including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An officer working group – for initial scoping, mapping of existing participation pathways and drafting key information for the strategy</li> <li>• NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (NPT CoP) to further develop the baseline, identify what works well, gaps and aspirations for ‘what we could do better’. The NPT CoP also contributed to the overarching objective and approach for the strategy.</li> <li>• The NPT Citizens’ Panel were asked to complete a questionnaire to provide an indication of how much residents currently participate in the council’s decision-making process; which mechanisms for participation they are aware of; the level of interest in participation opportunities; to what extent those who have participated feel their involvement allowed them to have a genuine impact on the decision(s) made; and listen to any suggestions as to what the council could do more to improve public involvement in our decision-making processes. The feedback from this informed the action plan for the strategy</li> <li>• Public consultation - December 2022 to March 2023</li> </ul>
1g	<p><b>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</b></p> <p><b>NPT Citizens’ Panel Questionnaire – Oct/Nov 2022</b></p> <p>The questionnaire received 71 responses. Themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most respondents don’t know that they can get involved in decision making (or that we want them to), not all of those who do know that they can get involved know how to go about doing this</li> <li>• Some feel that council engagement is just box ticking/lip service and we're not really interested in engaging (there is a perception that decisions have already been made)</li> <li>• We don't ‘close the loop’, so for those who have completed surveys/engaged previously they don't see the outcomes of that engagement (there is a mixture with regards to this, some seem to think if we don't do what they want then we haven't listened, maybe because we aren't explaining why we make certain decisions; others seem keen to see survey reports, but don't know where to find them)</li> <li>• There are a number of comments to indicate that respondents don’t feel that our decision making is transparent</li> <li>• Some people don't know who their councillor is, or where to find out – the same goes for council meetings, respondents aren't aware that papers are public and/or that members of the public are able to attend meetings</li> <li>• Most are aware of the website, but there are a few comments that mention we don't do enough for people who are not online.</li> </ul> <p>This feedback, along with information from the NPT CoP and Officer Working Group was used to help develop the overarching objective and the action plan</p>

### Public consultation

The questionnaire received 50 responses. Themes included:

- the need for information to be accessible (both in terms of being easy to understand and accessible formats)
- the need to close the loop in terms of letting people know how their feedback has influenced decisions
- the need to make provision for people who are not online
- the need to review the Citizens' Panel and the effectiveness of this
- the need to avoid jargon
- suggestions that the council should consider setting up people's assemblies
- the need to include some face-to-face engagement

## 2. Evidence

### What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

The draft plan was informed at an early stage by:

- Officer working group - including representation from Legal Services, Corporate Policy, Communications, Democratic Services, Digital Services and Electoral Services.
- NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (NPT CoP) - the NPT CoP was established in 2019 and membership has grown to 60+ council officers and representatives from partner organisations who regularly engage with specific stakeholder groups as part of their work. The purpose of the CoP is to provide a vehicle for members to work more smartly and in a more collaborative way to ensure that everyone in our communities can have the opportunity to have their say on the decisions that affect them. It is intended to provide a professional and respectful forum for members to share experiences and knowledge on involvement and engagement issues in a spirit of mutual learning and peer support.
- NPT Citizens' Panel - launched in January 2020, the panel is made up of more than 500 residents from across the county borough and actively involves them in decision making at a very early stage, so they help shape proposals before these go out to wider public consultation.

Public consultation was undertaken from December 2022 – March 2023. The draft strategy was amended in light of the consultation feedback.

## 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>The questionnaire used during the public consultation specifically asked respondents to indicate whether they felt the Draft Public Participation Strategy would have an impact on them and/or their family because of any of the 9 protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Of those that responded, the numbers indicated that the proposals would have an impact were as follows (although very few gave reasons for their responses):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age – 24% (9). One respondent said that they are not on any social media sites and have very limited digital knowledge / experience.</li> <li>• Disability – 17% (6).</li> <li>• Race – 9% (3).</li> <li>• Sex – 6% (2). There were reasons given for the responses relating to sex</li> <li>• Sexual orientation – 9% (9).</li> <li>• Religion or belief – 11% (4). One respondent expressed the need to maintain their Christian belief whilst respecting other religions</li> </ul>
Disability			+/-	
Gender reassignment			+/-	
Marriage & civil partnership			+/-	
Pregnancy and maternity			+/-	
Race			+/-	
Religion or belief			+/-	
Sex			+/-	
Sexual orientation			+/-	<p>No respondents indicated that they felt the Draft Public Participation Strategy would have an impact on them and/or their family because of gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity.</p>

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

The action plan in the strategy includes a number of actions which will contribute towards improving positive or mitigating negative impacts on people who share a protected characteristic. These include:

- Ensuring the Council’s forward plan supports public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly
- Promote Welsh Government’s Guidance / materials for 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales. Explore Web-based platforms.

- Elections and Education Directorate to explore other potential avenues through school forums / youth councils / career fairs.
- Continue to engage with schools (subject to pandemic), including links with school councils and youth councils
- Meet with stakeholders face to face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and the issues that matter to them
- Liaise with Group Leaders to suggest they appoint Diversity Champions for each political group
- Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow the feedback to be reviewed to support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office. The survey feedback will help to deliver a positive and diverse environment for future Members to undertake their roles
- Explore feasibility of workshops in schools on this to raise aspirations and educate on the role of elected members
- Explore feasibility of 'Member for a day' experience (like work experience) and/or some case studies on the role of elected members and what the impact they can have – perhaps linked to Local Democracy Week
- Review and further develop the Neath Port Talbot Citizens' Panel, and in conjunction with the relevant stakeholder groups, identify appropriate arrangements to enable members of stakeholder groups with protected characteristics to participate
- A Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model
- Ensure that information is accessible to all – e.g. friendly tone, easy read etc.
- Develop a better understanding of the demographics of residents who regularly provide feedback, so that any gaps in representation can be identified
- Continue to develop more meaningful and innovative forms of engagement to allow residents to participate and be involved in co-production
- Ensure information on the council website is accessible

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	+			Through the development of the draft Public Participation Strategy we are aiming to embed a consistent approach to participation, involvement and engagement, we will follow the principles of:



To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	+			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility – we will adapt what we do for different audiences, ensuring that our activities are made available in the formats and language(s) that people need. In addition, we will make the most of the opportunities that digital technology presents to enable our communities to participate in decision making, but equally, we are aware that digital technology is not available to or the preference of everyone and we will make provision for this.</li> <li>• Inclusivity and Non-discrimination - We will be sensitive to the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 - age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.</li> <li>• Empowerment – we will endeavour to make sure our communities can be part of our decision making process, enable them to influence meaningful change, and demonstrate back to them that their voices have been heard</li> </ul> <p>This approach will help to work to reduce inequalities across a range of different groups, not just in relation to protected characteristics.</p>
To foster good relations between different groups	+			

<b>What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?</b>

**4. Socio Economic Duty**

What is the impact	Why will it have this impact?
Positive	The aim of the plan is to have a positive effect by encouraging and enabling local people and communities in Neath Port Talbot to be actively involved in decisions that affect them.

	One of the 3 key principles for how we will approach participation, involvement and engagement is accessibility – we will adapt what we do for different audiences, ensuring that our activities are made available in the formats and language(s) that people need. In addition, we will make the most of the opportunities that digital technology presents to enable our communities to participate in decision making, but equally, we are aware that digital technology is not available to or the preference of everyone and we will make provision for this.
Negative	The cost of travel in order to participate in council meetings may disadvantage some residents, likewise online meetings and other online mechanisms may disadvantage digitally excluded residents
Neutral	

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

The action plan in the strategy includes a number of actions which will contribute towards improving positive or mitigating negative impacts on Socio Economic Duty. These include:

- Meet with stakeholders face to face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and the issues that matter to them (this will also make provision for those who are not online)
- Promote job-sharing by executive leaders and other office holders
- Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election
- Support the Welsh Government’s and IRPW’s commitment to explore Resettlement grants or ‘parachute payments’ payments for Members who lose their seats at election
- Reviewing meeting times to have more flexibility to suit the committee Members

**5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	+			Robust, consistent and effective public participation will help the council to understand our local communities and identify issues relating to Community Cohesion, Social Exclusion and Poverty. It will be vital in helping to inform and shape strategies, plans and activities to address these.
Social Exclusion	+			
Poverty	+			

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

**6. Welsh**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: - people's opportunities to use the Welsh language	+			During the consultation the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate what effect they think the Draft Public Participation Strategy will have on people's opportunities to use the Welsh Language. Of those that responded to this question, 51% (19) thought they would have no effect, 19% (7) thought they would have a positive effect, no respondents thought they would have a negative effect and 30% (11) didn't know.
- treating the Welsh and English languages equally	+			During the consultation the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate what effect they think the Draft Public Participation Strategy will have on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. Of those that responded to

				<p>this question, 51% (19) thought they would have no effect, 14% (5) thought they would have a positive effect, 3% (1) thought they would have a negative effect and 32% (12) didn't know.</p>
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**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

The Strategy has been developed in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure that every opportunity is taken to promote opportunities for participation in the Welsh language and that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language in our participation activities and mechanisms.

The action plan in the strategy includes a number of actions which will contribute towards improving positive or mitigating negative impacts on the Welsh language. These include:

**7. Biodiversity**

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

<b>Biodiversity Duty</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>Why will it have this impact?</b>
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	+			The Public Participation Strategy will support the decision-making process by ensuring a corporate and coordinated approach to participation, involvement and engagement. By working towards shared objectives and embedding a consistent approach, we aim to ensure our public participation activities are of a consistently high standard, leading to more robust decisions that have considered the needs and interests of stakeholders – including decisions that have an impact on biodiversity and/or promoting the resilience of ecosystems
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	+			

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

**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. <b>Long term</b> – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	The Public Participation Strategy will be reviewed and subject to formal consultation by the council following local government ordinary elections – the next due to take place in 2027.
ii. <b>Prevention</b> – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	<p>The Public Participation Strategy will support the decision-making process by ensuring a corporate and coordinated approach to participation, involvement and engagement. By working towards shared objectives and embedding a consistent approach, we aim to ensure our public participation activities are of a consistently high standard and involve as many local people as possible.</p> <p>Greater public participation can help prevent problems occurring or getting worse by building trust and leading to more robust decisions that have considered the needs and interests of stakeholders.</p>

<p>iii. <b>Collaboration</b> – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>The Council will be unable to implement the Public Participation Strategy without collaboration. The NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (60+ council officers and representatives from partner organisations who regularly engage with specific stakeholder groups as part of their work) has played a key role in shaping the draft strategy and will be key in its roll out.</p> <p>The Council is also 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 and these are key stakeholder groups for public participation.</p>
<p>iv. <b>Involvement</b> – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The strategy aims to encourage local people to participate in the making of decisions by the Council and sets out how we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote awareness of the Council’s functions and how to become a Member of the authority;</li> <li>• Facilitate access to information about decisions made, or to be made by the Council;</li> <li>• Promote and facilitate processes by which local people may make representations to the Council about a decision before, and after, it is made;</li> <li>• Set out the arrangements for bringing views of the public to the attention of scrutiny committees; and</li> <li>• Promote awareness among Members of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.</li> </ul>
<p>v. <b>Integration</b> – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	
<p><b>Council’s draft well-being objectives</b></p>	<p>This Public Participation Strategy reflects the values in our Corporate Plan 2022-2027 by setting out how we will encourage and enable local people and communities in Neath Port Talbot to be actively involved in decisions that affect them, including decisions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children have the best start in life</li> <li>• Communities are thriving and sustainable</li> <li>• Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations</li> <li>• Local people are skilled and access high quality, green jobs</li> </ul>

<b>Other public bodies objectives</b>	
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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.

Progress against the Strategy will be reported through our Annual Self-Assessment Report

This strategy will be reviewed and subject to formal consultation by the council following local government ordinary elections, however this document is a living document and will be reviewed by council officers on a regular basis to establish how the council can further enhance its participation programme.

### 10. Assessment Conclusions

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

	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Equalities</b>	The IIA will be revisited in light of responses to the consultation in March 2023, conclusions to the assessment will be reached and included in the next version of the IIA.
<b>Socio Economic Disadvantage</b>	
<b>Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty</b>	
<b>Welsh</b>	

<b>Biodiversity</b>	
<b>Well-being of Future Generations</b>	

**Overall Conclusion**

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **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

**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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Ongoing work with the NPT CoP and their stakeholder groups to identify appropriate arrangements to enable members of stakeholder groups with protected characteristics to participate.	Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Manager and the NPT CoP	Ongoing	The NPT Citizens' Panel membership will be representative of the profile of residents in the county borough in terms of protected characteristics.
Monitor equalities and diversity data concerning residents who have provided feedback	NPT CoP and complaints officers	Ongoing	

## 12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
<b>Completed by</b>	Anita James	Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Manager		13.3.23
<b>Signed off by</b>	Sheenagh Rees	Head of People & OD		19 <sup>th</sup> April 2023

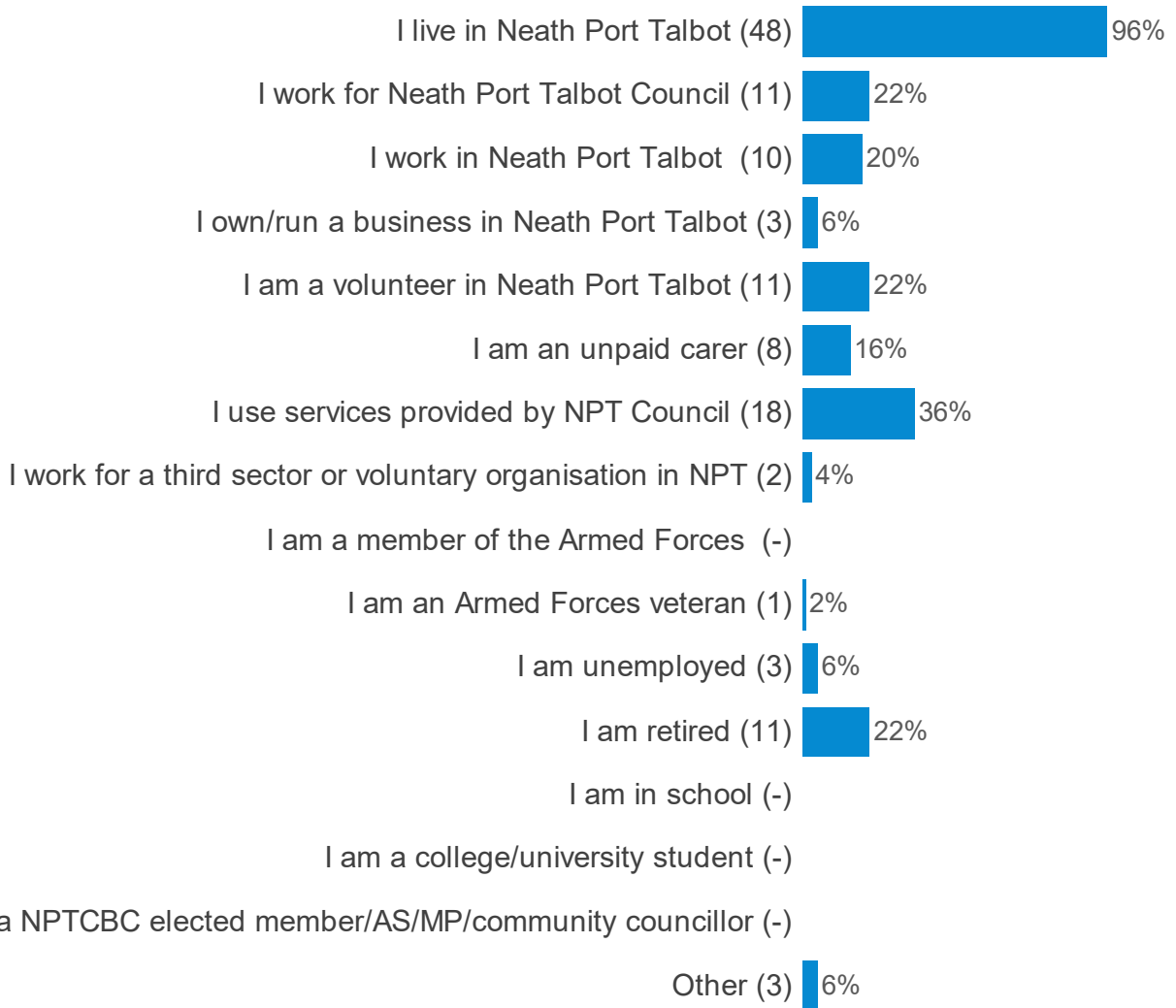
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# Consultation Report - Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028

This report was generated on 13/04/23. Overall 50 respondents completed this questionnaire.

The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

**Please indicate which of the following describes you (please select all that apply)  
(Please indicate which of the following describes you (ple...))**



*\*nb. in the above chart 100% = 50*

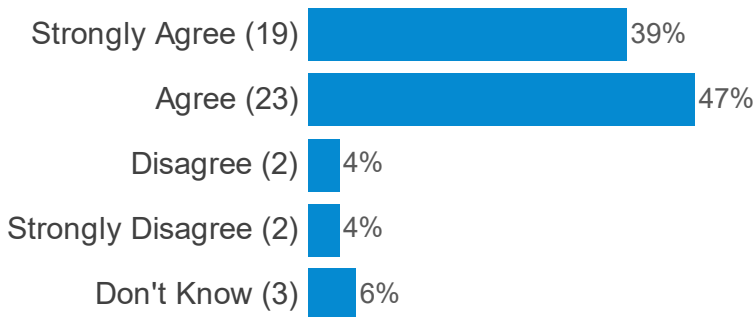
## Other - please specify

I live in Cymer specifically

I was born in Neath and brought up in Port Talbot. Currently living in Dublin Ireland but visit family in Port Talbot in a regular basis.

