



**EDUCATION, SKILLS & WELLBEING CABINET BOARD**

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 at 10.00am**

**MULTI-LOCATION MEETING – COUNCIL CHAMBER PORT TALBOT  
AND MICROSOFT TEAMS**

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

**Webcasting/Hybrid Meetings:**

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.

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Chairpersons Announcement/s
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Forward Work Programme 2022/23 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
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.
6. Disposal of Land at Neath Leisure Centre (*Pages 7 - 22*)
7. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (*Pages 23 - 94*)

8. Play Sufficiency Assessment (*Pages 95 - 164*)
9. Urgent Items  
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 (as amended).

**K.Jones**  
**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre**  
**Port Talbot**

**Date Not Specified**

**Education, Skills & Wellbeing Cabinet Board Members:**

Councillors. J.Hurley and N.Jenkins

## Education Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

### Immediately following Scrutiny Committee starting at 2pm

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
<b>27<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Christmas/New Year Opening Times (Libraries, Leisure Centres etc.)	Decision	Paul Walker
	Admission to Community Schools Consultation (Out for Consultation)	Decision	Helen Lewis
	Curriculum for Wales	Monitoring	Mike Daley and Anne Stoker
	Band C Schools	Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst
	Leadership Strategy	Information	Andrew Herbert
	Youth Service Update	Information	Jason Haeney/ Angeline Spooner-Cleverly
	Participation and Engagement Strategy (Permission to Consult)	Decision	Liz Dennis/ Zoe Ashton-Thomas
	West Glamorgan Archives Services	Decision	Craig Griffiths
	Quarter 1 Performance	Monitoring	Shaun Davies
	Education Transport Personal Allowance Proposal	Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
<b>Special Date to be arranged for November.</b>			
	Leisure Centres Service Business Plan	Decision	Andrew Thomas/ Paul Walker
	Cefn Coed Options Appraisal Report	Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
<b>8<sup>th</sup> December 22</b>			
	Adult Learning Update	Information	Michelle Trigg/ Angeline Spooner-Cleverley
	Education Safeguarding	Information	Sam Jones/ John Burge
	Pupil Attendance	Information	Hayley Thomas/ John Burge
	Quarter 2 Performance	Monitoring	Shaun Davies
	Period Dignity Report	Information	Chris Millis

	School Based Counselling Service Update	For Information	Rhian Miller/ Zoe Ashton-Thomas
	Culture Strategy – Update (Includes Leisure Services)	For Information	Andrew Thomas/ Paul Walker
	Free School Meals Update	For Information	Rhiannon Crowhurst
	Pontardawe Arts Centre – Village Green	Decision	Simon Brennan

Meeting Date 2023	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
<b>19<sup>th</sup> January</b>			
	Annual School Term Dates (Back from Consultation)	Decision	Helen Lewis
	Employability and Skills Update	Information	Chris Millis
	Welsh Public Libraries Standards Annual Report	Decision	Wayne John
	Support Visits	Monitoring	Mike Daley
	School Capacities Report	Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst

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**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION SKILLS AND WELLBEING CABINET BOARD**

**27<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF SUPPORT SERVICES AND TRANSFORMATION AND THE HEAD OF PROPERTY AND REGENERATION**

**MATTER FOR DECISION**

Page 7

**WARDS AFFECTED: Neath South, Neath East, Neath North**

**NEATH LEISURE CENTRE AT DYFED ROAD NEATH**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To obtain Member approval to declare the land and premises known as Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Road, Neath surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational leisure requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate and once vacant transfer responsibility to the Head of Property and Regeneration for future lease/disposal and for the surrender and termination of the existing lease of the whole and sub tenancy of part of the facility. To obtain Member approval for the operation of the new Neath Leisure Centre by Celtic Leisure pending the transfer of leisure services back to the Council.

## Executive Summary

2. As part of the Council's Neath Town Centre Redevelopment the Council is providing a new state of the art Leisure Centre to replace the existing facility at Dyfed Road Neath. As a consequence, the land and premises at the existing Leisure Centre at Dyfed Rd, Neath will become surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational leisure requirements of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate.

## Background

3. The Council hold freehold title to Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Road Neath as approximately shown edged in Black on the attached copy plan which like all other Council owned Leisure Centres is subject to a lease and operating agreement to Celtic Leisure Trust for a term of 15 years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

4. Members will be aware that on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 Cabinet decided that Indoor Leisure Services shall be brought back in house. The intended timeframe for the Council to take over the running of its leisure services is from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. .

The leases of all of the Indoor Leisure Services will be surrendered to coincide with that date.

5. There is also a sublease of that part of the Leisure Centre comprising a garage as shown hatched Black to the Trustees of Neath (Marlins) Sub Aqua Club for a term of 10 years wef 25/7/14 at a rent of £150 per annum for use as an equipment store and compressor room in connection with its sub aqua activities.

This sublease is subject to early determination by either party on giving not less than 6 months advance notice in writing.

6. Members will recollect that The Regeneration & Sustainable Development Cabinet Board of 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019 resolved to establish a new Leisure Centre within the Neath Town Centre Development to replace the existing facility at Dyfed Rd the latter of which will continue to operate until the new facility opens after which it will close.
7. Construction work on the new facility is nearing completion with an anticipated handover date from the contractor to the Council of mid October 2022.



8. There will then be a period of time allowing for the commissioning of the new facility and for staff and facilities to transfer from Dyfed Road to the new facility after which the new facility can open to the public and Dyfed Road will close.
9. The proposal is that the Dyfed Road facility is then declared surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate, and once empty and vacant the ongoing responsibility for the future of the facility be transferred to the Head of Property and Regeneration. The existing buildings will be demolished and a masterplan for the site will be developed setting out suitable alternative development opportunities which will be the subject of a future report by the Head of Property & Regeneration.
10. In advance of this there will be the need for the lease to Celtic Leisure Trust to be surrendered and for the sublease to the Sub Aqua Club to be terminated.

To that end there is a need for the Head of Legal Services to be instructed to serve the requisite termination notice on the Sub Aqua club as soon as possible.

### **Financial Impact Assessment**

11. At this stage there is no financial impact.

### **Valleys Communities Impact**

12. There are no specific Valleys Communities Impacts arising from this report.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

13. An Integrated Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken (Appendix 2) which concludes that an integrated impact assessment is not required as this report relates to an internal administrative function.

## **Workforce Impact**

14. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report as they will all transfer from Dyfed Road to the new Leisure facility

## **Legal Impact**

15. The intention is for Celtic Leisure to operate the new Neath Leisure Centre until the time that the Council takes over the running of its leisure services. Therefore the existing arrangements with Celtic Leisure will require modification to reflect the termination of the Dyfed Road facility and the commencing of operations at the new Neath Leisure Centre.

## **Risk Management**

16. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

## **Consultation**

17. There are no requirements for additional external consultation in this instance.

## **Recommendation**

18. Having had due regard to the first stage Integrated Impact Assessment Members are requested to:
  - a) declare the land and premises at Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Rd, Neath surplus to the ongoing strategic leisure requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Service and once vacant transfer ongoing responsibility for the future management and disposal to the Head of Property and Regeneration.
  - b) Provide Delegated Authority for the Heads of Participation and Property and Regeneration accept a surrender of the existing lease of the facility from the existing tenant.

- c) Provide Delegated Authority for the Head of Property and Regeneration in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services to serve a termination notice on and ensure vacant possession is obtained by the existing sub tenant of part of the facility
- d) Provide Delegated Authority for the Head of Property and Regeneration in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services to enter into a short term lease for Celtic Leisure to operate the new Neath Leisure Centre from its opening until 31st March 2023 date of the transfer of indoor leisure services into the Council. (or, if the 31st March 2023 date is not met, the date when leisure services are brought back in house).

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

- 19. Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Road Neath will become non-operational when the facility closes and staff and users relocate to the new Town Centre Leisure Centre during Autumn 2022 and therefore the Dyfed Road facility will then be surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational leisure needs of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate. Arranging for Celtic Leisure to operate the new Leisure Centre until the time that the Council takes over the running of its leisure services will ensure the operation of the new facilities from its opening and the ongoing provision of leisure facilities in Neath.

### **Implementation of Decision**

- 20. The decision will be implemented immediately.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Plan

Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Screening Assessment

## List of Background Papers

None

### **Officer Contact**

Paul Walker Operations Coordinator Education, Leisure, Lifelong Learning

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### **David Phillips**

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## APPENDIX 2

### Impact Assessment - First Stage

#### 1. Details of the initiative

**Initiative description and summary:** To declare the land and premises known as Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Rd, Neath surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational leisure requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate and once vacant transfer responsibility to the Head of Property and Regeneration for future lease/disposal and for the surrender and termination of the existing lease of the whole and sub tenancy of part of the facility.

**Service Area:** Support Services And Transformation

**Directorate:** Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning

#### 2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users		x
Staff		x
Wider community		x
Internal administrative process only	x	

3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age		x				The related report supports an administrative function
Disability		x				As above
Gender Reassignment		x				As above
Marriage/Civil Partnership		x				As above
Pregnancy/Maternity		x				As above
Race		x				As above
Religion/Belief		x				As above
Sex		x				As above
Sexual orientation		x				As above

**4. Does the initiative impact on:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		x				As above
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		x				As above

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**5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:**

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity		x				This report recommends that Members of the Education, Skills & Wellbeing Cabinet Board declare the land and premises known as Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Rd, Neath surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational leisure requirements of the

						Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate and once vacant transfer responsibility to the Head of Property and Regeneration for future lease/disposal and for the surrender and termination of the existing lease of the whole and sub tenancy of part of the facility. The supporting report does not identify or recommend potential avenues for future or alternative use and therefore has no impact of biodiversity or the wider environment.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		x				As above



**6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):**

	Yes	No	Details
<b>Long term</b> - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	N/A	N/A	Following on from what is essentially an internal administrative process, this report does not identify or recommend potential avenues for future or alternative use and seeks member decision to declare the land and premises known as Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Rd, Neath surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational leisure requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate and once vacant transfer responsibility to the Head of Property and Regeneration for future lease/disposal and for the surrender and termination of the existing lease of the whole and sub tenancy of part of the facility. The premises and land at the Dyfed Rd site, will become redundant and surplus to the ongoing strategic operational requirements of ELLL The replacement centre will provide first class state of the art facilities, to ensure the new centres is the local public health improvement solution, and will put the centre at the heart of the post Covid-19 recovery, and future community wellbeing planning, contributing towards ‘a vibrant and healthy place to live, work and enjoy recreational time’.

<b>Integration</b> - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	N/A	N/A	As above
<b>Involvement</b> - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	N/A	N/A	As above
<b>Collaboration</b> - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	N/A	N/A	As above
<b>Prevention</b> - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	N/A	N/A	As above

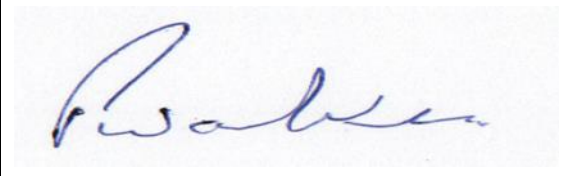
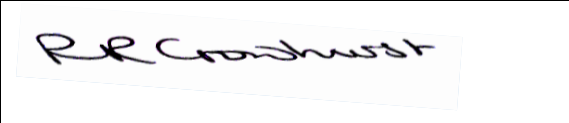
### 7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is not</b> required	√
<p>Reasons for this conclusion</p> <p>Following on from what is essentially an internal administrative process, this report does not identify or recommend potential avenues for future or alternative use and seeks member decision to declare the land and premises known as Neath Leisure Centre at Dyfed Rd, Neath surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational</p>	

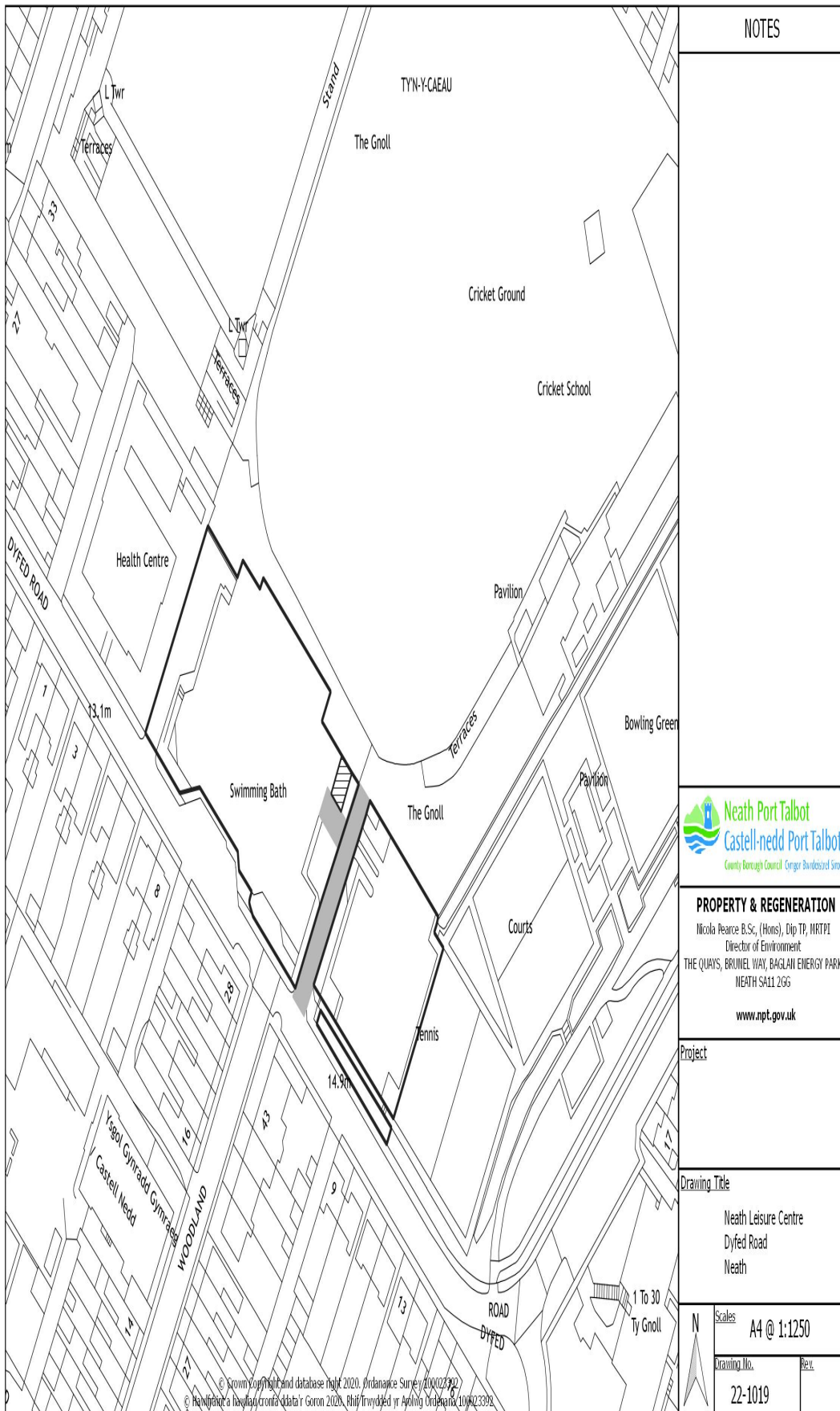
leisure requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate and once vacant transfer responsibility to the Head of Property and Regeneration for future lease/disposal and for the surrender and termination of the existing lease of the whole and sub tenancy of part of the facility when staff and users relocate to a brand new facility. The replacement school centre will provide first class state of the art facilities to ensure the new centres is the local public health improvement solution, and will put the centre at the heart of the post Covid-19 recovery, and future community wellbeing planning, contributing towards 'a vibrant and healthy place to live, work and enjoy recreational time'.

A full impact assessment (second stage) <b>is not</b> required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

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	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Paul Walker	Operations Coordinator D.E.L.L.L		12/8/22
Signed off by	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Head of Service		12/8/22

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NOTES



**PROPERTY & REGENERATION**  
 Nicola Pearce B.Sc. (Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI  
 Director of Environment  
 THE QUAYS, BRUNEL WAY, BAGLAN ENERGY PARK  
 NEATH SA11 2GG  
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Project

Drawing Title  
 Neath Leisure Centre  
 Dyfed Road  
 Neath

Scale  
 A4 @ 1:1250  
 Drawing No. 22-1019  
 Rev.

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## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board  
27<sup>th</sup> September 2022

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,  
LEISURE AND LIFELONG LEARNING  
ANDREW THOMAS

### MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: All

### WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2032

#### Purpose of report

1. To obtain permission to publish Neath Port Talbot's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032, following approval by Welsh Government.

#### Executive summary

2. Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 requires Local Authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
3. Neath Port Talbot's WESP details the plan to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities and planning for future growth. The plan details how further development will be secured over the next 10 years, January 2022 - January 2032.
4. The WESP has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders for a nine week period, and this report outlines the findings from the consultation.
5. In February 2022 full Council gave permission for the draft WESP to be submitted to Welsh Government for approval. Following further

amendments the WESP was approved and now permission is sought to publish the final WESP and begin implementation. Members are asked to approve the final WESP and commend the plan to Council for permission to publish.

## Background

6. Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 requires Local Authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP must contain proposals and targets to improve the:
  - Planning and standards of Welsh medium education and teaching; and
  - Report on progress made to meet the targets of the previous WESP.
7. Neath Port Talbot's WESP 2022-32, will be the cornerstone for the Council's vision for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium education in Neath Port Talbot, to enable all learners to develop their Welsh language skills and to use the language confidently in everyday life. It both complements and assists in facilitating the National vision for the Welsh language, to have 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050:

*The year 2050: The Welsh language is thriving, the number of speakers has reached a million, and it is used in every aspect of life. Among those who do not speak Welsh there is goodwill and a sense of ownership towards the language and a recognition by all of its contribution to the culture, society, and economy of Wales. Our vision is to secure favourable circumstances throughout the country that support language acquisition and use of Welsh language skills. We want to see an increase in language transmission in the family, early introduction of Welsh to every child, an education system that provides Welsh language skills for all*

### **Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers (Welsh Government, 2017)**

8. Welsh-medium education is an integral and essential part of the learning offer in Neath Port Talbot and all children should benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and understand their lives through the medium of Welsh. This principle is underpinned by ensuring universal



access to this provision across the county borough. Neath Port Talbot Council recognises that language and culture are critical parts of an individual's identity and is committed to promoting and celebrating Welsh language learning across all phases and sectors.

9. It is acknowledged that the statutory education system has a vital role to play in increasing the number of Welsh speakers. We must increase the number of school learners who have the opportunity to develop Welsh-language skills in school and the opportunity to use it in their everyday lives, significantly, to achieve our goals.
10. Neath Port Talbot's WESP details how we plan to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities and how we plan for future growth. The plan details how we will secure further development over the next 10 years, January 2022 - January 2032.
11. The plan has been developed through close working with partners including Neath Port Talbot schools, Menter Iaith, RhAG, Muddiad Meithrin, Neath Port Talbot College, Academi Hywel Dda Swansea University, the Urdd and with Welsh Government.
12. It aligns itself to the national policy and guidance '*The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019*', '*Cymraeg 2050*' and to the '*Education in Wales: Our National Mission, Action Plan 2017-21*'. The plan will reflect how the school system in Neath Port Talbot, including sixth forms, will move forward in the period until 2032 to ensure that the new curriculum is implemented effectively in our schools securing the opportunity and 'desire for learners to become increasingly bilingual with a strong grasp of other languages' (*Curriculum for Wales 2022*).
13. The overarching ten year target in Neath Port Talbot is to increase the number of Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh from 16.8% (252 pupils) in 2020/21 (PLASC 2021) to 31% (460 pupils) by 2032.
14. PLASC 2021 reception and second year nursery pupil numbers were 283 (18.7%) and 290 (21%) respectively, so over the short term, year 1 numbers and percentages are likely to increase.
15. Neath Port Talbot's WESP also contains information on mitigating any possible negative impacts on linguistically sensitive areas. This information is included as an appendix to the main WESP.

## **WESP Outcomes**

16. The following outcomes are outlined in the WESP and address the broader aims outlined in Cymraeg 2050 and its implementation plan.
- More nursery children/3 year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
  - More reception class children/ 5 year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
  - More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another
  - More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh
  - More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
  - An increase in Welsh-medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs (in accordance with duties determined by the ALN Act
  - Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.

## **Consultation**

17. The WESP has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders for a nine week period between 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
18. In total 13 responses were received. While the number of responses were less than anticipated it should be noted that a great number of them were very lengthy and contained much detail. Overall the response to the WESP was very positive, with many responders commending the plan for its vision, and recognising that the WESP is an ambitious, creative and challenging plan.

## **Welsh Government Approval**

19. The draft WESP was submitted to Welsh Government ministers following approval by full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022.

20. In May 2022, in line with Section 85(5)(a) of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 ("the 2013 Act"), Welsh Government consulted with officers regarding modifications to the plan. Following further discussions the majority of modifications were agreed and the WESP was amended.
21. In summary the amendments relate in general to including additional data, updates to Flying Start provision and the childcare offer following Welsh Government expansion of the schemes, an update on planned immersion centre provision, further information on transition arrangements and additional data and information regarding the workforce.
22. Information and targets relating specifically to the Swansea Valley proposal were initially included in the submitted draft WESP on the request of Welsh Government. The WESP forum felt strongly that specific references to the Swansea Valley proposal should not form part of the 10 year whole authority plan and should be addressed in a separate document. Following meetings with Welsh Government during the summer term, it was jointly agreed that specific reference to the Swansea Valley proposal will not be included in the WESP at this point in time as a result of a potential review.
23. Formal approval of the WESP was then granted by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language in July 2022.
24. The final WESP is attached at Appendix A.

### **Next Steps**

25. Council approval is now needed to publish the WESP and to progress implementation.
26. A five year action plan will be sent to the Minister by the end of the autumn term 2022, and will be reviewed annually, with progress reported to members following the review.

## **Financial Impact**

27. There are no financial implications linked to this report. However if implemented financial impacts could occur, for example an increase in the number of Welsh-medium schools is likely to lead to increased capital and revenue costs.
28. Applications for grant funding have been submitted to assist with additional capital and revenue costs for identified projects through the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools programme and these will be the subject of further reports.
29. Additional financial impacts may be identified through the course of the 10 year plan and reports will be presented to members at the appropriate time for approval.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

30. 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.
31. The assessment has indicated positive impacts on most protected groups, with neutral impacts on others, and a positive impact on the development of the Welsh language.
32. The Integrated Impact Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix B.

## **Valley Communities Impacts**

33. There are no impacts on valley communities as result of this report. Should the WESP be implemented it is likely that there would be positive impacts on the valley communities as the WESP aims to create and provide opportunities and experiences for all learners and the wider

community to use Welsh and be part of Welsh life in order to increase confidence in the Welsh language and to feel a sense of belonging

### **Workforce impacts**

34. There are no workforce impacts as a result of this report. However if implemented the WESP outcome 7 aims to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subjects) and teach through the medium of Welsh, which is likely to positively impact on the workforce.

### **Legal impacts**

35. The following legislation / regulations are aligned to this report:

- Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- The WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019
- The WESP (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

### **Risk Management Impacts**

36. Failure to approve the WESP will mean that the Council will not be able to fulfil its legal obligations.

### **Recommendation**

37. Having given due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that members approve the final WESP and commend the report to Council for permission to publish and progress implementation.

### **Reasons for proposed decision**

38. This decision is necessary to comply with the WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019.

## **Implementation of the decision**

39. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Final WESP

Appendix B: Integrated Impact Assessment

### **Officer Contact:**

Andrew Thomas

Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong learning

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# WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

**Name of Local Authority**

**Neath Port Talbot**

**Period of this Plan**

**2022-2032**

**This Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is made under Section 84 of *The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013* and the content complies with the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019<sup>1-2</sup>*. We have given due regard to the statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers when setting our targets.**

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....

(This Plan needs to be signed by the Chief Education officer within your local authority)

<sup>1</sup> [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(Coronavirus\) Regulations 2020](#)

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## **Foreword**

I am pleased to publish Neath Port Talbot's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032. This exciting Plan sets the direction of strategic planning for the growth of Welsh medium education in the County over the next decade.

This plan reflects our vision for promoting and ensuring meaningful access to Welsh language learning for pupils and staff across all phases and sectors and places the needs of our learners at the heart of our provision. We believe that all children should benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh. As a result, we are committed to ensuring high quality provision and support that will enable all learners to benefit from universal access to Welsh-medium education and experiences.

We firmly believe that education is the vehicle that will produce Welsh speakers of the future, and we have a responsibility to stimulate and promote growth in the sector. This is at the heart of this plan, with the aim of ensuring that the Welsh language is not restricted to the classroom.

As an Authority, we are committed to achieving all of the ambitious aims within our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and will ensure that the Plan responds in a co-ordinated, proactive and ambitious way towards the achievement of the Welsh national targets for 2050 and the aim of having one million Welsh speakers.

Councillor Peter Rees

**Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture**

January 2022

## Our ten year vision for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium education in our area

### The Vision

Neath Port Talbot Local Authority Borough Council recognises that language and culture are critical parts of an individual's identity and is committed to promoting and ensuring meaningful access to Welsh language learning for pupils across all phases and sectors.

Our vision for improving the planning and thus increasing the provision of Welsh medium education in Neath Port Talbot will facilitate the national vision for the Welsh language, to secure 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. We share the Welsh Government's vision:

***...to secure favourable circumstances throughout the country that support language acquisition and use of Welsh language skills. We want to see an increase in language transmission in the family, early introduction of Welsh to every child, an education system that provides Welsh language skills for all***

Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers (Welsh Government, 2017)

In Neath Port Talbot we will enable all learners, families and carers to develop their Welsh language skills and to use the language confidently in everyday life. Welsh-medium education is an integral and essential part of the learning offer in Neath Port Talbot. We believe that all children should benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh. The authority underpins this principle by committing to enabling all learners to benefit from its universal access to this provision.

Our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-32, will be the cornerstone for this vision and will detail how we plan to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities and how we plan for future growth. The plan details how we will secure further development over the next 10 years, January 2022 - January 2032. It aligns itself to:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'
- Prosperity for All: the national strategy and the programme for Government, Taking Wales forward 2016-2021
- Welsh Government's national Welsh language strategy 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers by 2050'
- Education in Wales: Our National Mission, Action Plan 2017-21- A desire for learners to become increasingly bilingual and commitments to

encourage teachers with some ability to speak Welsh to further develop their skills

- The Welsh in Education, Action Plan 2017-21  
Sets the direction for the development of Welsh-medium education
- Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

Our statutory education system has a vital role to play in increasing the number of Welsh speakers and, as highlighted by Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, "post-compulsory education and training providers have a key role to play in sustaining learners' Welsh language skills to meet the growing need for a bilingual workforce". In order to achieve our goals, we must significantly increase the number of school learners who have the opportunity to develop Welsh-language skills in all settings and thus use it in their everyday lives.