Unable to work due to illness

**Our Overarching Objective is to encourage and support people to participate in the council’s decision-making by undertaking our activities in ways that are inclusive and accessible, reflect the diversity of our communities, are responsive and meet the requirements of the relevant legislation and guidance (The Equalities Act 2010; The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act; The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act (2014); The Welsh Language Standards; The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. (Please indicate how you feel about this)**



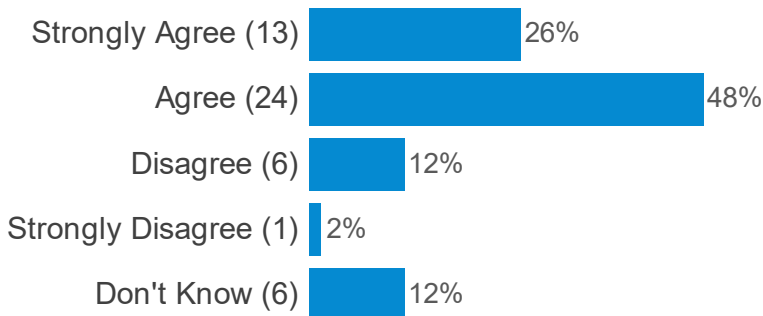
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 49*

**If you answered 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why**

Because Easy Read information is not always available or has less time to respond, also they dont make it easy for some people to take part

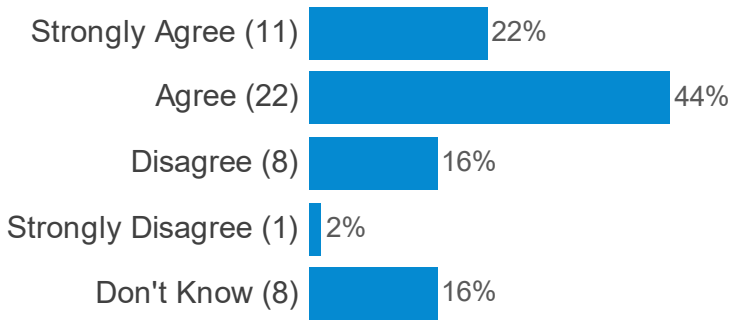
Services are not comprehensive and difficult to get hold of

**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the strategy will help the council to promote the following: (awareness among local people of the council's functions)**



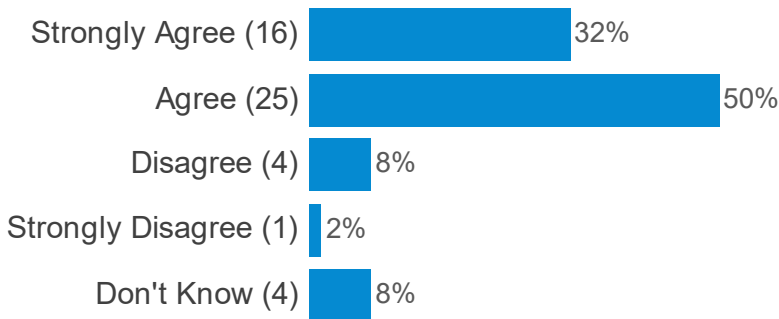
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the strategy will help the council to promote the following: (awareness among local people of how to become a member of the council and what membership entails)**



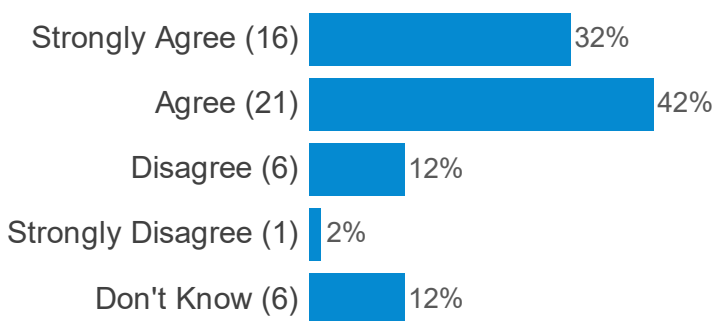
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the strategy will help the council to promote the following: (access for local people to information about council decisions)**



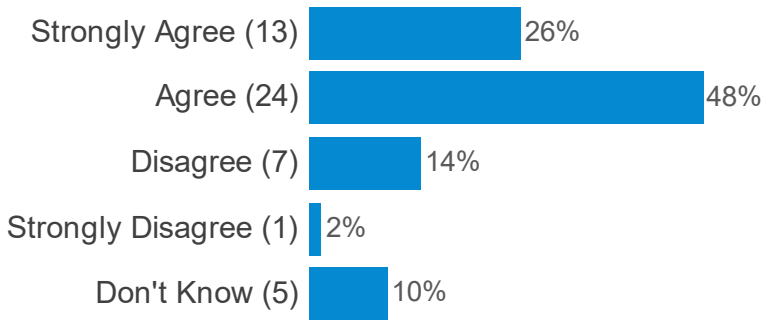
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the strategy will help the council to promote the following: (processes so that local people can make representations to the council about a decision before, and after, it is made)**



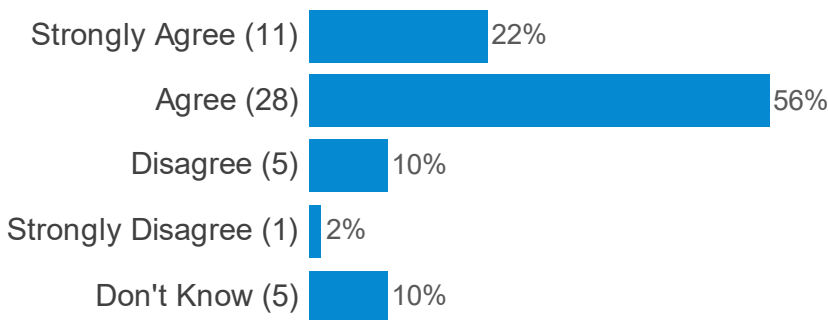
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the strategy will help the council to promote the following: (arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees)**



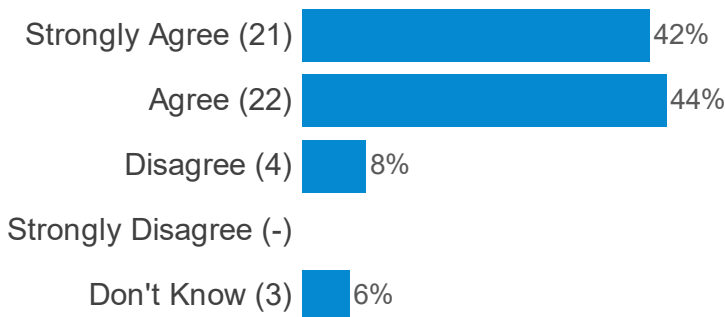
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the strategy will help the council to promote the following: (awareness among the benefits of councillors using social media to communicate with local people)**



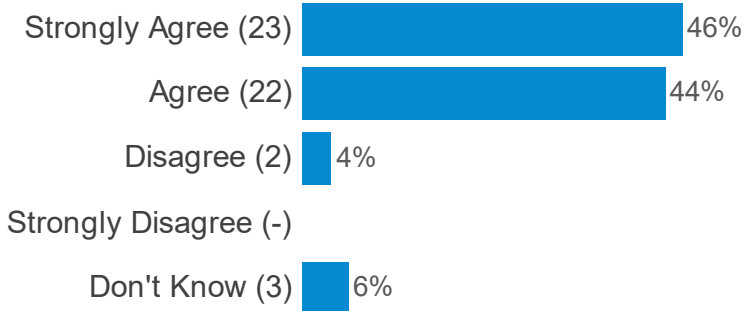
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Publish a final version of the Public Participation Strategy)**



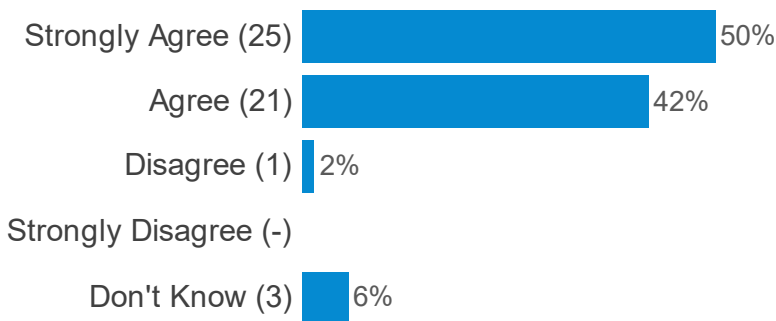
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Publish a Guide to the Democratic Process and how the Council makes decisions)**



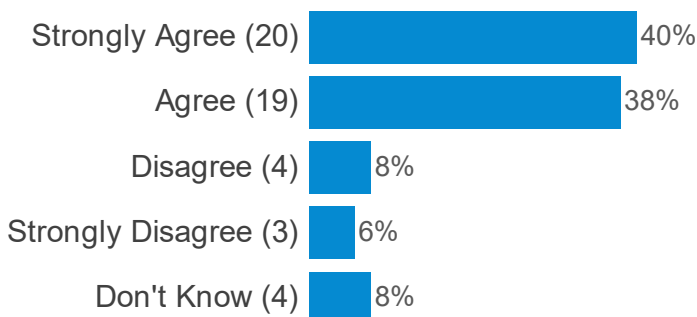
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Ensure the Council’s forward plan support public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly)**



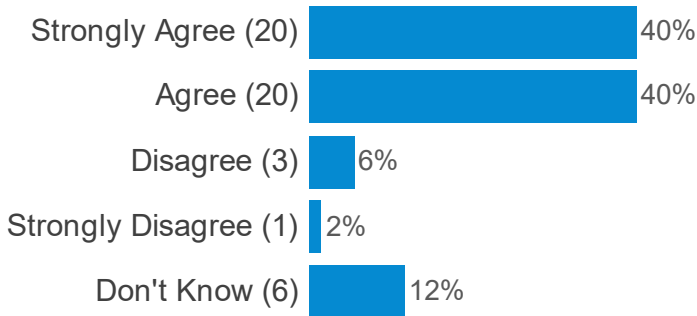
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Promote Welsh Government’s Guidance / materials for 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales - explore Web-based platforms)**



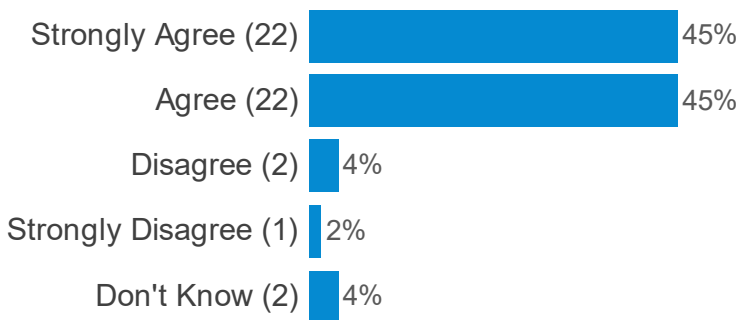
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Elections and Education Directorate to explore other potential avenues through school forums / youth councils / career fairs)**



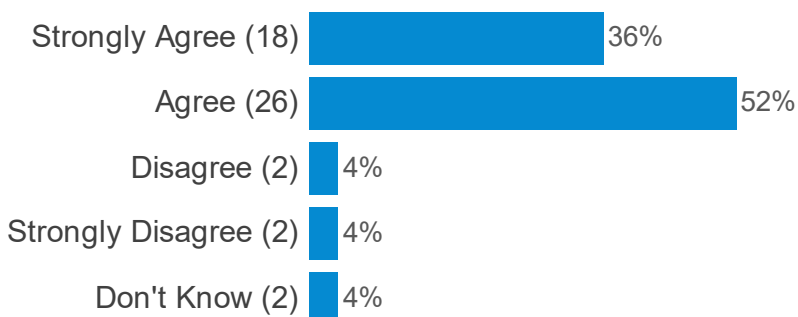
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Continue to engage with schools (subject to pandemic), including links with school councils and youth councils)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 49*

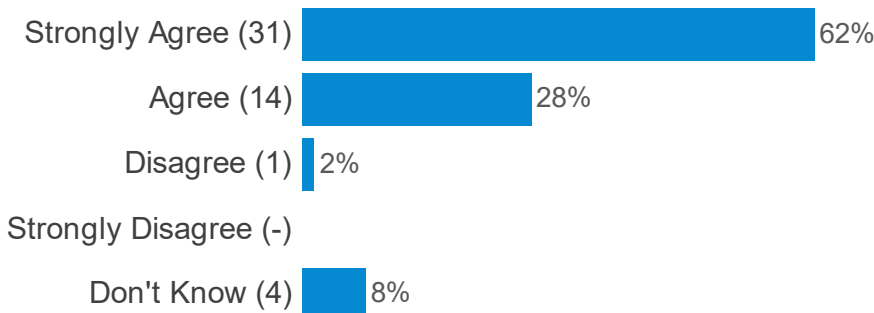
**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Liaise with local community groups, school governors and other such organisations to ensure links with 'Becoming a Councillor page' are promoted)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

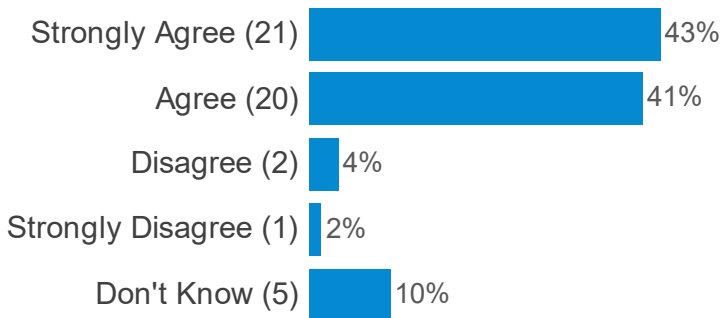


**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Meet with stakeholders face to face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and the issues that matter to them)**



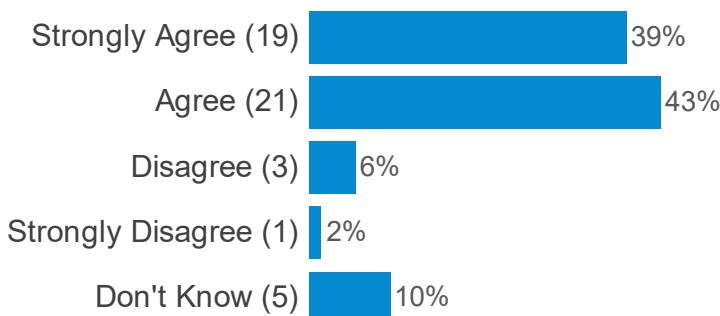
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 50*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Continue webcasting of meetings as specified under the 2021 Act and develop a hybrid meeting policy and ensure availability of translation facilities for Full Council meetings to be conducted bilingually and any other meetings required in legislation)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 49*

**Requirement 1: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors (Further promote the development of members' annual reports under section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as a means of promoting awareness of the council's functions and the role of elected members)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 49*

**Is there anything you think is missing from what we are proposing to focus on to promote awareness of the functions the council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors?**

You need better general management practices

Can't put my finger on it but possibly complex. Is ther accountability and inspection ?

Publish an easily accessible newsletter

The above should be available for scrutiny on request. Many documents are distributed and not read by public

**PUBLISH AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE NEWSLETTER**

1. Use large TV's/Screens placed in prominent places in local libraries, community centres (town centres) to promote awareness of the council functions, events etc. 2. Quarterly newsletters to all households (could be delivered by refuse collection teams)

It may also be beneficial to reinforce what the Council is not able to do (i.e. making the distinction between the functions of a MP and/or MS). In some instances, residents believe the local MP has "authority" over the Council.

Could accessing local democracy be a part of the education programme maybe as part of assemblies etc. and linked into a strategy to promote good citizenship from an early age? This should include all of the participation functions in addition to promoting responsible dog management (ownership), noise awareness, litter awareness etc.. Obviously this would need to be aimed at different age groups in different ways but promoting 'we' rather than 'me' in society.

Be more visible in the community. Be seen to be tackling issues.

Set up 'open days' at Council facilities, head office etc for people to see how the council works and how it puts the views, needs etc into practice. To also show how the decisions taken at council meetings are implemented.

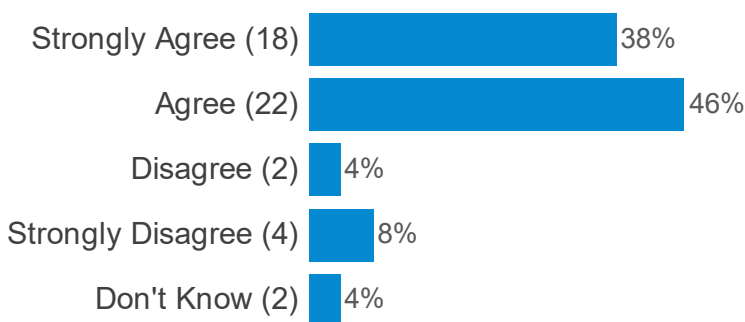
No

How are you going to get it out there?

Consistent methods of promoting this other than online

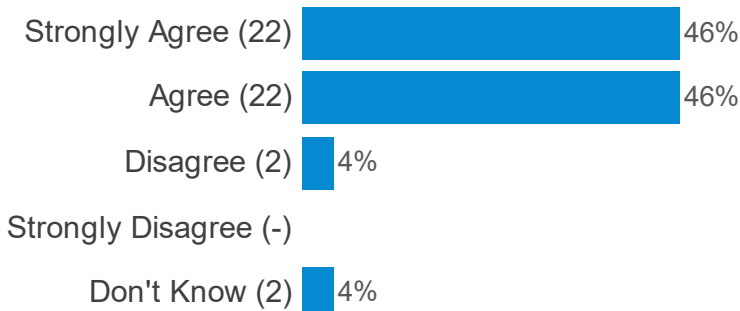
I complete all the surveys, but rarely if ever do I get final feedback, this leaves me with a strong belief that this is merely a box ticking exercise by the council, and that absolutely no notice or consideration of public feeling is taken into consideration when decision making.

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Continue with hybrid meetings that allow Councillors to attend and participate in meetings from any location with an internet connection)**



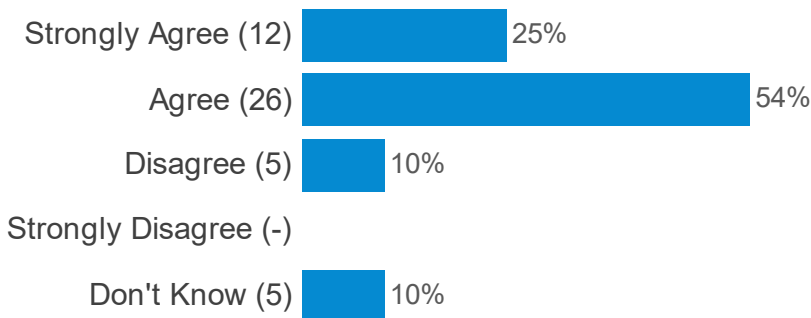
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Ensure that information for potential councillors is available and fit for purpose)**



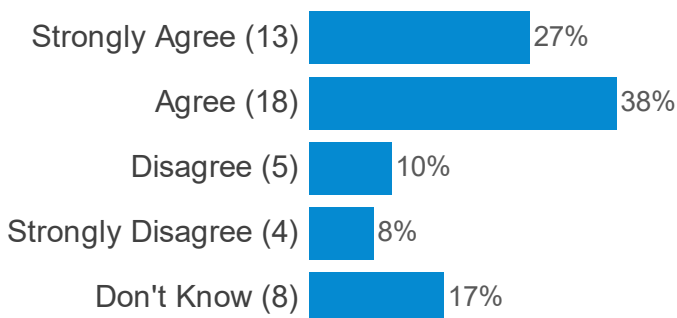
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Ongoing review of the effectiveness of the voting awareness raising campaigns elections and to build upon these campaigns ahead of the Local Government Elections 2022, ensuring wider partnerships arrangements are taken forward to allow engagement with wider audiences)**



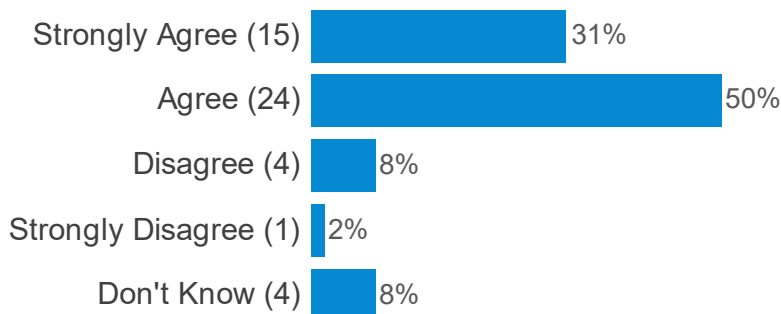
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Liaise with Group Leaders to suggest they appoint Diversity Champions for each political group)**



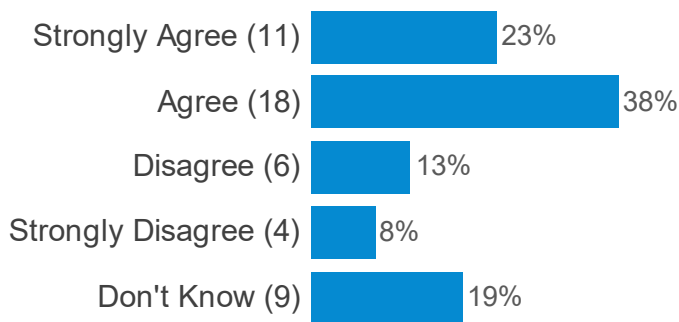
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Review areas of training and development which can be made available online, core set of training materials which can be used for all Members)**



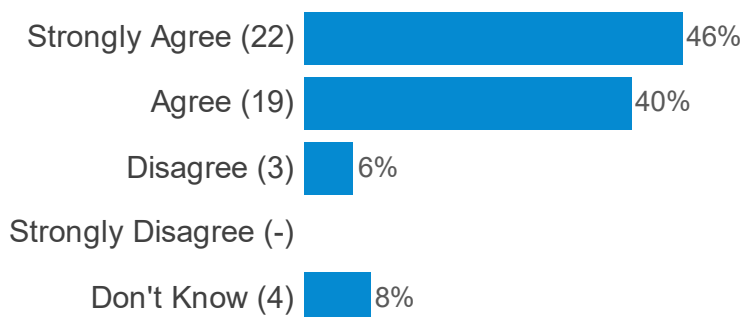
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Promote job-sharing by executive leaders and other office holders)**