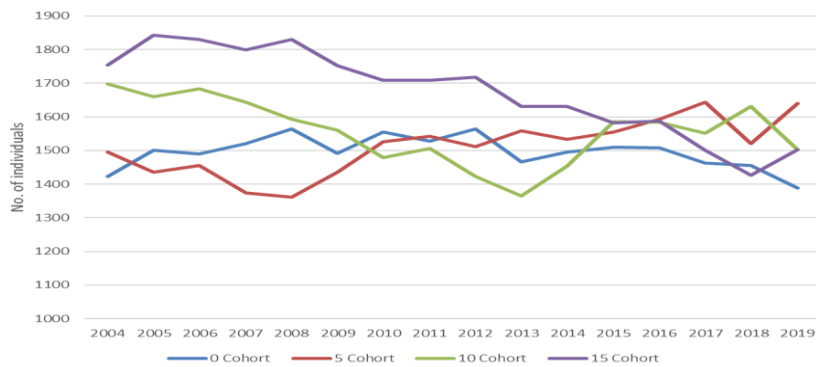
Welsh Government have set a target for Neath Port Talbot to increase the number of learners accessing Welsh-medium education of between 17% and 27% over a 10 year period. This target is based on increasing the number of Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh from 16.8% (252 pupils) in 2020/21 (PLASC 2021) to 31% (460 pupils) by 2032. Our ambitious plan is to exceed the upper range of the target set by Welsh Government.

### **Current trends and projected forecasts**

The overarching 10 year target is set as a result of a geographic and demographic assessment. The analysis tells us:

- The number of children within the zero age cohort gradually increased in the early 2000s but this process has now flattened out and returned to the lower levels previously seen at the beginning of the period.
- The three year average number of individuals within this cohort in 2017-19 is 1,436, which is 5.9% down on the level seen a decade earlier when the three year average for 2007-09 was 1,526 (90 individual per year higher).
- The age five cohort has displayed considerable growth over the last decade with the three year average 15.2% higher for this age group during 2017-19 than compared to 2007-09 (up from 1390 to 1601). This is in contrast with older age cohorts with the number of 15 year olds present within the County Borough seeing a sustained fall over the last 15 years, with the number in this age group now 17.7% lower than a decade earlier.

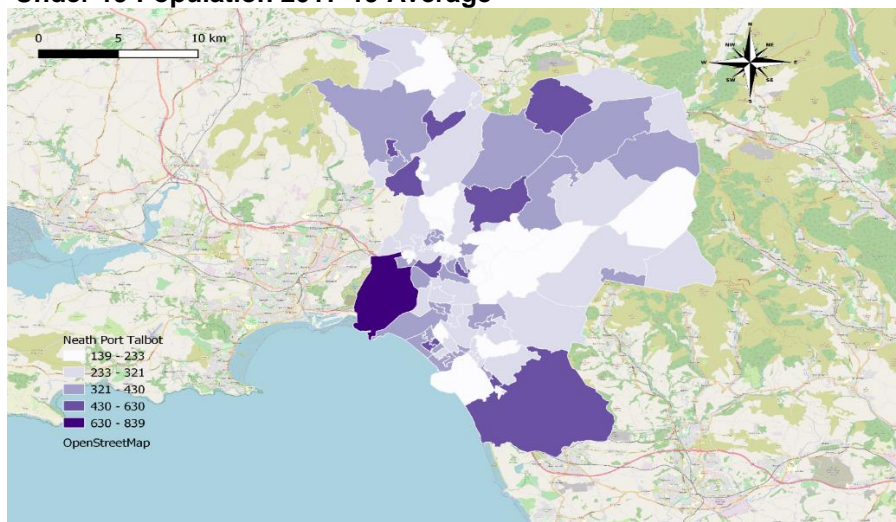
### County level population chart



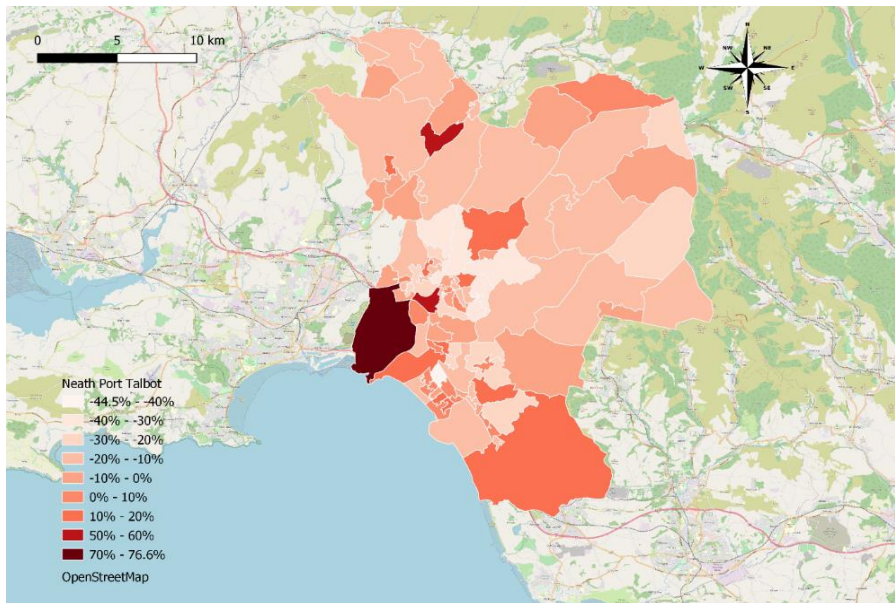
The above data shows a decrease in zero age population, however, an analysis of factors which will impact on the future of Welsh medium education has showed a projected plateauing in the school age population and a potential to substantially increase the number of Welsh medium learners within the next 10 years. The factors taken into consideration when conducting the assessment included population change, population density, population composition, existing Welsh language skills, current Welsh-medium learners and potential additional demand for Welsh-medium education.

The data from the assessment shows that some areas within the Local Authority are showing significant population growth in the under 19 category with one showing a population increase of 76.6% from a three year average of 475 in 2002-04 to 839 in 2017-19. The three year average for this area of 839 makes this the largest in terms of absolute population for this age group.

### Under 19 Population 2017-19 Average



### Under 19 % Population Change 2002-4 Average to 2017-19 Average



Analysis of the data shows that the strategic plan will require a proactive and reactive approach to include:

- establishing new Welsh-medium schools in areas where the demand for Welsh-medium education is identified
- creating a demand for Welsh-medium education in new geographical areas

### **Strategic Planning and links with the Local Development Plan**

A termly meeting is held to share information and consider future pressures on school places, including those brought about by approved housing developments, and to develop the appropriate responses to these pressures. Information on approved housing developments and information on sites allocated within the Local Development Plan (LDP) will be considered along with pupil population forecasts to predict the likely impact of population changes at a local and authority-wide level. Due consideration will be given to the demand for Welsh-medium education, and its planned growth. Work has recently begun on the preparation of the new LDP (2021-2036). Through consultation and engagement with key stakeholders throughout the plan's preparation process, the new plan will consider whether site-specific education facility allocations will need to be made and what policies may be needed to secure education provision, for example, through planning obligations. The new LDP will consider the demand for educational land use for all ages, types of facilities and for Welsh-medium and English-medium provision. The WESP co-ordinator along with the Strategic School Improvement programme team have been included in developing the new LDP.

## **Achieving the Vision**

In order to deliver the WESP our main objectives are:

- to bring forward a proposal to create a further 3 Welsh medium primary schools within the ten year plan
- to increase the transfer rates between pre-school and Welsh-medium school-based provision by 80% during the lifetime of the plan: we will deliver an action plan in conjunction with providers such as Mudiad Meithrin
- to ensure increased transition rates from Welsh-medium primary schools to Welsh-medium secondary schools with the aim of securing 100% transition rate per year
- to establish later entry point linguistic support for pupils wishing access to Welsh Medium Education through latecomer immersion provision for both primary and secondary learners as outlined in Outcome 2
- to ensure that Welsh language provision across all Welsh and English medium settings provides pupils with the skills and ability to become confident and sustained speakers of Welsh
- to ensure that post 16 provision through the medium of Welsh is strengthened and thus meets the needs and aspirations of all students
- to maintain the availability of transport in line with the approved council travel policy in order to promote access to Welsh-medium provision
- to ensure that children and young people with ALN receive linguistic equality of opportunity in terms of Welsh-medium education and support in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
- to ensure that access, locally or regionally, to professional training to support the development of effective Welsh teaching and learning which responds to the identified needs of those working in both the English and Welsh-medium sectors
- to recognise Welsh as being essential in role specifications when recruiting all school-based staff; we will clearly outline our expectations in terms of skill-level requirement (from Level 0 to 3) and provide in-house training to support staff development
- to ensure that the WESP Forum has clear objectives to enable it to deliver the outcomes effectively

These main objectives are discussed in detail on the following pages, with a brief summary of the current position and our proposals for the duration of the WESP.

## **Current provision**

Access to Welsh-medium education is met through existing primary and secondary school provision, mainly within the local authority and in a small number of cases in neighbouring authorities. We also facilitate access to secondary phase Welsh-medium education for out of Local Authority pupils, mainly from Powys, at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur. Recognising parental demand for more readily accessible secondary phase Welsh medium education, the local authority has recently established a second 11-16 campus in the south of the Local Authority

Borough. Transport has been provided in accordance with the authority's Home to School Travel Policy 2017.

The Local Authority complies with the statutory duties of the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008 and currently the Council's policy is to provide discretionary free home to school travel assistance to those pupils attending their nearest suitable Welsh-medium education provision or the designated Welsh-medium education provision for the home address. Discretionary assistance for free home to school travel to Welsh-medium schools is subject to the specified distance criteria being met. Currently there is no requirement to provide free home to school travel assistance to pupils of non-compulsory school age, including those attending Welsh-medium Post-16 provision.

### **Swansea Valley – an area of linguistic sensitivity**

The term 'linguistic sensitivity' is used to define those areas in Wales which require targeted and additional support where the language is deemed to be in a weakened state and where the number of speakers are in serious decline, and where the linguistic community may face challenges around the daily use of their language.

According to the 2011 Census, around 15.3% of the county borough's population could speak Welsh, which equates to 20,698 individuals. The vast majority of these speakers lived in the top of the Swansea and Amman Valleys with some communities such as Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Cwmllynfell and Lower Brynamman amongst the highest percentage of Welsh speaking areas in Wales. However, these are the areas that saw the greatest decline in terms of percentage and numbers of Welsh speakers between 2001 and 2011.

The Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Promotion strategy highlights the importance of the area between Trebanos to Cwmllynfell and Rhos to Gwaun Cae Gurwen as possibly the *'most important in the county borough in terms of its linguistic significance as it contains the highest numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers.'*

The table below shows a significant drop in the number of Welsh speakers in these communities over 10 years. In 2011 the Welsh Language Board established a specific language promotion scheme for the Aman Tawe area in an effort to halt the decline of the Welsh language in this area.

Community	Number of Welsh speakers (2001)	Number of Welsh speakers (2011)	Change	% Comparable change
Cwmllynfell	741	669	-72	-9.72
Lower Brynamman	861	776	-85	-9.87
Gwaun Cae Gurwen	1,860	1,572	-288	-15.48
Ystalyfera	1,614	1,339	-275	-17.04
Trebanos	580	459	-121	-20.86
Godre'r Graig	580	473	-107	-18.45
Pontardawe	1,826	1,624	-202	-11.06
Alltwen	800	664	-136	-17.0
Rhos	692	588	-104	-15.03

2001 and 2011 census

Factors that contribute to linguistic erosion include:

- Lack of language transmission at home
- Out-migration / Immigration
- Negative perception of the inherent value of the language
- Lack of awareness of the advantages of bilingualism
- Lack of confidence in Welsh speakers
- The spread of English into traditional Welsh languages
- Mixed language marriages
- The power of Anglo-American influence on the interests of children and young people
- More deaths than births among Welsh-speaking families

A range of actions have been identified within this WESP which are aimed to support and develop the Welsh language within this area and other areas within the Local Authority which require additional support to ensure that numbers do not significantly decline further.

As not to hold back on realising the ambitious targets in this strategic plan, the current WESP does not include actions with regards to the Swansea Valley proposal. We commit to working close with Welsh Government to address the actions and consider the advice in the Impact Assessment. This further work will be annexed to the current WESP once a decision process has been completed.

### **Welsh-medium Childcare Provision within Neath Port Talbot**

Name of provision	Location
Cylch Mwy Blaendulais	Seven Sisters
Tiddlywinks Childcare Centre	Ystalyfera
Cylch Aberafan	Aberavon
Cylch Brynhyfryd	Brynhyfryd
Lots of Tots	Tairgwaith
Meithrinfa Ddydd Ser Bach	Neath



Cylch Chwarae Castell-nedd	Neath
Meithrinfa Ddydd y Waun	Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen
Georgie Porgie's Cylch Tir Morfa	Sandfields
Cylch Chwarae Pontardawe	Pontardawe
Cylch Meithrin Cwmnedd	Glynneath

### **Welsh-medium schools within Neath Port Talbot**

Primary	Middle (3-19)
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Blaendulais	Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell-nedd	
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwmnedd	
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwmllynfell	
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Gwaun Cae Gurwen	
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontardawe	
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhosafan	
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Trebannws	
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tyle'r Ynn	

### **Post 16 provision within Neath Port Talbot**

Name of Provider
Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur
Coleg Afan Nedd
St Joseph's Sixth Form Centre

## Outcome 1:

### More nursery children/ three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

#### Where are we now?

Our early years ambition for the Welsh Language in Neath Port Talbot, involves us generating a culture where high quality Welsh Language services for families are not just easily accessible and available, but in demand; we need to create that demand. We feel, the key here is promoting and communicating the benefits of the Welsh Language and bilingualism as early as possible during a child's journey through education and services.

We recognise that parents decisions about their child's ultimate destination school, regardless of language, is often considered very early on in a child's life, or even during gestation. Identifying both universal and targeted provision contact points with families, and working in partnership is essential in fulfilling these targets.

In terms of our existing strategies and plans, it is essential for us to dovetail the many cross-cutting outcomes throughout the Early Years services we run, both as a Local Authority, and collaboratively with partners. These include:

- CCG: Childcare and Play- Supporting Families (3 focus areas, one of which is to support and assist families wishing to access provision through the medium of Welsh)
- Welsh Language Strategy – Childcare element within Priority 1
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – Priority: Improve access to Welsh medium and bilingual provision
- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Flying Start Childcare
- Childcare Offer for Wales

#### **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment**

The Childcare Act 2006 requires Neath Port Talbot Council, and other Local Authorities to shape and support the development of childcare in the local area to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This is to ensure that parents, carers and families are able to access the childcare they need locally. Local Authorities are therefore required to assess the local childcare market to develop a realistic and robust picture of parents' current and future need for childcare. Having sufficient childcare in Neath Port Talbot means that families are able to find childcare that meets their children's needs and empowers parents and carers to make choices about work and training.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment data was not required by WG to be refreshed as initially planned during 2020, due to the pandemic. The last full CSA was 2017. This was reliant on SASS data that was not fully complete by the NPT CC sector at the time, so the data and information is not an accurate measure of the WM sector at the time.

3% of the 68 registered childminders in NPT class their main operating language as Welsh and English (2 childminders classified as Welsh/English, 66 class themselves as English only).

The new Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will be published in 2022 and this information will be included in the annual action plans that will accompany this WESP.

### **Distribution of Childcare Places**

Based on data from June 2020, there were 9 wards within the Local Authority with no registered childcare provision (Welsh and English). Of these 9 wards, 3 were in the catchment area of existing Welsh-medium schools- Trebanos, Godre'r Graig and Coedffranc Central. It is therefore essential to address these areas within the first half of the WESP plan, with the aim of addressing the remaining areas in the second half of the plan.

### **Welsh-medium Childcare Data**

From a snap shot taken 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 from the NPT CIW childcare data shown below, 10.5% of the total 2199 available registered childcare spaces were Welsh Medium spaces:

Service URN	Service Name	Provider Address Town/City	Service Type	Service Sub Type	Maximum Capacity	Date Of Registration	Temporarily Closed
SIN-00004620	Cylch Meithrin Mwy Blaendulais	Blaendulais	Childrens Day Care	Sessional Day Care	12	37347	Open
SIN-00004621	Tiddlywinks Childcare Centre, Yst	Ystalyfera	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	43	37347	Open
SIN-00005342	Cylch Aberafan, Aberavon Integrated Children's Centre	Aberavon	Childrens Day Care	Sessional Day Care	12	38951	Open
SIN-00005645	Cylch Brynhyfryd Flying Start Playgroup	Brynhyfryd	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	?	40206	Open
SIN-00005723	Lots of Tots (Canolfan Maerdy)	Tairgwaith	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	52	39926	Open
SIN-00005753	Meithrinfa Ddydd Ser Bach / Little Stars Day Nursery	Neath	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	19	39917	Open
SIN-00006233	Cylch Chwarae Castell-Nedd	Neath	Childrens Day Care	Sessional Day Care	28	41346	Open
SIN-00006241	Meithrinfa Ddydd y Waun	GCG	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	19	41380	Open
SIN-00006588	Georgie Porgie's Cylch Tir Morfa	Sandfields	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	12	42009	Open
SIN-00007321	Cylch Chwarae Pontardawe	Pontardawe	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	14	42571	Open
SIN-00008668-SPWH	Cylch Meithrin Cwmnedd	Cwmnedd	Childrens Day Care	Full Day Care	20	43325	Open
				<b>Total Spaces</b>	<b>231</b>		
Service URN	Service Name	Provider Address Town/City	Service Type	Service Sub Type	Maximum Capacity	Date Of Registration	Temporarily Closed
SIN-00010201-SWQB	Clwb Plant Tiddlywinks, Yst	Ystalyfera	Childrens Day Care	Out of School Care	32	43517	Closed

In the short term, one 32 place WM setting is closed and is being supported to reopen, along with our current SSIP (Strategic School Improvement)/ WMG (Welsh Medium Grant)/ CCO (Child Care Offer) capital developments due to be completed, creating an additional 58 Welsh Medium spaces to be available before 2022. This increases the overall WM percentage to 14.6% by 2021/2022.

### **Flying Start**

The number of children accessing Welsh language in Flying Start, accumulative, is as follows:

2017/18 - 104

2018/19 – 135

2019/20 -130

## 2020-21(during Covid) – 77

There will potentially be 34 more places available as part of the WM capital developments in YGG Pontardawe and YGG Tyle'r Ynn in 2021-2022.

Based on 2020/21 data, there were 452 Flying Start childcare places per annum across our settings of which 65 were category 3 (Welsh language) and category 2 (English/Welsh language) childcare settings equating to a total of 14.4%. The following table shows the transition rate from WM Flying Start places to Nursery education in WM primary schools:

Flying Start Setting	Transition rate		Destination Schools	Notes
	Welsh Medium Nursery	English Medium Nursery		
Cylch Brynhyfryd	66.6%	33.3%	YGG Tyle'r Ynn, Carreg Hir	
Cylch Aberafan		100%	Sandfields Primary	Setting on school site
Cylch Cwmnedd	50%	50%	YGG Cwmnedd, Blaendulais, Cwmnedd English	Setting on YGG school site
Cylch Castell Nedd	50%	50%	YGG CN, Gnoll, Alderman Davies	
Meithrinfa Dydd Y Waun (GCG)	100%		YGG GCG	Setting on school site
Cylch Pontardawe	100%		YGG Pontardawe	Setting on school site
Cylch Tir Morfa	100%		YGG Rhosafan	Setting immediately next to school site
Tiddlywinks Ystalyfera	100%		YGG Ystalyfera Bro Dur	
Lots of Tots Canolfan Maerdy	100%		YGG Ystalyfera Bro Dur, YGG Brynamman	

We recognise the need to increase the percentage of children accessing WM FS childcare entering WM Nursery Education. The current overall transition rate from WM FS Childcare to MW Nursery Education is 74%. 44 children (11 of which accessed English Medium FS Childcare) transitioned into WM Nursery during 2020/2021.

### **Flying Start Expansion- Phase One**

Building on on-going works, in line with our WESP aims, at least 4 additional Welsh or bilingual settings are due to open near to, or in FS areas during 2022/23. These new settings will be used to offer and encourage Welsh language childcare to FS families. While we are committed to the increase and development of Welsh language childcare provision, we also recognise that childcare providers are enthusiastic about offering more Welsh language opportunities in their setting. We have staff that are passionate about the Welsh Language, working with the English Medium settings to improve the Welsh they offer through an awards based Welsh Language quality assurance scheme which includes support, access to training and drop-in Welsh language acquisition sessions. The change in categories will mean a move from category 1 English language settings to category 2 English / Welsh language settings over time.

Additional care will be taken when placing outreach placements, with amendments to outreach policies to include ensuring Bilingual/Welsh childcare is offered, along with benefits of bilingualism messages.

Outreach guidance is being reviewed to assist targeted support via the referral route for families in some key deprived communities that will not be covered by expansion in phase one, as “communities of interest”, so that those who need the support, are still able to

access the services they need, while those communities wait for expansion to reach their areas. We are confident that the 32 additional spaces will be utilised, with scope to use existing FS childcare settings to accommodate this. We hope this offer will have an initial offer of Welsh language provision as a first offer.

Additional Welsh speaking staff are being recruited into the FS parenting team, and our Welsh Language Dev Officer has developed a Welsh Award for Childcare settings to promote and improve the use of Welsh within settings

Once the Flying Start Phase One draft plan has been approved by NPTCBC AND SBUHB, quantitative targets will be set in the annual action plan for outcome 1.

### **Developing bilingual settings**

While we are committed to the increase and development of Welsh language childcare provision, we also recognise that childcare providers are enthusiastic about offering more Welsh language opportunities in their setting. We have staff that are passionate about the Welsh Language, working with the English Medium settings to improve the Welsh they offer through and awards based Welsh Language quality assurance scheme which includes support, access to training and drop-in Welsh language acquisition sessions. The change in categories may mean over time a move from category 1 English language settings to category 2 English / Welsh language settings.

### **Capital Projects**

There are a number of pre-school capital projects that will impact Welsh Medium Provision within the Local Authority outlined below which will significantly increase the WM places available:

Capital project	Brief outline of works	Estimated completion date	Additional WM Places
YGG Cwmllynfell	Increased classrooms and new childcare room	Sept 2021	24
YGG Tyle'r Ynn	Increased classrooms, new childcare room, new community space	Sept 2021	24
YGG Pontardawe	Increased classrooms, larger childcare space	December 2021	+10
Neath Central	New childcare setting	May 2022	24
			82

### **Family Information Service**

Our Family Information Service is a pivotal part of Early Years information and support for families within NPT. During COVID its importance has been in the spotlight, with even greater reliance on seeking correct and up to date information on line for families.

The Early Years Team, is working closely with FIS, to develop its information for parents looking for WM groups, childcare and schools, and aims to highlight the benefits of bilingualism and the Welsh Language to parents in a fun and interesting way, including online presence, access to Welsh stories and rhymes, signposting to Welsh lessons for

parents etc. Work has already taken place to improve the WM schools landing page, but we acknowledge that there is work to be done to streamline the links between the FIS site and the NPT schools pages to ensure clear, easy to navigate information.

### **Mudiad Meithrin**

As we move out of the restrictions of coronavirus, community groups will reignite, and we will work with Mudiad Meithrin officers to develop Cymraeg i Blant, Ti a Fi, and to offer early Welsh language opportunities for very young children and families. Cymraeg i Blant will aim is to increase the number of nursery age children that are able to speak Welsh. This will be achieved through sharing information and giving advice and support to parents on the benefits of Welsh medium education/childcare, the benefits of being bilingual and the importance of introducing Welsh to children as early as possible. Cymraeg i Blant will therefore contribute towards the Welsh Government’s target of achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Mudiad Meithrin officers will continue to work with the Early Years team to develop and expand Cylchoedd Meithrin across the borough especially through their Set up And Succeed programme (Cwmllynfell and Tyle’r Ynn). We will continue to encourage all new and existing Cylchoedd to tender to deliver on our early years’ contracts including Flying Start, Early Years Education, Assisted and Supported Places as well as the Childcare Offer.

### **Nursery places**

Pupils within the Local Authority start Nursery education at the age of 3 years old. The percentage choosing Welsh medium education at this stage is gradually increasing. N1 numbers (youngest Nursery cohort) increased in 2021 as a result of PLASC being later than usual due to the pandemic but the percentage fell from previous years. PLASC 2022 will provide more accurate figures for this cohort.

The percentage of pupils in N2 (oldest Nursery cohort) Welsh-medium schools in 2021 was the highest since 2011, with numbers increasing by almost 4% since 2017. Three year N2 cohort averages at all Welsh-medium primary schools in the south of the Local Authority are on the increase, this coincides with the availability of more accessible secondary Welsh-medium education with the opening of the YG Ystalyfera Bro Dur south campus in September 2017.

<b>Plasc Pupil Numbers and Percentages in Welsh Medium Schools</b>															
<b>Year Group</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Nursery 1 - Numbers	94	111	90	89	103	108	87	110	92	81	85	104	109	112	155
Nursery 1 - Percentages	20.5%	21.9%	19.0%	19.2%	20.2%	22.0%	18.0%	20.5%	18.6%	17.7%	18.4%	21.1%	22.7%	23.7%	20.3%
Nursery 2 - Numbers	245	268	304	280	310	306	285	266	272	270	243	256	270	292	290
Nursery 2 - Percentages	18.6%	18.7%	19.8%	18.8%	21.2%	20.2%	18.6%	17.7%	17.3%	18.0%	17.1%	18.0%	18.7%	19.8%	21.0%

		Plasc Actuals - Welsh Medium Year Nursery 2															
No.	School	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
2213	YGG Y Wern	16	18	22	15	13	32	18	23	23	11	17					
2202	YGG Blaendulais	14	18	17	12	11	13	16	12	17	7	18	10	12	13	16	
2168	YGG Castell-nedd	39	38	48	34	49	58	54	43	46	60	43	48	53	58	59	
2205	YGG Cwm Nedd	25	25	31	28	44	19	27	23	23	15	11	9	9	27	21	
2149	YGG Gwaun Cae Gurwen	13	14	22	19	13	13	23	18	17	26	25	24	26	24	25	
2218	YGG Pontardawe	31	38	37	47	49	59	38	35	36	56	37	50	45	32	47	
2158	YGG Rhosafan	35	48	53	57	56	47	48	42	45	43	41	50	62	56	51	
2231	YGG Tyle'r Ynn	21	27	30	28	35	26	22	33	30	27	31	26	23	45	30	
2125	YGG Cwmgors	10	7	4	6	4	8	7	6	7							
2128	YGG Cwmllynfell	12	10	11	7	9	14	16	14	19	9	9	8	5	8	9	
2198	YGG Rhiwfawr	3	2	7	5	9											
2208	YGG Trebannws	20	16	18	19	14	17	16	17	9	16	11	10	15	10	11	
2139	YGG Y Glyn	6	7	4	3	4											
5501	YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur													21	20	19	21
	<b>Total - Welsh Medium</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>290</b>	
	<b>Total - NPT</b>	<b>1317</b>	<b>1434</b>	<b>1536</b>	<b>1489</b>	<b>1459</b>	<b>1512</b>	<b>1530</b>	<b>1505</b>	<b>1575</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>1425</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>1447</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>1382</b>	
	<b>% - Welsh Medium</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	

We recognise that we will need to expand our Welsh language registered childcare places, including Flying Start childcare places, with a focus on any further school expansion to enable continuity for families as well as areas where there is currently no Welsh language childcare provision. The expansion of childcare provision will require a focus on capital developments submitted to Welsh Government, as well as workforce development to ensure sufficient staff to run high quality Welsh language childcare. This in turn will lead to an increase in demand for Welsh-medium Nursery places and will lead to an increase of 3 year olds/ nursery children accessing Welsh-medium education.

### Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

Our aim is to increase the number of Nursery children receiving Welsh-medium education in order to reach our target of an increase of 208 pupils by the end of the 10 year plan. This will be achieved by implementing the following actions.

- The Council commits to creating a baseline and an operational plan that identifies further geographical gaps in provision in order to ensure that pre-school provision is available throughout the county by 2024. This will be in line with the 2022 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the Early Years Flying Start expansion plan-Phase One.
- Promote partnership work with Midwifery and Health Visitors to assist early messages about the Welsh Language and bilingualism, to be shared though the perinatal and postnatal period. Information booklets providing information on the benefits of bilingualism and addressing common fears will be created and used by the partners from initial perinatal communication with parents.

- Partnership work with Swansea University/ Academi Hywel Teifi will embed the promotion of bilingualism into the midwifery course currently running at the University.
- Revisit the training run by Cefin Campbell with all staff working within EY in NPT, LA and Health (including SALT), childcare sector etc. It is important to regain some of the momentum lost during COVID, revisiting some of the good work that had started to impact how our own team members and our partners used and promoted Welsh and Bilingualism.
- Promote the importance of transferring between Cylchoedd Meithrin and Welsh-medium primary schools. This transfer is essential to ensure that progression from one to the other increases and reaches 100% by the end of the 10 year plan.
- Work with parents and carers to understand what information they need to inform their choices of language provision for education, including resources, web presence, activities etc. will be developed. They will focus on alleviating common worries and barriers. Partnership work with Menter Iaith and RhAG will be essential in the success of this campaign.
- Work with parents to ensure that a clear progression route in Welsh-medium education from childcare through to post-16 is identified for all families.
- The Local Authority will explore the possibility of using a promotional consultant employed specifically to promote the benefits of Welsh-medium education and to produce a promotional campaign i.e. website, leaflets, social media, posters, videos, to strengthen communication. A NPT website will be created outlining the journey of Welsh medium education for learners within the Local Authority. Menter Iaith and RhAG will play a pivotal role in promotion.
- Develop Welsh-medium wraparound childcare options to address gaps in existing provision and to support parents including parents accessing the 30 hour offer and Flying Start expansion in conjunction with our partners including Mudiad Meithrin through establishing new Cylch Meithrin settings for YGG Tyle'r Ynn, YGG Cwmllynfell, YGG Trebannws, YGYBD Primary sector as well as within the 3 new Welsh-medium primary schools which will open within the 10 year plan.
- Develop further Welsh-medium wraparound childcare options to support parents accessing the 30 hour offer and Flying Start expansion in conjunction with our partners including Mudiad Meithrin through expanding existing settings i.e. YGG Pontardawe, YGG Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen.
- Increase the number of Welsh-medium groups running within settings and schools i.e. Babi a Fi, Ti a Fi, baby massage, parenting classes to follow the YGG Tyle'r Ynn model (Ti a Fi alone increased Nursery numbers by 24 places).
- Regularly review the 'Neath Port Talbot Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan' with an emphasis on improving access to Welsh medium and bilingual provision by identifying and filling gaps in provision.
- Based on 2020/21 data, there were 452 Flying Start childcare places per annum across our settings of which 65 were category 3 Welsh language and category 2 English/Welsh language childcare settings equating to a total of 14.4%. We have a target in Flying Start to increase this percentage to 20% within the next 5 years, 25% by end of the 10 year plan by expanding provisions/ establishing new provisions.
- The Early Years team will continue to work with Mudiad Meithrin officers to develop and expand Cylchoedd Meithrin across the borough especially through their Set up And Succeed programme (Cwmllynfell and Tyle'r Ynn). We will continue to



encourage all new and existing Cylchoedd to tender to deliver on our early years' contracts including Flying Start, Early Years Education, Assisted and Supported Places as well as the Childcare Offer

- The Local Authority will support the Welsh Language Awards within English language childcare settings to progress through the continuum towards an increase in category 2 Welsh language childcare provision.
- Use the PSA (Play Strategy Assessment) to develop and encourage out of school activities in Welsh.
- The Local Authority will review and amend the online admissions process in partnership with the admissions team for the process of applications for Nursery and Reception, so that information is strategically placed throughout the online application system to ensure families are able to make informed decisions about the language of provision they want for their child.
- A programme of professional development will be created to ensure that partners are updated regarding what is available, increase confidence for those who speak Welsh already, provide opportunities to learn Welsh and ensuring Welsh is part of job vacancies moving forward.
- All partners will collaborate and support private childcare settings to ensure an increase in Welsh medium provision with the emphasis of promoting the advantages of bilingualism.
- Ensure sufficient provision for Nursery/ 3 year old provision at primary school level is easily available throughout the Local Authority. We will establish a new single form entry starter school in Skewen/ Neath Abbey area with the possibility of expanding/ transferring to a new purpose built WM primary school in Coed Darcy subject to member approval and compliance with the extant criteria of the Schools' Organisation Code.
- To bring forward a proposal to create a further 2 Welsh medium primary schools within the 10 year plan. Funding will be sought from the appropriate Sustainable Communities for Learning programme grant funding streams. The initial plan for opening the second school in the south east of the Local Authority will be in place by 2024. The location of the third School will be confirmed in the second half of the scheme.

### **Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?**

By the end of the 10 year plan, all pupils in all areas of the Local Authority will have easy access to Welsh medium education and Welsh pre-school education. Information regarding Welsh medium education and the benefits of bilingualism will be provided by all partners to parents throughout the educational continuum, from pre-birth to post 18 in order to provide clear, concise and cohesive information. Parents will be supported throughout their child's education.

## Key Data

### Numbers and % of 3-year olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
311	21.4%	331	22.8%	351	24.2%	370	25.5%	389	26.8%
2027 - 2028		2028- 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
408	28.1%	427	29.5%	446	30.8	465	32.%	484	33.4%

## Outcome 2

### More reception class children/ five year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

#### Where are we now?

In Neath Port Talbot there are 10 Welsh-medium schools, 9 out of 55 primary schools and 1 Welsh-medium middle school providing for ages 3 -18yrs. There are also 7 English-medium secondary schools and 2 English-medium Special Schools.

Although showing a variation over the years, the numbers at reception age show an increase. Both the number and percentage of reception pupils in Welsh-medium schools increased for the third year in a row with the percentage higher than it has been since 2013.

Plasc Pupil Numbers and Percentages in Welsh Medium Schools															
Year Group	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Reception - Numbers	272	247	263	303	282	296	296	276	265	266	273	234	252	268	283
Reception - Percentages	20.1%	18.4%	18.3%	19.3%	18.5%	20.0%	19.3%	17.9%	17.2%	16.7%	17.8%	16.1%	17.2%	18.0%	18.7%

Plasc Actuals - Welsh Medium Year Reception																
No.	School	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
2213	YGG Y Wern	23	14	18	18	15	13	29	19	22	23	13				
2202	YGG Blaendulais	14	15	20	17	13	13	12	14	12	16	7	18	10	11	15
2168	YGG Castell-nedd	49	40	38	48	37	48	57	49	45	49	61	38	46	52	54
2205	YGG Cwm Nedd	21	24	24	33	27	42	15	24	23	21	15	13	10	9	27
2149	YGG Gwaun Cae Gurwen	22	14	12	23	17	15	14	21	17	22	26	22	23	24	23
2218	YGG Pontardawe	36	34	37	38	49	46	58	41	35	35	55	35	48	46	32
2158	YGG Rhosafan	43	35	47	51	54	57	46	47	41	43	44	40	47	63	54
2231	YGG Tyle'r Ynn	21	22	27	27	31	35	27	20	34	30	28	30	26	25	43
2125	YGG Cwmgors	4	10	8	3	6	5	7	7	6						
2128	YGG Cwmllynfell	10	12	9	13	5	13	15	18	14	19	8	9	10	5	8
2198	YGG Rhiwfawr	9	3	2	8	7										
2208	YGG Trebannws	19	19	15	21	20	9	16	16	16	8	16	11	11	14	10
2139	YGG Y Glyn	1	5	6	3	1										
5501	YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur												18	21	19	17
	<b>Total - Welsh Medium</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>283</b>
	<b>Total - NPT</b>	<b>1355</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>1437</b>	<b>1572</b>	<b>1521</b>	<b>1479</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>1542</b>	<b>1543</b>	<b>1596</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>1457</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>1487</b>	<b>1511</b>
	<b>% - Welsh Medium</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>

At present, the following is being implemented within the Local Authority:

- We currently monitor demand and identify trends for Welsh-medium education and use this information to plan for future provision.
- We ensure that proposals for appropriate Sustainable Communities for Learning include full consideration of Welsh-medium education.
- Targets are set to increase the capacity of Welsh-medium pre-school provision and to provide information for parents/carers that promotes the benefits of a bilingual education, seeking advice of best practice in other authorities. In terms of Welsh language pre-school provision, a snap shot taken 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 from the NPT CIW childcare data shows that 10.5% of the total 2199 available registered childcare spaces were Welsh Medium spaces.

- The current SSIP/WMG/CCO capital developments will create an additional 58 Welsh Medium spaces to be available before 2022. This increases the overall WM percentage to 14.6% by 2021/2022.
- We work closely with Mudiad Meithrin to ensure expansion of pre-school provision across the authority and support the sector to recruit suitably skilled Welsh language care workers.
- Targets are set within the NPT Language Promotion Strategy plan to improve the support for parents/pupils and schools to move along the linguistic continuum through collaboration with Menter Iaith and RhAG.
- The authority has opened a second WM secondary campus in the south-east in September 2018 with a capacity for 650 11-16 pupils. It has stimulate interest and growth in WM primary provision in the areas of Port Talbot, Neath, Llandarcy, Briton Ferry and the Cwmafan area in subsequent years.
- All the Council's schools are regularly reviewed against specific criteria, and the need for sufficient places at Welsh-medium schools features in the reviewing process, the outcomes of which have included rationalisation of Welsh-medium schools, where appropriate, to maximise the available accommodation and improve teaching and learning opportunities. The need for Welsh-medium schools is addressed by a strategic approach to service planning and delivery.
- The below projects have recently been completed or are nearing completion. In total these projects will increase the number of Foundation Phase places available within primary schools by 150 F/T pupil places.

The projects are:

1. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontardawe,

This project initially involved creating 3 extra classroom and childcare provision at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontardawe. This project was awarded £1.6m grant funding.

Following more detailed discussion with the school the scheme was amended. At the schools request the current childcare provision and nursery/reception classes were relocated within the school to allow for work to take place without interruption, which necessitated remodelling 2 classrooms, providing extra toilet facilities and outdoor play area, converting the staffroom and office to provide childcare facilities and converting a reception area for storage.

The completed scheme will provide remodeled and extended childcare and nursery facilities along with 2 new build FP classrooms, a new entrance way, staffroom, meeting room and office and additional play areas, fencing and pathways, along with medium refurbishment of the hall.

As well as providing increased capacity the scheme also sought to relocate the main entrance and reception to the front of the school creating a new and more visible front of school which can be clearly seen by the road and nearby housing estate. With careful landscaping and signage of the school site it is hoped that the school will appear more attractive to parents who may be considering a WM education in their local area.

## 2. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwmllynfell

At Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwmllynfell £640k was awarded to provide 1 extra classroom space and a childcare setting, with the aim of increasing the capacity of the school, improve Foundation Phase provision and provide space to develop pre-school Welsh-medium provision.

The scheme aimed to prevent drift to other schools in neighbouring authorities, strengthening the development of Welsh language in the area and impacting positively on the Council's Band B proposal at YG Ystalyfera Bro Dur (north campus) by increasing the number of children from the area choosing secondary education through the medium of Welsh.

The project has been successfully completed and both the new classroom and childcare provision are ready for use.

## 3. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tyle'r Ynn

The aim of this project was to create a more attractive and stimulating learning environment with high quality Welsh -medium childcare on site. In the longer term it was anticipated that this would ease accommodation pressures in the area, with demand for Welsh medium pupil places increasing year on year. £1.14m of funding was awarded which enabled the provision of 2 extra classroom spaces and a new Welsh medium childcare provision.

The project has been successfully completed and is a very welcome and timely addition to the school. Pupil numbers have already shown an increase with both nursery and reception classes full in September 2021.

## 4. Additional Projects

In addition, over the past 4 years there has been significant capital funding for major refurbishment projects in eight existing Welsh-medium schools. The investment, which secures the future of these schools, ranges from boundary wall and toilet/changing facility refurbishment schemes to a new build kitchen block, boiler replacement and re-roofing. A new build 4 block extension at YGG Rhosafan and a new 60 place Foundation Phase classroom provision at YGG Castell nedd has also been provided as part of the Reducing Infant Class Size grant.

Ensuring sustainable growth of Welsh-medium places and achieving an increase in demand will require detailed and informed planning to ensure that we create the demand across all outcomes. We recognise that more pupils accessing their statutory education through the medium of Welsh is key not just for the WESP but the NPT Welsh Promotion Strategy and the national Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

The actions laid out in this outcome will work towards the desired increase in pupils entering Reception at Welsh-medium schools by proactively planning to increase demand and also fill the 26.7% (632 places) of surplus capacity that currently exist in

our Welsh-medium primary schools. Annual detailed action plans will outline how the demand will be created in specific areas within the Local Authority.

### **Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?**

Our target is to increase the number of Year 1 children receiving WM education by 208 pupils by the end of the 10 year plan (this will mirror the number of children in Reception class as they commence full time education). We will ensure that an increase is also reflected in the transition rates within Outcome 3 and 4.

- We will review the demand for provision for Welsh-medium education on an annual basis, analyse the results of our parental surveys and draft appropriate action plans to address and create demand in specific areas and within specific groups.
- In order to create and stimulate demand we will appoint a consultant to promote the benefits of WM education and produce a marketing campaign i.e. website, leaflets, social media, and to liaise with and strengthen communication between different stakeholders etc. Specific emphasis will be given to reducing surplus places in the North of the Local Authority.
- In order to create and stimulate demand we will work closely with Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith, Tŷ'r Gwrhyd and RhAG to inform parents/ carers of the benefits of Welsh medium education and bilingualism in order to ensure retention of pupils from Nursery to full time education. Welsh-medium primary schools in the north of the Local Authority have 459 surplus places (out of a total of 632). Specific emphasis will be given to reducing surplus places in the North of the Local Authority.
- Cylchoedd Meithrin will work closely with their local WM schools/ Family Information Service, Flying Start to ensure that a high percentage of children transfer to WM schools. Specific emphasis will be given to reducing surplus places in the North of the Local Authority.
- We will establish a new single form entry starter school in Skewen/ Neath Abbey. The current need for a Welsh medium school in this area is clear. The seedling school will have 210 places (one form entry) plus a 45 place Nursery. If the demand for Welsh medium education in the area continues to grow as expected, there is a possibility that the Welsh-medium seedling school will remain in Skewen and an additional Welsh medium school will be built in Coed Darcy to accommodate the increasing numbers. Alternatively, the starter school could transfer to a new building in Coed Darcy in line with capacity and pupil numbers. In depth demographic and geographic assessments will be completed in order to assess the situation when the developer achieves the required number of new build homes needed to trigger the construction of a new school as specified in the S106 Planning agreement. This will be subject to member approval and compliance with the extant criteria of the Schools' Organisation Code. Informal conversations have taken place with the head teachers of both YGG Tyle'r Ynn and YGG Castell-nedd around this proposal, and further more detailed discussions are expected to take place during the latter months of 2021, as it is recognised that it will be essential to gain the support and goodwill of these

schools to ensure that the proposed new school is promoted in the local area. Formal consultation has taken place and a final decision is expected in September 2022.

- Subject to member approval we will establish a new Welsh medium school in the east of the county borough. Early work on potential pupil numbers have identified that an increasing number of pupils currently travel from areas including Cwmafan, Taibach and Port Talbot town to YGG Rhosafan, which is continuing to also attract growing numbers of pupil from Sandfields, Aberafan and lower Baglan areas. We would also seek to create the demand for Welsh-medium education in this area in order to attract greater numbers of pupils from the lower Afan Valley and Margam areas which currently have low numbers of pupils accessing Welsh-medium provision. It is expected that funding for this new school would be sought from the appropriate Welsh Government capital grant funding stream available at the time. The initial plan for opening the second school in the south east of the Local Authority will be in place by 2024. We are currently working closely with Replacement Local Development Planning (RLDP) officers in order to identify possible sites and timetables to implement the build. Annual action plans for this outcome will further detail this development.
- To bring forward a proposal to create a third Welsh medium primary school within the 10 year plan. Funding will be sought from the appropriate Sustainable Communities for Learning programme grant funding streams. The location of the third School will be confirmed in the second half of the plan. We are currently working closely with Replacement Local Development Planning (RLDP) officers in order to identify possible sites and timetables to implement the build. Annual action plans will further detail this development.
- We will investigate using **pilot schools** with the aim of mapping out a continuum of staff training to be able to eventually create a category 2 stream within an English-medium school, starting at nursery and working through to Year 6 over a number of years. Early discussions have identified areas suitable for developing a scheme of this kind within the Swansea Valley and the Neath/ Baglan area. Information regarding the schools, specific quantitative data and timescales will be set and evaluated in our annual action plans.
- As a result of Welsh Government funding, we will develop immersion provision for latecomers to the Welsh language. The immersion provision will enable more learners to access Welsh-medium education at primary. The model will depend on need with the aim of having provision accessible to all areas of the Local Authority by the end of the plan.

Long term aim (Post March 2022-Local Authority funded) - The long term aim of the following model is to establish effective immersion hubs in both the north and the south of the Local Authority (in line with WESP targets). We will establish an immersion centre in YGG Pontardawe. This 16 place hub will open in September 2022 to stimulate a demand for Welsh-medium education in the north of the county. This location will also assist in developing the language in a linguistically sensitive area as well as potentially improving confidence and the transition rates to Welsh-medium secondary. The second hub in the south of the county will be located in YGG Rhosafan. This will also be a 16 place hub. We will look to establish provision for the secondary sector in the second half of the WESP with the aim of ensuring provision for late comers to Welsh medium education and pupils who are now in the system but need intensive linguistic support.

Short term aim (December 2021-August2022 WG grant funded)- The short term aim of the grant funding is to research into existing methodologies and good practice across Wales and to form effective networks that will assist in creating effective provision that will address learners' needs and support their progression both in the short and long term. An area within YGG Pontardawe will be identified and developed/ refurbished during the Summer term with the aim of officially opening a 16 place provision in September 2022. Resources for both hubs will be sourced and acquired during this period.

Quantitative targets will be identified and evaluated in the annual action plans and evaluation reports in order to ensure that enough demand is created and that outcomes are effective.

### Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

All children in all areas of Neath Port Talbot will have easy access to WM education as they progress from one stage to the next. Additional provisions set out above and an increase in WM settings/ schools will allow this and will lead to the projected increase of 208 pupils.

### Key Data

Numbers and % of 5-year olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh

2022 - 2023		2023 - 2024		2024 - 2025		2025 - 2026		2026 - 2027	
288	19.7%	308	21%	327	22.3%	346	23.6%	365	24.9%
2027 - 2028		2028- 2029		2029 - 2030		2030 - 2031		2031 - 2032	
384	26.2%	403	27.5	422	28.8	441	30.%	460	31.4%



## Outcome 3

# More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

### Where are we now?

All proposed projects mentioned above in Outcome 1 and 2 are aimed at increasing Welsh-medium provision and addressing key WESP priorities such as improved transition between Early Years, Foundation Phase, Key Stages 2 and 3 in specific geographical areas.

At present, the percentage who commit to YGYBD secondary phase is higher than it has been for many years (86% WM primary to secondary transition). Those who do not transfer are highest in Pontardawe, Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Trebannws and Ystalyfera. Although this remains a concern, the transfer percentages have improved significantly (+ 6%).

Plasc Pupil Numbers and Percentages in Welsh Medium Schools															
Year Group	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Year 7 - Numbers	160	152	171	183	163	165	178	195	165	188	212	213	249	257	248
Year 7 - Percentages	9.4%	8.9%	10.4 %	10.9 %	10.6 %	11.1 %	11.9 %	13.2 %	11.1 %	12.1 %	12.7 %	13.1 %	15.2 %	15.2 %	14.9 %

	Year 7 School																																			
	May 2018 Y6 vs Sept 2018 Y7								May 2019 Y6 vs Sept 2019 Y7								May 2020 Y6 vs Sept 2020 Y7																			
	Out of County	Cohort	Bae Baglan	Cefn Saision	Cwmtrawe	Cwm Brombill	Cymer Alan	Dwr y Felin	Llangatwg	St Joseph's	Ystalyfera	Hendrefelin	Maes y Goed	Out of County	Cohort	Bae Baglan	Cefn Saision	Cwmtrawe	Cwm Brombill	Dwr y Felin	Llangatwg	St Joseph's	Ystalyfera North	Ystalyfera South	Hendrefelin	Maes y Goed	EHE	Out of County	Cohort							
#### YGG Blaendulais	10														10																					
#### YGG Castell-nedd	31														1																					
#### YGG Cwmlllynfell	6																																			
#### YGG Cwmnedd	5	18	1		1																															
#### YGG GCG	3	19			5																															
#### YGG Pontardawe	3	46			11																															
#### YGG Rhosafan	49																																			
#### YGG Trebannws	1	17			9																															
#### YGG Tyle'r Ynn	28																																			
#### YG Ystalyfera - Bro Dur	1	16			7																															

The following is being implemented (along with a menu of other various transition activities) in the Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur cluster to maintain pupils in the sector:

- Ystalyfera'n cyfri- teachers from YGYBD attend cluster schools for 1 hour weekly to deliver a specific series of lessons
- Hawl i Holi-pupils and staff from YGYBD attend cluster schools and primary pupils have an opportunity to ask questions or voice any transition concerns/ anxieties
- Transition website for pupils transferring to YGYBD
- Additional transition days for pupils with ALN or anxiety
- Open days for pupils and open evenings for families
- Gwyl Haf- 3 day summer camp for Year 5 pupils based on a specific theme and followed by a presentation to parents

- Proms- vocal and instrumental. Y5 and Y6 pupils from cluster schools attend YGYBD and are taught by staff and pupils for the day. It is followed by an orchestral performance in the evening (instrumental) or a performance by the YGYBD Cluster Choir (half time Ospreys rugby in Liberty)
- Gig Tanio'r Ddraig- Y5, 6, 7 pupils attend a music festival in YGYBD playing fields annually with the best of current Welsh bands and talent performing
- Cluster sports day for KS2 pupils from feeder primaries on YGYBD playing fields

However, there is a fall in numbers and percentage of learners choosing Welsh-medium education in the post-16 period. The numbers below show the percentage within Welsh-medium schools but there is also a small cohort in St Joseph's studying Welsh A level/ AS level 2<sup>nd</sup> language Welsh, and a small cohort of students studying A level and AS second language Welsh in NPTC Group of Colleges (see outcome 4 for details).

Plasc Pupil Numbers and Percentages in Welsh Medium Schools															
Year Group	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Year 12 - Numbers	106	110	85	88	97	95	90	110	99	84	109	120	108	92	95
Year 12 - Percentages	49.5%	53.1%	44.0%	48.1%	45.8%	42.4%	44.8%	49.3%	45.8%	42.4%	46.8%	53.6%	48.2%	41.8%	40.1%
Year 13 - Numbers	78	89	98	91	72	93	81	67	93	99	65	87	100	95	82
Year 13 - Percentages	43.3%	48.1%	51.0%	47.4%	42.4%	42.5%	41.8%	37.9%	46.3%	49.7%	40.1%	48.1%	54.9%	50.0%	40.8%

Authority staff are working with Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur to consider how post-16 education can be provided in the most effective and efficient way considering what options are available for online provision or blended learning will enable us to implement the highest quality post-16 provision in a way that is compatible with the technology and techniques developed in recent months. This is a discussion but may offer or be part of a short term solution and possibly reduce travel requirements.

Consideration needs to be given to the post-16 provision at the Bro Dur site. This is outlined further in Outcome 4.

### Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?

Our target is to increase the number of pupils receiving WM education by 208 pupils and to retain a higher percentage of these pupils within the system by the end of the 10 year plan. We aim to do this by implementing the following targets.

- The WESP forum will monitor the transition rates and to adapt and amend the Strategic Plan in line with the results of the data
- The Local Authority, along with the WESP working parties, will create a policy setting out the Local Authority's expectations of pupils continuing within the Welsh sector. All schools will support and implement the policy when dealing with

parents, resulting in a collective responsibility to support parents and encourage confidence.

- There will be central messages from the authority through our new Policy to ensure that pupils are encouraged to remain in Welsh-medium education when transferring from one key stage to the next.
- The Local Authority and the WESP forum will support and strengthen the work of the cluster and parents' confidence in the Welsh language. They will encourage early support and preparation within the Primary sector to communicate expected pathways to pupils and parents through the promotional strategies outlined in Outcome 1.
- Stakeholders i.e. schools, Menter Iaith, RhAG, Tŷ'r Gwrhyd will gather information and identify parents' concerns during transfer.
- The Local Authority will provide guidance in order to support parents and alleviate concerns. Services including the Family Information Service and admissions will play a key role in this support.
- The Local Authority will explore using a Promotional Consultant to implement the 'Choice Architecture Model' for organising the context in which parents decide on secondary education for their children.
- A Local Authority Policy will ensure that every school implements the Welsh Language Charter and sets targets aimed at improving Welsh language skills.
- There will be a Local Authority led programme of enrichment activities for schools (all sectors) to encourage development of Welsh language skills. Working in partnership with third sector providers i.e. Urdd, PASS, Tŷ'r Gwrhyd.
- There will be a Local Authority led programme of support for schools to ensure that Welsh is high on the agenda and is being promoted as a valuable and essential skill in line with Y Gymraeg 2050. This will be led by our Education Support Officers.
- The Local Authority will develop a support package for schools to monitor progress. This will be discussed and developed further during core visits from Education Support Officers. This support will include information on developing staff and pupils through various courses, signposting good practice and projects i.e. Cynefin (web based local Welsh history and culture platform for schools to develop).
- As a result of Curriculum Developments for Wales, there will be Local Authority level support for schools to develop the visibility of the new curriculum with the focus on confidence in the Welsh language.
- Case studies to market good practice and raise status (work in partnership with Menter Iaith) will be publicised via a promotional campaigns, social media and websites.
- Rich marketing programmes will raise the profile of the Welsh language and give Welsh-medium education a high status – A Brighter Future (working in partnership with Menter Iaith).
- There will be provision to provide an enhanced workforce skilling programme to meet the needs of outcome 3 in improving pupils' skills across all sectors.
- We will invest in immersion provision for latecomers to the Welsh language. The immersion provision will enable more learners to access WM education at primary and secondary level. The model will depend on need with the aim of having provision accessible to all areas of the Local Authority by the end of the plan. See outcome 2 for details.