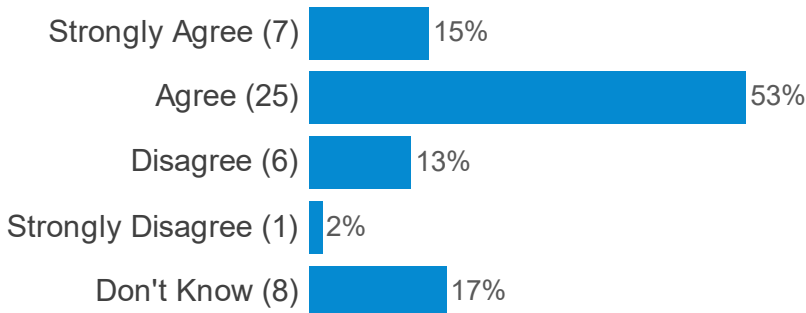
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Ensure that members undertake health and safety training, lone working training and other personal safety measures)**



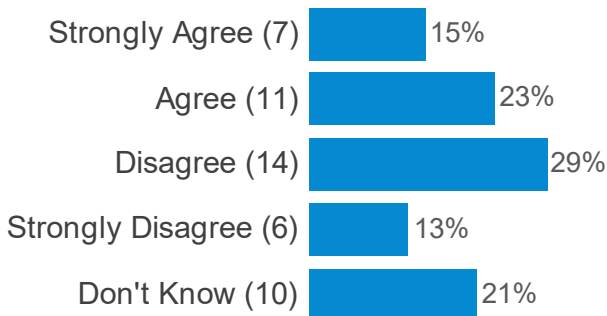
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election)**



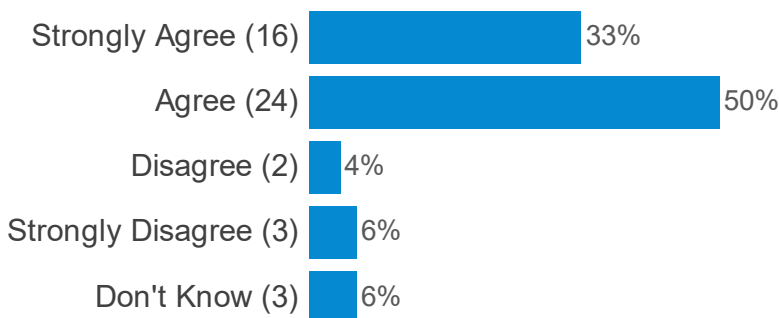
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 47*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Support the Welsh Government’s and Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) commitment to explore Resettlement grants or ‘parachute payments’ payments for Members who lose their seats at election)**



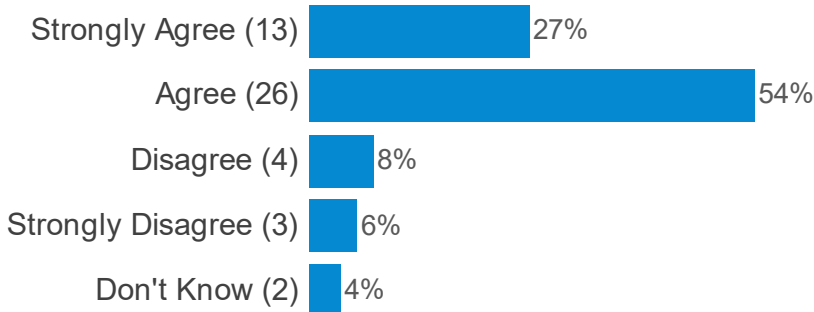
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**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Reviewing meeting times to have more flexibility to suit the committee Members)**



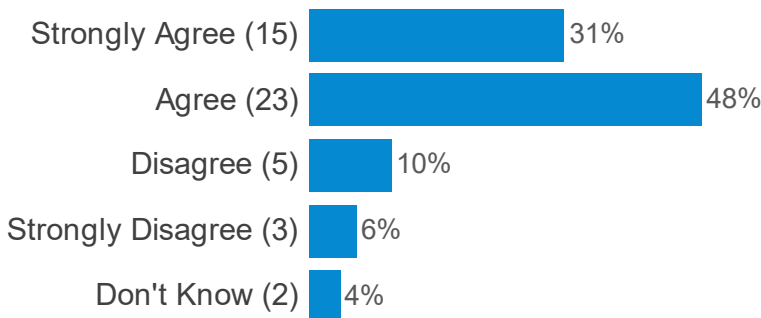
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow the feedback to be reviewed to support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office. The survey feedback will help to deliver a positive and diverse environment for future Members to undertake their roles)**



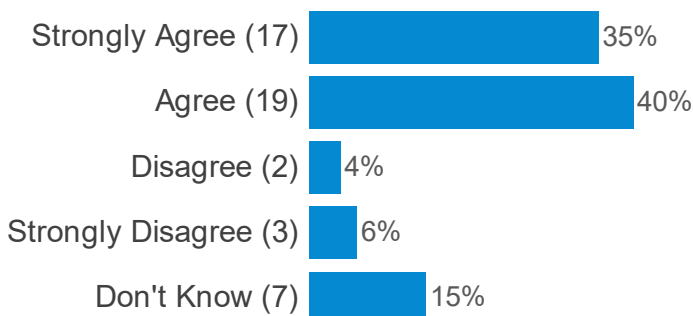
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Explore feasibility of workshops in schools on this to raise aspirations and educate on the role of elected members)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Requirement 2: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves (Explore feasibility of 'Member for a day' experience (like work experience) and/or some case studies on the role of elected members and what the impact they can have – perhaps linked to Local Democracy Week)**

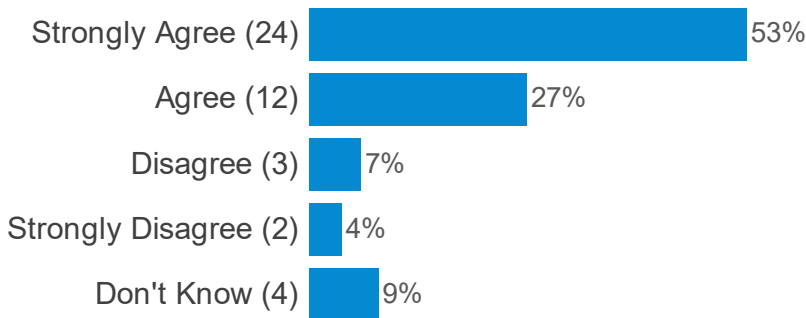


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 48*

**Is there anything you think is missing from what we are proposing to focus on to share information about how to go about becoming an elected member, or councillor, and what the role of the council involves?**

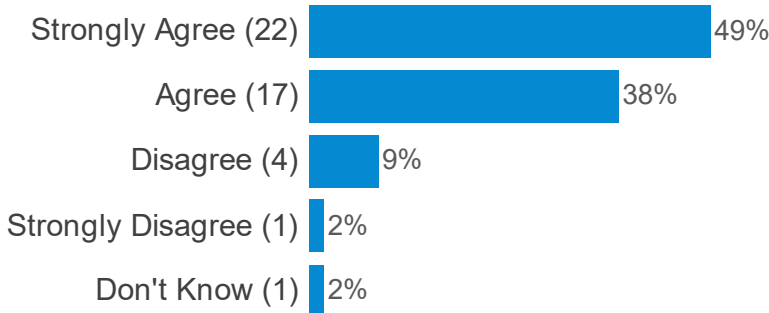
- \_\_\_\_\_ Better management practices are necessary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Outside help maybe?
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
- \_\_\_\_\_ Note that not everyone has access to new technology
- \_\_\_\_\_ NO
- \_\_\_\_\_ Greater focus on the role, activities and achievements of the various member committees
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm not keen on promoting the remunerations available. Whilst I accept that allowances will be paid, I feel this should be a secondary benefit. I would hope prospective candidates are driven by an intrinsic need to make their communities better through their contributions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ALL training for Members should be made available to anyone with an aspiration to become a politician and the processes involved in becoming a Member From idea to election should be laid out in an ultra simple way so that it is accessible to all (without council 'jargon') providing clear detailed information as part of a roadmap to becoming an elected Member.
- \_\_\_\_\_ N/A
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
- \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Continue to move towards participative approaches to engagement which empower citizens and place decision making in the hands of communities and individuals)**



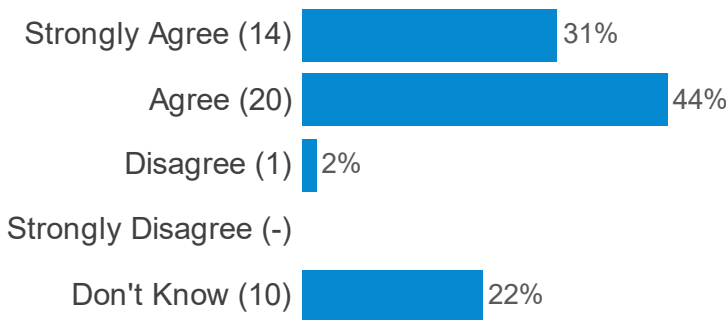
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Build on the use of technology to increase the reach of engagement activity)**



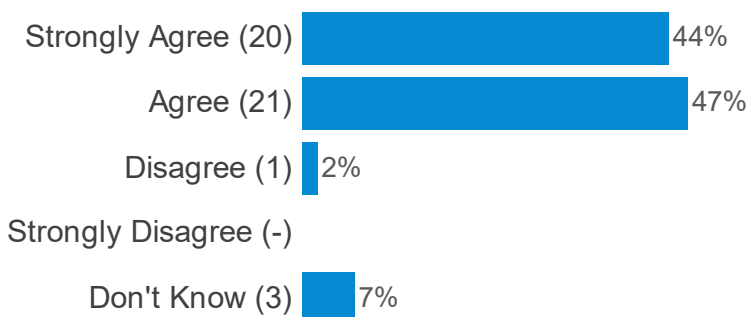
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Have due regard for Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Citizen Engagement Scheme in all of our consultation and engagement activities)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

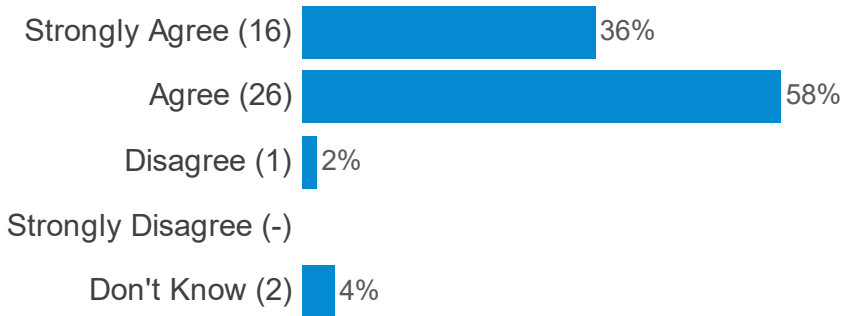
**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Campaign to raise awareness of the mechanisms in place for local people to get involved in decision making )**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

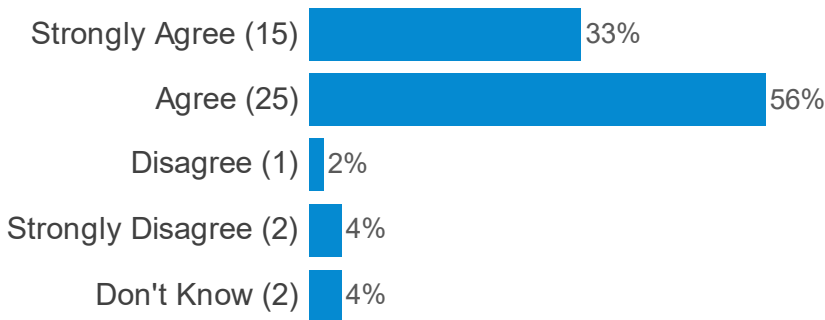


**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Develop effective and inclusive consultation and engagement exercises that set reasonable expectations about what can and cannot be changed as a result)**



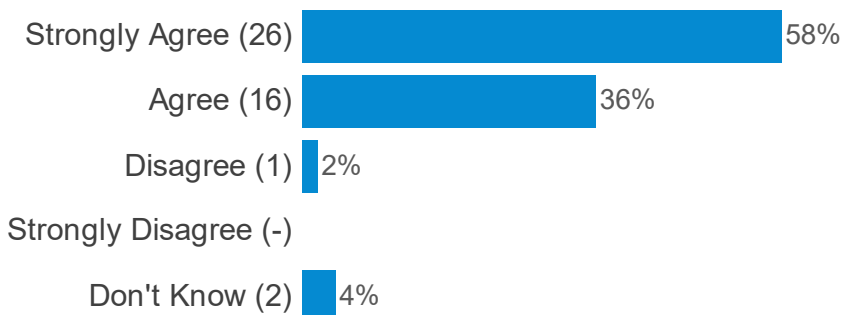
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Review and further develop the Neath Port Talbot Citizens' Panel)**



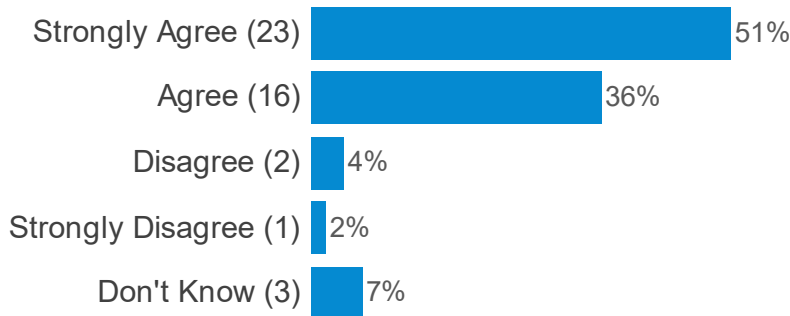
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Let people know how their feedback helped influence decisions e.g. 'You said...we did')**



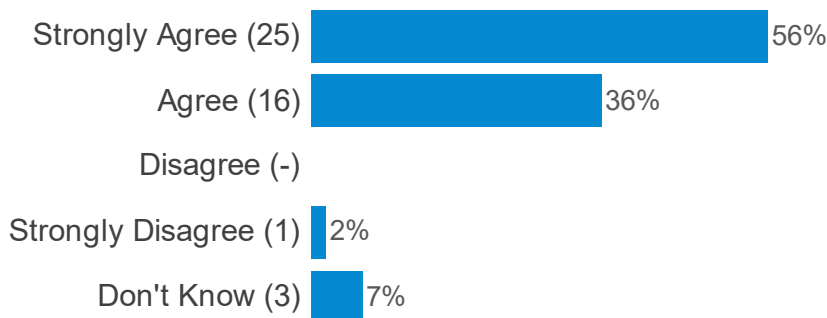
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Identify opportunities to increase our reach into communities through partnership working)**



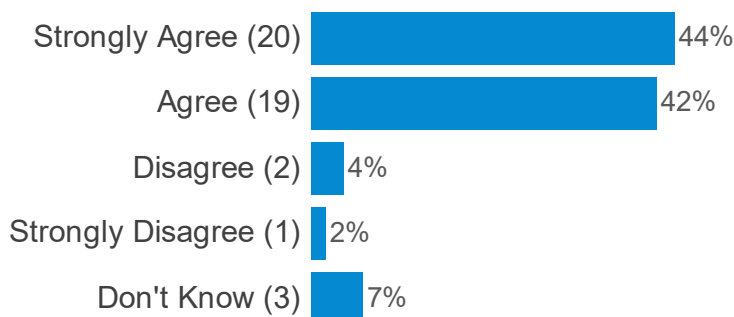
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Ensure that when important decisions are made, robust and reliable information and stakeholders' feedback is made available to decision makers)**



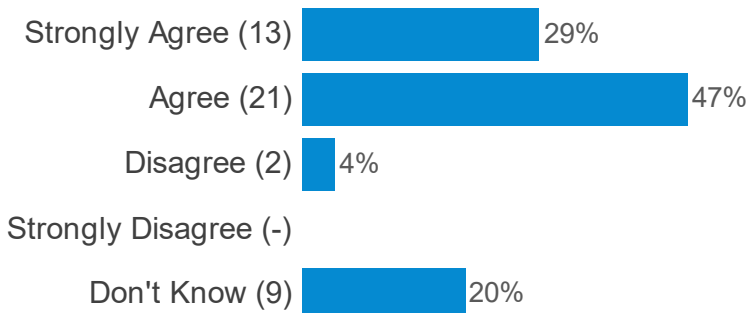
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Explore the views of the public about which of the council's committees they consider should be broadcast live)**



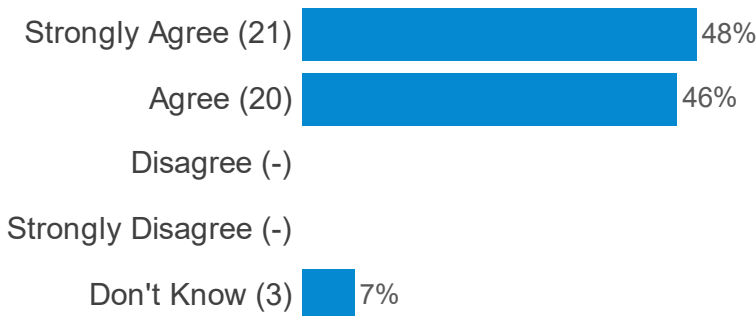
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Further develop the NPT Community of Practice on involvement and Engagement to ensure a coordinated approach to consultation and engagement)**



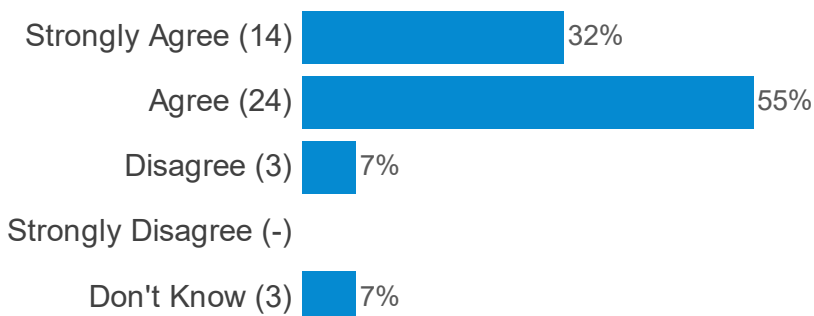
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Ensure officers are adequately equipped with the necessary skills and tools to design consultations, collect feedback in a timely way and accurately interpret the results)**



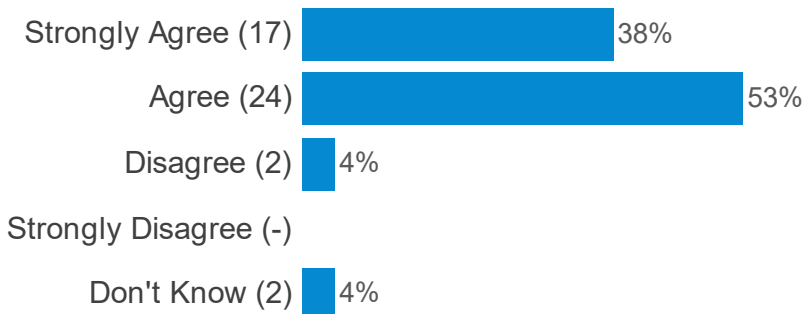
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 44*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Develop a Consultation and Engagement Toolkit to ensure a corporate and consistent approach to all activities)**



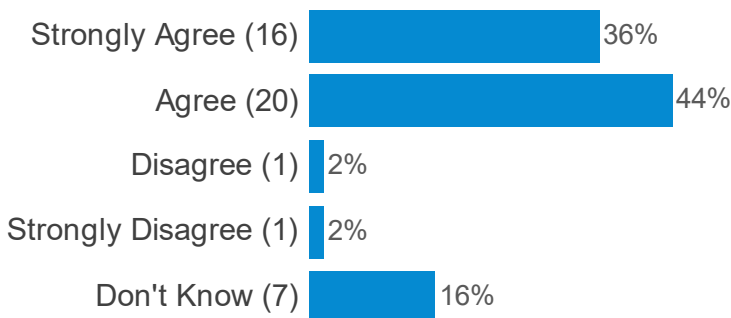
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 44*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Develop systems and processes for collating all consultation and engagement feedback from across the Council in a central resource, to form a reliable, robust and more comprehensive picture of what people in Neath Port Talbot think, need and want)**