- By the second half of the WESP, with growth at key stage 2, the Bro Dur site will reach a full capacity of 650, an increase of 150. As a result of this growth, we will need to consider expanding the capacity within Welsh-medium secondary education. We are currently working closely with Replacement Local Development Planning (RLDP) officers and Headteacher in order to identify options and timetables to implement the developments. Annual action plans will further detail this development.
- We will ensure that the whole educational journey from nursery to post-16 is clear to families in order to further develop confidence in choosing Welsh-medium. In order to ensure this continuum, we will need to develop and provide accessible Welsh-medium education, including post-16 provision at vocational and A level within the Local Authority. Development details and quantitative targets will be identified and evaluated in the annual action plans and evaluation reports.

### **Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?**

By the end of the 10 year plan we will see a significant increase in the number of learners transferring from WM primary to YGYBD as well as an increase in the number of learners remaining in WM education from KS3 to KS4 (see Outcome 4). It is intended to see an increase in the number latecomers changing to WM education as a result of successful immersion, as parents become more informed and confident with WM education.

## Outcome 4

### More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

#### Where are we now?

As outlined in Outcome 3, pupils who have attended Welsh-medium primary education are strongly encouraged to follow the same continuum through the key stages.

Pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur secondary phase are able to study all subjects at GCSE level through the medium of Welsh. Science is optional with learners choosing either to be taught through the medium of Welsh or English on the Ystalyfera site. At present YGYBD secondary phase offer in excess of 36 KS3 courses through the medium of Welsh at GCSE, BTEC, Welsh Bacalaureate, Agored Cymru Tystysgrif Lefel 2 and vocational CBAC level.

All sixth form pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur secondary phase can study their chosen subjects through the medium of Welsh, with the exception of Science. At present, 28 pupils study A level Biology, 18 study A level Chemistry and 15 study A level Physics through the medium of English. These subjects are currently not available through the medium of Welsh.

The Local Authority recognises the need to cater for vocational courses through the medium of Welsh at KS4.

The data for assessed qualification in Welsh as a subject at GCSE, A level and AS level is as follows:

#### Numbers and % of pupils studying the first and second language Welsh specification at GCSE level

Year	11 Cohort	1st Language GCSE	2nd Language GCSE	2nd Lang (SC GCSE)	Total	Total % of cohort	% cohort 1st Language GCSE	% cohort 2nd Language GCSE	% cohort 2nd Lang SC GCSE
2018	1486	190	917	40	1147	77%	13%	62%	3%
2019	1456	166	1038	0	1204	83%	11%	71%	
2020	1513	171	984	0	1155	76%	11%	65%	
2021	1619	196	1061	0	1257	78%	12%	66%	

	AS Welsh 2nd Language	AS Welsh 1st Language	A Level 2nd Language	A Level 1st Language
2019	5	4	3	5
2020	1	5	2	5
2021	2	1	1	4

Numbers of pupils studying the first and second language Welsh specification at A and AS level (YGYBD secondary phase and St. Joseph's)

	Year 12 St Joseph's	Year 13 St Joseph's	Year 12 Ystalyfera	Year 13 Ystalyfera	Total year 12	Total year 13	Overall Total
2019	110	76	109	100	219	176	395
2020	121	99	92	88	213	187	400
2021	133	94	96	81	229	175	404

The NPTC Group of Colleges offers AS and A Level first and second Welsh language courses. Figures from the past three years can be seen below:

	AS Welsh 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language	AS Welsh 1 <sup>st</sup> Language	A Level Welsh 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language	A Level Welsh 1 <sup>st</sup> Language
2019	21	0	13	0
2020	8	0	11	0
2021	7	0	3	0

Also, to date units from the following courses at NPT Group of Colleges have been translated / delivered in Welsh or bilingually:

- Mathematics
- Construction
- Agriculture
- Sport
- Public Services
- Childcare
- Hairdressing

The Urdd also offers apprenticeships through the medium of Welsh within the Local Authority. The apprenticeships offer new opportunities to learn, develop and increase confidence in the workplace. From sports, outdoor activities and youth work apprenticeships to qualifications and accreditations, the Urdd offer a range of opportunities for all ages and abilities.

**Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?**

Our target is to increase the number of pupils receiving WM education by 208 pupils and to retain a higher percentage of pupils studying for assessed qualifications through the medium of Welsh and Welsh as a subject by the end of the 10 year plan. We aim to do this by implementing the following targets.

- Raise the status of the Welsh language as a medium of study and work across all education system partnerships.
- Develop a language and learning continuum across all progression steps. Promoting learner confidence and parental reassurance.
- Research and seek local knowledge on parents' attitudes in all schools where there is a lack of transition.
- Monitor post 16 welsh medium uptake. WESP to be adapted in line with data.
- At present, there is no vocational provision in the Local Authority outside YGYBD. The role of Colegau Cymru (Neath / Afan College) Vocational Courses – skills workforce, will need to develop to include Welsh medium and bilingual courses.
- Establish Bro Dur as a Post-16 Welsh Medium Vocational Qualification centre, providing pathways for ALL pupils in line with Scandinavian model where national qualification programmes are divided into two categories: preparatory and vocational. Preparatory programmes satisfy the requirements needed to study university courses in specific subject areas. Vocational education provides learning which builds on secondary education and prepares students for the labour market. It is developed and run in close cooperation with employers and industries.
- Provide courses that ensure an increase in the Early Years workforce in order to fulfil the increased demand for Welsh-medium education within the 10 year plan.
- Work with Careers Wales and Colegau Cymru to develop a menu of Welsh medium and bilingual apprenticeships for the current pupils in the system.
- Include the Urdd in future post 16 qualification discussions with the aim of increasing the number of students completing apprenticeships with the Urdd through the medium of Welsh.
- Increase numbers who choose Science GCSE through medium of Welsh in YGYBD (currently Welsh/ English optional). By 2025, the default language for Science GCSE will be Welsh. Pupils will be encouraged to choose Science through the medium of Welsh and will have to apply to opt out of the Welsh language course. By the end of the 10 year plan, 100% of pupils will complete their Science GCSE through the medium of Welsh. This target will be monitored closely in our annual plans and further mid-term targets will be set accordingly.
- Work towards transitioning A level science to Welsh medium (currently all English). By 2027 (to ensure progression from Welsh-medium GCSE), the default language for Science A level will be Welsh. Students will be encouraged to choose Science through the medium of Welsh and will have to apply to opt out of the Welsh language course. By the end of the 10 year plan, 100% of pupils will complete their

Science A level through the medium of Welsh. This target will be monitored closely in our annual plans and further mid-term targets will be set accordingly.

- English medium schools to provide and deliver high quality Welsh language Teaching and Learning in line with new curriculum and one equal qualification (no second language Welsh GCSE)
- Promote Welsh across the curriculum (and not Welsh in isolation) in all schools, with the expectation that all teachers will be able to promote, enrich and encourage the process of developing Welsh as a language.
- Provide a menu of language support and training for staff of all levels and identify gaps in provision.
- Employ a Welsh in Education Promotion Officer to support / lead the 'need for Welsh', with the aim of changing mindsets. Co-ordinate the provision across the Local Authority. Embed the new vision for Welsh medium and Welsh education across all providers.
- Provide support for Bro Dur as KS4 pupils transfer to KS5. Ensure suitable routes and transport for these pupils.

Careers Wales to promote Welsh language as essential skills for the future within the Local Authority, emphasising the requirement for Welsh language skills in all jobs by 2030.

#### **Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?**

By the end of the 10 year plan, we aim to see a significant increase in the percentage of qualifications studied through the medium of Welsh as learners and parents become more confident in choosing Welsh medium education.

There will also be a wider variety of vocational qualifications taught through the medium of Welsh available within the Local Authority in order to allow full access of the Welsh language to all learners.



## Outcome 5

### More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

#### Where are we now?

The targets for this outcome have been developed alongside the targets set out in the Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (alongside Priority 1) with emphasis on promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language and increase its use in everyday life within schools and the wider community.

It also aims to promote the Curriculum for Wales Framework by ensuring that All learners should have appropriate pathways for learning Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. It aims to support learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales.

The Authority recognises that having varied opportunities to use the Welsh language in different contexts within the school environment is key to promoting confidence. Learners, parents and carers will need to be supported and encouraged to participate in a variety of experiences and opportunities through the medium of Welsh in order to improve their confidence in the language.

The Siarter Iaith was an integral part of most schools pre Covid with most Welsh schools and many English medium schools increasing the social use of Welsh within school and the wider community in a variety of creative and successful ways. To date, the following data demonstrates the success of the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus pre Covid:

- 9 Welsh medium primary schools have achieved the Siarter Iaith silver award,
- 1 Welsh medium primary school has achieved the Siarter Iaith gold award,
- 45 English medium schools are currently engaged in the Welsh Charter scheme 'Cymraeg Campus' at the moment,
- 17 English medium schools have achieved the Cymraeg Campus bronze award

Covid and long periods away from school sites has had a negative impact on this progress and the Authority recognises the need to promote and develop the Siarter Iaith in order to regain the confidence lost during lockdown periods.

The Authority also recognises the need to work with organisations such as Academi Hywel Teifi, Tŷ'r Gwrhyd, Menter Iaith, Mudiad Meithrin and Urdd Gobaith Cymru to provide 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. This will be key to the success of our strategy.

### **Menter Iaith**

Menter Iaith currently provide a wide range of opportunities for children and young people with the Local Authority:

- arrange staff training sessions for the Childcare sector
- arrange family activity sessions/ days e.g. fun days, singing sessions
- create and distribute language awareness packs with the aim of providing parents with the information needed to make informed choices about their child's education/ promote the benefits of Welsh medium education
- attend open days within schools and the community with the aim of providing information and promoting the Welsh language
- work closely with schools i.e. Gig Tanio'r Ddraig (Welsh music festival, Cwis Dim clem (quiz), language awareness sessions with staff, pupils and parents, information evenings with parents to promote transition to Welsh medium secondary education etc.
- arrange social events for primary age learners (outside of school hours) e.g. cooking sessions, parties, treasure hunts
- arrange social events and activities for secondary age learners e.g. surfing, youth clubs, fun days
- jointly employ a youth worker (with Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur) with a specific role of promoting activities through the medium of Welsh
- produce and share (via website) a wide range of Welsh medium resources
- produce and distribute 'Cymraeg Campus' newsletter to all English medium schools with resources, 'top tips' and ideas on how to raise the profile of Welsh in their local area
- Facebook group to support parents and teaching staff

### **Urdd**

The Urdd provides a wide range of opportunities for learners and the wider community to participate in various activities to promote a sense of belonging and the Welsh language. These include:

- Eisteddfod: Pupils from the Local Authority have the opportunity to take part in over 400 competitions, from singing to cooking, dancing to designing websites, and writing stories to starring on stage
- sporting activities: provides opportunities across the Local Authority for every child and young person to embrace sport, through clubs, competitions, training, and regional and national sports festivals.
- residential centres: pupils from the Local Authority visit centres in Glan-llyn, Llangrannog, Cardiff and Pentre Ifan. This supports learning outside of the classroom and provides an excellent context for the use of the Welsh language in a fun environment.
- community and youth work: The Urdd Community Department focuses on providing arts opportunities to members within the Local Authority. They arrange activities to encourage and enable children and young people to socialise through the medium of Welsh outside the classroom. The Urdd also develop the Urdd's 'adrannau' and 'aelwydydd' (junior and youth clubs) and provide a range of Welsh-medium resources.

### **Ty'r Gwrhyd**

Ty'r Gwrhyd is a Canolfan Gymraeg in Pontardawe, jointly established by Neath Port Talbot Council and Academi Hywel Teifi at Swansea University in 2016. Ty'r Gwrhyd houses a Welsh-language bookstore, and rents office space to Menter Iaith CNPT, Urdd Gobaith Cymru officers and Dysgu Cymraeg Ardal Bae Abertawe tutors. Welsh language educational courses are delivered at the centre, as are Welsh language lessons for adults. Community groups, including Merched y Wawr, Cylch Darllen Cwm Tawe and papur bro *Llais*, make regular use of the facilities at the centre. The centre hosts regular book launches, small art exhibitions, cultural and literary events and creative activities for children and young people. Ty'r Gwrhyd is also home to Cylch Ti a Fi Pontardawe and a reading club for primary age children which attracts pupils from throughout the Swansea Valley from Cwmllynfell to Clydach.

There is currently no provision within the Authority for children and young people who are latecomers to Welsh-medium education to access a Welsh language immersion centre, learners' needs are catered for within individual schools. This target is addressed in Outcome 2.

### **Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?**

Our aim is to create and provide opportunities and experiences for all learners and the wider community to use Welsh and be part of Welsh life in order to increase confidence in the Welsh language and to feel a sense of belonging. We will do this by implementing the following targets.

- Designated staff will re-launch the Siarter Iaith ensuring that it is embedded in all new curriculum designs. Schools will progress on the Siarter continuum and will be supported along the journey with guidance and resources.
- By September 2022, all Welsh and English medium schools will have reviewed and revisited previous Siarter Iaith/ Cymraeg Campus targets and will achieve the pre Covid standards.
- By September 2024, the Siarter Iaith/ Cymraeg Campus will be an integral part of planning for the Curriculum for Wales within all schools, with an emphasis on a whole school progression approach (supported by our Welsh in Education officer and Curriculum Development Officer (Welsh in English medium)). This will increase learner and staff confidence in using the Welsh language and impact positively on the ethos of all schools.
- By September 2024, Siarter Iaith/ Cymraeg Campus action plans/strategies will be used to 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. This will lead to an increased awareness of the relevance/ importance of Welsh in their everyday lives. This will be monitored and supported by our Welsh in Education officer and Curriculum Development Officer (Welsh in English medium).
- We will continue to build on the huge success of our annual 'Gig Gymraeg' within the YGYBD cluster for Y6 and Y7 learners. We will aim to roll this out

across the LA, ensuring that all Y6 pupils in WM and EM schools have access to a contemporary WM music festival on an annual basis. This will be supported by Menter Iaith CNPT.

- We will aim to roll out the 'Gig Gymraeg' to all Y8 and Y9 pupils along with Y12 pupils at a large central venue i.e. Margam in order to provide an opportunity to speak Welsh and enjoy Welsh contemporary culture outside of school.
- A leading excellent practice English medium school has been identified and this school will share resources and ideas and support other schools with their curriculum design, ensuring that Welsh culture, history and appreciation of the local area is embedded in their new curriculum.
- The NPT schools website, created by learners, to promote modern Welsh culture, history and local area will be launched and added to on a regular basis in all Welsh medium schools and rolled out to all English medium schools.
- An audit will be undertaken to see what WM 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. Following the audit, a menu of support will be created for all schools within the LA.
- By September 2022, the Local Authority's agencies and third sector services will have introduced a baseline and targets that will demonstrate their intention to increase community activities.
- We will track and evaluate the targets annually using quantitative and qualitative data.
- All schools will be encouraged to use the Urdd Residential Centres to promote the Welsh language in a fun and relaxed environment.
- All schools will be encouraged to partake in Urdd Eisteddfod activities with the aim of increasing confidence in the language and increasing awareness of Welsh literature, music and the arts.
- We will work closely with partners including Academi Hywel Teifi, Tŷ'r Gwrhyd, Menter Iaith, Urdd 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. This will be in conjunction with the NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, Priority 1.
- We will listen to our learners across all sectors and ages to obtain views and ideas on promoting the Welsh language, contemporary culture, history and a feeling of belonging. Pupil voice will be essential in reviewing and setting our annual action plan.
- As a result of Welsh Government funding, we will develop immersion provision for latecomers to the Welsh language. The immersion provision will enable more learners to access Welsh-medium education at primary. The model will depend on need with the aim of having provision accessible to all areas of the Local Authority by the end of the plan.

Long term aim (Post March 2022-Local Authority funded) - The long term aim of the following model is to establish effective immersion hubs in both the north and the south of the Local Authority (in line with WESP targets). We will establish an immersion centre in YGG Pontardawe. This 16 place hub will open in September 2022 to stimulate a demand for Welsh-medium education in the north of the county. This location will also assist in developing the language in a

linguistically sensitive area as well as potentially improving confidence and the transition rates to Welsh-medium secondary. The second hub in the south of the county will be located in YGG Rhosafan. This will also be a 16 place hub. We will look to establish provision for the secondary sector in the second half of the WESP with the aim of ensuring provision for late comers to Welsh medium education and pupils who are now in the system but need intensive linguistic support.

Short term aim (December 2021-August 2022 WG grant funded)- The short term aim of the grant funding is to research into existing methodologies and good practice across Wales and to form effective networks that will assist in creating effective provision that will address learners' needs and support their progression both in the short and long term. An area within YGG Pontardawe will be identified and developed/ refurbished during the Summer term with the aim of officially opening a 16 place provision in September 2022. Resources for both hubs will be sourced and acquired during this period.

Quantitative targets will be identified and evaluated in the annual action plans and evaluation reports in order to ensure that enough demand is created and that outcomes are effective.

- We will develop via a locally based task and finish group, a holistic plan which looks in detail at all aspects of the vitality of the Welsh language in areas of linguistic sensitivity and establish working groups to consider thematic issues such as the use of the language by the private sector, by voluntary groups and by young people in general. Areas for possible collaborative working:
  - Preschool Provision and location
  - Marketing Welsh-medium education
  - Provision and take up of Welsh for adults
  - Language confidence building events
  - Promoting the use of Welsh by private and voluntary organisations
  - Activities and entertainment for young people and young adults
  - Employment and economic development

### **Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?**

All schools within the Local Authority will be fully engaged with Curriculum for Wales in conjunction with the Siarter Iaith. The Welsh language, contemporary culture and history will be integral to curriculum design. We will see an increase in learner and staff confidence and pride towards being Welsh and the Welsh language. The Welsh language and the associated extra-curricular activities will be inclusive and will radiate into the wider community, allowing all to have access and to develop their Welsh-language skills.

## Outcome 6

**An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018**

### Where are we now?

As a result of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018, significant changes are underway in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of all learners with ALN. All services within the local authority will be required to consider whether the child or young person needs ALP (Additional Learning Provision) in Welsh.

At present, for learners with significant ALN who cannot access mainstream education within primary and secondary schools, specialist provision is provided which include:

Primary LSCs	
Abbey	EYAC
Blaenbaglan	SpLg
Cilffriw	SpLg
Gnoll	ASD
Maesmarchog	ASD
Waunceirch	ASD
Blaendulais	MLD
Blaenhonddan	MLD
Croeserw	MLD
Trebannws	MLD
Tywyn	MLD
Tywyn	SLD
Tywyn	PMLD
Catwg	Sensory
Crynallt	SEBD
Awel y Mor	SEBD

Secondary LSCs	
Ysgol Bae Baglan E Band	MLD and SpLg
Ysgol Bae Baglan F Band	ASD, HI, SLD, PMLD
Dwr y Felin	ASD
Cwmtawe	ASD
Cwmtawe	SpLD
Cefn Saeson	SENC

Special Schools
Ysgol Hendrefelin
Ysgol Maes Y Coed

Currently the data provided from Welsh medium schools is not evidence enough for the requirement for specialist provision in a specific area of need. However, it is difficult to currently predict the level of need for specialist provision in the future. The authority will work to ensure *'all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of ALP in Welsh over time'* (The ALN Code for Wales 2021, 3.2.(e)).

It is recognised that Welsh-medium schools need further support from the LA to build their capacity to meet the needs of learners with ALN. The authority continues to monitor this situation and continues to engage with the Welsh medium sector on demand and need.

Specialist services are able to provide almost all services through the medium of Welsh and best endeavours are made to recruit specialist staff who are able to work through the medium of Welsh.

The local authority has worked closely with schools over the past three years to prepare for the implementation of ALN reform. This has included training, workshops and cluster planning events. WM schools have contributed to and received bilingual tools to follow new decision making processes. A comprehensive bank of bilingual resources have been provided to our Welsh medium schools and the Inclusion Service will continue to work in partnership with Welsh medium schools to further develop robust Inclusive Learning Provision(ILP) and Additional Learning Provision (ALP) offers, to meet the range of needs of pupils with ALN.

NPT Inclusion Service has developed a regional Early Resolution and Dispute Prevention training package, to further develop parent partnership and training and bilingual materials have been provided to our WM schools.

### **Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?**

- Continue to collect detailed data and information to set a baseline for current provision, to recognise gaps in provision and to set quantitative targets and time lines for improvement over the 10 year plan.
- We will provide information and advice for children and young people and their families, ensuring school and council websites include information about addressing the needs of pupils in Welsh-medium education and about specialist provision.
- The Local Authority commits to develop plans to establish a Welsh-medium learning support centre at YGG Trebannws, ensuring that this is a gradual, steady process transitioning from predominantly English-medium provision that exists, to a bilingual provision and eventually to a fully Welsh-medium provision.
- We will include the provision of a 16 place Welsh-medium learning support centre in the plans to build a replacement YGG Rhosafan, as part of NPT's appropriate Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Band C proposals.
- Continue to develop a comprehensive professional development training menu and support for teachers within our Welsh medium mainstream schools and for our Early Years and Childcare Sector. This will enhance the Inclusive Learning Provision (ILP) and Additional learning Needs Provision (ALP) offer within our Welsh Medium schools and Early Years settings, as set out in the new ALN Code for Wales 2021. This training and support offer, including a review of resources and appropriate assessment material, will be reviewed annually and

will be informed by any changing need within our WM mainstream schools and Early Years and Childcare Sector.

- Undertake a biannual audit of the additional learning needs (ALN) of Welsh medium language learners and review our specialist planned places, in order to inform current and map future emerging need for Welsh medium provision for our most complex children and young people with ALN.
- Support and enable the development of a variety of specialist preschool provision to facilitate the early identification of emerging needs for our youngest children, where Welsh is first language or there is a parental preference for Welsh medium provision.
- Invest in bilingual specialist playgroup and childcare provision to support the early identification of emerging needs for our youngest children, where Welsh is first language or there is a parental preference for Welsh medium provision.
- Invest in a bilingual specialist provision and specialist staff within the local authority or with regional partners, to secure the capacity to deliver a Welsh medium specialist provision for children and young people with more complex additional learning needs.

#### **Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?**

All pupils with ALN within the local authority will have access to provision at all levels through the medium of Welsh. Collaboration with regional partners will provide a comprehensive range of resources, training opportunities and networking to ensure that Welsh medium provision will be of a high standard and complies with the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018. Early Years and pre-school WM ALN support, assessments and provision will provide increased confidence in parents when choosing Welsh medium education for their children.



## Outcome 7

### Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

#### Where are we now?

Current data and targets can only be based on reported data reflecting the self-assessment of fluency by individual members of staff.

The most recent data about the education workforce in NPT shows a plateau in the percentage of school teaching staff able to speak Welsh and teach through the medium of Welsh.

#### Recent Workforce Data

At 31.3.2022, 843 employees self-reported that they are fairly fluent/fluent in speaking and writing Welsh. Of these, 514 were schools' employees. The total employee headcount on this date was 6385.

Previous data relating to school staff is outlined below:

SWAC - Teacher Welsh Language Ability																
SWAC Year	School Teaching Staff - Welsh Language Ability (Numbers)								Total	School Teaching Staff - Welsh Language Ability (%)						
	W1 - No Welsh Skills	W2 - Entry Level	W3 - Foundation Level	W4 - Intermediate Level	W5 - Advanced Level	W6 - Proficient Level	W7 - Not Obtained	W1 - No Welsh Skills		W2 - Entry Level	W3 - Foundation Level	W4 - Intermediate Level	W5 - Advanced Level	W6 - Proficient Level	W7 - Not Obtained	
2019	252	269	270	92	57	234	8	1182	21.3%	22.8%	22.8%	7.8%	4.8%	19.8%	0.7%	
2020	254	275	276	99	58	249	1	1212	21.0%	22.7%	22.8%	8.2%	4.8%	20.5%	0.1%	
2021																

SWAC - Teaching Through the Medium of Welsh												
SWAC Year	Teaching Through Medium of Welsh (Numbers)					Total	Teaching Through Medium of Welsh (%)					
	T1 - Teach/work in Welsh in current post	T2 - Able to teach/work in Welsh but not doing so in current post	T3 - Not able to teach/work in Welsh	T4 - Teaching Welsh as a subject only	No Answer		T1 - Teach/work in Welsh in current post	T2 - Able to teach/work in Welsh but not doing so in current post	T3 - Not able to teach/work in Welsh	T4 - Teaching Welsh as a subject only	No Answer	
2019	205		81	442	447	7	1182	17.3%	6.9%	37.4%	37.8%	0.6%
2020	218		77	448	468	1	1212	18.0%	6.4%	37.0%	38.6%	0.1%
2021												

A significant growth of the workforce able to teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh is critical in order for Neath Port Talbot to succeed in delivering the growth of Welsh-medium education and Welsh speakers in our schools. We recognise that as well as recruiting a sufficient high quality workforce for our new Welsh-medium schools, we will need to upskill staff and the learning workforce in English-medium schools in order to ensure that a greater amount of teaching and learning is done through the Welsh language.

At present, the Welsh Sabbatical course is offered to all schools within the Local Authority. The numbers of staff who have attended the course is as follows:

Welsh Sabbatical Course- Numbers of NPT staff attending				
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	4	5	3	3

We recognise that there is a need to heavily endorse and promote this course in order to strategically increase the numbers of Welsh-speaking staff within our English-medium schools and succeed in our aim to provide bilingual education throughout the Local Authority.

To achieve a greater awareness and level of ability in the Welsh language within our English-medium schools, teaching staff within the Local Authority have been encouraged to attend Welsh language courses run by Academi Hywel Teifi (courses tailored to suit all abilities from entry level to higher level). The Local Authority monitors the number of staff attending and promotes the provision when needed.

At present, YGYBD are working closely with PGCE students from Swansea University's School of Education ITE programme and Academi Hywel Teifi to train and promote teachers in Welsh-medium education. Thirteen students were placed in WM settings (YGYBD secondary phase sites) through this partnership in 2020-21 and 14 students in 2021-22, with a focus on subject needs within the workforce i.e. Welsh, English, biology, chemistry, physics, MFL, mathematics, DT and computer science. Furthermore, all student-teachers on the PGCE programme receive mandatory 30 hours of Welsh-language learning/enhancement as part of their course (the provision is tailored to where the individual is on their language continuum and ranges from ensuring basic conversational Welsh to enhancing fluency). All are offered further Welsh language learning opportunities once they've achieved their qualification; all graduate with a good level of language awareness and understanding of the bilingual educational context of Wales.

From September 2021, the Swansea University Schools' Partnership (SUSP) will also deliver a unique one year full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Primary with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). After experiencing teaching placements across the primary age phase, the student teacher can choose to specialise in Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 or All- Age contexts. The programme is heavily promoted in south Wales with a view to securing student-teachers that will enter the workforce in their home localities. By placing these student-teachers within our NPT schools as they train, we envisage forging links with potential new staff and securing a workforce that's well-equipped to address the changing face of education in a bilingual Wales.

Developments are also afoot in the NPTC Group of Colleges which has received further funding from Colleges Wales / The National Centre for Learning Welsh to recruit a Work Welsh tutor that solely delivers Learn Welsh courses to NPTC Group of Colleges staff. The Work Welsh target is to provide 120 hours of Welsh to increase bilingual and Welsh-medium delivery in post-16 education, therefore concentrating on academic staff. There are currently 26 staff on the scheme. The 'Welcome' course (Cwrs 'Croeso') has also given NPTC Group of Colleges staff an opportunity to learn and develop their Welsh language skills in the workplace. Due to the success of the course, Work Welsh have used NPTC Group of Colleges as an example in their past case studies for good practice. They were also awarded Work Welsh Employer of the year 2020. Online Work Welsh courses have been built into the College induction scheme for all new staff and are also offered as CPD targets to all staff, therefore

ensuring that staff at NPTC Group of Colleges continue to develop their Welsh language skills. The College has also developed a strategic approach (HR Linguistic Skills Strategy) to recruiting and training staff to close the skills gap between current capacity and the requirements identified in the new Welsh Language Standards and Towards Cymraeg 2050, by introducing a benchmarking exercise.

**Where do we aim to be within the first 5 years of this Plan and how we propose to get there?**

We aim to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh in all sectors by the end of the 10 year plan. We aim to achieve this by implementing the following targets.

- We will devise and implement a system of targeting schools according to greater need to nominate individuals to attend the National Sabbatical Scheme with a view to enabling at least 3 teachers per year to attend. The Local Authority will also monitor and ensure that the learning and knowledge is cascaded within each school that benefits from the scheme with a view to creating a changed culture, ethos and language practice within the school.
- The Local Authority will complete a biannual audit and detailed analysis of Welsh speakers able to teach through the medium of Welsh in all sectors. This will include teachers, TA's, youth workers etc. This data, along with projected pupil numbers and workforce planning data involving projected retirements, will be used to capture the required number of staff needed for the future and pinpoint schools, in order to drive the Local Authority's recruitment plans and Welsh-language learning initiatives for staff.
- Based on the data analysis of the biannual Welsh speakers' audit, we will set biannual targets for increasing the proportion of the workforce with language skills at foundation level, and at intermediate level or higher and will report on these as part of the annual monitoring.
- We will undertake regular analysis of all data sources to understand trends in the demand for Welsh-medium teachers. This will include projecting annual transition rates of learners from primary to secondary education and looking at trends in terms of numbers of teachers moving into leadership roles, moving schools or leaving/ retiring from the profession.
- We will undertake a regular analysis of how many staff have Welsh language skills in English-medium schools in order to identify gaps and target schools/ staff for further Welsh language training and immersion.
- By 2023, the authority aims to ensure that at least one member of staff has been identified in every English-medium Primary School who will have the linguistic skills to lead the Welsh language within the organization. English-medium schools will be required to identify a community of staff with Welsh-language skills that will drive their school's engagement with the language and the WESPs targets. Our aim here is to ensure whole school involvement in this agenda thus avoiding the risk of leaving isolated individuals to deliver on school and county-wide targets.
- The Local Authority will ensure that a teaching member of staff's ability to learn /improve their Welsh language skills is factored into that individual's

worktime and workload and that recognition of their progress and effort will be documented in their annual personal development record.

- The HR department will audit the number and place of work of all Welsh speakers within the Authority in order to ensure Welsh medium non-teaching staff are allocated to Welsh medium schools, thus strengthening provision and communication.
- We will establish a workforce forum by September 2023 to respond to recruitment gaps and challenges in the authority. The information gathered will form part of the national workforce strategy.
- The Local Authority commits to ensuring a professional support service that can speak Welsh by appointing and upskilling employees currently in the system.
- We will access schemes through Mudiad Meithrin to provide language immersion methods and training for staff across the county.
- The authority recognises its proactive role in promoting opportunities to engage with the workforce across the whole range of Local Authority services. One of the main responsibilities of the promotion Officer will be to facilitate this work - commence September 2022.
- The Local Authority will set out clear guidelines for use by schools, governing bodies and HR when recruiting new staff, outlining the expectation in terms of the Welsh language. School Governing Bodies will be required to address this ongoing aim as a standing agenda item.
- We will provide an efficient translation service within the Local Authority to ensure that Welsh and English correspondence have equal status.
- We will continue to build on the effective ITE partnership between YGYBD and Swansea University and ensure maximum engagement with the new Primary programme.
- PGCE students from Swansea University and the Careers Service will hold regular information sessions with staff and pupils from Y10-13 in both Welsh and English medium schools, outlining the benefits of a career in education and the integral role the Welsh language plays in this.
- We recognise the need to increase the early years workforce and practitioners who can speak the Welsh language in education and early years. We will work with partners to ensure and promote opportunities for practitioners to access Welsh-medium childcare courses. We will identify these gaps in our annual action plan for this outcome and will set targets accordingly.
- The Local Authority will seek to benefit from Welsh Government's pilot project to incentivise Welsh speakers that return from universities to help teach Welsh in schools.
- Teaching staff within the Local Authority will be further encouraged to attend Welsh language courses run by Academi Hywel Teifi with an initial five-year programme of planning and development identified for this area. The focus will be in the large on staff in English-medium schools with minimal Welsh-language skills, but provision for those wishing to brush up or enhance their skills will also be made available across all schools.
- The Local Authority will identify/ recruit potential leaders and support them when completing the 'Aspiring Leaders' course with the intention of continuing to complete the NPQH.

- Increasing the number of staff attending the Welsh Language Sabbatical scheme will be a target. We will investigate using **pilot schools** with the aim of mapping out a continuum of staff training to be able to eventually create a category 2 stream within an English medium school, starting at nursery and working through to Year 6 over a number of years. Early discussions have identified areas suitable for a scheme of this kind within the Swansea Valley, along with 3 other pilots in the Neath/Baglan area (2 primary and 2 secondary schools). Information regarding the schools will be detailed in our mid-term plan and specific quantitative data and timescales will be set and evaluated in our annual action plans.
- Welsh language awareness training will be made available for all non-teaching staff in the Local Authority's schools.
- To fulfill the aspiration of opening three schools over the 10 year period we will need to ensure at least 3 headteachers, a senior team for each school, class teachers and assistants during the establishment and development of each school. As plans develop in line with member approval and the RLDP, we will calculate the data on the exact staffing numbers needed for the new Welsh-medium schools in line with the proposals. These will be included in the annual action plans.
- We will review the Welsh Government Workforce Development Plan and seek to mainstream recommendations at local level to maximize and grow a Welsh teaching and learning workforce.
- In order to achieve the targets for increasing the number of learners in Welsh-medium education, we will need a partnership approach to planning the workforce needs. We will look to work with relevant stakeholders and Welsh Government in order to achieve these ambitious targets. Annual action plans will reflect these collaborative actions and quantitative short term targets will be agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders.

#### Where do we expect to be at the end of our ten year Plan?

An increased number of the NPT education staff will be able to teach through the medium of Welsh and Welsh as a subject. There will be an increase in Welsh medium staff able to teach specific subjects at secondary level. There will be an increase in the number, ability and confidence of staff in English-medium schools able to converse and teach Welsh, therefore increasing the amount of learners with access to Welsh-medium education at all levels throughout the Local Authority. NPT will attract and recruit excellent, bilingual leaders for our schools. All NPT schools will form communities that promote the Welsh language as a medium for education and community life.

## How we will work with others to achieve our vision

The WESP sets out a requirement for each local authority to establish a Welsh Education Forum (WEF). The NPT WESP Forum comprises of headteacher representatives from Welsh-medium and English-medium primary and secondary schools, officers of the local authority and other stakeholders from our community including Menter Iaith, RhAG, Health, Mudiad Meithrin, Swansea University's Academi Hywel Teifi, Tŷ'r Gwrhyd and the Urdd.

The NPT WESP Forum met to offer its views during the initial planning of the document in July 2021. Following the initial meeting, working groups for each outcome, comprising of members of the forum, were formed. The working groups will meet termly to form and evaluate an action plan for their specific outcome. These action plans will be focused on achieving the overarching aims set out in the WESP document. Progress will be reported back to the full WESP forum on a termly basis.

## 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
1	R.Crowhurst	Head of Service	Jan. 2022
2	R.Crowhurst	Head of Service	September 2022

### 1. Details of the initiative

	<b>Title of the Initiative: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</b>
	<b>: Transformation</b>
<b>1b</b>	<b>Directorate: ELLLS</b>
<b>1c</b>	<b>Summary of the initiative:</b> Plan for developing Welsh language across education settings
<b>1d</b>	<b>Who will be directly affected by this initiative?</b> Preschool, primary, secondary and post 16 pupils
<b>1e</b>	<b>When and how were people consulted?</b> Consultation between November 2021 and January 2022
<b>1f</b>	<b>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</b> The plan received widespread support and approval

## 2. Evidence

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

The following evidence, information and data was used before and during the process of completing the WESP document. As a result, the WESP aligns itself to:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'
- Prosperity for All: the national strategy and the programme for Government, Taking Wales forward 2016-2021
- Welsh Government's national Welsh language strategy 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers by 2050'
- Education in Wales: Our National Mission, Action Plan 2017-21- A desire for learners to become increasingly bilingual and commitments to encourage teachers with some ability to speak Welsh to further develop their skills
- The Welsh in Education, Action Plan 2017-21- Sets the direction for the development of Welsh-medium education
- Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

Further data was also collated from the NPT Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017, NPT Childcare CIW data 2021, NPT Local Development Plan, PLASC, 2011 Census, Family Information Service and a range of third-party partners including Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith, Urdd and Academi Hywel Teifi.

## 3. Equalities

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

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	x			The proposal will have a positive impact on children and young people of all ages. As a result of the WESP, the Council is expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education and increase the number of learners in Welsh medium education.



			<p>The outcomes reflect a learner’s education journey and are consistent with the policy areas of Cymraeg 2050 and Education in Wales: Our National Mission. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome 1: More nursery children/three-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh</li> <li>• Outcome 2: More reception class children/five-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh</li> <li>• Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another (Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4)</li> <li>• Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh (Key Stage 3 and 4)</li> <li>• Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school (Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4)</li> <li>• Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (Pre-school age to Key Stage 4)</li> <li>• Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh (Pre-school age to Key Stage 4)</li> </ul> <p>In addition, there may be a positive impact on adults and older children if the Welsh language is learnt by younger children and spoken within the home setting.</p>
Disability	x		<p>As a result of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018, significant changes are underway in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of all learners with additional learning needs (ALN). All services</p>

			<p>within the local authority will be required to consider whether the child or young person needs ALP (Additional Learning Provision) in Welsh.</p> <p>Outcome 6 in the WESP is concerned with ensuring an increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with ALN. Targets in this section includes providing support for teachers within Welsh-medium mainstream schools. This will enhance the Inclusive Learning Provision (ILP) and Additional learning Needs Provision (ALP) offer within Welsh- Medium schools and Early Years settings, as set out in the new ALN Code for Wales 2021.</p> <p>The Council's WESP outlines the aim to invest in a bilingual specialist provision and specialist staff within the local authority or with regional partners, to secure the capacity to deliver a Welsh medium specialist provision for children and young people with more complex additional learning needs.</p> <p>Consultation replies stated that specific Welsh-medium Additional Learning Needs provision was needed throughout the Local Authority to ensure equal access to ALN pupils in Welsh-medium education. The WESP has been amended accordingly with the inclusion of two Welsh-medium support centres to be established during the 10-year plan.</p>
Gender reassignment		x	This is not a criterion considered in terms of the Council's education arrangements either for pupils or school staff, however, it is expected that all NPTCBC schools meet the needs of pupils and staff who are transgender.
Marriage & civil partnership		x	This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal
Pregnancy and maternity		x	This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal
Race	x		It is evident from WM school data that families from different ethnic backgrounds choose WM education, with many English families moving to the area and making the informed decision to educate their children in WM schools. Both the WESP and the Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Strategy aim to inform and support these families when making the decision about choosing WM education. These aims

			<p>significantly alleviate concerns and it is anticipated that this will lead to an increase in the number of pupils from ethnic backgrounds attending WM education.</p> <p>As part of the outcomes of the WESP there should be a promotion of increasing Welsh language across all ethnic groups, supported by the provision of Welsh language immersion centres across the local authority area.</p>
Religion or belief		x	<p>This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal, however, it is expected that the Council's educational arrangements across Welsh-medium and English-medium schools will meet the needs of pupils or staff members of different religions or with different beliefs.</p>
Sex	x		<p>Outcomes in the WESP aim to provide a plethora of opportunities for both boys and girls to develop and use Welsh outside of the classroom through cultural and sporting activities within school and in the wider community. These opportunities ensure that learners, both boys and girls, have access to the Welsh language both formally and informally, which could lead to an increase in the use of Welsh in the wider community.</p> <p>Transition data shows that there is no clear year on year trend of a specific sex transitioning from Welsh-medium Key Stage 2 education to English- medium education at Key Stage 3. Annual data shows a fluctuation of both sexes from a minority of schools transitioning to English-medium secondary education. This has been addressed in Outcome 3 with specific targets set for retaining all pupils within Welsh-medium education from one key stage to the next.</p>
Sexual orientation		x	<p>This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal</p>

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

**To improve positive impacts\_**

- The Council has produced a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan document for 2022-2032, this document sets out all actions that will be taken to improve Welsh language outcomes in education and should be read in conjunction with this IIA.
- The WESP forum will monitor transition rates for pupils choosing to be educated through the medium of Welsh and will also monitor the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan document over a ten-year period (2022-2032) and mitigate any negative impacts by amending the Strategic Plan accordingly.

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

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>Why will it have this impact?</b>
To eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation	x			As part of the WESP outcomes there should be a promotion of increasing Welsh language across all community groups, supported by the provision of Welsh language immersion centres across the local authority area. This provides opportunities across all communities and promotes the elimination of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	x			The WESP aims to develop and expand the opportunities for using the Welsh language across all community groups. Additional information can be found in the outcomes of the WESP document.
To foster good relations between different groups	x			Opportunities are present in the WESP to ensure that groups work together to promote and develop the Welsh language, for example Welsh-medium schools supporting English –medium schools to further develop pupil and staff Welsh language skills.

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

The WESP document is a 10 year plan with seven outcomes, each containing actions. This document will be monitored by both the Council and the WESP forum.

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

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	x			The WESP aims to promote community cohesion by creating opportunities to work together towards a common aim, developing the Welsh language. Specific actions within the WESP promote community cohesion, for example, Menter Iaith's family activity sessions/ days e.g. fun days, singing sessions; The Urdd's Community Department providing arts opportunities and arranging activities to encourage and enable children and young people to socialise through the medium of Welsh outside the classroom; further development of Ty'r Gwrhyd's community groups, including Merched y Wawr, Cylch Darllen Cwm Tawe and papur bro <i>Llais</i> , and activities including regular book launches, small art exhibitions, cultural and literary events and creative activities for children and young people. These activities aim to forge good relationships between Welsh-medium and English-medium communities.
Social Exclusion	x			There could be a positive effect on social exclusion through reaching the targets as stated in the WESP document, coupled with Welsh Government's desire for additional Welsh speakers across communities in Wales.

Poverty			x	No impact on poverty because of the WESP has been identified.
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**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

The WESP document is a 10 year plan with seven outcomes, each containing actions. This document will be monitored by both the Council and the WESP forum.

**5. Welsh**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: - people's opportunities to use the Welsh language	x			<p>The WESP overarching ten year target in Neath Port Talbot is to increase the number of Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh from 16.8% (252 pupils) in 2020/21 (PLASC 2021) to 31% (460 pupils) by 2032. Outcome 5 in the WESP seeks to provide more opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.</p> <p>The targets for this outcome have been developed alongside the targets set out in the Neath Port Talbot Welsh Language Strategy (alongside Priority 1) with emphasis on promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language and increase its use in everyday life within schools and also within the wider community.</p> <p>It also aims to promote the Curriculum for Wales Framework by ensuring that All learners should have appropriate pathways for learning Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. It aims to</p>

			<p>support learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales.</p> <p>The Authority recognises that having varied opportunities to use the Welsh language in different contexts within the school environment is key to promoting confidence. Learners, parents and carers will need to be supported and encouraged to participate in a variety of experiences and opportunities through the medium of Welsh in order to improve their confidence in the language.</p> <p>The WESP therefore should impact positively on people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language.</p>
<p>– treating the Welsh and English languages equally</p>	<p>x</p>		<p>The WESP includes the aim to create and provide opportunities and experiences for all learners and the wider community to use Welsh and be part of Welsh life in order to increase confidence in the Welsh language and to feel a sense of belonging.</p> <p>By September 2022, all Welsh and English medium schools will have reviewed and revisited previous Siarter Iaith/ Cymraeg Campus targets and will achieve the pre Covid standards.</p> <p>By September 2024, the Siarter Iaith/ Cymraeg Campus will be an integral part of planning for the Curriculum for Wales within all schools, with an emphasis on a whole school progression approach (supported by our Welsh in Education officer and Curriculum Development Officer (Welsh in English medium)). This will increase learner and staff confidence in using the Welsh language and impact positively on the ethos of all schools.</p> <p>Siarter Iaith/ Cymraeg Campus action plans/strategies will be used to 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. This will lead to an increased awareness of the relevance/ importance of Welsh in their everyday lives. This will be monitored and supported by our Welsh in Education officer and Curriculum Development Officer (Welsh in English medium).</p>

				The WESP therefore should impact positively on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
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**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

The WESP document is a 10 year plan with seven outcomes, each containing actions. This document will be monitored by both the Council and the WESP forum.

**6. 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			X	This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider			X	This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal



environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				
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**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

## 7. 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 WESP is expected to positively impact on pupils aged 3-18 and on older children and adults, and will aim to will improve wellbeing through the promotion of the development of the Welsh language leading to increased opportunities to participate in the language and culture of Wales
ii. <b>Prevention</b> – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The WESP directly supports wellbeing objective 1 – ‘to improve the wellbeing of children and young people’ through the provision of enhanced opportunities and provision for current and future generations of primary aged pupils. It also supports wellbeing objective 2 –‘to improve the wellbeing of all adults who live in the county borough’ and wellbeing objective 3 ‘to develop the local economy and environment so that the wellbeing of people can be improved’, particularly through WESP Outcomes 5 and 7.

<p>iii. <b>Collaboration</b> – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>The WESP is always developed in consultation with both internal and external Welsh language groups and communities. The WESP forum comprises Neath Port Talbot officers and school and early years representatives, along with a number of external groups and organisations who have collectively developed actions within the draft WESP.</p> <p>In February 2022 the draft WESP was submitted to Welsh ministers who gave approval in for the plan in July 2022</p>
<p>iv. <b>Involvement</b> – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>As above, a range of stakeholders have been actively involved in developing the draft WESP. The draft WESP has been subject to a comprehensive public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders for a nine week period between 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p> <p>Based on the statutory requirements set out in the Welsh in Education Strategic Planning regulations (Wales) 2019 (“<i>the 2019 Regulations</i>”) local authorities must consult with a range of stakeholders.</p>
<p>v. <b>Integration</b> – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	<p>Welsh-medium education is an integral and essential part of the learning offer in Neath Port Talbot and all children should benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and understand their lives through the medium of Welsh. This principle is underpinned by ensuring universal access to this provision across the county borough. Neath Port Talbot Council recognises that language and culture are critical parts of an individual's identity and is committed to promoting and celebrating Welsh language learning across all phases and sectors. The draft WESP aims to provide greater opportunities to enable all learners to develop their Welsh language skills and to use the language confidently in everyday life.</p>
<p><b>Council’s well-being objectives</b></p>	<p>The WESP directly contributes to wellbeing objective – ‘to ensure all children get the best start in life’ and ‘to ensure our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations to improve the wellbeing of all adults who live in the county borough’.</p>
<p><b>Other public bodies objectives</b></p>	<p>The strategy supports and complements the Public Services Board’s wellbeing objectives</p>

## 8. 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 of the plan will be monitored termly by WESP forum members and annually by elected members and Welsh Government

### 9. Assessment Conclusions

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

	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Equalities</b>	Positive impacts in relation to age, disability, race and sex; neutral impacts on all others. The WESP is a 10 year plan and will continue to be monitored during that period for any mitigating actions where necessary including changes to the strategic plan.
<b>Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty</b>	Positive impact
<b>Welsh</b>	Positive impacts
<b>Biodiversity</b>	No Impact
<b>Well-being of Future Generations</b>	Positive impact

### Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised x
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions

- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

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

Approving the WESP will result in positive impacts on most protected groups and on the development of the Welsh language. It will also ensure compliance with the requirements imposed upon the council by Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the WESP (Wales) Regulations 2019.

## 10. 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?
Monitoring the outcomes in the WESP	Members and the WESP forum	Annually over the 10 year plan	Targets set in the strategic plan are achieved

## 11. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Head of Service		September 2022

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Andrew Thomas</b>	<b>Director</b>		<b>September 2022</b>
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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board**

27<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### **Report of the Head of Early Years, Inclusion & Partnerships – Hayley Lervy**

#### **Matter for Decision**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All Wards

## **Play Sufficiency Assessment 2022**

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

To seek Members' approval for the implementation of an action plan developed from the Neath Port Talbot Play Sufficiency Assessment 2022.

#### **Executive Summary:**

Local authorities in Wales have a duty to assess for and secure opportunities for children's play, and to submit their assessment and action plan to Welsh Government on a three year cycle. This report seeks Member's approval for the action plan drawn from the 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment to be implemented.

Good progress has been made on the recommendations from the 2019 assessment, however, Covid and funding constraints has hindered new developments.

The appointment of a Play Development Officer and two play workers has helped to ensure that actions from the assessment were driven forward.

**Background:**

The Children & Families (Wales) Measure places a duty on local authorities in Wales to assess for and secure sufficient play opportunities for children and young people in their area.

As part of this, authorities are required to conduct a Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) on a three year cycle, to be submitted to Welsh Government (WG). Annual action plans and monitoring reports are required to be sent to WG between assessments.

An independent consultant was appointed to undertake the assessment and to develop an action plan in conjunction with the Play Strategy Implementation Group and other stakeholders. Funding was received from WG for this purpose.

The assessment considers a number of matters affecting children's play, as identified in the Statutory Guidance, Regulations and supporting toolkit, namely:

- Matter A Population
- Matter B Providing for diverse needs
- Matter C Space available for children to play
- Matter D Supervised provision
- Matter E Charges for play provision
- Matter F Access to space/provision
- Matter G Securing and developing the play workforce
- Matter H Community engagement and participation



Matter I      Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

Whilst Welsh Government does not provide confirmed annual funding for children’s play, in-year funding has been made available most years since the introduction of the duty. The funding is often received late into the financial year thereby limiting the impact that can be made, particularly with revenue funding that does not continue into the following year. However, a number of projects have been funded each year that would otherwise not have been possible.

Significantly more funding was made available by WG during 2021/22 for Summer of Fun, Winter of Wellbeing and a capital grant. It has helped to support many projects across Neath Port Talbot, including enhancing schools and local playgrounds to improve children’s play. The funding has helped to make progress on some Matters and priority areas from the 2019 assessment.

Funding was also awarded in 2021/22 for Playworks Holiday provision, which has also been awarded for 22/23 and 23/24, to the value of £46,813 per year. The purpose of the funding is to enable the authority to meet some of the actions from its Play Sufficiency Assessment action plan relating to staffed play provision. The funding for 2022/23 has yet to be fully utilised and the PSA findings will be used to identify priority areas for project delivery.

Table below outlines the funding received from WG since the assessment in 2019.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>No. Projects Supported</b>
2019/20	£5,000	4

2020/21	£172,978	23
2021/22	£522,184 Rev £235,000 Cap	81 25

### **Progress on 2019-2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment:**

As part of the Covid pandemic response and recovery, funding such as Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing were awarded to support the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of children and young people. The programmes focussed on providing a range of free activities for children and young people, and local groups and organisations were invited to apply for the funding. Many projects were successful in securing funding to deliver projects, which helped meet some actions from the 2019 assessment. It also helped to sustain existing projects, improving quality or extending provision.

The pandemic has hindered progress in some areas, however, the funding and changes in restrictions as part of Covid recovery has enabled some progress to be made:

#### **Matter B – Providing for diverse needs**

- Inclusive play sessions offered to encourage play for children with disabilities.
- More accessible playground equipment has been funded within the last assessment period.

#### **Matter C – Spaces available for children to play**

- Assessments of play spaces undertaken on an annual basis to understand the ‘value’ of opportunities offered to children. The assessment findings inform consultation responses in relation to planning applications.
- Through use of grant funding, improvements have been made at a number of playgrounds as well as maintenance at other sites, helping to avoid removal of equipment.

#### **Matter D – Supervised play**

- The Winter of Wellbeing and Summer of Fun, alongside Playworks Holiday funding has provided children and young people with a wealth of opportunity for supervised play opportunities, which are free at the point of access

#### Matter G – Securing and supporting the play workforce

- Playwork qualifications and training were included as part of an assessment of need for the play workforce.
- Play training was included as part of the Early Years and Childcare team training programme for childcare providers, including Outdoor Provision – developing quality outdoor provision for health, well-being, play and learning opportunities; and Water Play – exploring its potential and engaging children in valuable play and learning opportunities.

#### Matter H – Community engagement and participation

- Plans for a Participation Champion project were started to help primary school children have a say in decisions affecting them, including decisions about play.
- Family Information Service Outreach worker has been working with local communities to promote areas to play and activities on offer.
- Engagement sessions were undertaken with children and young people as part of Neath Port Talbot's Let's Talk Campaign, and the need for good quality play and leisure was highlighted.

#### Matter I – Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

- The Play Strategy Implementation Group has representation from a number of departments and agencies whose work impacts on or influences children's play.
- The Council's Corporate Plan recognises children's play as a priority.
- Funding was secured through WG's Child Development Fund and Early Years Integration Transformation Programme to

provide play based family support services and also provision for children with additional learning needs.

**Play Sufficiency Action Plan 2022-25:**

The 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment has been completed and reflects feedback from children and young people, parents and stakeholders. It draws together their views with information collated through the WG toolkit to provide an overview of the current position in NPT. A SWOT analysis has been produced outlining the strengths and weaknesses against each Matter and the opportunities for improving these.