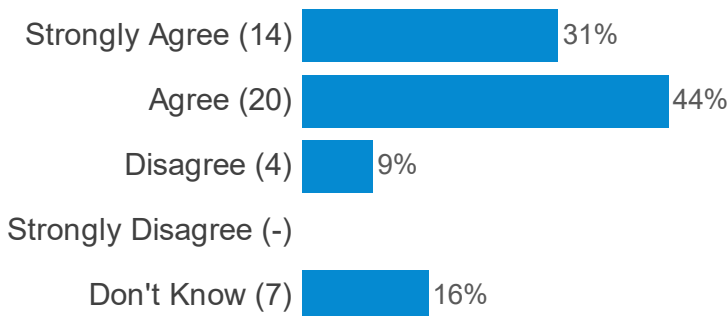
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Develop a forward planning process/consultation calendar)**



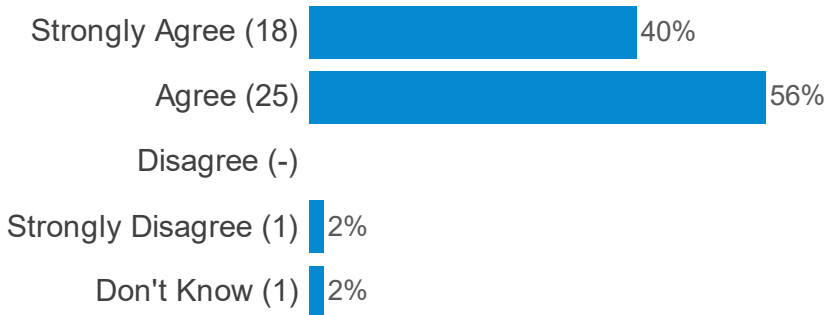
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Improve analysis, interpretation and sharing of information to inform decision making, utilising the agreed technology (i.e. Snap Software))**



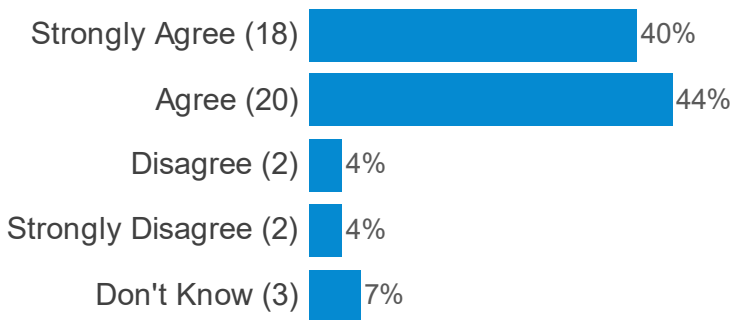
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Keep up-to-date with any relevant changes in legislation and exploring examples of innovation and good practice)**



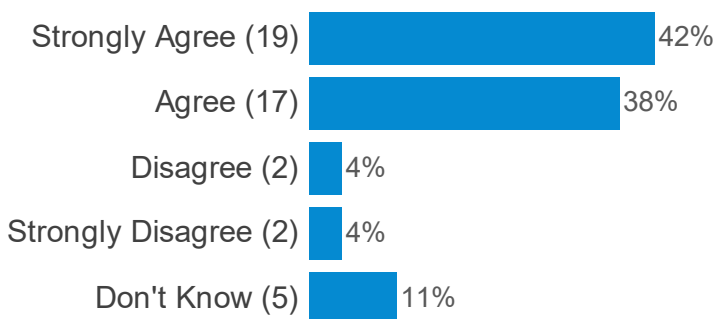
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (A Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Requirement 3: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council (Ensure that information is accessible to all Children and Young People – e.g. friendly tone, easy read etc)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 45*

**Is there anything you think is missing from what we are proposing to focus on to provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council?**

Improved practice in management are needef

Don't know

No

The ideas are good but the practicality of implementing the above cost

NO

Improved consultation, engagement and communication with carers of children and adults regarding help, support, advice available and how to access it. One central point of contact that can help to signpost /co-ordinate across the various depts. e.g. education, social services & health

Making better use of community based workers such as Local Area Co-Ordinators as not only case workers but with a wider brief to provide information about the council, consultations etc and also to be able to receive feedback on behalf of the council and to record this feedback formally.

Engage with senior citizens and older people more. Improve services to retired people and pensioners.

As there are 500+ members of the Citizen's Panel and just 70 responses to surveys, we need to consider how a campaign is going to engage with those members who are not responding to surveys and identify their reasons. Is it lack of confidence, or skills required and perhaps a need for training? Are we reaching enough people by using current communication models? Is there a need for identifying panel members interests in subject matter?

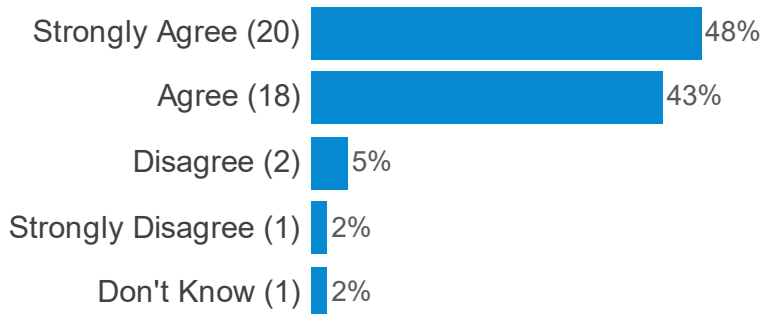
Info to be accessible to all, including those with learning disabilities or who may not be active digitally. Need to avoid by giving impression consultation is a referendum: Council are responsible for taking decisions, some which may be right but not popular.

Not all individuals have access to IT equipment

The Citizens' Panel should be scrapped. 71 respondents from 500 residents? That's 14% involvement! This is a very poor level of interaction and shows the Panel is not functioning at all. NPTCBC should introduce a Citizens' Assembly, e.g. 101 residents called up akin to jury service in order to help council make necessary policy decisions. With a citizens' assembly, interaction is 100% and would allow for more cohesive and definite strategies. More, here: <https://citizensassembly.co.uk>

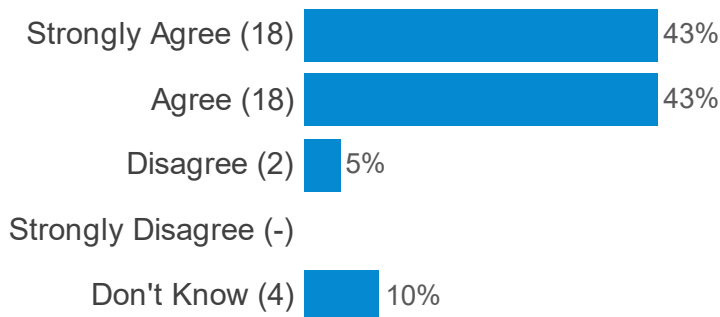
NPT Citizens panel should be reviewed, not sure about developing it or whether it should be scrapped for something else. As a member I am losing interest as there is no interaction with others - just giving your thoughts in your own personal bubble without the opportunity to discuss issues and ideas with others makes you feel like you aren't really part of the process. In-community and virtual workshops on important issues (similar to what I believe was done with the budget) where anyone with an interest can join in would be more beneficial ALL committees should be broadcast live Key discussion topics in council meetings should be shared across social media so public knows what is being discussed when without having to think about it and look for it. Likewise, meeting recordings should be times stamped according to the agenda items so people can easily find the parts they are interested in Consider citizen's assemblies for important (potentially controversial) topics - demographically selected people from across the borough being asked to participate

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Further develop our engagement campaign ('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 )**



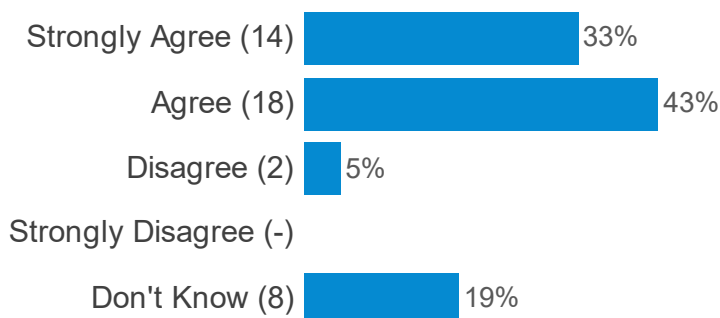
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Develop a better understanding of the demographics of residents who regularly provide feedback, so that any gaps in representation can be identified)**



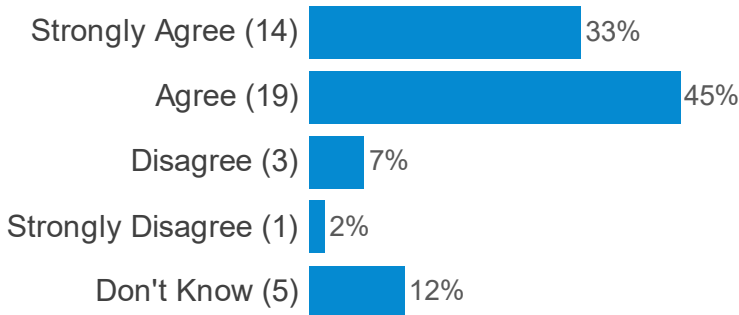
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Consider how we develop these as a more formal mechanism for the online community to participate in consultations and engagement campaigns )**



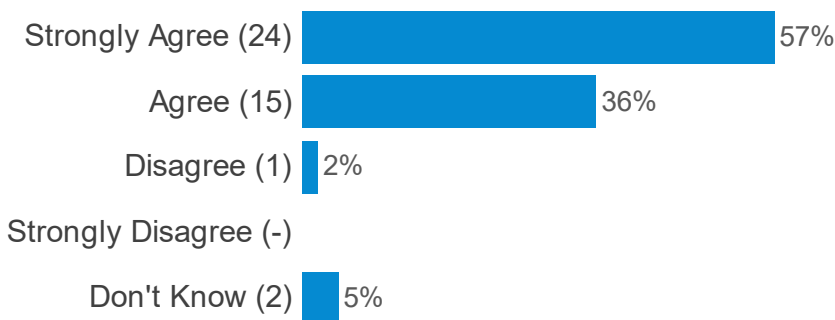
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Embrace the use of digital discussions )**



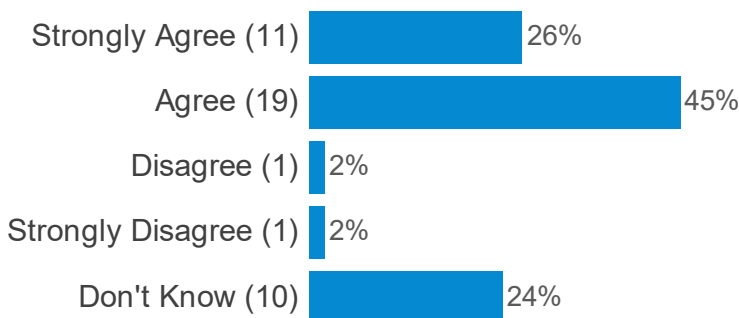
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Meet with stakeholders face-to-face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and issues that matter to them)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

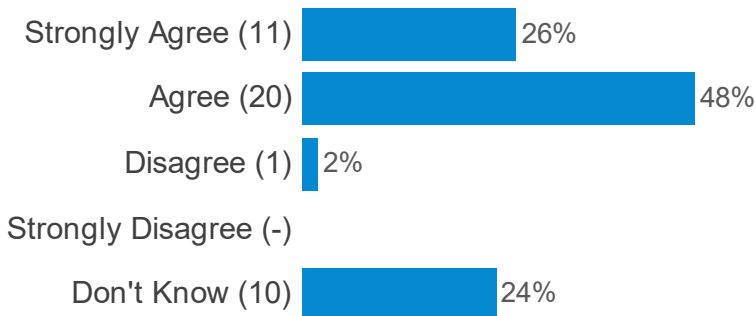
**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Review and update the Scrutiny Public Engagement Strategy particularly with respect to hybrid meetings )**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

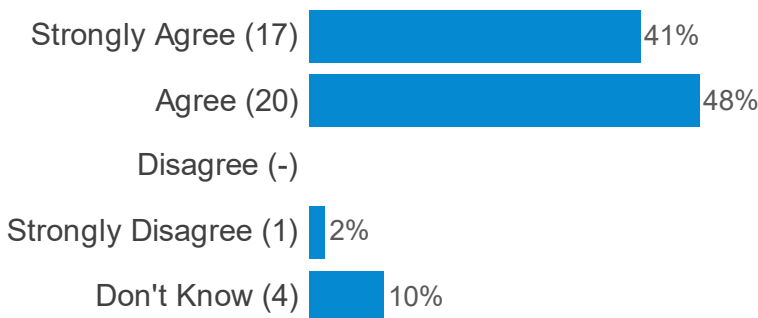


**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Review and update the council’s Consultation and Engagement Strategy )**



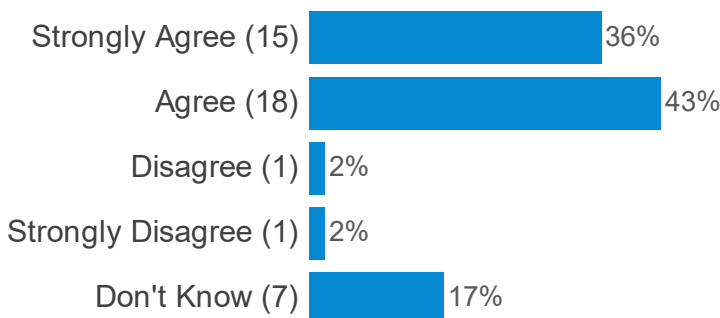
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Implement the council’s duty under section 90 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to consult local people on performance)**



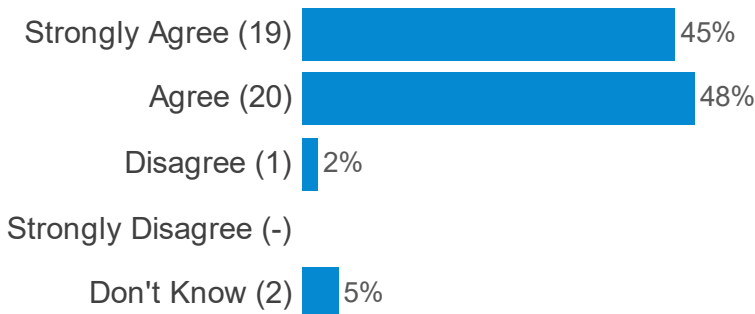
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (A Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model )**



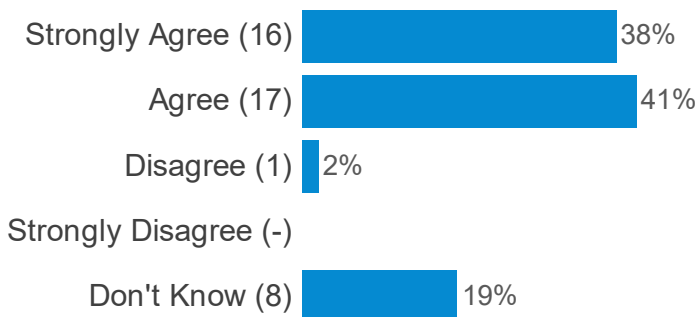
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Continue to develop more meaningful and innovative forms of engagement to allow residents to participate and be involved in co-production. )**



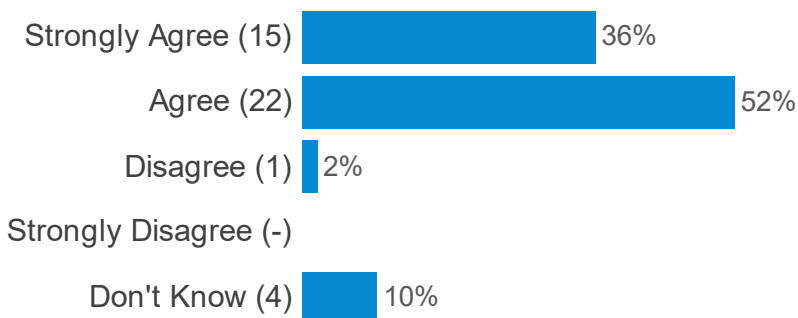
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Provide training for staff so that they understand what effective participation looks like. Provide a framework or model - e.g. Lundy and raise awareness of the Gunning Principles. )**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 4: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations (Develop a framework for how we monitor participation opportunities to ensure quality, consistency and measure the impact they have)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Is there anything you think is missing from what we are proposing to focus on to provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations?**

Practices in management that are better

Involve a Private company?

No

No

NO

1) Ensure a balance of on-line, digital discussions and face-to-face / stakeholder meetings to accomodate those that are not computer literate or do not have internet access. 2) Ensure communication/consultation mechanisms are in place for people who are housebound e.g. via carers

All complaints about service, performance and other general issues should be published with the outcome. Develop a resolution driven strategy to address complaints and recognise complaints as an honest reflection of how council services are perceived and are therefore an essential and highly valued part of the participation process.

Avoid words like co-production without being clear what the jargon means

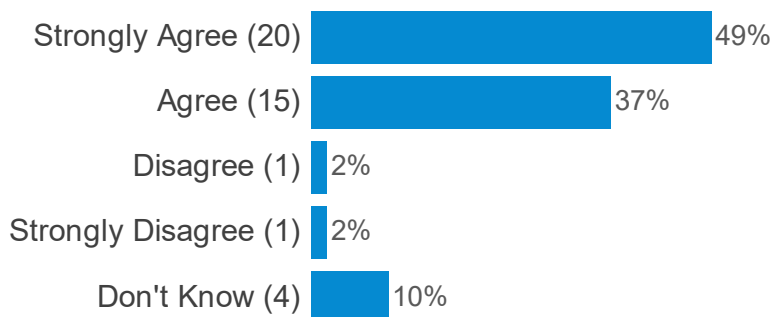
N/A

I think Cymer is viewed by NPT as an outpost. We were not consulted or even told when a small bridge over the Corrwg river was removed a few years ago. This was used frequently by local people including a partially disabled resident. So your consultation proposals need more work!!

I agree that developing "more meaningful and innovative forms of engagement to allow residents to participate and be involved in co-production" is essential, but disagree that 'Let's Talk' strategy is the answer. NPTCBC should consider setting up People's Assemblies throughout each community. People's assemblies are a way for local residents and communities to direct policy and initiate research into new strategies for consideration by the Council and a Citizens' Assembly. More, here: [https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/2497271/How-to-run-a-Peoples-Assembly.pdf](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/2497271/How-to-run-a-Peoples-Assembly.pdf)

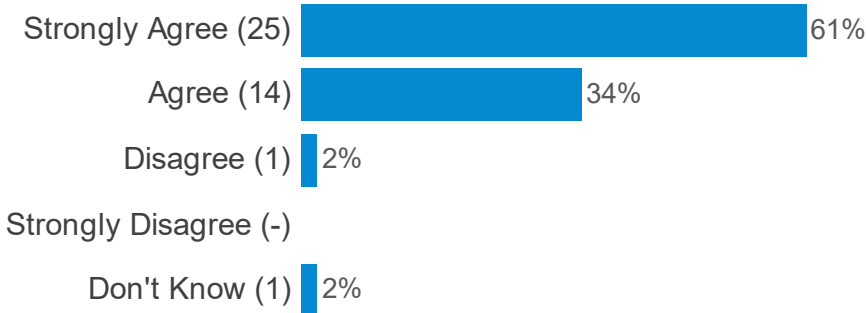
develop "let's talk" to include regular on-street forums (people's assemblies) on current questions the council faces in high footfall areas so people who would not normally engage in consultations etc can stumble across them and join in through curiosity consider consultations that could be less formal / structured, not more

**Requirement 5: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (Publish a Guide to the Democratic Process and how the council makes decisions )**



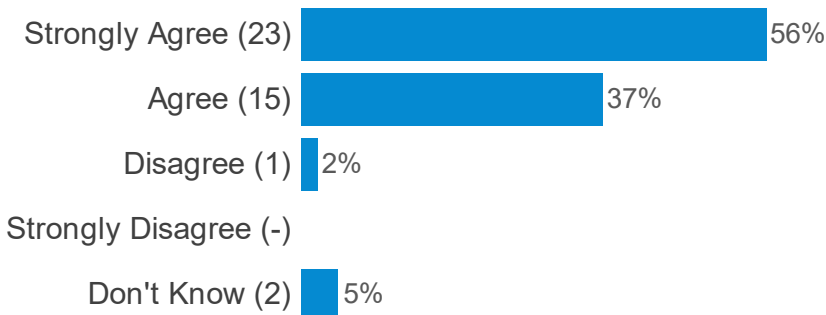
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 5: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (Ensure information on the council website is accessible )**



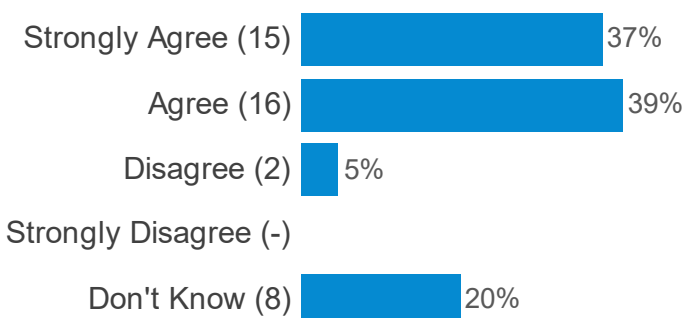
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 5: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (Ensure the council’s forward plan supports public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly )**



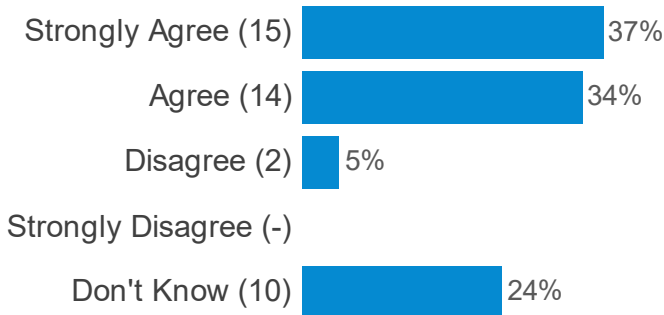
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 5: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (Continue the webcasting of meetings as specified under the 2021 Act and develop a hybrid meeting policy and ensure availability of translation facilities for Full Council meetings to be conducted bilingually and any other meetings required in legislation)**



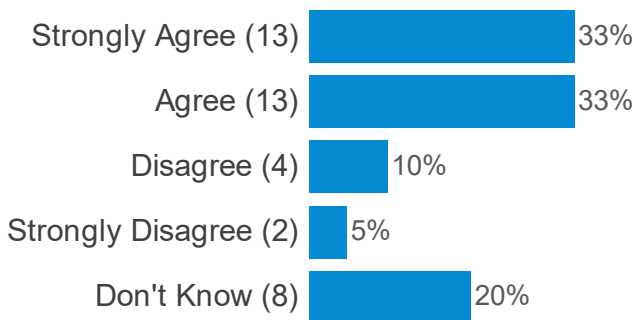
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 5: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (Provide detailed training to chairs of scrutiny committee on ways in which they can engage the community in the scrutiny process)**



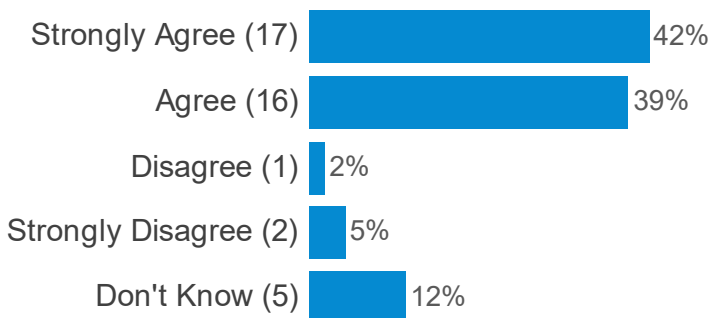
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 5: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (Promote the use of scrutiny on social media channels )**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

**Requirement 5: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees (A Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Is there anything you think is missing from what we are proposing to focus on to provide arrangements to bring views of the public to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees?**

Yes as before re management practices

Don't know

No

No

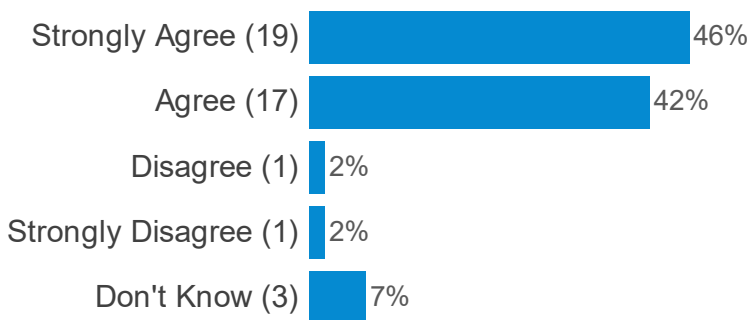
NO

I totally agree with the publication of a guide to the democratic process and how decisions are made. I hope it shall be in a readable format that is accessible to all and not exclude those who may have sight problems

N/A

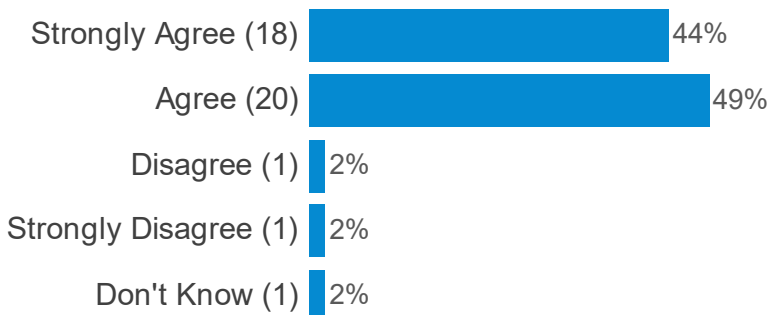
How will you communicate to people with out IT equipment

**Requirement 6: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors (Member Induction and Training )**



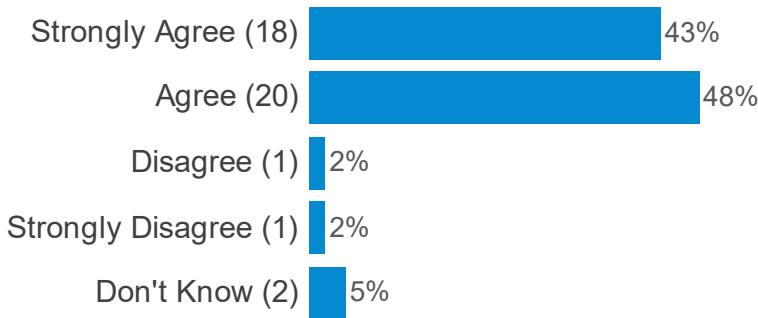
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 6: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors (Social media safety training to be delivered to members through the Member Induction Programme and built upon during their term of office )**



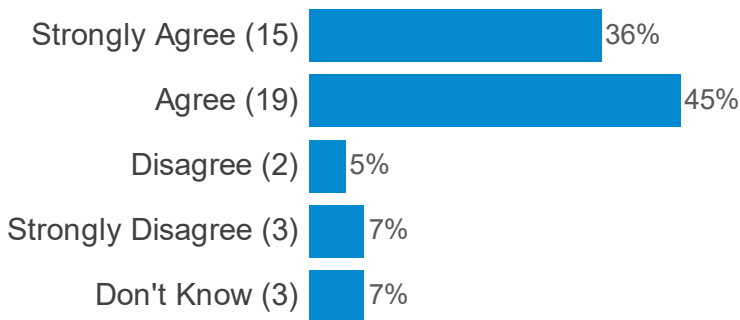
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 6: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors (Develop our social media channels as a platform to ask questions and share views)**



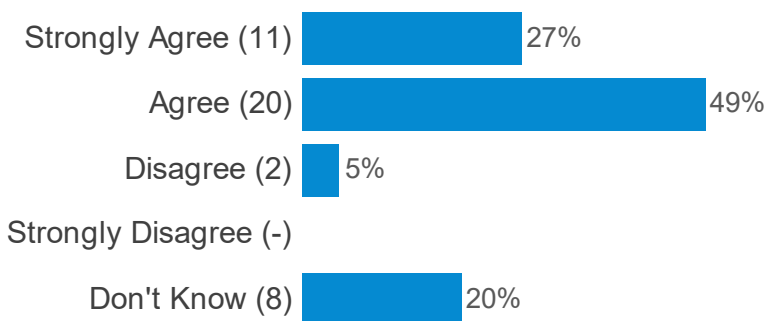
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 6: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors (Embrace the use of digital discussions)**



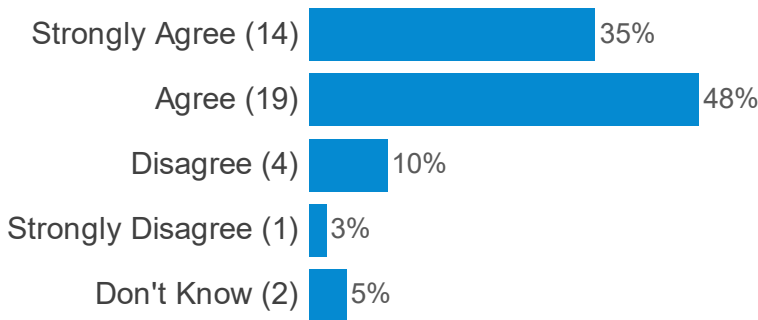
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

**Requirement 6: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors (Member Seminars )**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Requirement 6: please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors (The Children and Young People’s Participation and Engagement Strategy will include information and processes for digital engagement)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

**Is there anything you think is missing from what we are proposing to focus on to promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to councillors?**

Councillor should be meeting residents face to face not everyone has access to social media

Don't know

no

No

NO

\*\* more investment in local libraries to further develop / maintain the wonderful and crucial role they are playing in connecting with our local communities and encouraging communication and the wellbeing of residents with each other through the various wide ranging activities and services

Older residents need help to access it

Social media debates open to abuse and hijacking, bullying, intimidation.

N/A

No

As long as councillors remain professional at all times I feel this is a great way to communicate with communities especially those who struggle to get out.



### Do you have any other views on our Draft Public Participation Strategy that you would like to share with us?

The council needs to adopt better practices as before

Its not all about a digital world. Councillors should be more visible as they are when seeking votes

Looking at this is I'd say you need professional help

none

No

NO

a typical dichotomous survey

Not enough focus on older people, retired and pensioners. There is a lack of provision for older people who want housing that meets their needs.

It's an excellent strategy and well thought out. I have made some comments and hope they're useful suggestions, they're not meant as a criticism in any way to those responsible for development of the strategy

Councillors need to be given best advice in coming to decisions: informed by but not dictated by views, else can lead to short term please social media decisions, which may not be the same as the best decision

Please remember people in Cymer would like to be consulted.

No

Could the use of 'council' language be clearer/more user friendly e.g. what does 'Lundy' and 'Gunning' mean?

It is important that people know how the council has used the feedback that they have given

No

### Have you voted in a local election in the last five years?



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

### Please give your reasons for your response

It's very important to vote

No

Because it is my right to do so.

Stupid question. Why does anyone vote

why would I vote?

I believe that all those eligible to vote should do so.

Important to maintain democracy

I BELIEVE THAT ALL THOSE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE SHOULD DO SO.

Because I have?

I believe participation in democracy is extremely important. I feel it is unfair to comment or criticise if you have not voted (in other words, you get what you deserve if you do not vote).

### Please give your reasons for your response

Don't vote don't have a say

have voted in all elections.

I want things to improve where I live and in the wider NPT community.

If I don't let me local councillor know my concerns, how will they be addressed.

Democracy is important in our society and gives us the opportunity to make informed choices and decisions

Voting is a hard won democratic right and it is duty to vote.

To have my voice heard

Democracy

N/A

I have always voted. sometimes it's to keep someone out rather than to let someone in.

Because I had to.

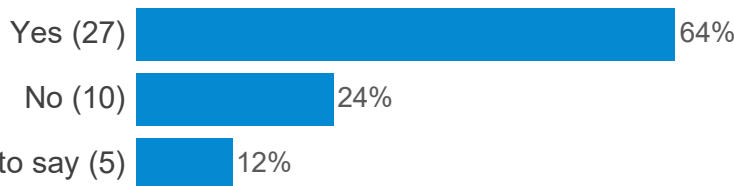
AS I HAVE VOTED????

We are lucky to live in a democracy and I think it is important to use your vote

I want to influence how we are governed locally. It needs to change.

I always vote

### Have you taken part in any other activities to influence NPT Council's decision making in the last 12 months (e.g. surveys, focus groups, submitted a comment or complaint, signed a petition etc.)?



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 42*

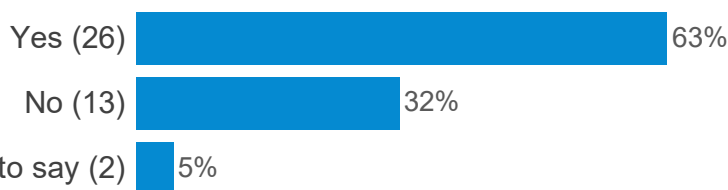
**If yes, please tell us how and which decision(s) this/these were related to**

- Can't remember
- Never had any feedback outcomes to any activities
- All surveys/information that I get made aware of.
- Refuse collection
- REFUSE COLLECTION
- Signed the Fair Funding petition (Unison campaign) Responded to the recent Culture and Heritage consultation
- Culture strategy consultation
- survey, complaint
- Destruction of wild flowers, poorly maintained pathways, litter, speeding on the 30mph roads. I'm not sure if any were taken seriously
- Planning objections
- the surveys sent via email to NPT email. Same as this survey.
- Let's Talk survey
- I don't keep a list
- Citizens' Panel

**If no, please tell us why not**

- I didn't know I could
- Not been aware of any focus groups etc but we are extremely lucky and appreciative of the caring, supportive and helpful staff in Cwmavon Library who are actively involved in connecting with the community and providing a wide range of support and social activities to help the young and elderly and vulnerable members of our local community.
- No reason
- N/A

**Have you interacted with your local councillor/s in the last twelve months?**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 41*

**Please give your reasons for your response**

- To actively promote charitable causes
- Can't remember
- Email due to dangerous trees in park, although still not sorted and fly tipping
- Because 1 lives next door, others sit on panels that I sit on, because there are issues that need addressing.
- A concern regarding refuse collection
- On facebook - following activity and involvement in community of the local councillors
- A CONCERN REGARDING REFUSE COLLECTION

### Please give your reasons for your response

(1) Provided views and major concerns over the proposed wind farm in Cwmavon

No issues encountered.

Busy caring for elderly parent

Discussing third sector grants

I have been poorly

flooding

Attended ward meetings and asked advice too

N/A

No cause to.

No reason to.

Planning concerns

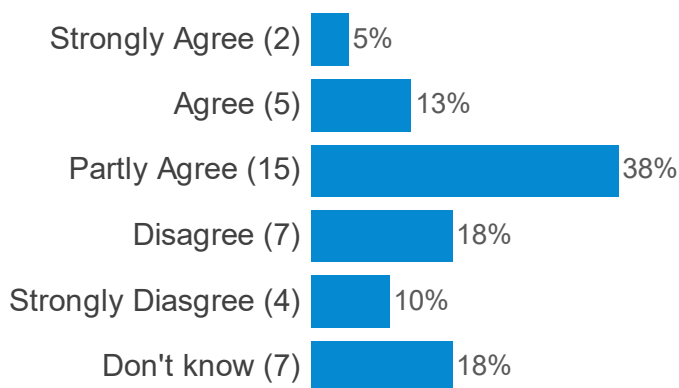
Never see them or hear from them.

Complaints about our local environment

I've recently moved house

I have found the councillor to be helpful, considerate and supportive.

### NPT Council always seeks to involve members of the public in decision-making



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

**If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why**

- I didn't know I could have a voice

---

- Impossible to do

---

- Good idea just doesn't work due to the council's poor management practices

---

- Never see a Councillor once they are voted in

---

- Because they like to hide things or make it difficult for people

---

- There seems to be more engagement during this new coalition than there was with the previous administration

---

- I have seen little evidence of this or the communication mechanisms have been inadequate. I am not on any social media site. All my information is gained from our local library in Cwmavon, which has very proactive and supportive staff.

---

- Sometimes it appears to be a ticking the box exercise.

---

- Little attempt to hold physical events/ meetings outside the main settlements.

---

- NPT seems to be a closed book when it comes to openness unless you are 'in the know'.

---

- But they don't take notice of what we say

---

- The proposed Pontardawe Superschool is a prime example of how historically the council did not involve the local community and abused their perceived power to ridiculous and ultimately ILLEGAL levels.

---

- No

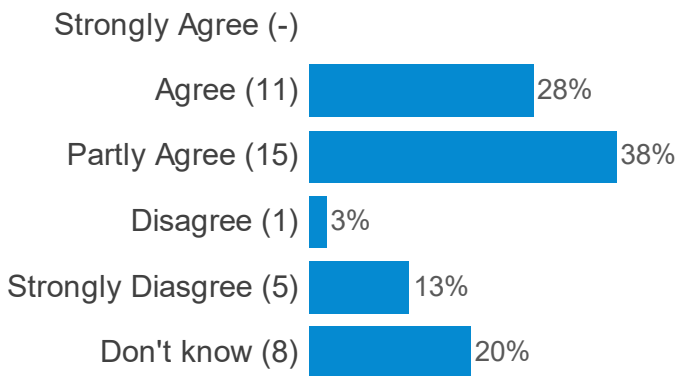
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- N/A

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- If NPTCBC does involve members of the public, then it appears to always be the same members of the public.

**All residents are able to get involved in NPT Council's decision-making if they choose**

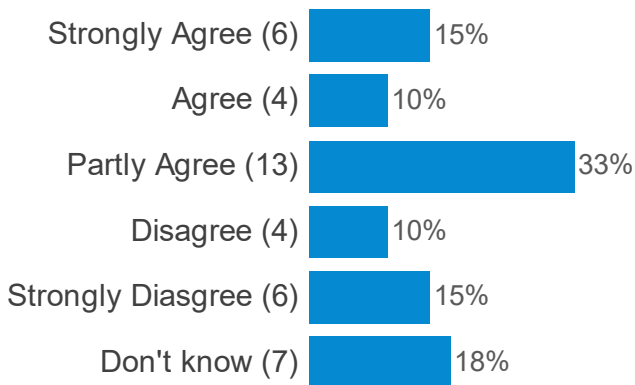


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

**If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why**

- I don't feel there is an opportunity
- As above
- We can comment but never get any feedback and Councillors do want they want not the community they serve
- Only if you are aware of the activities / consultation?
- It isn't clear what the council is planning and how to feed back responses.
- Ask yourself, how did you invite me to participate in this consultation?
- I'm unsure as to whether we're reaching all residents by current methods or whether they're are not getting involve because that is their wish
- How would I find out about when the decisions are made
- I think that people may be afraid of the (necessary) bureaucracy, systems etc within the Council
- Residents are not fully aware of restrictions and decision making should be made.
- More can be done to proactively involve residents by way of 1. people's assemblies in each community; and 2. a citizens' assembly that feeds into the main Council.