The action plan has a focus on improving the quality of play provision on offer – that of existing provision and of future developments – and on encouraging children, young people and families to utilise what is available to them. Some actions had also been identified in earlier assessments, however, the uncertainty around funding and the nature of some issues, for example parental perceptions, make these difficult to achieve.

Successful implementation of the action plan will require support and co-operation from all directorates. The implementation will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Play Strategy Implementation Group, which currently has representation from key directorates and from Third Sector partners. The need to strengthen the strategic profile of children’s play has come out strongly from the assessment, in order that we can protect children’s opportunities to play and so that these are not unintentionally impacted upon by others’ work.

**Financial Impacts:**

The action plan identifies whether recommendations can be achieved within existing resources or whether new finances would need to be in place in order to progress these. Actions requiring new finance would not be progressed without additional funding sources being in place.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

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

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

The Play Sufficiency Assessment meets WG's requirement that a local authorities in Wales assess for and secure sufficiency of play opportunities for children aged 0-17 years.

Based on the above assessment, a full impact assessment is not required as the initiative has low or no impact on the majority of factors indicated. In the few cases where impact has been identified this is positive, improving opportunities for children and young people's development and wellbeing.

Consultation and engagement with children, young people, parents, and stakeholders was undertaken as part of the assessment and their views are reflected within the action plan.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

The assessment has identified actions in relation to play in rural areas so implementation of the action plan should have positive impacts for valley communities.

### **Workforce Impacts:**

No implications.

### **Legal Impacts:**

No implications.

### **Risk Management Impacts:**

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

**Consultation:**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

**Recommendations:**

It is proposed that the Play Sufficiency Assessment action plan be approved to outline priorities for the delivery and development of play in Neath Port Talbot.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

1. Undertaking a Play Sufficiency Assessment and developing an accompanying action plan is a statutory duty for all local authorities in Wales.
2. The action plan has been developed to help ensure that we maximise the available resources for play to improve the quality of the provision offered across the county.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision is proposed for implementation immediately after consultation with the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Appendix 2 - Play Sufficiency Assessment

**List of Background Papers:**

First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment – PSA 2022

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## Appendix 1

### Proposed Action Plan

Actions to be taken to address the issues / shortcomings recorded in the Play Sufficiency Assessment

Proposed actions for the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

(Funding source: funding from Local Authority own budgets and to be included in the Single Integrated Plan).

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
<b>Geographical Gaps</b>					
Addressing the perceived gap of provision in rural areas.	Raise awareness of existing provision in rural communities.	Focused outreach in rural areas. Collaborative working with Youth Services, Parks and other key departments.	Partner with FIS meeting asap. To promote Summer of fun provision etc, ONGOING	Play Development Officer and Family Information Service Manager	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Encourage families to use green and open spaces for play.	Working with Countryside and Biodiveristy Team, Natural Resources Wales, Town and Community Councils, Local Area Coordinators and others to help families understand the spaces and places they can use for play.	Extend PSA launch invitation to partner groups. July 22 Identify cross over projects with Biodiversity team. Aug 22 Invite selected groups to become PSIG member. Meeting Sept 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
5 wards have no supervised play provision: Blaengwrach, Coedffranc North, Dyffryn, Lower Brynamman and Onllwyn.	Liaise with Early Years and Childcare and Youth Service to understand gaps in provision. Work with Local Area Coordinators and other community-based organisations to explore opportunities and share details on existing provision.	Connecting rural communities with the play provision they need and want. Learn from successful approaches for example Early Years Integration Pathfinder programme.	Summer of Fun provision July-Sept 22 feedback  Invite EYC and Youth service to PSA launch meeting July 22 Invite above to join PSIG meeting Sept 22	Play Development Officer PSIG partners	Existing funding/Staff hours
Working with schools to address gaps in provision.	Concerns about Health and Safety prevent schools from opening their site out of hours for play. Explore ways in which these barriers could be overcome, for example Town and Community Council partnerships.	Identify schools in areas with low levels of play provision. Initial engagement with school. Wider partnership working with key Council Departments and Town & Community Councils.	PDO to identify schools. Aug 22 Arrange meetings with schools Oct 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
<b>Diverse Needs Gaps</b>					
Using data to understand need.	Population data, including the 2021 Census release, is used to understand need and inform decisions about play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources and funding are focused on responding to need.</li> </ul>	Use PSA and QGIS mapping tools Etc. to inform of areas of need. Ongoing	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
Supervised play provision for children and young people with disabilities is not meeting demand.	Co-design project with parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities to respond to gaps in provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Interplay and Neath Port Talbot Special Need Support Group to listen to parents and carers.</li> <li>Identify funding that could be used to address gaps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-design provision with parents and carers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Create links with user groups. Meet with groups to agree their priorities. Aug 22	Play Development Officer	New Funding to be sourced
	Explore opportunities to use Section 106 and other funding to invest in increasing the availability of inclusive play provision equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with Planning and other Council Officers to ensure the strategic use of Section 106 funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore other funding opportunities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Meet with PSIG Parks subgroup July 22	Play Development Officer Parks Dept Project Development and Funding Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Welsh Medium Play Provision	Support Early Years and Childcare Unit to pilot Welsh in Childcare Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase provision of childcare (including play provision) in the Welsh Medium.</li> </ul>	Confirm Early Years membership of PSIG and agree attendee July 22	Play/Early Years	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Enable playworkers to participate in training to learn Welsh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More playworkers with Welsh language ability</li> </ul>	Work with Early Years to create these opportunities. Ongoing	Play/Early Years	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Make it easier for families to find play that is provided in the Welsh language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Family Information Service and Dewis to showcase provision in the Welsh Language</li> </ul>	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action Sept 22	Play/FIS	
	Help parent and carers to choose Welsh language provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Clwb Cwtsh, Cymraeg I Blant and other programmes that enable parents and carers to try Welsh. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership working with Menter Iaith.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Working with Welsh Language schools to understand and showcase what support is available for families</li> </ul>	Meet with FIS to work towards this action using early year's group members to support. Ongoing	Play/FIS/Early Years and Childcare Group	Existing funding/Staff hours
Traveller Play Provision	Work with Traveller Education Officer to engage with the community to see if they want play provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letting the community inform decisions about play that affect them.</li> </ul>	Meet with Traveller Education Officer to assess Oct 2022	Play/Traveller Education Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Supporting Young People with Diverse Needs	Collaborate with Youth Services to engage with young people including the LGBTQ community, young carers and those with additional learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The play wants and needs of children and young people with diverse needs are understood.</li> <li>Young people play a role in shaping the provision that for them.</li> </ul>	Meet with Families First Youth Coordinator Aug 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
<b>Access Gaps</b>					
60% of parents say road traffic is a barrier to play.	Learn from the Cilfrew Village 20mph speed limit pilot. How does this impact on play within the village?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership working with Road Safety Team.</li> <li>Listening to the community in Cilfrew Village. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Cilffriw Primary School</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Agenda item for PSIG group Sept 22 Update from Road Safety team ongoing PDO meet with Primary School and attend	Road Safety Officers/Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours



Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
			Community group meeting. Oct 22		
25% of young people said access to transport and 24% said safer routes would enable them to play more.	<p>Feasibility Study: Wheels to Play</p> <p>Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a scheme be created to help children and young people access play? For example, a programme where activities such as litter picking or volunteering can be traded for a cycle hire, bus vouchers and / or railcard.</p> <p>Could a scheme be created to help children and young people access play? For example, a programme where activities such as litter picking or volunteering can be traded for a cycle hire, bus vouchers and / or railcard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify potential partners.</li> <li>Explore funding options.</li> <li>Feasibility study</li> <li>Pilot scheme if viable</li> </ul>	Take to PSIG To identify a working group Sept 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
86 play areas were assessed to have issues that impact their accessibility.	Share findings of Play Space Assessments with Parks Team and collaborate on a strategy to address accessibility barriers.	Play spaces assessment process is used to inform investment in play space for the benefit of children, young people and families.	Meet with Parks sub group to develop action Oct 22	Play Development Officer/Parks	Existing funding/Staff hours
Families are not sure where to find out information about play.	A communications and outreach strategy for the Family Information Service to include Children's Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clear strategy for the promotion of play provision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective use of outreach.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Collaborative working with play providers and partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of the Family Information Service.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action Sept 22	Play Development Officer Family Information Service Manager	Existing funding/Staff hours
	All play settings / activities are listed on the Dewis database. Starting with all provision being provided by the Local Authority being on Dewis within the first 3 months of the action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a "one stop shop" to find information on play opportunities in Neath Port Talbot.</li> <li>Family Information Service and Dewis have clear, concise up to date and relevant information on play.</li> </ul>	Meeting with FIS to start Summer of Fun promotion asap Include FIS promotion as part of SoF contract June 22 Ongoing	Play Development Officer Family Information Service Manager	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Come and Play Events – Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a come and play events programme could be explored. This would involve working with Local Area Coordinators, Friends Groups and other community groups to deliver come and play events to bring people together in their local park or greenspace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families are re-connected with the provision in their area.</li> </ul>	Invite/meet with partners to look at holding said events at PSA launch July 22	Play Development Officer and partners	New funding to be sourced
Children and young people do not feel safe in some outdoor play spaces.	Work with the Community Service Partnership, Parks Team, and other partners to identify a strategy for addressing the perception that outdoor play spaces are anti-social behaviour hot spots and therefore unsafe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing parks and play areas that are perceived to be anti-social behaviour hot spots. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with partners to address concerns.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Invite PCSO rep to PSIG Sept 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Promote existing provision in partnership with Youth Services, PASS, Schools and other partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people know the play opportunities that are available to them.</li> </ul>	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action	Play Development Officer and PSIG partners	Existing funding/Staff hours

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
There is a shortfall in provision for children and young people aged 13 years and over.	Partnership project with the Youth Council to co-design a play opportunity, for example park enhancements or a session, with young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people inform the play provision that is provided for them.</li> </ul>	Identify youth council partners August 22 Invite to PSIG to inform actions Sept 22 or meet separately	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Prioritise Future funding from WG to address play needs of diverse and older children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified funding would be used to address this need</li> </ul>	Ongoing PIG meeting agenda item to action as opportunity arises.	PSIG and Play Development Officer	New to be sourced
<b>Type Gaps</b>					
Address identified gaps in types of provision.	Work with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to address gaps identified through Childcare and Play Sufficiency Assessment processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative working to address gaps and ensure effective use of available funding and capacity.</li> </ul>	Meet with Early years and Youth Service Invite to PSIG meeting Ongoing	Play Development Officer Early Years Manager Youth Service	Existing funding/Staff hours
	PSIG to collaborate on Open Spaces Assessment and other work to support the Local Development Plan refresh.		Create links with plan development officers Aug 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Families would like to see the value of outdoor designated play spaces to be improved.	Use the Play Space Assessment process to inform investment in play spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of outdoor play provision is improved through collaborative working and strategic investment of funding.</li> </ul>	Continue Park fund subgroup July 22 and ongoing	Play Development Officer Parks Dept. Project Development and Funding Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Natural Play	Identify existing natural play toolkits and develop if necessary to explore and encourage the creation of natural play spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural play provision is seen as sustainable and suitable option for play in Neath Port Talbot.</li> <li>Promote natural play to decision makers.</li> </ul>	Meet with NPT Biodiversity team invite to attend PSA launch July 22 Invite Biodiversity team to become members of PSIG asap	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
<b>Workforce Gaps</b>					
Play workforce audit.	Collaborate with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to undertake a full workforce audit. Co-design a training plan in response to this audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More childcare staff with qualifications in play.</li> <li>More childcare staff with qualifications in play.</li> <li>Awareness of training and its benefits increased in the sector.</li> </ul>	Meet with EYC to ensure play qualifications are included in any audit they undertake. July 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
40% of schools said play training for staff could help them to deliver more play in school.	Enable schools to participate in training provided through existing training programs e.g. Early Years and Childcare Unit training programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are able to participate in the training they want and need.</li> </ul>	Source and identify play training available to schools Oct 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Review and revise existing Play training school module with schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding analysis.</li> <li>Training programme.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Review OCN Unit Nov 22 Identify Schools wanting to participate Nov 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
Quality Assurance Framework	Play Strategy Implementation Group to explore the feasibility of a Quality Assurance Framework for Play in Neath Port Talbot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality assurance framework.</li> <li>The quality of play is improved.</li> </ul>	PSIG Group meeting Ongoing action/agenda item	PSIG Group	Existing funding/Staff hours
<b>Policy Gaps</b>					
Policy and Strategy	Play Strategy Implementation Group to participate in the process to develop the Neath Port Talbot Culture and Leisure Strategy, Local Development Plan Refresh and other key policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play is on the agenda.</li> </ul>	Ensure PSIG membership includes strategy and policy members or their nominated staff Ongoing	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG)	Refresh and reinvigorate the PSIG – agree on a vision for Play In Neath Port Talbot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broaden the membership.</li> <li>Update Governance and Terms of Reference.</li> <li>Quarterly meeting schedule with identified priorities.</li> </ul>	Invite additional members as listed above. Have a PSA 22 launch meeting July 22. Schedule PSIG Sept/Jan/March 22	Play development officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
<b>COVID Gaps</b>					
Children and young people are unsure about returning to play post the Pandemic.	Collaborate with schools, youth services and other partners to create a programme of events and activities to reconnect children and young people with play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective use of Summer of Fun Funding and other capacity.</li> <li>Collaborative working.</li> </ul>	Summer of Fun July-Sept 22 Work with partner agencies via FIS/Dewis	Play Development Officer FIS	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Family Information Service to share resources and information to address this barrier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reassure families and children post pandemic.</li> <li>Highlight events and activities.</li> </ul>	Invite FIS to join PSIG and work in partnership towards action July 22	Play Development Officer FIS	Existing funding/Staff hours
Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.	Family Information Service to share resources and information to address this barrier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced Family Information Service.</li> <li>Strategic use of Summer of Fun and other funding.</li> <li>Raised awareness of play opportunities.</li> </ul>	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action July 22 Meet with CVS to increase partner projects Nov 22	Play Development Officer FIS	Existing funding/Staff hours

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2022 - 2025

# Neath Port Talbot Play Sufficiency Assessment

June 2022

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## 1.0 Introduction and context

### THE VALUE OF PLAY

#### Why we think play is important

Article 31 of the UNCRC recognises “the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” Play is an important part of children, young people and family’s lives. It lets children explore their world, discover who they are and make friendships. It helps children develop the skills they need for life, including socialising, problem solving, language development, creativity, communication, negotiation and listening. Neath Port Talbot Council understands and appreciates what play can do for children. In collaboration with our partners we are committed to ensuring that all children and young people living in

Neath Port Talbot can access quality play provision that is creative, exciting and stimulating.

Giving all children and young people who live in Neath Port Talbot equal access to high quality play opportunities can help to address the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences including poverty. It can enable children to be healthier and happier, supporting their physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

Play encompasses a wide variety of things to do, recreation and fun are an important part of children and young people’s lives. It is important that children are able to choose how and where they play. Children and young people are safely enjoying playing in our network of play areas, parks, green spaces, open space and seaside. They benefit from a wide variety of indoor play spaces including family

centres, soft play areas or youth clubs. Neath Port Talbot’s children can play in their homes, childcare settings or schools.

In Neath Port Talbot we understand that quality play provision is about providing safe but challenging play in rich and stimulating environments. That play should be fun, enabling children to explore and learn. We appreciate that children and young people of different ages, ability and stages of development will want and need different types of play provision and there cannot be a one size fits all approach.

Working with children, young people, parents, carers and stakeholders, this Play Sufficiency Assessment has been an opportunity to collaborate and co-design a shared Action Plan for the future. This assessment and Action Plan will enable us to celebrate and shout about what play can do

## 1.0 Introduction and context

for our children and young people, connecting families to the play provision they want and need.

The COVID 19 pandemic has been challenging for the children, young people and families living in Neath Port Talbot and illustrated why play is important to our children's health and well-being. Research by Mind Cymru reported that three quarters of young people (74% of those aged 13-24) said that their mental health has worsened during the period of lockdown restrictions from early April to mid-May 2020<sup>1</sup>. Play is important because it "helps children recognise and express their emotions and develop positive relationships with peers and family members. It helps them to deal with anxiety and boredom and build their ability to concentrate and focus on what's important to them."<sup>2</sup>

In focus groups with children and young people to support this assessment some of them talked about "forgetting how to play" because of the COVID-19 pandemic, that they had "got used to being at home and not seeing [their] friends." Research suggests that the pandemic has "impacted on the lives of young people in ways that are both profound and somewhat contradictory. At one level, there were widespread concerns about a lost period of adolescence, missed education, and potential scarring effects for future education and work. Alongside this, however, young people spoke of having made unexpected positive changes to their lives. Indeed, many used the time afforded to them by the pandemic as an opportunity to invest in their selfcare, well-being, and their relationships."<sup>3</sup> The Play Safety Forum (including Play Wales, Play England, Play Scotland and Play

Northern Ireland) concluded that the "little consideration appears to have been given to children's welfare outside of the impact on education. Play, as has often been the case, has been forgotten or side-lined, yet there is copious scientific evidence of its importance for development."<sup>4</sup>

Above all, play and recreation provide children with the chance to have fun, "play involves children doing as they wish in their own time and in their own way. It has the key characteristics of fun, uncertainty, challenge flexibility and non-productivity."<sup>5</sup> We want the children and young people of Neath Port Talbot to be able to have fun and experience all the many benefits of play regardless of their age, postcode or ability. We want play to be equal and accessible for all.



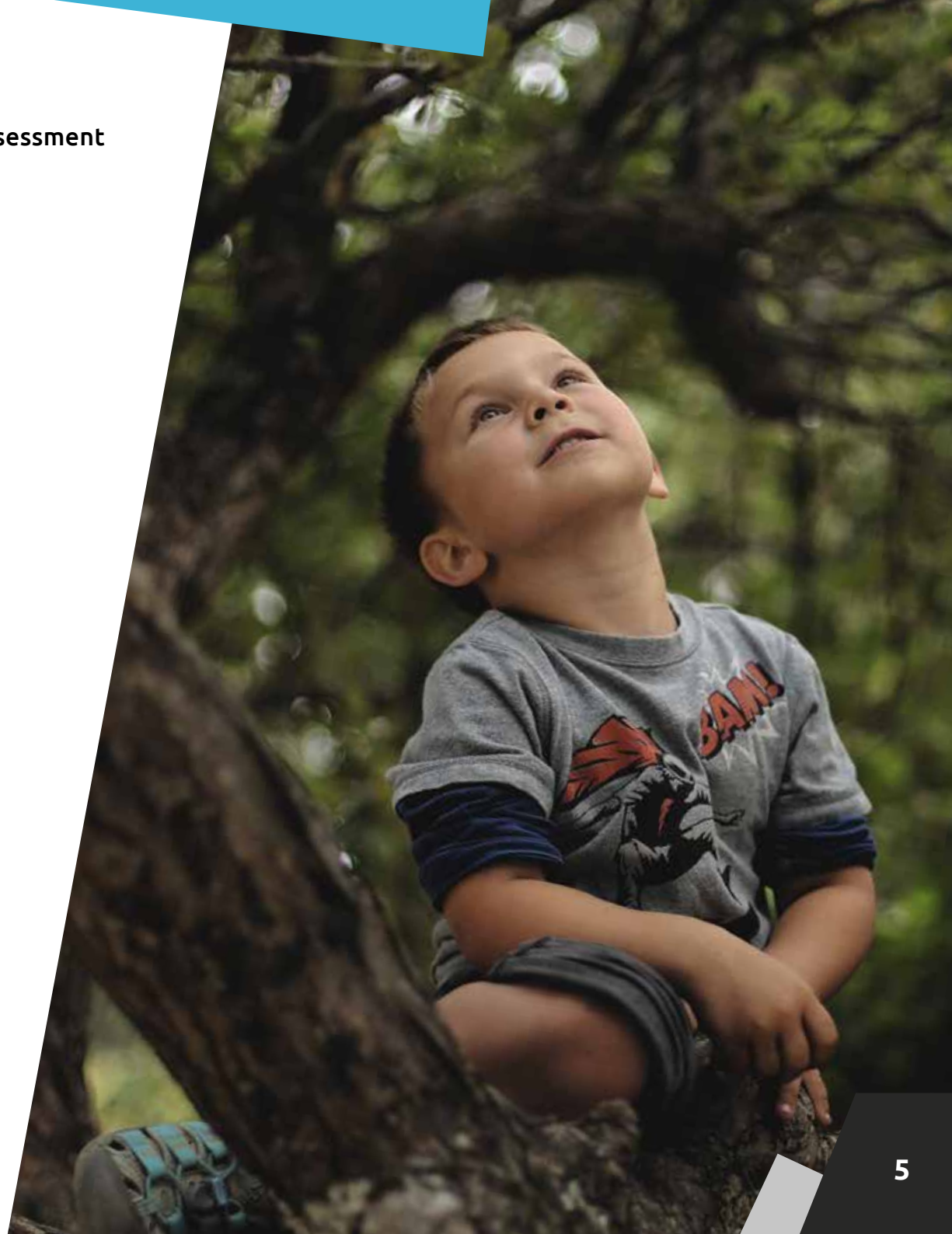
## 1.0 Introduction and context

### About the Play Sufficiency Assessment

The Welsh Government, Play Wales and their partners want “Wales to be a country where children are increasingly seen outside enjoying the benefits of play. We want to create a play environment which provides time, space and the permission for children to play.”

To support this aspiration a section on Play Opportunities was included in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, which requires:

1. A Local Authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children and young people in accordance with the regulations.
2. Secure sufficient play opportunities for children and young people, so far as reasonably practical.
3. Publish information about play opportunities within its area for children and young people.
4. Keep the information published up to date.



## 1.0 Introduction and context

Whilst carrying out these duties, a Local Authority must consider the needs of:

- a. Children and young people who are disabled
- b. Children and young people of different ages

To shape and inform the assessment there is a requirement to consult:

- a. Children,
- b. Parents,
- c. Individuals and organisations with an interest in play, as the local authority considers appropriate.

Play Sufficiency Assessments are completed on a 3-year cycle, this assessment will cover the period from 2022 – 2024. To support consistency of approach across Wales a toolkit has been made available, alongside the “Wales – A Play Friendly Country: Statutory Guidance.” These documents set out how Local Authorities should conduct the assessments and the 9 matters that need to be considered:

- Matter A: Population
- Matter B: Providing for Diverse Needs
- Matter C: Space available for children to play
- Matter D: Supervised provision
- Matter E: Charges for play provision
- Matter F: Access to space/provision
- Matter G: Securing and Developing the play workforce
- Matter H: Community engagement and participation
- Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

## 1.0 Introduction and context

### The Future of Play in Neath Port Talbot

The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2022-2027: Recover, Reset, Renew includes a pledge to “enhance play and leisure opportunities for young people.” This supported by an additional £640,000 investment to improve community infrastructure including upgrades to play facilities. The Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) will play a key role in delivering on this pledge. It is made up of a range of stakeholders that design and deliver play for children in Neath Port Talbot. This assessment will inform their decision making to sustain and enhance play for the benefit of local families. Based on the findings of the assessment a one-year Action Plan has been developed which focuses on:

- Ensuring all children and young people can access play that meets their needs.
- Helping families feel safe in outdoor places for play.
- Creating play recreation places for young people.
- Enhancing the quality of play provision.
- Enabling children and young people to return to play post COVID.
- Supporting schools.
- Making sure information and support around play is easy to find.
- Play supported by policy.
- Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.

## 2.0 How we did the assessment

### HOW LISTENING HAS INFORMED THE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

The methodology outlined below was based on our experience of carrying our previous Play Sufficiency Assessments, the statutory requirements, and Play Wales Guidance.

#### Baseline Assessment:

The baseline review was the foundation phase of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and was critical to ensuring the process was based on a comprehensive understanding of existing provision and existing and future need. This process commenced with a review of the previous Play Sufficiency Assessments in order to identify and obtain the data required for this process. In addition, the baseline review process was used to research

and identify all relevant national, regional and local policies and strategies which will form the basis of the policy review to support Matter I: play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas. This phase also looked at existing funding models to consider best use of available resources to support the play agenda.

#### Stakeholder Engagement:

A programme of stakeholder engagement including workshops, meetings and interviews took place throughout the lifetime of the assessment. This enabled a collaborative process and the sharing of information and ideas. This phase commenced with a workshop that brings all stakeholders together to launch the process and collaborate on a shared vision for play and the provision of play in Neath Port Talbot.

#### Community Engagement:

We prepared and delivered a programme of community engagement. This that ensured the voice of children, young people, parents and carers, and the community are embedded in and influenced the process. This programme used a diverse range of approaches including focus groups, community events, questionnaires, online activities and social media. We particularly focused on hearing from those who are seldom heard such as children living in areas of deprivation and with disabilities.

#### Needs Assessment:

This was an identification and audit of all play provision (including indoor and outdoor space) to evaluate provision in terms of quantity, accessibility, quality and value. This process, alongside population data, enabled us to undertake a needs assessment to ascertain the requirements for play within the area and define a vision

## 2.0 How we did the assessment

and criteria for play within Neath Port Talbot.

### SWOT and Gap Analysis:

Using the information gathered in previous phases we undertook a preliminary SWOT analysis of all the matters associated with the Play Sufficiency Assessment. This formed the basis of the workshop with stakeholders and resulting Action Plan. It enabled us to clearly identify realistic and achievable aspirations for the future that will benefit the children and young people.

Fundamental to the Play Sufficiency Assessment process is identifying and understanding gaps in provision, and the Action Plan explores how these can be realistically addressed. To support and enhance the SWOT analysis process we brought together the qualitative and quantitative data resulting from the implementation of

the engagement plan and provision audit, which enabled us to deliver one of the core objectives of the Play Sufficiency Assessment: “identify gaps in information, provision, service delivery and policy implementation.”

Gaps we explored included:

- Geographical Gaps - Where a geographical area has a general shortage of supply
  - Diverse Needs Gaps - Where there is a shortage of suitable places to play for disabled children, or children with other specific needs or requirements, including those from particular faiths or community groups
  - Access Gaps - Where there is a shortage of accessible play provision
  - Age Gaps - Where there is a shortage of play provision suitable to the needs and requirements of a certain age group (for example, school-aged children up to 18 years, if they are disabled)
- Type Gaps - Where there is a shortage in the type of play for which children, young people and parents may be expressing a preference
  - Workforce Gaps - Where there are gaps/shortages in the play workforce
  - Policy Gaps – What policies to support and develop play are missing?
  - COVID-19 Gap – What gaps have arisen since the last assessment, which of these gaps are a result of the pandemic

## 2.0 How we did the assessment

### Action Plan Workshop:

The success of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process and the ultimate implementation and delivery of the Action Plan will be dependent on several Council departments, organisations and stakeholders working together. The aim of this session was to share the results of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process and resulting gap analysis and to work in partnership to create a robust and deliverable Action Plan.

### Play Sufficiency Assessment Form and Action Plan:

The completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form and Action Plan, bringing together the findings of the previous stages.

### Summary Report:

The Play Assessment and Recommendations took the form of an illustrated report that brings together the data and analysis from the previous stages to provide an overall assessment of play provision within Neath Port Talbot.

### Feedback:

It is important to feedback to those who participated in the community and stakeholder engagement to illustrate how their ideas and concerns have contributed to the Play Sufficiency Assessment. We contacted all participants sharing an infographic outlining how stakeholder and community engagement has informed the assessment and directing them to the full assessment which is available online.



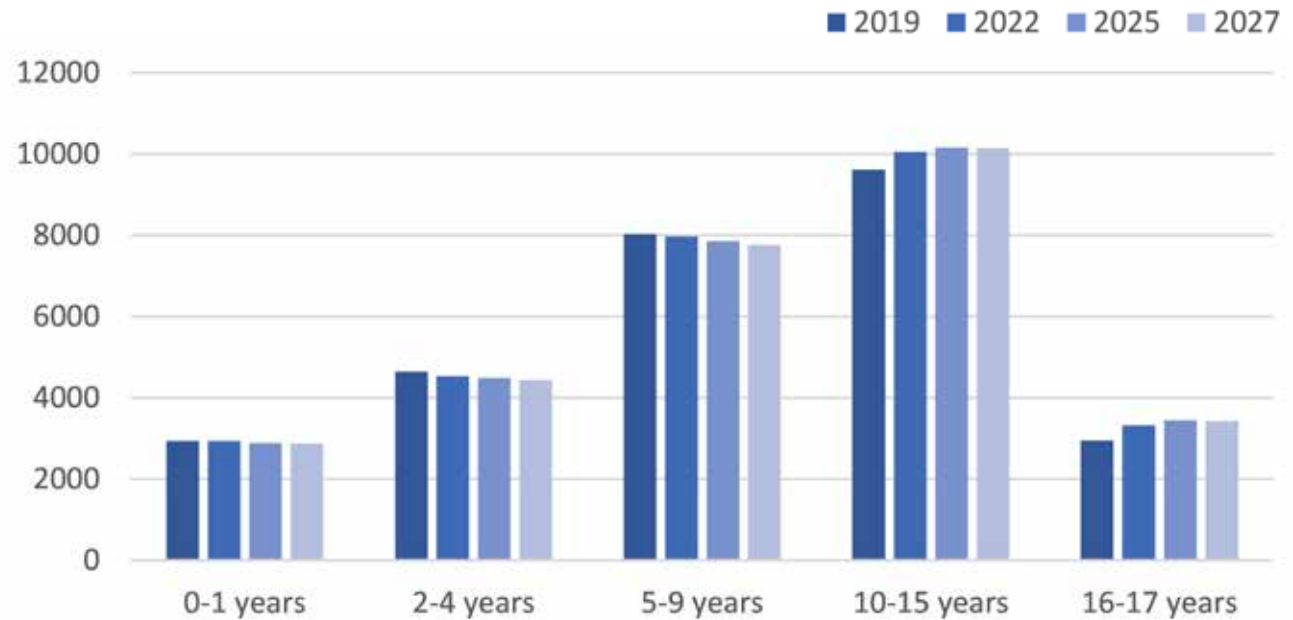
## 3.0 Conversations about play

### WHAT YOU TOLD US

#### The Play Population

In some ways the Play Sufficiency Assessment is about supply and demand. What play provision is available (supply) and what is the audience of play in Neath Port Talbot (demand). As part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process, we are required to understand how many children and young people are living in Neath Port Talbot. Figure 1 below uses mid-year population estimates to illustrate the current and projected population.

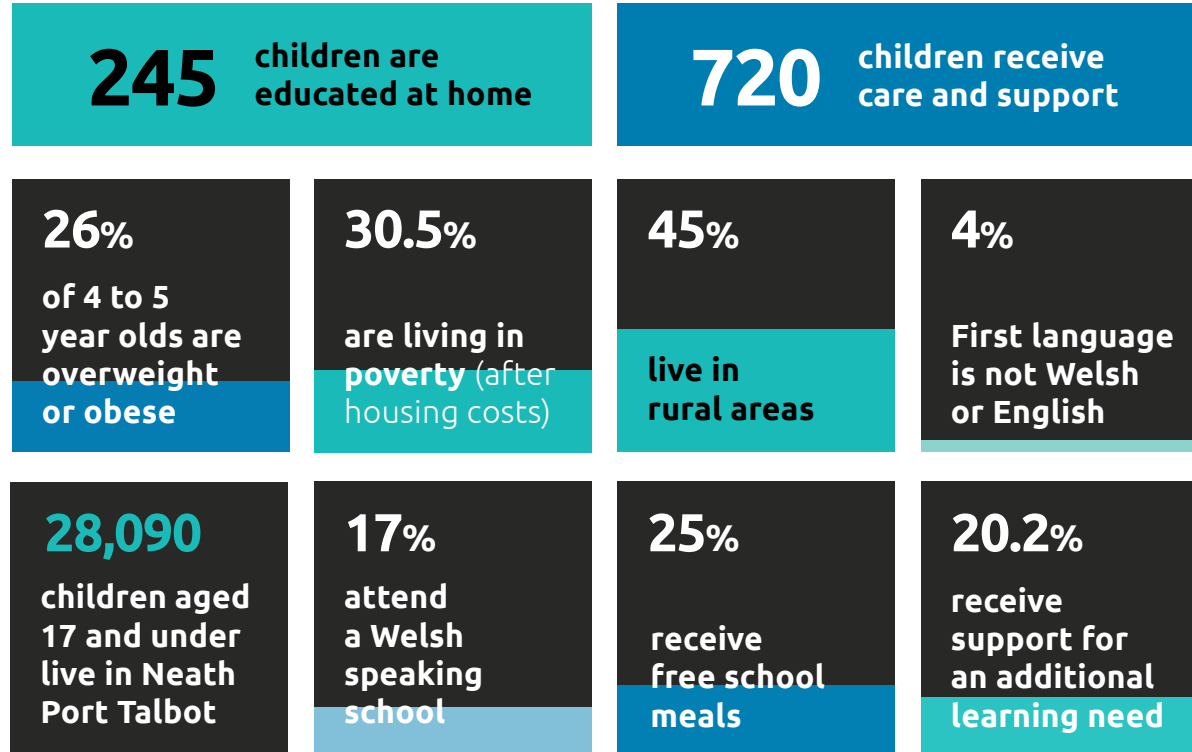
Figure 1:  
The Play Population in Neath Port Talbot



### 3.0 Conversations about play

Based on mid-year population estimates Neath Port Talbot has a population of 28,090 children aged 17 years of age and under. This population is projected to increase a further 0.14% by the time of the next assessment in 2025, suggesting that the number of children in Neath Port Talbot will remain relatively consistent. To help the Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) make decisions about play, and to help us move towards the aspiration of equality of access, we have mapped the population by ward. We have also used other key data sets which help us better understand children and young people with diverse needs.

Figure 2: What We Know About Children and Young People in Neath Port Talbot.



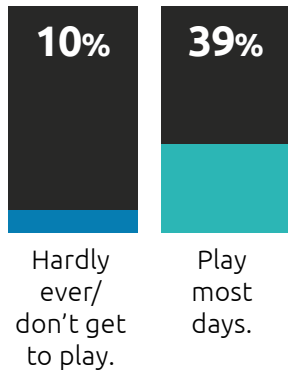


### 3.0 Conversations about play

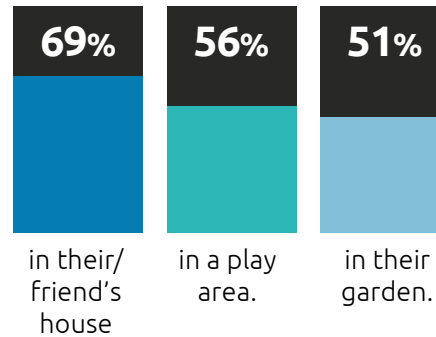
#### Big Play Survey

218 primary school aged children completed our big play survey. They told us:

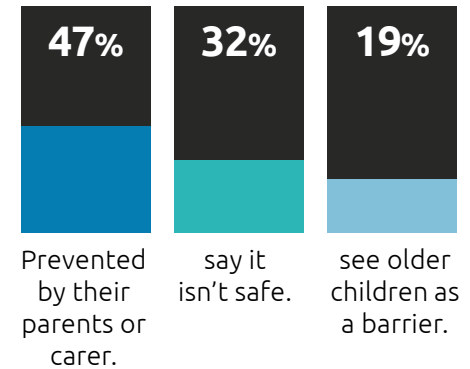
#### Frequency of play:



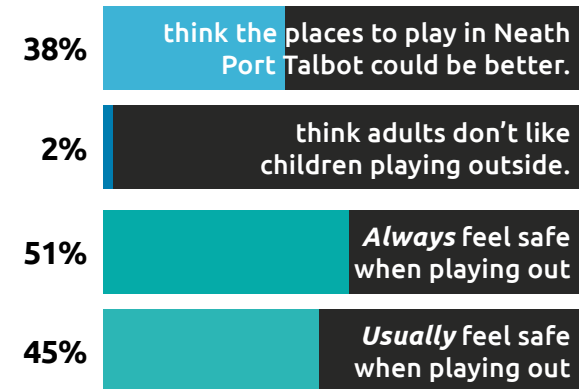
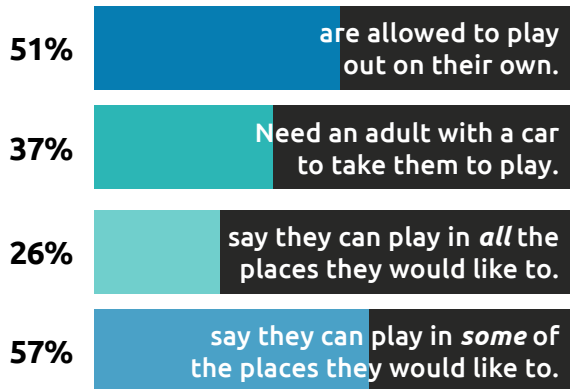
#### Favourite place to play:



#### Reasons children can't play where they want:



#### Results:

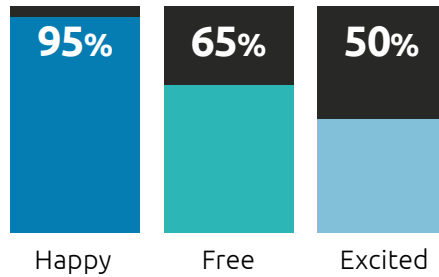


### 3.0 Conversations about play

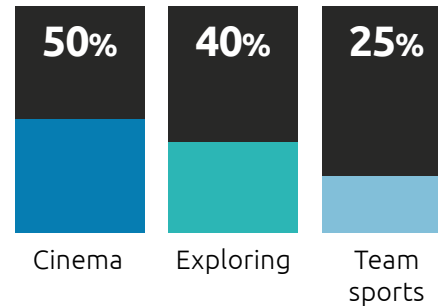
#### Young People Survey

105 children aged 12 to 17 completed our survey. They told us:

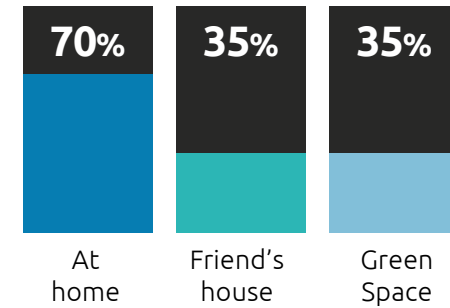
#### What they feel about how they spend their time:



#### Popular activities:



#### Favourite places to hang out:



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## 3.0 Conversations about play

### Listening to Children and Young People

To understand the survey results and find out more, we spoke to **117** children and young people aged 6 to 18 about play. These conversations highlighted the following themes. Quotes are taken from focus groups, survey responses and comments on display materials.

**"It's too dangerous now because of older kids abusing everything and swearing and smoking. I am not safe"**

- Survey Respondent, age 12

In focus group discussion with children (aged 14 and under) they explained that they often do not feel safe because of older children / teenagers in public spaces. Children spoke of wanting to use multi-use games areas (MUGAs) or play areas but being unable to do so because

teenagers were there. Others spoke of park misuse by teenagers, for example vaping and drinking, resulting in them not wanting to use those spaces anymore. There is a perception that parts of Neath Port Talbot are not safe to play, which is a considerable barrier to children playing.

**"Most places are either for younger children or are dangerous."**

- Survey Respondent, age 15

Young people also do not feel safe and are also concerned about the behaviour they see in parks and open spaces: "there is one park in my village, but it is vandalised all the time and drug users sit there." Additionally, young people feel underserved in terms of provision and things to do: "there's nowhere safe for teens to hang out. Places to go cost money and not everyone has enough."

**"I think during COVID I lost my social skills; I feel awkward when I go out now. It is much easier to just stay at home and spend time with friends on my Xbox."**

- Focus Group Participant, age 16

Children and young people did miss the opportunity to play and hang out with friends during the pandemic, describing it as impacting on their ability to make and retain friendships and affecting their social skills. While some enjoyed time with family and were able to see friends in outdoor spaces, others described feeling trapped and lonely.

**"If you like sport there is loads to do and lots of clubs. But I don't like sport, if you don't like sport where I live there is nothing to do."**

- Focus Group Participant, age 14

## 3.0 Conversations about play

In focus group discussions there was a clear split. Those children who played sport felt there was plenty for them to do. Children without an interest in sport felt underserved in comparison.

**"Most of my friends live far from where I live so socialising after school is difficult. If we could create more safe ways to travel independently such as having public transport buses or times for youths only."**

- Survey Respondent, aged 14

Those who live and go to school in the same community benefit from being able to play with school friends. Children and young people who have longer journeys to school or do not know other children in their local area find it more challenging. The survey results showed a reliance on adults with a car to take children to play and this was reflected in qualitative engagement discussions. When

talking to young people there was a perception that you need to go to Port Talbot or Neath or even further to Swansea or Cardiff for things to do. Public transport is believed to be expensive, and some young people also feel unsafe using buses and trains.

**"Young people are often looked down upon by adults for just having fun."**

- Survey Respondent, aged 15

**"Sometimes we're at the beach, just sitting and chatting and we'll get the side eye from adults. Like we shouldn't be there."**

- Focus Group Participant, aged 13

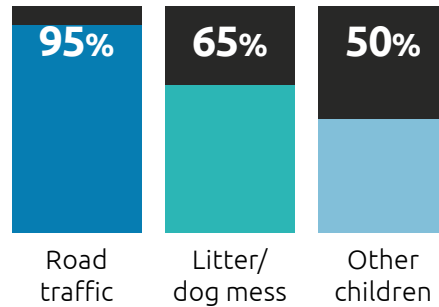
While some children and young people spoke about playing in their local streets and parks, others felt they couldn't play in their local communities because of adults. Teenagers feel their behaviour is "seen as anti-social no matter what we do. Where are we meant to be hanging out?" The strong preference for spending time at their own home or a friend's home is seen as one of the ways to avoid judgement from adults.

### 3.0 Conversations about play

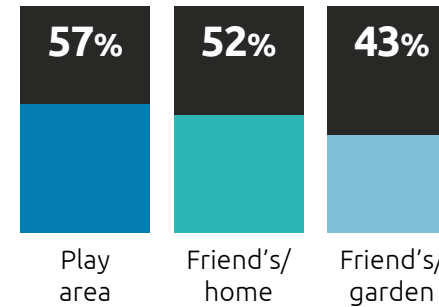
#### Talking with Parents and Carers

222 parents and carers completed our play survey. In summary:

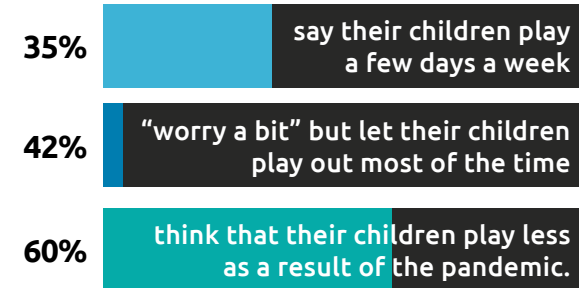
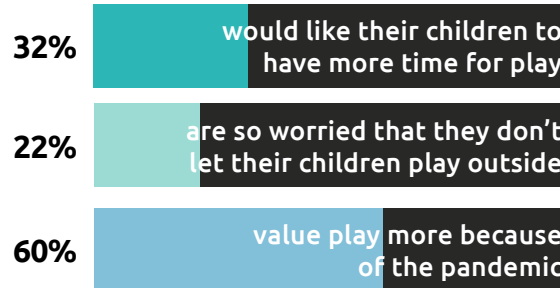
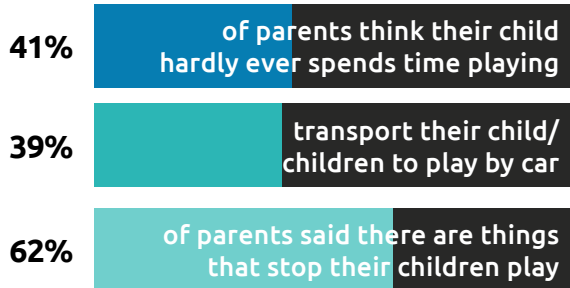
#### What stops their children from playing:



#### Where they think their child's favourite place to play is:



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## 3.0 Conversations about play

To understand the survey results and find out more, we spoke to 142 parents and carers about play. As part of this process, we had specific focus groups for families living in rural areas, low income families, families who use or would like to use Welsh language play provision and families of children with additional needs. These conversations highlighted the following themes. Quotes are taken from focus groups, survey responses and comments on display materials.

**"If it is raining or cold (which in Port Talbot is often), there are no places for teenagers to hang-out. If they hang-out in the park, then people complain, if they walk the streets then they are called 'gangs'. They seem to have a bit of a bad deal."**

- Family Play Survey Respondent.

Parents and carers agree that there is limited provision for young people. In focus groups they referenced the lack of things to do for young people citing youth clubs, skate parks and safe places where teenagers can come together as potential solutions. They also acknowledged the challenge of young people coming together potentially being misinterpreted.

**"Advertise and show to families what's available within areas, again especially to families with children who have additional needs."**

- Additional Needs Focus Group Participant.

Parents and carers think it is hard to find out about places to play in the local community. Focus group participants were not aware of the Family Information Service or Dewis, instead relying on word of mouth and / or social media to find play opportunities to enjoy as a family. A one stop where you could find things

to do was considered a key resource by focus group participants.

**"My son doesn't feel safe going out. Too many issues in our area of drugs etc. pandemic has not helped his confidence is shattered. He does not mix with his friends outside of school and although confidence is building, he is now often excluded."**

- Family Play Survey Respondent.

Parents and carers expressed concern about the legacy of the pandemic and the impact it has had on their children. They spoke about children who had "forgotten how to play with friends" or "struggled to settle in at play group." The impact on confidence and the ability to socialise was also a concern. As with children and young people, a number of parents and carers raised concern about safety in public spaces, raising concerns about anti-social behaviour.

## 3.0 Conversations about play

**"Community inclusion for additional needs young people, please understand that ASD is not a one size fits all diagnosis."**

*- Additional Needs Focus Group Participant.*

Families of children with disabilities and / or additional needs felt there is not enough provision for them in Neath Port Talbot. They were not adverse to integrated play settings or spaces, but felt it was important to have spaces or times specifically for their family to play with other families who understand and appreciate their needs and experience. They also want to see an acknowledgement that "a basket swing doesn't make a play area inclusive. Different children, different families need different things."

**"There is nothing to do in Cimla. Nothing, I'm working so my son stays at home which is isolating him."**

*- Rural Communities Focus Group.*

Parents and carers living in rural areas think that they are underserved in relation to play "everything is in Neath or Port Talbot. I don't drive so how are we meant to get there." They are concerned that community infrastructure such as schools and facilities are being removed from their local community which is impacting on children "he doesn't have any school friends that live near him. When we went to school everyone in the same village went to the same school. Now when he comes home, he can't just go and call on a friend. In the school holidays I must take him to see friends, which I can't always do."

**"Updating the playgrounds in the local park. I took my children to Hendy Park in Llanelli during pandemic, and it was amazing. Our local park is boring and can easily fit more equipment. The skate ramp is not even being used for what it is supposed to due to the height of it."**

*- Family Play Survey Respondent.*

There is a perception among parents and carers that local play areas at best are not fun or at worse are unsafe and unusable. There is a belief that most of the park provision is for young children and "that they are pretty boring the parks by us if I am honest." Participants also spoke of concerns around levels of litter and antisocial behaviour in public spaces which is a barrier to using them for play.

### 3.0 Conversations about play

"Provide more free access opportunities. Lots of families in our area do not have the money to spend on activities for their children, and it is these children who miss out."

- Deprived Communities Focus Group

There is an increasing concern about the cost of play, particularly for activities and play sessions. Play in the context of the cost-of-living crisis was also discussed with some participants expressing concern about rising costs resulting in decisions that may impact on play – “we have to think about when we can afford to use the car, which means have to think about how often we go to play group.”





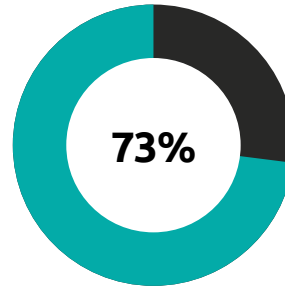
## 3.0 Conversations about play

### Talking to Stakeholders

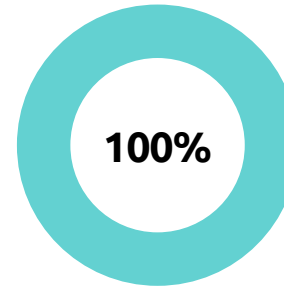
In order to complete the Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit (appendix 1) and to create a realistic and deliverable Action Plan for the future we collaborated with stakeholders from across the Local Authority and other sectors. This process enabled us to complete the assessment and explore strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These conversations highlighted the need to embed play in a wide range of strategies and policies so that it receives the support and funding it needs to be sustained and enhanced for the benefit of our children, young people and families.

### Listening to Schools

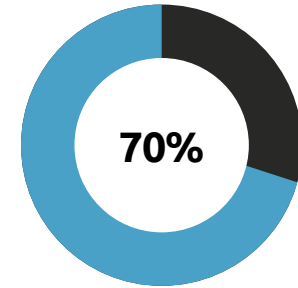
We asked all schools in Neath Port Talbot to complete a short survey; 12 schools completed the questionnaire (a response rate of 20%). They told us:



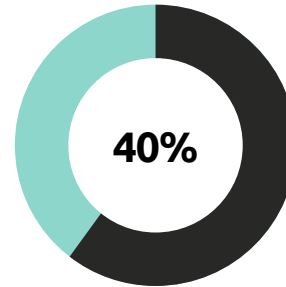
say play is very **important** in their school.



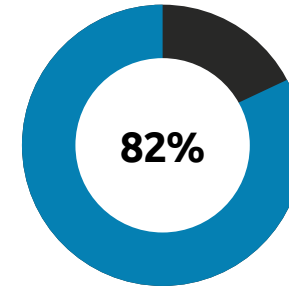
of schools **promote play** in school.



say lack of **resources** is the biggest barrier to play.



say staff play **training** could help them to deliver more play in school.



do not have a staff member appointed to lead on **play promotion**.

### 3.0 Conversations about play

#### Listening to Town and Community Councils

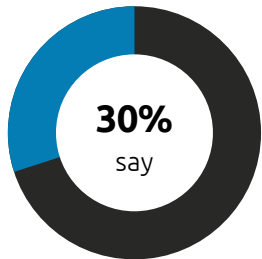
We asked all Town and Community Council's to complete a short survey, **13** participated a response rate of 65%.



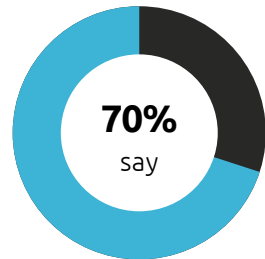
**planning projects** to increase play in their community.



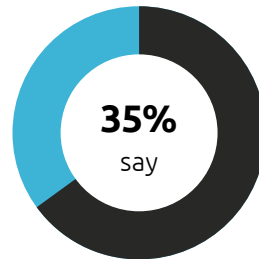
**engage** with children, young people and families when making decisions about play.



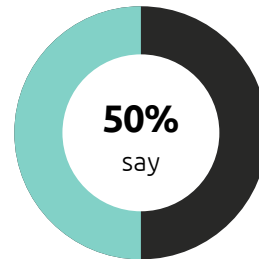
use of outdoor play **spaces stayed the same** during the pandemic.



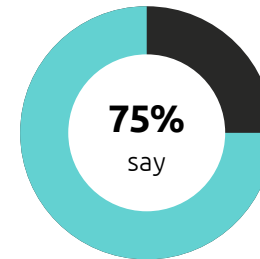
play is a **priority** for their organisation.



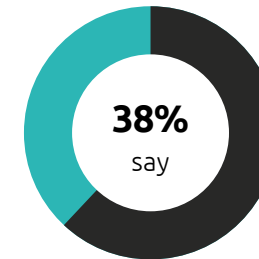
**litter is the biggest barrier** to play in their community.



use of indoor play **provision has decreased** as a result of the pandemic.



**places** for young people to spend time and hangout are **missing from their community.**



**inclusive play** for children with disabilities or additional needs is **missing from their community.**

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## 3.0 Conversations about play

### Engaging the Play Workforce

We spoke to staff who deliver play and / or recreational activities in a range of settings including stay and play sessions, childcare settings and youth clubs. They explained that they enjoy their roles and enjoy working with children and young people. However, they expressed concerns about play work being undervalued and that “factors like only earning just about minimum wage and short term funding, meaning I don’t know how long I’ll have a job, aren’t great. If I want to buy a home, I doubt I’ll be able to do that and be a play worker.” There is concern about how we can create pathways to recruit, develop and retain the play workforce to address the gaps this assessment has identified.

### Action Plan Workshop

The Action Plan Workshop was attended by 32 people from across the Local Authority, community groups and third sector. All those who attended were passionate about play and working to achieve change that will benefit children, young people, families and communities.



## 4.0 Places to play

### WHERE CAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY IN NEATH PORT TALBOT?

#### Introduction

Children and young people want and need safe spaces to come together. Places that are creative, imaginative, accessible and enable them to spend time with their friends. This section of the report summarises the existing spaces where children and young people can play, enabling us to identify gaps in provision.