**Public involvement has a genuine impact on NPT Council's decision-making**

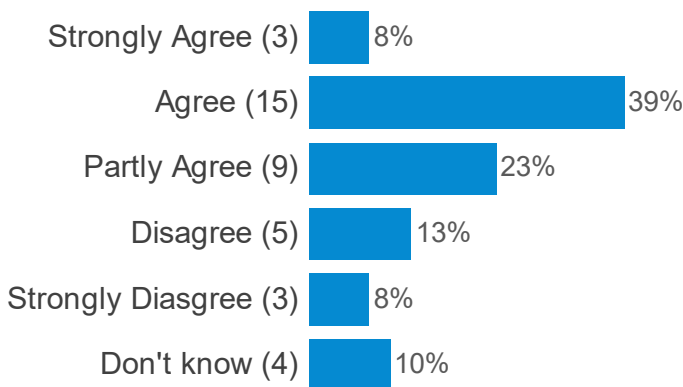


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

**If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why**

- I have never had an opportunity
- As above
- They may ask but don't act
- I don't think NPT listen or care
- Some evidence of public changing NPT decision
- We do not receive any feedback on the outcome or impact of public involvement in the decision making process
- The biggest challenge is engaging "hard to reach" residents (especially those who appear apathetic)
- It is sometimes thought that the decisions are made before consultation so what's the point
- Some consultation at policy level but many key decisions are not consulted on. Not clear whether the results of consultation is considered binding or advisory - suspect in many cases it is used mainly as an awareness- raising tool rather than actually affecting decisions.
- Don't trust your processes.
- They don't listen
- For the public to have a say
- N/A
- Do not believe public concerns are considered
- we don't always know what the feedback has been on something and how it has been used

**I know about the council's decision-making processes**

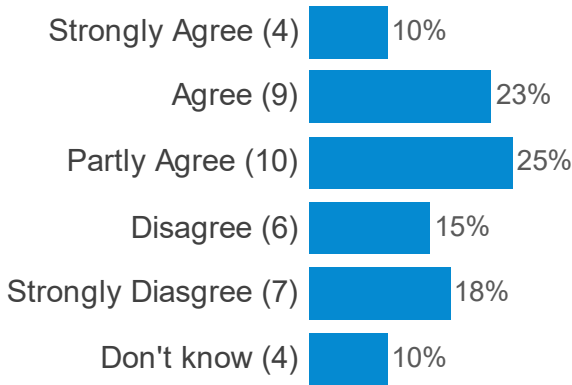


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*

**If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why**

- As above
- Not on public domain
- As above - no feedback / info received
- The committee structure is opaque and it is difficult to find current information on the website.
- N/A
- Where?

### I understand the council’s decision-making processes



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

### If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why

- Do t know about how to access the info

---

- As above

---

- Not in public domain

---

- It doesn't always make sense then you discover little things like corrupt officers..

---

- Aware of council members meetings but no specific information of various committee meetings or decisions

---

- Committee structure is complex.

---

- Some decisions taken don't appear to be logical

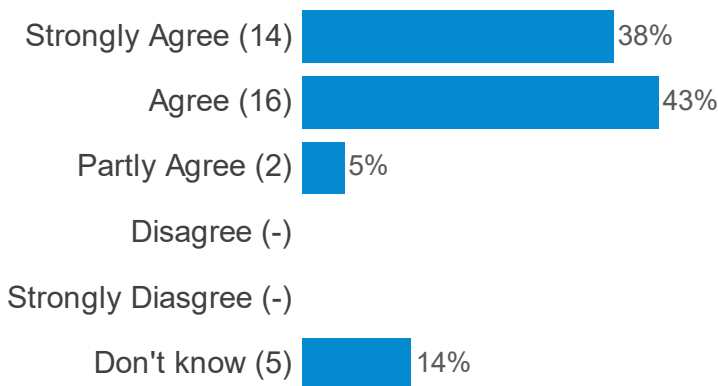
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- Where?

---

- It's quite complicated

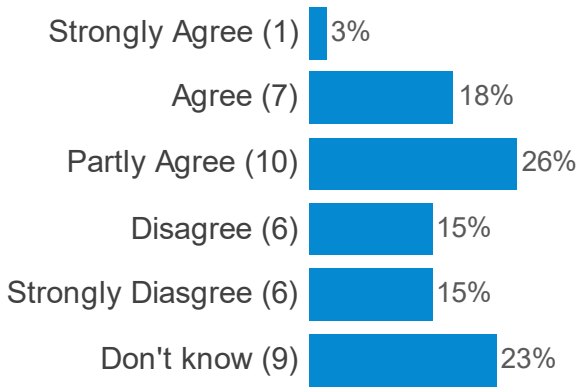
### I am interested in how and why the council makes decisions



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 37*



### The council is open and transparent about its decision making



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*

### If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why

Poor management practices

Never hear see decisions made

Because getting information is hard, and different outcomes for similar issues depending on who is asking

Communication mechanisms need greatly improving

Some decisions are transparent; others just seem to happen.

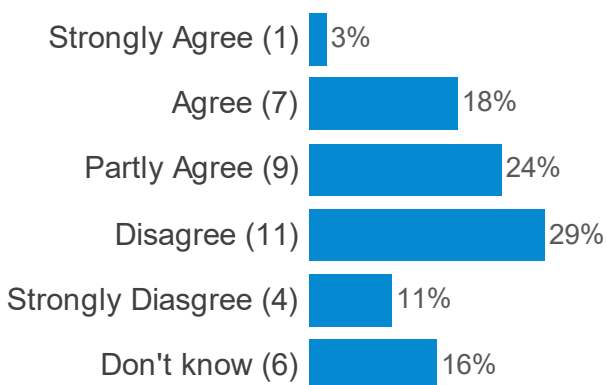
The dark art of NPT decision making is hard to navigate.

Don't justify just make excuses.

Under the Rainbow Coalition that would be a definite AGREE but due to the despotic nature of the previous regime, bad memories linger

Planning decisions

### It is easy and straightforward to find information about council decisions



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 38*

**If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why**

As above

Unless you have internet access get seen to get hold of information, not told when decisions are being made

Because it is often hidden in long consultation documents or titles making it hard to find.

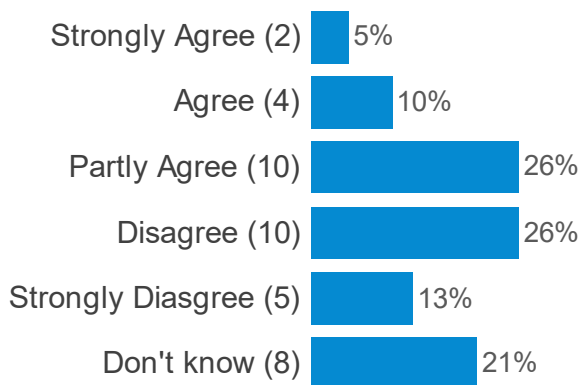
Communication mechanisms need greatly improving

Not clear where these are announced.

I find it easy to access information as I have access to broadband/internet though I'm not sure others would have that same fortune

Don't know where.

**It is easy and straightforward to participate in the council decisions making**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*

**If you answered 'partly agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' please tell us why**

Over complicated methods due to bad practices in management

Not told when how deciyare being made

because things like this are difficult for many to understand with very tight dealines.

As above

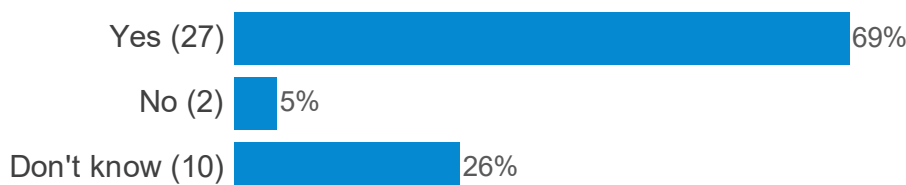
Can sometime feel as complaining rather than proactive inputting

Several possible pathways (via councillor, direct submissions, consultations) but not clear what is being discussed and how best to respond.

wouldnt know how to start on this participation.

If it were that 'easy and straightforward' I'm fairly sure there would be more involvement.

**Could NPT Council do more to improve public involvement in our decision-making processes?**

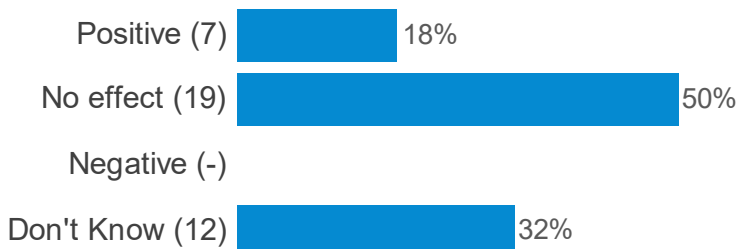


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*

**If you answered 'yes' please give us your suggestions**

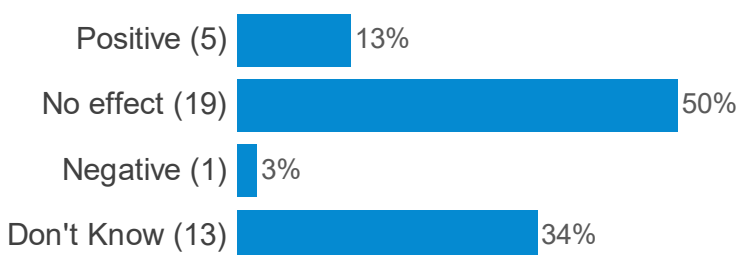
- Advertise where to find this information
- Improve your general management practices
- Be open, honest, transparent, use other media to notify community's
- Allow more time for people to become aware and allow them to do research. Have information available in Easy read for everything
- Outside help
- This document is a typical example of Local Authority jargon - repetitive. An attempt should be made to communicate in a concise and user friendly manner.
- See previous comments. Better use of library and community centre facilities to host / publicise council meetings / consultation events
- Always difficult to get public involved. Needs a lot of effort for little/no input
- Provide an easy-to-find forward plan of meetings and topics written in a way that outsiders can understand.
- Listen and feedback
- I have made comments on previous pages
- Get Councillors to lead local conversations with officer support to report back.
- Send letters/ Questionnaires
- Councillors should hold more published meetings
- Give more information on how to access this on social media and through posters:flyers
- give more information on how to do this.
- 1. One people's assembly in each electoral ward; and 2. One overarching Citizens' Assembly to recommend policy to Council

**What effect do you think Draft Public Participation Strategy will have on: (People's opportunities to use the Welsh Language)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 38*

**What effect do you think Draft Public Participation Strategy will have on: (Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language)**

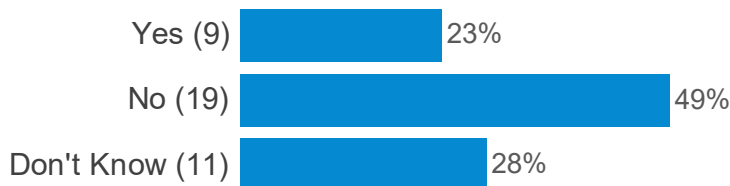


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 38*

**Please give reasons for your response**

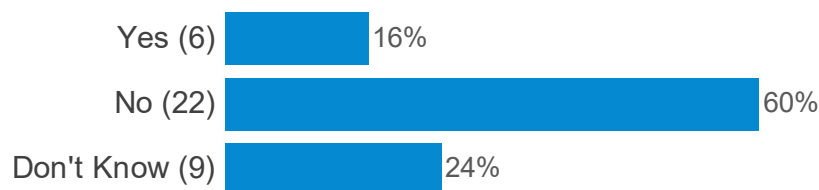
- Welsh is the first language of this country
- Most in NPT don't speak Welsh, sadly and the opportunities to use it are very sparse. Which is a shame.
- Seems waste of money
- Welsh language promotion already supported by other authorities
- none
- Don't know
- I DON'T KNOW
- only issued English language version of this consultation document. I thought that it should be bi-lingual (or there may be a Welsh language version available but it was not communicated)
- Os ydych chi'n gwybod Cymraeg rydych chi'n fwy tebygol o siarad/defnyddio'r Gymraeg.
- I believe offers Welsh language communciatioesn already/.
- The fact that this survey is in English and I'd have to click on a link to go to the welsh version, should be other way around
- So many non Welsh speaking diehards love to block increased use of the Welsh language
- It's about being inclusive in all strategies being made public
- Can't see why it would have any effect
- What are the benifits of speaking welsh
- I do not believe this will affect the welsh language
- Meeting papers aren't available in Welsh
- This is an educational issue. I've made my thoughts clear to MS Jeremy Mile in his role as Education Minister, that the only thing that will change the landscape regarding the use of Welsh is that every school in Wales should be bilingual, and that all pupils should be fluent in Welsh AND English by age 16 years.

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Age)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Disability)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 37*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Gender reassignment)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 35*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Marriage or civil partnership)**



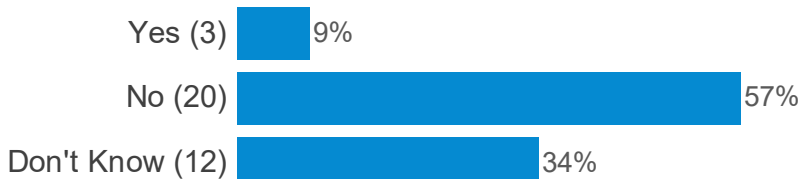
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 35*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Pregnancy and maternity)**



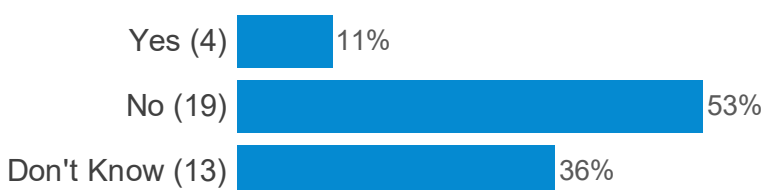
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 35*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Race)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 35*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Religion or belief)**



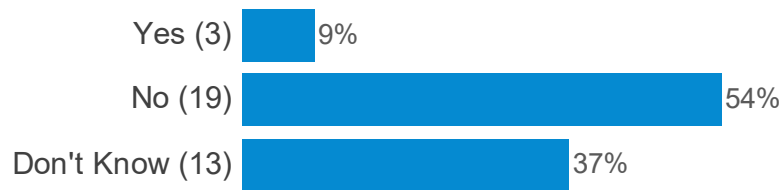
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 36*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Sex)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 35*

**Would our Draft Public Participation Strategy have an impact on you and/or your family because of (your and /or their): (Sexual orientation)**



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 35*

**If yes, please explain why**

I am over 80 years old and strongly feel that we need to maintain our Christian belief although respecting other religions

Not on any social media sites. Very limited digital knowledge / experience

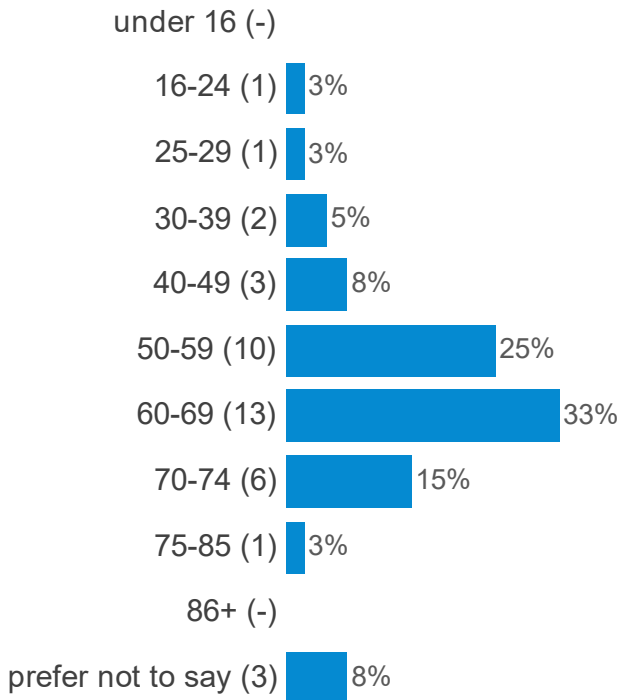
It's inclusive of age and disability.

N/A

**Please provide your full postcode below (e.g. SA13 1PJ). This allows us to more accurately pinpoint respondents' views and needs by area, and to make sure we've heard from people in all parts of the county borough:-**

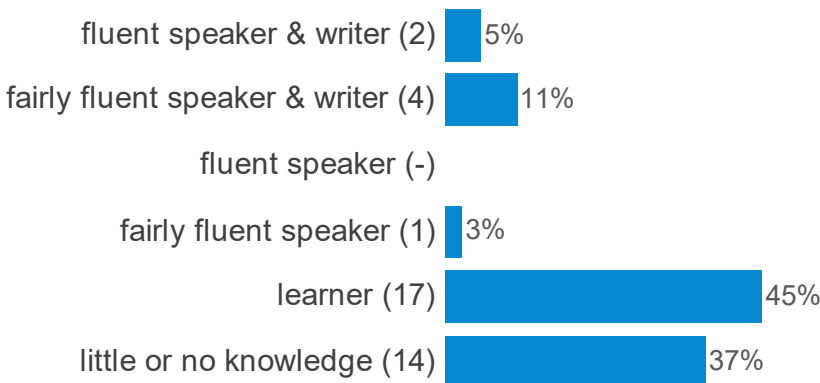
5	SA11 5TA	SA12	Sa18 1UN	SA12 6SR	SA109BT	SA11 2TJ
SA12 8EF	Sa13 1pj	SA12 9YD	SA13 3EY	Sa8 3bp	SA10 9BT	SA13 2LH
SA12 9TB	SA12	SA10 1BT	sa10 6up	SA18 1EL	SA10 9BT	SA10 8LN
SA12 9gh	SA13	SA11 1HE	SA13 1ET	SA13 3EW	SA13 1es	SA11 1BB
Sa131th	SA12 9EJ	SA12 6RP	Sa8 3ax	SA13 3LY	Sa12 6be	SA114DR

### What is your age?



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

### Welsh Language - are you:



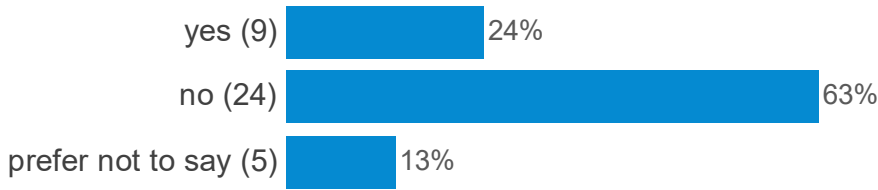
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 38*

### Are are you pregnant or on maternity leave?



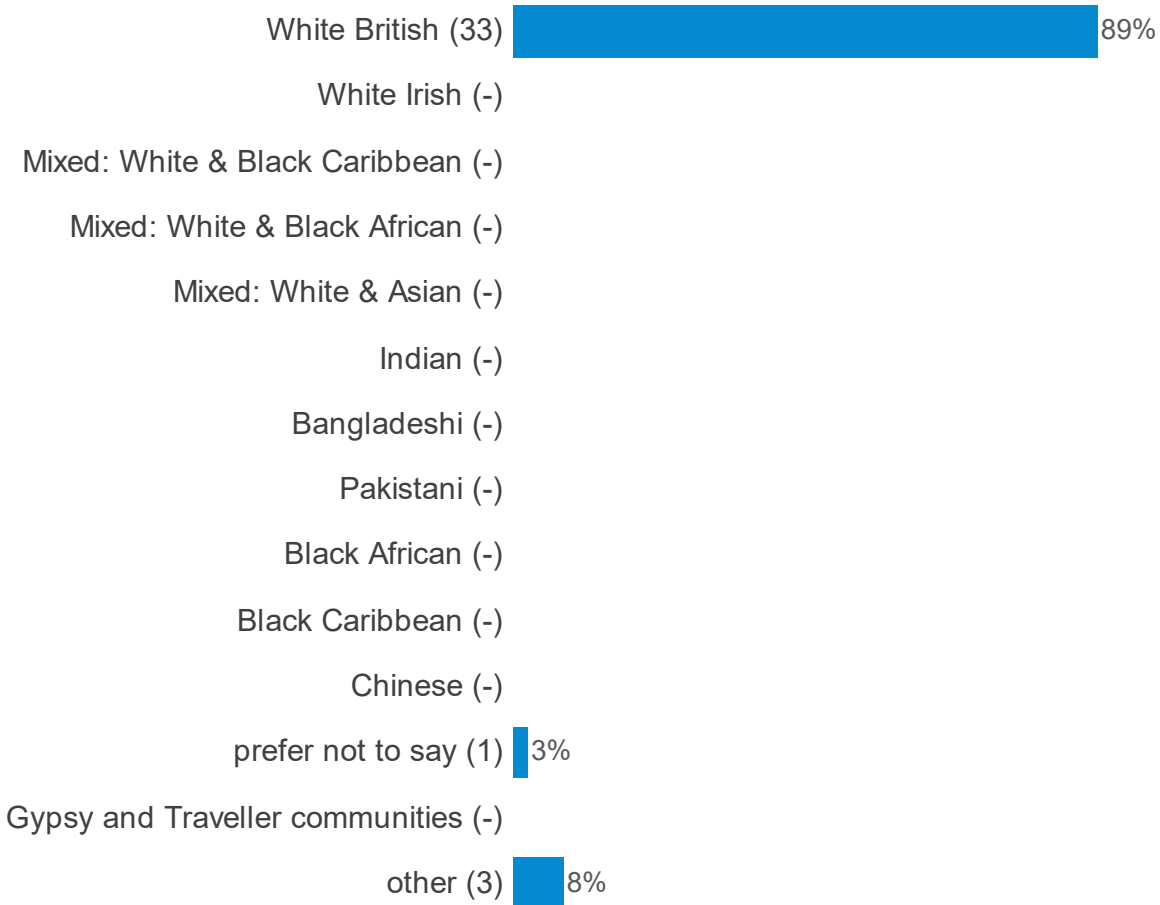
*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*

### Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 38*

### Ethnic origin



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 37*

### other - please specify (Other ethnic group - please specify)

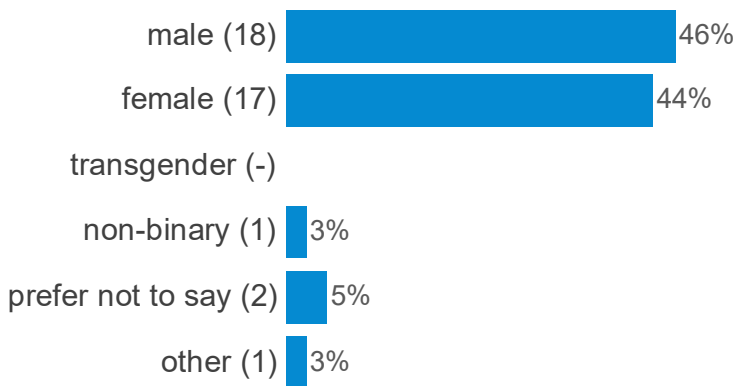
- White Welsh
- Welsh



### Gypsy and Traveller communities - please specify

- Irish Traveller (-)
- New Traveller (-)
- Roma (-)
- Romani Gypsy (-)
- Showperson (-)
- Other (-)

### Sex:

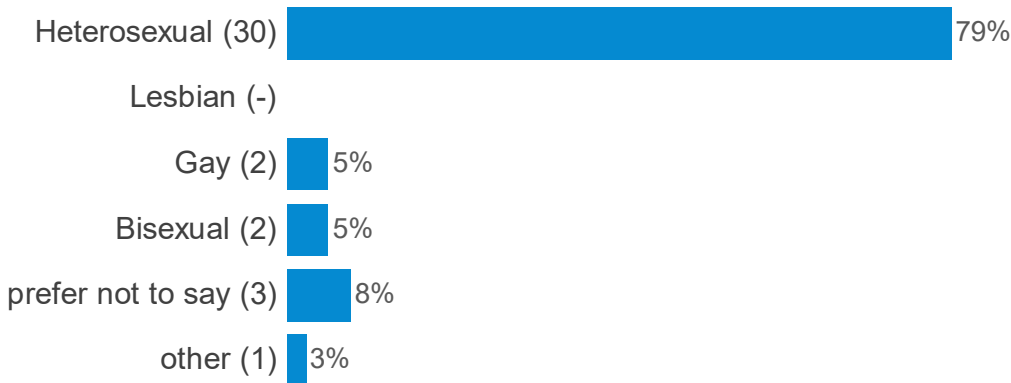


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*

### other - please specify

This question does not conform to best practice as set out by the Office for National Statistics as it will result in answers which are impossible to rely on. The question should ask simply about sex recorded at birth.

### Sexual orientation:

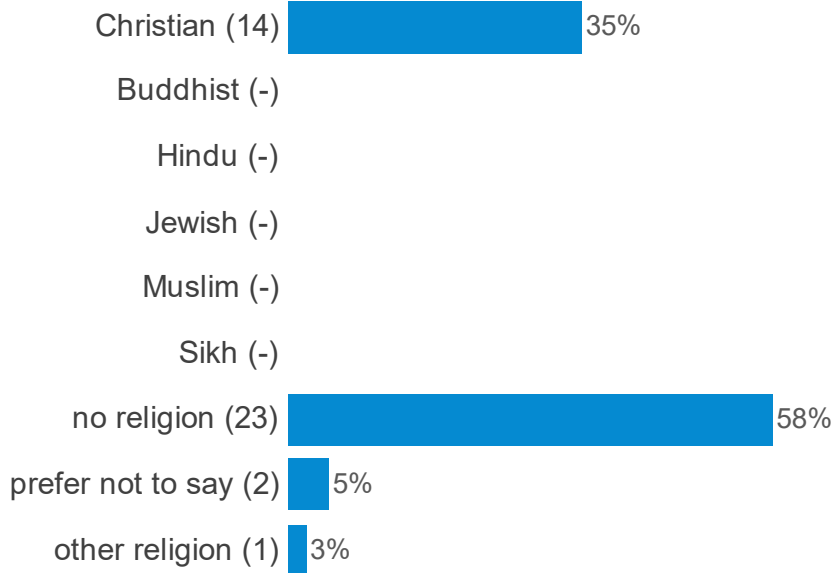


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 38*

### other - please specify

You will need to define Lesbian here as transwomen attracted to ciswomen may describe themselves as Lesbian.

#### Religion / belief:

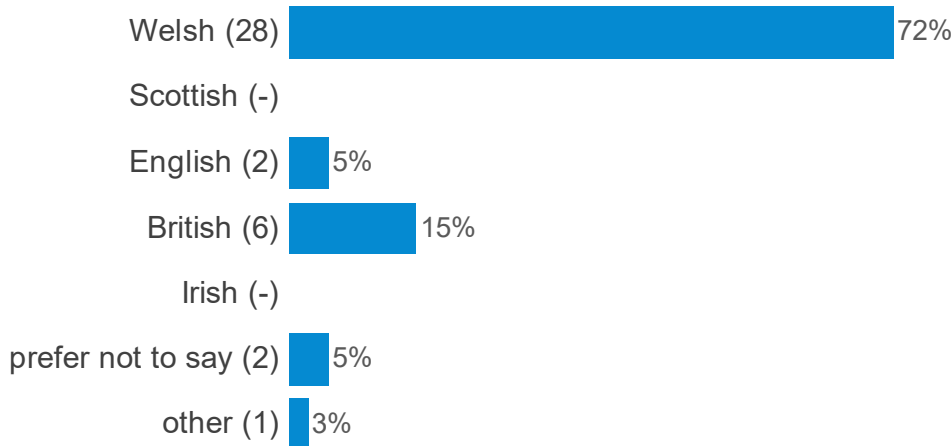


*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 40*

#### other religion - please specify (other - please specify)

climate concerned

#### Nationality:



*\*nb. The percentages in the above chart are based on the number of respondents who answered this question, therefore 100% = 39*



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **Council**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – MR CRAIG GRIFFITHS**

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Standards Committee Annual Report 2022-2023**

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

1. To note the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2022-2023.

#### **Background:**

2. There is now a legal requirement (pursuant to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for Standards Committees to make an annual report to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council on the standards regime within Neath Port Talbot.
3. The report must
  - (a) describe how the Standards Committee has discharged its functions during the preceding financial year;
  - (b) include a summary of reports and recommendations made or referred to the Standards Committee by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales relating to the investigation of alleged breaches of the member code of conduct, and any subsequent action taken by the committee;

- (c) include a summary of notices given to the Standards Committee by the Adjudication Panel for Wales, relating to the Panel's decisions on possible breaches of the member code of conduct; and
  - (d) include the Standards Committee's assessment of how political group leaders have complied with their new duty to promote high standards of conduct.
4. The requirement to make an annual report is intended to ensure there is a regular and consistent approach to the reporting and consideration of standards of conduct by elected members. This is intended to promote local ownership and collective responsibility by members for ensuring high standards of conduct within their authority.
  5. Neath Port Talbot Council must consider the report and any recommendations made by its standards committee within three months of its receipt. The consideration of a report will be a matter of public record through the published minutes of the meeting.
  6. A copy of this report will be shared with the following:
    - (a) All elected members of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council;
    - (b) All Town and Community Councils;
    - (c) Public Service Ombudsman for Wales
    - (d) Audit Wales
  7. The Standards Committee approved this report at their meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Financial Impacts:**

8. No implications.

**Integrated Impact Assessment:**

9. An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

**Valleys Communities Impacts:**

10. No implications

**Workforce Impacts:**

11. No implications

**Legal Impacts:**

12. There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

**Consultation:**

13. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

**Recommendations:**

14. That members note the Standards Committee Annual Report 2022-2023 and the recommendations included therein.

**Appendices:**

15. Annual Report

**List of Background Papers:**

16. None

**Officer Contact:**

Mr Craig Griffiths  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Telephone 01639 763767  
Email: c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council



**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2022-2023**

### The Ten General Principles of Public Life

<p><b>Selflessness</b> – members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.</p>	<p><b>Personal judgement</b> – members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.</p>
<p><b>Honesty and integrity</b> – members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.</p>	<p><b>Respect for others</b> – members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority’s statutory officers and its other employees.</p>
<p><b>Objectivity</b> – members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefit.</p>	<p><b>Duty to uphold the law</b> – members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.</p>
<p><b>Accountability</b> – members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.</p>	<p><b>Stewardship</b> – members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.</p>
<p><b>Openness</b> – members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.</p>	<p><b>Leadership</b> – members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.</p>
<p><b><i>Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life</i></b></p>	



## Annual Report

There is now a legal requirement (pursuant to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for Standards Committees to make an annual report to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council on the standards regime within Neath Port Talbot and with its town and community councils.

The report must:

- describe how the Standards Committee has discharged its functions during the preceding financial year;
- include a summary of reports and recommendations made or referred to the Standards Committee by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales relating to the investigation of alleged breaches of the member code of conduct, and any subsequent action taken by the committee;
- include a summary of notices given to the Standards Committee by the Adjudication Panel for Wales, relating to the Panel's decisions on possible breaches of the member code of conduct; and
- include the Standards Committee's assessment of how political group leaders have complied with their new duty to promote high standards of conduct.

The requirement to make an annual report is intended to ensure there is a regular and consistent approach to the reporting and consideration of standards of conduct by elected members.

This is intended to promote local ownership and collective responsibility by members for ensuring high standards of conduct within their authority.

Neath Port Talbot Council must consider the report and any recommendations made by its standards committee within three months of its receipt. The consideration of a report will be a matter of public record through the published minutes of the meeting.

A copy of this report will be shared with the following:

- All elected members of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- All Town and Community Councils
- Public Service Ombudsman for Wales
- Audit Wales

## Chair's Foreword

This is my first report as Chair of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Standards Committee, since being elected as Chair in January 2023.

I start by acknowledging my gratitude to the former Chair, Mr Clifford Jones, whose term of office ended in December 2022 and the former vice Chair Mrs Barbara Richards, whose term of office ended in November 2022. Both served the Committee for the maximum term allowed under the Standards Committees Regulations and led the Committee ably during their respective tenures.

In their place, we have been pleased to welcome two new independent members, Professor Duncan Lewis and Mrs Alison Davies. We welcome our new Community Council representative, Community Councillor Carolyn Edwards of Blaengwrach Community Council, and our new County Borough Councillor Representatives, Councillor Wayne Carpenter and Councillor Sarah Thomas.

I am also pleased to welcome back Mr Tom Ward, who will serve as Vice Chair of the Standards Committee and I look forward to working with him and my fellow members to further promote the work of the Standards Committee.

Since last year's report there has been an election and, in its wake, a new Council. Congratulations to all of you on your election and my best wishes as you attend to your duties over the next five year term. I am pleased to note that all 60 members elected in May 2022 have completed the Code of Conduct training provided by the Monitoring Officer following the May 2022 elections.

Standards in public life have been under the spotlight for many years. The Nolan Principles were published in 1995 in response to the conduct of some members of the Commons during John Major's tenure as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Those principles still stand and are included at the front of this annual report

In the five years that I have been a member of the Standards Committee, the concept of standards in public life and in society at large has been the subject of fierce debate from time to time and recently they are back in the news.

In a recent publication, the UK Government's Committee on Standards in Public Life said while a "robust ethical culture" should be integral to the way organisations operate, too often it takes a crisis for leaders to act. In a report highlighting best practice in the public sector, the committee said there should be "zero tolerance" for conduct that falls short of the required standards, with clear consequences when they are not met. Doing things in the right way and in the public interest is critical for public confidence in the bodies that operate on the public's behalf and supports the delivery of public services. The report commented that a robust ethical culture supports effective risk management – if people see thinking about ethical issues as part of their job and feel safe to speak up, this can pick up potential concerns before they escalate. Evidence shows that an ethical culture does not emerge by accident - it requires discussion and action. I echo those views. To this end the role of the

Standards Committee is to promote, maintain and protect standards of conduct of members within the Council and propriety in all Council proceedings. Fortunately, examples of misconduct in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council itself are rare - long may that be the case.

The Standards Committee have welcomed the new powers conferred on us by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 regarding group leaders taking steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members. The duty recognises those in positions of leadership and influence within a principal council should have responsibility for combating bullying and harassment amongst elected members and council staff, and must act as a positive role model. I have welcomed the opportunity for the Standards Committee to meet with the group leaders to discuss how this important function can be discharged and more information on this can be found in this annual report.

With the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Standards Committee being the nominated standards committee for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee, I welcome the role and look forward to contributing to this important programme of work that aims to improve the overall South West Wales region.

I would like to thank all my fellow Standards Committee members, who have all contributed fully and diligently to the work of the Standards Committee; and must also thank the Monitoring Officer and his staff who have continued, to provide us with efficient and effective support and advice.

As the Council faces the many challenges presented to it in the year ahead, we would urge Members to remain mindful of the fundamental importance of high standards of conduct in order for members of the public to maintain their trust and confidence in local democracy.

**Mrs Louise Fleet CSTJ, JP**

## **Members of the Standards Committee**

**2022-2023**

Mrs Louise Fleet CStJ, JP	Chair
Mr Tom Ward	Vice Chair
Professor Duncan Lewis	Independent Member
Mrs Alison Davies JP	Independent Member
Councillor Carolyn Edwards	Community Council Representative
Councillor Wayne Carpenter	County Borough Councillor
Councillor Sarah Thomas	County Borough Councillor
Mr Clifford Jones	Chair (May 2022 – December 2022)
Mrs Barbara Richards	Vice Chair (May 2022 – December 2022)

The Standards Committee operates on the clear understanding that elected members that sit on the Committee are independent of political allegiance and that all discussions and decisions are taken with ethical principles at the forefront. The Standards Committee is mindful that not all political groups are represented on the Standards Committee, and welcomes attendance by all members at its meetings and is happy to receive contributions from those groups not so represented.

### **The remit of the Standards Committee**

To discharge with delegated authority the following functions:-

1. To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Members and co-opted Members of the Authority.
2. To assist members and co-opted Members of the Authority to observe the Members Code of Conduct.
3. To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members Code of Conduct (and relevant protocols relating to Member/Officer relationships).
4. To monitor the operation of the Council's adopted Members Code of Conduct throughout the Authority.
5. To advise, train, or arrange to train Members and co-opted Members on matters relating to the Members Code of Conduct.
6. Where statutes so permit, to arrange dispensation to speak and/or vote where a Member or co-opted Member has an interest in any matters.
7. To receive Local Commissioner Reports following investigations, or part investigations, in relation to allegations of breach of the Members Code of Conduct and/or
  - (a) To receive and consider reports and recommendations made with regard to same, from the Monitoring Officer (when such matters are referred to that Officer) including provision with respect to the procedure to be followed by the Standards Committee; and
  - (b) Following its consideration of any such reports or recommendations, to take any action prescribed by statute or regulations made thereunder (including action against any Member or co-opted Member (or former Member or co-opted Member) of the Authority who is the subject of any such report or recommendation) and to give publicity to such report, recommendation or action.
8. To receive, consider and implement general advice from the Local Commissioner and the Council's Monitoring Officer.
9. \*To receive from the Adjudication Panel, Interim Case Tribunals or Case Tribunals:-
  - (a) Notices issued by them to Council;
  - (b) Recommendations about matters relating to the exercise of the Authority's function, the Code of Conduct and the Standards Committee and make such recommendations as it thinks fit to Council relating thereto.

10. To be responsible for liaison between the Council and external agencies, in particular the National Assembly for Wales, the District Auditor and the local Ombudsman in connection with any matter within the Committee's terms of reference, under the provisions of the 2000 Act and Regulations made thereafter.
11. To make representations to the National Assembly and the Welsh Local Government Association about any matter relating to the General Principles of Conduct for Members of the Council.
12. To consider and recommend procedures for complaints to be dealt with by the Standards Committee and to propose amendments as may be appropriate from time to time in accordance with statute etc.
13. To oversee the whistle-blowing regime in particular in this respect to consider and recommend procedures in respect of the following:
  - Whistle-blowing arrangements;
  - Anti-Fraud/Corruption or malpractice strategy.
14. To examine any Code(s) of Conduct for Employees of the Authority and to make recommendations as may be considered appropriate.
15. To receive progress reports from the Monitoring Officer from time to time on such matters within the purview of the Standards Committee, and to make such recommendations to Council as may be deemed appropriate.
16. To exercise such powers or duties as may be given to or imposed on Standards Committees from time to time by legislation.
17. To exercise in relation to Community Councils and their Members within the County Borough area such of the foregoing matters as are referred to in Section 56 of the Local Government Act 2000.
18. To monitor compliance of the leaders of political groups on the Council with their duties under Section 52A(1) of the Local Government Act 2000 that they are taking steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their group and are cooperating with the Standards Committee's functions.
19. To produce an annual report to the Council as to how the Standards Committee has operated, including:
  - (a) what has been done to discharge the general and specific powers conferred on it by statute and these requirements;
  - (b) reports and recommendations made or referred to it by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
  - (c) action taken by the Standards Committee follows is consideration of reports and recommendations

(d) notices given to the Standards Committee

20. It should be noted that members of local authorities who are Members of the Standards Committee will have a term of office until the next ordinary local government election following their appointment. They may be reappointed for one further consecutive term.

## **The work of the Standards Committee in 2022-2023**

### **Observation of Town and Community Council Meetings**

Members of the Standards Committee have attended meetings of Town and Community Councils as observers, and discussed their observations. Such observation is helpful to inform the Standard Committee's work and understand the work of Town and Community Council

Town/Community Councillors and Clerks have indicated that the presence of Standards & Ethics Committee members was a helpful influence on Members' behaviour.

The Standards Committee were pleased to observe positive conduct at Council meetings, with meetings being business focussed and less fractious.

This work will continue throughout 2023-2024, with continued observation of both Town and Community Council meetings and County Borough Council meetings. Standards Committee members are encouraged to continue attending different Council and Committee meetings for observation and feedback to the Standards Committee.

### **Community Councils**

The Standards Committee has the same statutory functions in relation to Community Councils and their Councillors as it has in relation to Neath Port Talbot Council and its Members.

The Standards Committee has considered the ways in which it discharges its functions, and what else it may do, within available resources, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within Community Councils and build good working relationships with them.

The Standards Committee have highlighted the number of Town and Community Councillors who do not undergo formal code of conduct training or have a local resolution process. The Standards Committee has noted and approved a programme of actions, which includes: offering training on the Code of Conduct; quarterly meetings between the Community Council Clerks and the Monitoring Officer to discuss issues relating to Member conduct; provision of advice and support to Clerks in relation to local resolution processes and observation of Community Council meetings by Standards Committee members.

### **Member Officer Protocol**

The Standards Committee considered one of the key protocols that exists within the local authority, that of the Member Officer Protocol.

The purpose of this protocol is to guide Members and officers of the Council in their relations with one another. The strength of the relationship between Members and officers is vital in ensuring that the Council practices the highest ethical standards in both its private and public dealings.



This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the respective rules of conduct which apply to Members and officers. The purpose of the rules and this protocol is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government by demanding very high standards of personal conduct.

Members and paid officers each have their own separate Codes of Conduct. This protocol underpins those documents and focuses particularly on the interaction between Members and officers; deals primarily with Members' and officers' own separate responsibilities; and refers to the working relationship between Members and senior officers who formally advise the Council

An effective working relationship between Members and officers is crucial to the successful operation of the Council's business. This relationship within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is characterised by mutual trust, respect and understanding between politicians and paid officers – this is one of the keys to achieving effective local government.

The Standards Committee was content that the protocol was operating satisfactorily and that there were no ethical concerns arising.

### **National Standards Forum**

The Standards Committee received a report on the creation of a national standards forum.

In March 2021 the then Minister for Housing and Local Government announced her intention to commission an independent review of the Ethical Standards Framework for Local Government (ESF) in Wales that was established by the Local Government Act 2000. The review sought to ensure that it remained fit for purpose, was open and transparent, and that it commanded the confidence of all involved with the framework. Richard Penn, an Independent Consultant was commissioned to undertake the review with the aim to report to Welsh Government Ministers by the end of June 2021 with the intention that any agreed changes to be made ahead of the Local Government elections in May 2022. Mr. Penn is a former Chief Executive of two major local authorities in England and was the first NAW Commissioner for Standards from 2000 - 2012.

The first phase of the Independent Consultant's Review was brought before members of the Standards Committee in January 2022. In the first phase review Richard Penn suggested that an all Wales - Forum for Chairs of Standards Committees be established and that the Annual Conference for Independent Chairs and Independent Members of Standards Committees across Wales be re-established.

A National Forum for Wales has now been created. The Forum will be a body for the sharing of good practice and the coordination of activity. The Forum is not a formal decision making body and will not have delegated powers to act on behalf of the Standards Committees in Wales. The purpose of the Forum is to share good practice and training and knowledge across the 22 principal councils, 3 fire and rescue authorities, and 3 national park authorities in relation to the work of Standards Committees. At the Forum, authorities can share good practice and discuss solutions to problems they are experiencing.

The Standards Committee look forward to playing a role in this Forum and identifying any measures of best practice that can be adopted in Neath Port Talbot.

### **Local Resolution Process**

The Standards Committee welcomed the opportunity to consider the Local Resolution Protocol.

This protocol recognises that the freedom of expression enjoyed by Members is not absolute and the exercise of the freedom incurs responsibilities and may be subject to restrictions, notably the protection of the reputation and other rights of other Members and preventing unauthorised disclosure of information. The freedom to express their political opinions is not restricted by agreeing to this Protocol.

It is designed to consider low level complaints about Members, including:

- Minor complaints from Members about Members
- Minor complaints from Officers about Members
- Members alleged to have not shown respect and consideration for others – either verbally or in writing.

The Standards Committee were pleased to note that there had been no occasions in the last 12 months where the protocol was required to be invoked but would continue to publicise its requirements to elected members and ensure they consider the same, to negate any complaints to bodies such as the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales. The Standards Committee will continue to promote the use of this protocol to Group Leaders.

### **Whistleblowing**

The Standards Committee's terms of reference include responsibility for monitoring and overseeing the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and considering any ethical issues arising from complaints made under the Policy. T

The Committee received a report on the Council's Whistleblowing Policy

The Committee was informed about work undertaken with Management teams to raise awareness of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure and the information leaflets produced for employees and managers with some amendments being suggested to how the Whistleblowing Policy could be improved and clarified in some areas to provide greater ease of understanding for officers and members of the public.

The Standards Committee was content that the Council's whistleblowing arrangements were operating satisfactorily and that there were no ethical concerns arising.

### **Employee Code of Conduct**

The Standards Committee welcomed the opportunity to review and comment on the Council's Employee Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Employee Code of Conduct is to provide a clear framework for all Council employees, as the service the officers provide make a difference to the lives of individuals, families, and our local communities. As a public service worker, they have additional responsibilities due to public accountability and statutory obligations. The public expects and deserves a high standard of conduct from all local government employees.

It is noted that the Council has high aspirations for our communities and relies on our employees to deliver the best possible services and value for money. Our local communities expect them to be committed and dedicated; to be creative and innovative in service design and delivery; to embrace new ways of working and work collaboratively with others to achieve common goals.

The Employee Code of Conduct encourages officers to work in this way and sets out clear and helpful advice on the standards expected. To support the code, there is a framework of policies, procedures, standards, and guidance on a range of topics which provides information on rights, responsibilities and values and behaviour at work.

The Committee was informed about work undertaken with promote the Code of Conduct and identified some areas which could be improved and clarified to provide greater ease of understanding for officers and members of the public. These will now be considered by the Council's Personnel Committee as part of their review

The Standards Committee was content that the Council's Employee Code of Conduct is operating satisfactorily and that there were no ethical concerns arising.

### **Dispensations**

The Standards Committee has statutory power to grant dispensations to Members with a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter, to allow them to participate in a decision regarding that matter, in appropriate circumstances, which are set out in statutory regulations.

During the course of the year a number of dispensations were granted to allow Members to actively participate in decision making to ensure their voice and the voice of their constituents is not lost as a result of prejudicial interests. These covered matters such as where members may have family members employed by the Council, whether they have children who attend a neighbouring school or perhaps they serve on a community organisation or school governing body.

The Standards Committee continues to approach each application with a presumption in favour of granting a dispensation wherever practicable, particularly in relation to granting a dispensation to speak. The Committee may also delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to grant similar dispensations in relation to that business. However no such delegation was utilised during the period of this report.

Details of the applications that have been dealt with can be viewed as part of the minutes of the meetings of the Committee which are accessible on Neath Port Talbot Council's website ([www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk))

### **Other Activities**

In addition to the above activities the Standards Committee also:

- Received and considered the Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales;
- Received and considered case decisions of the Adjudication Panel for Wales;
- Received and considered case decisions made by other Standards Committees in Wales;
- Received and considered the Code of Conduct casebook published by the Ombudsman.

Where appropriate the Standards Committee have identified points of learning and best practice and have taken them into account in their own decision making and included them in any training provided

## Group Leader Duties

### Background

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 addresses some new obligations for Standards Committees. The Act imposes specific duties on political leaders to promote and maintain standards of conduct within members of their group, and to cooperate with the Standards Committee in the exercise of its functions. This requires leaders of political groups to take steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their groups.

The duty does not make leaders of a political group accountable for the behaviour of their members as conduct must be a matter of individual responsibility. However, they do have a role in taking reasonable steps in maintaining standards, setting an example, using their influence to promote a positive culture, being proactive in promoting high standards of conduct in their group and addressing issues as soon as they arise.

Reasonable steps the group leader *may* undertake include:

- demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards;
- encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards;
- ensuring nominees to a committee have received the recommended training for that committee;
- promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal council meetings;
- promoting informal resolution procedures in the council, and working with the standards committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution;
- promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity;
- attend a meeting of the council's standards committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;
- work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards;
- work together with other Group Leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the council.

The purpose of the new duties is to build on and support a culture which is proactive, acts on and does not tolerate inappropriate behaviour.

A standards committee must also provide advice and training, or arrange to train Group Leaders on the new duty. At the start of each administration this should take place within six months of the election and be reviewed at least annually.

### Group Leaders in Neath Port Talbot

It should be noted that such training for Group Leaders took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and was attended by all Group Leaders.

At its meeting in July 2022, Standards Committee agreed to invite one or two Group Leaders to each meeting of the Standards Committee over the coming year. Questions (previously agreed by members) were provided in advance to Group Leaders to afford the opportunity to consider the issues that the Standards Committee would like to raise.

The questions are set out set out below:

- (a) Could you please introduce yourself and explain how long you have been a group leader?*
- (b) How appropriate to you believe the Code of Conduct is??*
- (c) What steps do you take to promote high standards of conduct within your political group?*
- (d) What do you understand the role of the Standards Committee to be?*
- (e) Is there any work you feel the Standards Committee should be undertaking over the next year to help you with your role as group leader?*
- (f) How can the Standards Committee become more active in promoting ethical conduct among Councillors / Co-opted Members?*
- (g) The Ombudsman, Adjudication Panel for Wales and the High Court has taken a view on politicians (and in some cases senior officers) having a “thick skin” and on political banter being part of the political landscape. What are your own views and how would you as a Political Group Leader/Committee Chair ensure that the line is not crossed.*
- (h) What are your views on the Authority’s Code of Conduct training? How do you rate its effectiveness? How could it be improved so as to raise the ethical standards of Councillors / Co-opted Members?*
- (i) Training for Councillors / Co-opted Members is vitally important. How can the Standards Committee tackle those that do not see training as important?*
- (j) The Authority’s Local Resolution Process (LRP)(Cllr v Cllr) is capable of being used by Councillors. In the event of a dispute will you be encouraging your party to use the process? Do you consider the lack of referrals to the LRP demonstrates that councillors are behaving within the Code?*

The Standards Committee were pleased to note the approach that Group Leaders take in promoting standards and the personal commitment they have to encourage members within their groups to embed ethical processes in their day to day activities. Of interest particularly to the Standards Committee was how Group Leaders deal with the “thick skin” ideology that the Public Service Ombudsman and other regulatory bodies adopt and the views that all Group Leaders have that often this is an inappropriate test and it is not something that any elected member should have to have if they face abuse from members of the public, particularly in a social media setting.

The Standards Committee are required to conduct an assessment of how political group leaders have complied with their new duty to promote high standards of conduct and the Standards Committee are able to confirm that throughout 2022-2023, Group Leaders have discharged their duty, in the views of the Standards Committee, and that there were no ethical concerns arising.

Further work will be undertaken throughout 2023-2024 to further refine how Group Leaders can discharge their duties and how the Standards Committee can further assist Group Leaders.

## Complaints

The Standards Committee has oversight of the complaints and any themes or patterns emerging (but only considers specific details of individual cases if a complaint is formally referred to the Standards Committee by the Monitoring Officer or the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales).

During the period 1st April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the Monitoring Officer was notified of a total of 5 complaints made against Members of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Three of these complaints were dismissed by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales as not being appropriate for investigation. Two are presently subject to further consideration.

During the period 1st April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the Monitoring Officer was notified of 13 complaints made against Town and Community Councillors alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct.

All 13 were dismissed by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales as not being appropriate for investigation. The Monitoring Officer has not been made aware of any further complaints.

In respect of its role as the Standards Committee for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee, the Standards Committee received no complaints or referrals to it in respect of the members to that regional organisation

During the municipal year 1st April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the Standards Committee received no referrals from the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.



### **Local Resolution Process**

The Standards Committee notes that the Local Resolution Protocol adopted by Neath Port Talbot Council continues to provide a helpful process for resolving relatively 'low-level' behavioural complaints made by Neath Port Talbot Members about other Members, in a timely and proportionate way.

The Standards Committee is pleased to note that no cases have been referred to the Hearings Panel during 1st April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

The Standards Committee has encouraged Community Councils to adopt their own local resolution protocols, using the model developed by One Voice Wales in consultation with the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

## Future Priorities

The Standards Committee regularly reviews its forward work programme and has identified the following priority areas for consideration in 2023-2024

- **Code of Conduct, Member Training and Development** – the Standards Committee will consider the need for any further training on the Members’ Code of Conduct focussing on Town and Community Councils and facilitate training opportunities for Councillors, as part of this a survey and review of Community Council training plans so far as they relate to standards and ethical governance will be undertaken. Further engagement work will also be undertaken, to include presentations, meetings and guidance.
- **Declarations of Interest** – a review of interests being declared in Council meetings by both Town and Community Councillors and County Borough Councillors
- **Candidates for Council Elections** – the Standards Committee will look to develop an easy read guide for proposed candidates on the ethical obligations they will be required to meet if elected.
- **Observation of Council and Committee Meetings, including Town and Community Councils** – the Standards Committee will continue to observe proceedings at Council and Committee meetings to give feedback on observations and inform its work priorities.
- **Gifts and Hospitality** - To review the Councils procedures for the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality by Officers; and continue to monitor the registers of gifts and hospitality received by Members.
- **Annual Meeting with Group Leaders** - To facilitate ongoing engagement with representatives from all political groups and discharge legal duties pursuant to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and develop ways to ensure regular reporting from Group Leaders to comply with the duty under the aforementioned legislation.
- **Local Resolution Process** – a further review of the local resolution process will be undertaken and look to see how it can be expanded
- **Case Studies** – A set of case studies and examples will be prepared by the Standards Committee to address practical scenarios for elected members to consider on ethical behaviour, declaration of interests and general conduct matters.
- **Engagement with Members** – in order to dispel myths about the work of the Standards Committee, it was felt arranging a meeting with a sample of elected members would be beneficial for members to understand more about their work programme.

- **Whistleblowing Policy** - to further review the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and its implementation; and to receive information on reports made under the Policy and consider any ethical issues arising.
- **Adjudication Panel for Wales** – the Standards Committee propose to seek out opportunities to attend adjudication panel meetings where opportunity presents itself and to observe and bring back to the Standards Committee evidence of good practice
- **Member and Officer Relationship** – the Standards Committee recognise that this is the lynchpin of local government and propose to look at ways to further develop the Member Officer protocol to ensure ethical standards remain at the forefront of the relationship.
- **Governance and Audit** – the Standards Committee will look to develop a relationship with the Governance and Audit Committee and identify ways to work collaboratively on matters to enable assurances to be provided of ethical decision making and appropriate arrangements being in place.
- **Engagement with National Standards Regime** – with proposals to changes in the Standards regime throughout Wales, the Standards Committee will continue to work and look at ways for such proposals to be implemented in Neath Port Talbot.
- **Social Media and Conduct** – the increase use of social media means the accountability and conduct of members is of the utmost importance. The Standards Committee propose a piece of work to look at social media training and what more can be done to guide and support members in their use of social media platforms and to ensure conducts and behaviour are being considered in usage.

## Recommendations

As part of consideration of the annual report, the Standards Committee would make the following recommendations to Neath Port Talbot Council:

- (1) All members ensure they attend annual refreshers in respect of the Members Code of Conduct undertaken by the Monitoring Officer;
- (2) All Group Leader make Standards and Ethics a standing item on their political group meeting agendas;
- (3) All members ensure they are completing their declarations of gifts and hospitality, including where such gifts and hospitality are declined;
- (4) Group Leaders consider bi annual meetings with the Monitoring Officer to discuss standards and ethics and how they can work together to promote standards within their political groups;
- (5) Steps be taken to promote the Member Officer Protocol to all elected members and officers of the Council, with training provided as appropriate;
- (6) Consideration be given to inserting a short leaflet in election packs for those candidates wishing to stand for County Borough Council or Town/Community Councils highlighting the key ethical principles that if elected they will have to comply with;
- (7) A series of guidance documents be circulated to all members in respect of key conduct matters such as declarations of interest, predetermination, conduct case studies and key information for members.

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COUNCIL

26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – MR C GRIFFITHS

### Matter for Decision

Wards Affected – All Wards

### Shadow Cabinet Terms of Reference

### Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to members to endorse the terms of reference for the creation of a Shadow Cabinet Liaison Meeting and to agree an amendment to the Schedule of Remuneration for Elected Members to allow the attendance at a Liaison Meeting to be classified as an approved duty for the claiming of travelling expenses.

### Background

2. On the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Chief Executive received notification from the Welsh Labour group that they had a formed a shadow cabinet to match the cabinet portfolios that had been adopted by the Rainbow Coalition (the members of which being included at Appendix 1)
3. On the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022, the Chief Executive received a request from the Welsh Labour group that provision be made for formal recognition of the Shadow Cabinet, with a request that shadow cabinet members have access to officers to receive information once policies have been announced or issues arising from current policies in existence, and any national changes to policy and how it will affect the County Borough

4. Accordingly, it would be proposed a Shadow Cabinet Liaison Meeting be convened pursuant to the terms of reference included at Appendix 2 of this report.
5. As this will be classed as an official meeting, it would be proposed that an amendment to the Schedule of Remuneration for Elected Members be made to allow the attendance at a Liaison Meeting to be classified as an approved duty for the claiming of travelling expenses.

### **Financial Impact**

6. Any additional financial expenses incurred as a result of the amendment to the Schedule of Remuneration will be met from existing budgets.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

7. There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment in respect of this item as this report relates to governance related matters only.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

8. There are no impacts in respect of this item.

### **Workforce impacts**

9. There are no workforce impacts in respect of this item.

### **Legal Impacts**

10. There are no legal impacts in respect of this item.

### **Risk Management**

11. There are no risk management issues in respect of this item.

### **Consultation**

12. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendation**

13. It is recommended that members:
- (a) Endorse the terms of reference of the Shadow Cabinet Liaison Meeting as set out Appendix 2
  - (b) That attendance at Shadow Cabinet Liaison Meetings be identified as an approved duty pursuant to the Schedule of Remuneration for Elected Members and that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to update the Constitution of Neath Port Talbot Council to reflect this amendment.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

14. To enable Full Council to endorse the terms of reference for the creation of a Shadow Cabinet Liaison Meeting and to agree an amendment to the Schedule of Remuneration for Elected Members to allow the attendance at a Liaison Meeting to be classified as an approved duty for the claiming of travelling expenses.

## **Implementation of Decision**

15. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

## **Appendix**

16. Appendix A – Shadow Cabinet proposed by Opposition Group  
Appendix B – Terms of Reference for Shadow Cabinet Liaison Meeting

## **Background Papers**

17. None

## **Officer Contact**

Craig Griffiths  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Email: [c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1

### Proposed Shadow Cabinet – Neath Port Talbot Labour Group

Leader, Community and Strategic Leadership and Housing and Community Safety	Cllr Rob Jones	
Deputy Leader and Education, Skills and Training	Cllr Sonia Reynolds	
Finance, Performance and Social Justice	Cllr Carol Clement Williams	
Economic and Community Regeneration	Cllr Sharon Freeguard	
Climate Change and Wellbeing	Cllr Cathy James	
Children and Family Services	Cllr Angharad Aubrey	
Adult Social Services and Health	Cllr Peter Richards	
Strategic Planning, Transport and Connectivity	Cllr Suzanne Paddison	



Streetscene

Cllr Mike Harvey



## **Appendix 2**

### **Terms of Reference**

- (a) That six weekly Liaison Meetings with members of the opposition group's spokespersons ("the Shadow Cabinet") be scheduled into the Council diary for the purpose of briefing the Shadow Cabinet on matters within the Council's Forward Work Programme.
- (b) Meetings will take place in a hybrid manner unless otherwise agreed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the opposition group
- (c) The Leader of the opposition group will identify the members of the Shadow Cabinet to the Chief Executive and only those members may attend meetings. The number of the Shadow Cabinet, including the Leader and Deputy Leader of the opposition group is not to exceed the number of members on the council's executive. No substitutions will be allowed.
- (c) An agenda for each meeting will be drawn up by the Chief Executive or her nominated representative, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Leader of the opposition.
- (d) The meetings will not function as another scrutiny committee and shall have no decision-making functions.
- (e) The agenda will include topical items on which the Cabinet/Cabinet Boards are to receive/ or have received reports. The Chief Executive, Directors or Heads of Service on certain occasions would present factual reports and be able to provide background information. (Clearly officers would not be in a position to explain why the Cabinet had taken a particular course of action, as this would quite properly be a matter for the Leader or other Cabinet member.)
- (e) A brief note of the matters discussed at the Liaison Meetings will be maintained by an officer nominated by the Chief Executive and be available for inspection by other members.
- (f) These arrangements will replace all other official briefings between the Chief Executive, Directors, Heads of Service and all other senior officers in regard to the provision of information to the Shadow Cabinet

save for any meetings which are able to take place as referenced in the Constitution of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

- (g) Attendance at the Liaison Meetings will be considered to be an approved duty for the payment of expenses.
- (h) The Chief Executive will draw up guidelines for officers in respect of the operation of these arrangements.
- (i) These terms of reference shall be reviewed on a six monthly basis by the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Leader of the opposition group

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