#### Play Outdoors

Outdoor play spaces were in the top three favourite places to play and hang out with friends for both children and young people. 57% of parents and carers thought one of their children's favourite places to play was a park or play area. When we talked to children and young people

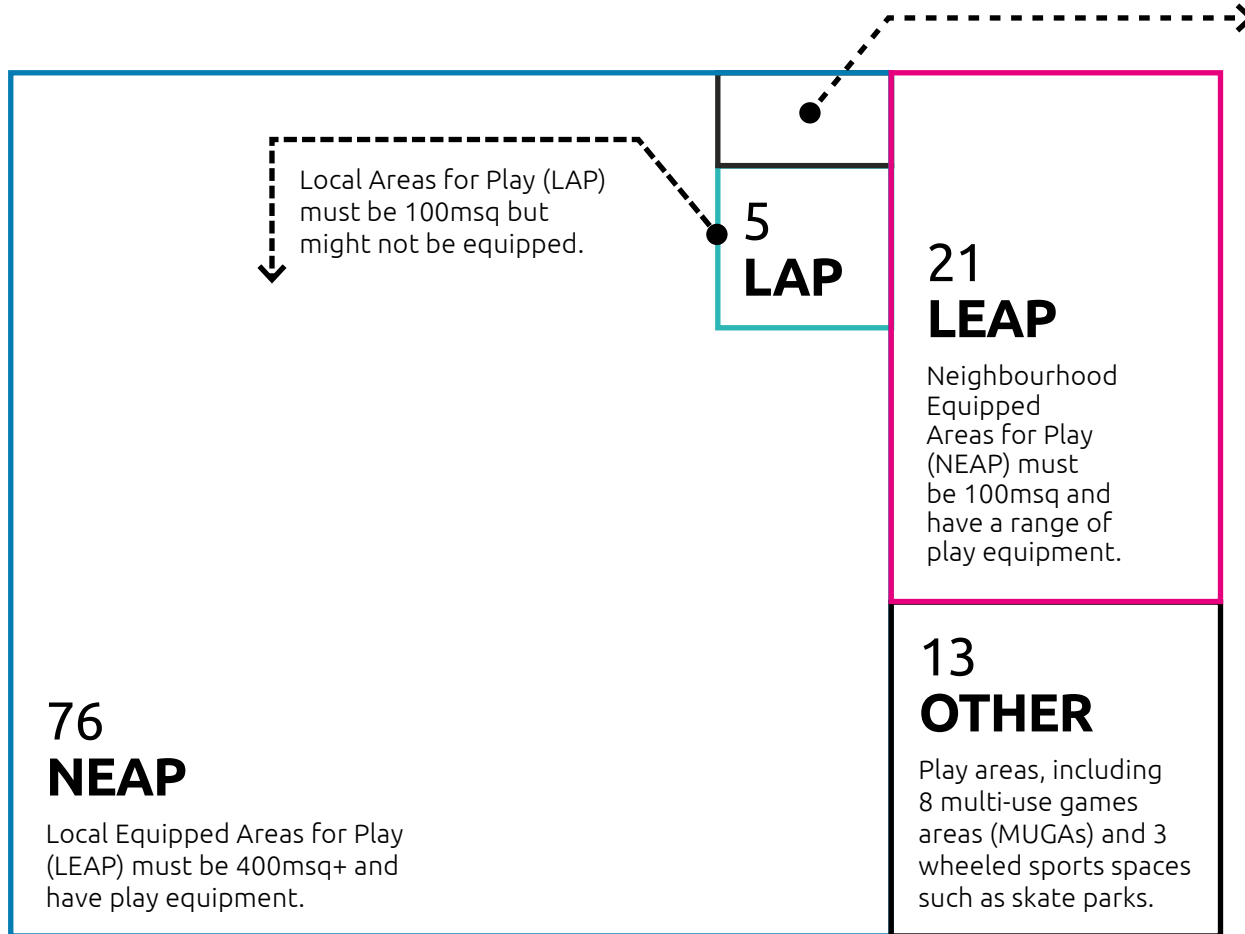
about play they described spending time in local parks, green spaces, at the beach and in other outdoor spaces like the street they live on or their local high street.

The Open Space Assessment undertaken in 2013 uses the Fields In Trust (FiT) benchmark standard to understand if there is enough spaces to play on a ward level. The FiT standard says there should be 0.25ha of designated play space (including play space) and 0.55ha of information play space per 1000 children. The assessment uses a total figure of children's play space of 0.8ha for children's play space. As shown in figure 2 all the wards in Neath Port Talbot meet this threshold.



Figure 2. Children's Play Space

## 4.0 Places to play



**3 destination play spaces**, which can attract children and young people from a large catchment area. They are **Skewen Park, The Gnoll** and **Margam Park**.

The Gnoll and Skewen Park have equipment specifically for children with disabilities. Other parks have inclusive play facilities for example basket swings.

**57** play areas were assessed to have provision for children aged 13 or over.

Play value is how we assess if a playspace is a rich and engaging space for children and young people. The highest score can achieve is 28.6. The average score in Neath Port Talbot is 13.47. The highest scoring play space is Coed Darcy with a score of 27.48. 39 parks and play areas have a below average play value score. The highest score that can be achieved is 62.



←----- There are **118 outdoor** designated **play spaces** in Neath Port Talbot ----->

## 4.0 Places to play

In terms of quantity the Fields in Trust (FiT) benchmark has been used to show there is sufficient provision on a ward basis. However, in the period since the last play space assessment the average play value score has decreased from 18.8 to 13.47. In addition, 2 play areas have been removed since the last assessment.

In qualitative engagement, such as focus groups, parents, carers, children and young people have all expressed concerns about the quality of outdoor play provision, the standards of maintenance and their safety in public spaces. It is important to note that austerity and funding cuts have impacted on the Local Authority's ability to maintain and enhance outdoor play provision. It is interesting to note that the highest scoring park benefited from Section 106 funding and was designed and delivered as part of housing development, which is a key

funding mechanism for play. Funding has also been invested from a range of sources including the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant and Neath Port Talbot Council's Capital Investment Programme.

### Play Indoors

It is challenging to identify and understand all indoor play provision available in Neath Port Talbot. For the purposes of this assessment, we have used the information available through the Community Directory Dewis, which requires providers to register and share their information. On this basis we have identified 158 supervised settings including childcare providers, stay and play sessions, parent and toddler groups and youth clubs.

The Local Authority directly provides play provision through a number of stay and play sessions and youth clubs. Teams within the Authority

can provide one to one support for families that help them to play and to understand the value of play.

The Local Authority invests in supervised play provision by providing support, training and funding for providers including childcare and schools. For example, the Flying Start & Early Years Team's joint training programme ensures childcare providers meet their mandatory training requirements such as first aid and food hygiene. There is also additional training that supports providers to develop their delivery of play; previous training has included messy play and loose parts.

Funding support is available to develop and enhance play provision. The Flying Start programme has clear guidance around the delivery of play, including a requirement for outdoor play space, and as a result support can be provided around training and resources.

## 5.0 Maximising resources for play

### FUNDING PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

Neath Port Talbot Council does not currently have a ring-fenced budget for play. Funding from a range of sources contributes to play. For example Pathfinder Early Years Integration funding has enabled the recruitment of 2 play workers to deliver a physical literacy through play project based around targeted stay and play provision. Families First Funding is used to enhance a robust and far-reaching youth services provision.

The Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being Funding provided by the Welsh Government to address the impact of the pandemic was used to support a range of play and recreation activities to reconnect the children and young people to play and their community.

In 2021/22 Neath Port Talbot benefited from just over £757,000 of investment in play, primarily from Welsh Government grants.

Financial Year	Play Provision (Revenue/Capital)
1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022	<p><b>Capital: £190,339</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in outdoor spaces for play</li> <li>Youth Club Facilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Revenue: £44,999</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Sessions</li> </ul> <p><b>Summer of Fun: £204,000</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for activities, trips and additional provision</li> </ul> <p><b>Winter of Well-being: £258,725</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport to play</li> <li>Sessional Play</li> <li>Play Spaces</li> </ul> <p><b>Playworks Holiday Project: £41,882</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holiday play investment</li> </ul> <p><b>Child Development Fund: £17,239</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A programme of activities designed to provide social and interaction opportunities.</li> </ul>

## 5.0 Maximising resources for play

The table overleaf details funding streams that have supported play in Neath Port Talbot. There are other programmes that have and continue to support play in Neath Port Talbot. With funding come from departments including Education, Social Services and Planning.

A key source of monies for capital investment in play is the Members Community Fund has enabled investment in play provision. Each ward member has a fund allocation, they can use in their area. It can be used as match funding and / or as part of a wider project alongside other funding sources such as Section 106.

During the lifetime of the first Tranche of Members Funding Section 106 Planning Gains, and other opportune

sources of Grant aid, yielded, between April 2019 and March 2021 £474,516 across 16 play projects.

The period covering the 2nd Tranche of the Members Fund, culminating in May 2022 yielded another 20 play projects benefiting from Grant aid to the value of £559,280.

The total investment, resulting from the work of the Council's funding team, was **£1,033,796**.



## 6.0 Accountability for play

### WHO MAKES DECISIONS ABOUT PLAY?

The Play Sufficiency Assessment process requires the Local Authority to explain who will be accountable for the monitoring and delivery of the Play Sufficiency Assessment's Action Plan.



## 6.0 Accountability for play

Remit	Responsible	
<b>Lead Director</b>	Andrew Thomas, Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning	
<b>Lead Members</b>	Councillor Nia Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture	
<b>Play Strategy Implementation Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Families Team</li> <li>• Early Years and Childcare Team</li> <li>• Flying Start</li> <li>• Early Years Integration Pathfinder Programme</li> <li>• 30 Hour Childcare Offer for Wales</li> <li>• Youth Services</li> <li>• Family Information Service</li> <li>• PASS (physical activity and sport service)</li> <li>• Disability Sport Wales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countryside and Wildlife</li> <li>• Country Parks and Cemeteries</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Road Safety</li> <li>• Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Sandfields West Children’s Community</li> <li>• Hwb Cymru</li> <li>• Interplay</li> <li>• Tai Tarian, Housing Association</li> </ul>

The Play Strategy Implementation Group, chaired by the Children and Families Team Manager, is responsible for delivering and monitoring the action plan resulting from the assessment. The group includes representation from key Local Authority departments and the third sector. In response to this assessment the membership, role and remit of this group will be reviewed.

## 7.0 What we have found out

### WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT FROM THE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

#### Introduction

Appendix 1 of this summary report is the completed Play Sufficiency Assessment Form. This form uses a RAG (red, amber, green) assessment to evaluate Neath Port Talbot's provision of play against a range of criteria within the 9 matters that make up the assessment. This process was done in collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure a fair and robust process to the assessment.

#### SWOT Assessment

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the 9 matters which make up the assessment enabled us to use the toolkit alongside the results of the community and stakeholder engagement to identify priorities for change.



## Matter A. Population

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Play provision is in areas of high / higher population density.</p> <p>Data has been used to understand the population of children and young people across the County.</p> <p>Population and PLASC data have informed this assessment. This data can be used to support decision making around play.</p> <p>Early Years Integration and other approaches are supporting and enabling the sharing of data between partners.</p>	<p>There is limited data available in relation to children with disabilities and other needs such as young carers.</p> <p>Health data is not being used to its potential to shape investment in play.</p>	<p>To create and update a Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) data dashboard to understand and use relevant data around play. This data dashboard could also inform medium to long term planning.</p> <p>To continue using population data, alongside stakeholder and community engagement, to inform decision making and investment in play.</p> <p>Increase capacity by training more members of the PSIG and play workers to use available data sets and mapping.</p>	<p>Limited capacity to collate, analyse and use data in a meaningful way.</p>

## Matter B. Providing for diverse needs

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Neath Port Talbot and others provide opportunities for integrated supervised and free play provision.</p> <p>Funding programmes have used needs assessment processes to use data to identify and address gaps in provision for children and young people with diverse needs.</p> <p>There is provision throughout the County serving family's living in rural areas and areas of deprivation.</p>	<p>There is limited Welsh Language play provision and parents who do not speak Welsh have concerns about attending.</p> <p>Projects and programmes that serve children, young people and families with diverse needs are heavily reliant on funding and therefore may not be sustainable.</p> <p>Specialised / provision for diverse needs is located primarily in Neath and Port Talbot – families in other areas need access to a car to attend which is a barrier.</p> <p>Not all families want an integrated approach, a number of engagement participants expressed a preference for targeted play provision that is specifically for them.</p> <p>Rural communities find it harder to access play provision.</p> <p>There is a shortage of provision for older children, which is impacting on accessibility of provision for young children.</p>	<p>Listen to children, young people and families with diverse needs and involve them in developing play provision to meet their needs.</p> <p>Identify and collaborate with groups and organisations that work with families with diverse needs.</p> <p>Explore how play can support and deliver the ALN reform agenda.</p> <p>Share learning from funded projects for example Early Years Integration Pathfinder Programme play workers</p> <p>Work with Dewis and the Family Information Service to make it easier for families to find provision to meet their needs.</p>	<p>Failure to address identified gaps resulting in disengaged communities.</p> <p>Duplication of provision, rather than a effective, collaborative strategic approach to change.</p> <p>Increased competition for funding.</p> <p>Short term funding means projects and interventions are not sustainable.</p>

## Matter C. Open Spaces and Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Policies and strategies support the protection and enhancement of open space.</p> <p>There are a wide variety of types of open spaces across Neath Port Talbot. The Well-Being Plan puts a focus on the importance of Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>Section 106 and capital investment is being used to enhance and create spaces for play, based on play value assessments.</p> <p>There are a variety of designated play spaces, that provide a wealth of opportunities for outdoor play.</p> <p>Town and Community Councils engaging families and considering play value when making decisions about play.</p> <p>When funding is available it is invested in the context of the Play Sufficiency Assessment to improve play quality and value, addressing gaps in provision.</p> <p>The quantity of provision has remained stable since the previous assessment – all wards meet the FIT benchmark standard for quantity of provision per 1000 children.</p>	<p>Families are not always aware of the open spaces they can use for play in their community – citing concerns about safety and access.</p> <p>In focus groups with children and young people, they expressed concern that COVID 19 had resulted in them forgetting how to play outside and how to play in their community.</p> <p>Limited provision for older children and young people.</p> <p>Young people using play spaces that are for younger children is making those young children anxious and scared to use the play provision that is for them.</p> <p>Children, young people and families do not feel safe in some play area and parks. They are concerned about vandalism and the standard of maintenance.</p>	<p>Reconnect families to the open spaces where they can use their imagination and play safely.</p> <p>Open access play sessions to bring children and young people back to outdoor play.</p> <p>The Let’s Talk report has shown that children and young people think play is important.</p> <p>To work with the parks team to improve the quality and value of play space based on the findings of the play space assessments. Delivering on the corporate plan pledge to enhance play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.</p>	<p>Children and young people playing in open spaces are sometimes misinterpreted by adults as anti-social behaviour resulting in them being moved on.</p> <p>Parents and cares are concerned about health and safety in areas that are not designated as being for play.</p> <p>Ongoing budget restrictions as provision of outdoor space is not a statutory duty.</p> <p>Further reduction in budgets for parks and play areas.</p> <p>A perception that parks and play areas are not safe spaces for families to enjoy.</p>

## Matter D. Supervised provision

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>A range of Local Authority teams including NPT PASS, Parenting, Youth Services and Education (through schools) provide a wide variety of play opportunities for children and families.</p> <p>The childcare sector is participating in training to deliver quality play settings.</p> <p>Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being funding has been invested in supervised play opportunities with a focus on bringing families back to play after the pandemic and addressing gaps in provision.</p>	<p>The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has highlighted gaps in provision including wrap around provision and Welsh Language childcare.</p> <p>It is harder for families living in rural areas to access supervised play provision.</p> <p>There is not currently a mechanism for assessing play settings for quality.</p> <p>Not all settings / providers share information about their setting with Dewis.</p>	<p>A collaborative quality mechanism for childcare and play.</p> <p>Encourage and enable providers to participate in training and professional development with a focus on quality.</p>	<p>Further reductions in budget / funding for play and play settings.</p>

## Matter E. Charges for play provision

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being Funding was used to create a wide variety of free to access play provision that benefited families.</p> <p>Summer of Fun 2022 will enable more free provision to be created and delivered.</p> <p>There is a range of free and low-cost play provision in Neath Port Talbot.</p> <p>Data enables the PSIG to make informed decisions that take into consideration poverty and deprivation levels across the County.</p> <p>The Family Information Service is working with providers to ensure information on all free and low-cost provision is easily accessible.</p> <p>Families value and understand the importance of play.</p>	<p>The reliance on cars to access play provision, increases the cost of play for families.</p> <p>Paid for activities including sports and arts clubs often require block booking / payment in advance which is a barrier for low income and deprived families.</p> <p>Families are perceiving play as expensive.</p>	<p>Family Information Service and Dewis connecting families to play opportunities.</p> <p>Collaborative outreach in partnership with schools, Town and Community Councils, Play Groups and others to enable families to find free and low-cost play provision where they live.</p>	<p>The cost-of-living crisis is putting access to paid for play in the context of family's expenditure, parents and cares are having to make difficult decisions about priorities.</p> <p>If the cost of play is perceived to be increasing some families may disengage.</p> <p>Free provision is reliant on grant funding and therefore sustainability is depending on continued funding.</p>



## Matter F. Access to space/provision

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Skills and capacity of the Road Safety Team is ensuring children and young people have the opportunity to learn road safety skills.</p> <p>Play is located in places where children and young people can access them by walking or cycling.</p> <p>A Early Intervention Information Development Officer has been recruited as part of the Family Information Service to work with providers and increase availability of information on Dewis.</p> <p>Strong social media presence and following.</p>	<p>Perception that road traffic is a barrier to play.</p> <p>Young people say they need access to transport to get to play.</p> <p>There is a mechanism for closing streets for play and activities such as street party's, but it is complicated and expensive.</p> <p>Families think it is hard to find out about play and would prefer a one stop shop.</p>	<p>Cilfrew village 20mph pilot and the lessons learnt can address parent / carer concerns about road traffic.</p> <p>The PSIG contributing to local travel plan and strategies to ensure play is taken into consideration.</p> <p>Active travel agenda – improving walking and cycling routes.</p> <p>Family Information Service (FIS) Outreach to connect family's to play opportunities in their community.</p> <p>Collaborative promotion and awareness raising with key partners e.g. early years and childcare.</p>	<p>Children in some communities do not think they play on the street and / or do not feel safe walking to the park.</p> <p>Children and young people rely on adults to take them to play.</p> <p>Providers are not sharing information with Family Information Service and Dewis.</p>

## Matter G. Securing and developing the play workforce

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Free training and professional development opportunities are available.</p> <p>Existing Flying Start and Early Years Training Plan provides training for childcare and play workers. Some training is available to volunteers.</p> <p>Play work training available from NPTC College Group and Adult Learning in Wales.</p>	<p>Limited understanding of the play workforce as it currently stands. This has impacts on planning and provision.</p> <p>Capacity and funding restrict the training offer.</p> <p>25% of childcare workers, whose job involves play do not have a formal play qualification.</p> <p>Schools say the need training to help their staff to deliver play.</p>	<p>Neath Port Talbot Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce Development Plan. Building on existing training plans and approaches such as ALN reform. Ensuring an overarching approach to upskilling the workforce and improving the quality of provision.</p>	<p>Funding is often short term and not guaranteed.</p> <p>Limited opportunities for work experience in play settings.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention to minimum wage play work jobs and roles.</p>

## Matter H: Community engagement and participation

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Engagement mechanisms including Citizen’s Panel, Youth Council and Bronze Ambassadors.</p> <p>The Early Intervention Information Development Officer is working to ensure correct and consistent information about play is available.</p> <p>Partners including schools and Town and Community Councils are committed to engaging when making decisions about play.</p> <p>Family Information Service Outreach worker working with local people and providers to engage and learn.</p> <p>Engagement with children and young people as part of Neath Port Talbot’s Let’s Talk Campaign.</p>	<p>Engagement is seen by communities as a boxing ticking exercise.</p> <p>Funding timescales do not always allow for robust community engagement.</p> <p>Engagement with service users is not undertaken consistently by projects and / or providers.</p> <p>There is not a clear strategy for engaging communities consistently in decisions about play.</p>	<p>Collaborative working with community groups and organisations that work with families.</p> <p>To support the Corporate Plan pledges around enhancing play provision there is an opportunity to develop more consistent engagement methods with children and young people around play and leisure.</p> <p>Partnership working with Local Area Action Coordinators to engage and work with communities to address play gaps in their area.</p>	<p>Capacity and resources to support meaningful community engagement are limited.</p>

## Matter 1: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2022-2027: Recover, Reset, Renew includes a pledge to “enhance play and leisure opportunities for young people.” This supported by an additional £640,000 investment to improve community infrastructure including upgrades to play facilities.</p> <p>Play Sufficiency Assessment will inform the Well-Being Assessment and Plan.</p> <p>Planning policy supports sustaining and enhancing play.</p> <p>Early Years Integration and subsequent funding for play workers.</p>	<p>Play is included in key strategies including the Corporate Plan. It is not clear how these objectives and aspirations will be delivered.</p>	<p>Play as a mechanism for delivering the well-being agenda.</p> <p>Refresh the Play Strategy Implementation Group membership.</p>	<p>If play is not valued by decision makers and embedded in policy it is a risk of further cuts in funding and capacity.</p>

## 7.0 What we have found out

### Gap Analysis

Following the assessment process, we have identified the following gaps in provision, which can be summarised as follows:

Type of gap	Identified gaps in provision
<b>Geographical Gaps</b>	Rural communities feel forgotten and underserved. There is provision in rural areas, alongside a perception that the majority of events and activities are in urban areas particularly Neath and Port Talbot.
	4 wards have no supervised play provision: Aberdulais, Blaengwrach, Dyffryn and Trebanos.
	20 wards have no provision for older children and young people (indoor or outdoor provision for age 13+): Aberdulais, Baglan, Blaengwrach, Briton Ferry East, Bryn and Cwmavon, Bryn-coch North, Bryn-coch South, Cadoxton, Cimla, Coedffranc Central, Coedffranc North, Coedffranc West, Crynant, Cwmllynfell, Cymmer, Dyffryn, Glyncoirwg, Glynneath, Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, Gwynfi, Lower Brynamman, Margam, Neath South, Onllwyn, Pelenna, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Resolven, Rhos, Sandfields East, Tai-bach, Tonna and Trebanos.
<b>Diverse Needs Gaps</b>	Supervised play provision for children and young people with disabilities is not meeting demand.
	Only 2 of the 118 play areas assessed have specialist equipment for children with additional needs and/or disabilities.
	16% of childcare places and 30% of supervised play settings are bilingual or Welsh Language. Parents and carers who don't speak Welsh would like more support to help them learn Welsh and find Welsh language events and activities.
	There is no play provision in the Local Authority's traveller sites.

## 7.0 What we have found out

Type of gap	Identified gaps in provision
<b>Access Gaps</b>	60% of parents say road traffic is a barrier to play.
	25% of young people said access to transport and 24% said safer routes would enable them to play more.
	Only 2 of the 118 play areas assessed have equipment for children with additional needs and / or disabilities.
	86 play areas had an accessibility score of less than 5 out of a maximum score of 20.
	Families are not sure where to find out information about play.
<b>Age Gaps</b>	There is shortfall in provision for children and young people aged over 13. 48% of parks and open spaces provided for this age group. By comparison 93% serve children aged 4 to 11.
	20 wards have no provision for older children and young people (indoor or outdoor provision for age 13+): Aberdulais, Baglan, Blaengwrach, Briton Ferry East, Bryn and Cwmavon, Bryn-coch North, Bryn-coch South, Cadoxton, Cimla, Coedffranc Central, Coedffranc North, Coedffranc West, Crynant, Cwmllynfell, Cymmer, Dyffryn, Glynccorwg, Glynneath, Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, Gwynfi, Lower Brynamman, Margam, Neath South, Onllwyn, Pelenna, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Resolven, Rhos, Sandfields East, Tai-bach, Tonna and Trebanos.
	90% of young people want to hang out more, but 40% think there is hardly anything to do in their area.
<b>Type Gaps</b>	Engagement with parents and the childcare sufficiency assessment suggests there is unmet demand for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday play provision</li> <li>• Youth Clubs</li> <li>• Supervised play provision for children with disabilities and / or additional needs</li> <li>• Low cost or free to access supervised play provision</li> </ul>
	Families would like to see the value of outdoor designated play spaces to be improved including more natural play provision.

7.0 What we have found out

Type of gap	Identified gaps in provision
<b>Workforce Gap</b>	There is no up to date play workforce audit.
	Availability of training is defined by funding rather than need.
	There is no quality assurance framework to ensure quality of settings and support professional development.
	SASS data to inform the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has shown that 44% of childcare staff are play practitioners of which 25% have no formal play qualification.
	40% schools who participated in the play sufficiency assessment survey said play training for staff could help them to do deliver more play in their school.
<b>Policy Gaps</b>	Play is included in key strategies including the Corporate Plan. It is not clear how these objectives and aspirations will be delivered.
<b>COVID-19 Gaps</b>	Support and guidance to help children, young people and families who have forgotten how to play to return to having fun.

## 8.0 Action Plan

### CLOSING THE PLAY GAP

#### Recommendations for the Future

The Play Sufficiency Assessment process provides a robust overview of play provision across Neath Port Talbot. The Action Plan is focused on achievable change, therefore there is not action for every criteria within the Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit, rather a focus on impact and is informed by the community and stakeholder engagement.

These themes have been informed by the evidence and engagement and developed in partnership with key stakeholders and seek to focus on what is achievable and realistic within existing budgets and resources.

- Ensuring all children and young people can access play that meets their needs.
- Helping families feel safe in outdoor places for play.
- Creating play and recreation places for young people.
- Enhancing the quality of play provision.
- Enabling children and young people to return to play post COVID.

- Supporting schools.
- Making sure information and support around play is easy to find.
- Play supported by policy.
- Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.

This Action Plan was developed through a collaborative process, the Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) were brought together in a workshop to co-design the Action Plan. The Action Plan is for the period June 2022 – May 2023 and will be delivered, monitored and evaluated by the Play Strategy Implementation Group. This group will also develop Action Plans for each of the years between now and the next Play Sufficiency Assessment in response to changing need and factors including funding and resources.



## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL GAPS</b>		
Addressing the perceived gap of provision in rural areas.	Raise awareness of existing provision in rural communities.	Focused outreach in rural areas. Collaborative working with Youth Services, Parks and other key departments.
	Encourage families to use green and open spaces for play.	Working with Countryside and Biodiveristy Team, Natural Resources Wales, Town and Community Councils, Local Area Coordinators and others to help families understand the spaces and places they can use for play.
5 wards have no supervised play provision: Blaengwrach, Coedffranc North, Dyffryn, Lower Brynamman and Onllwyn.	Liaise with Early Years and Childcare and Youth Service to understand gaps in provision. Work with Local Area Coordinators and other community-based organisations to explore opportunities and share details on existing provision.	Connecting rural communities with the play provision they need and want.
		Learn from successful approaches for example Early Years Integration Pathfinder programme.
Working with schools to address gaps in provision.	Concerns about Health and Safety prevent schools from opening their site out of hours for play. Explore ways in which these barriers could be overcome, for example Town and Community Council partnerships.	Identify schools in areas with low levels of play provision.
		Initial engagement with school.
		Wider partnership working with key Council Departments and Town & Community Councils.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>DIVERSE NEEDS GAP</b>		
Using data to understand need.	Population data, including the 2021 Census release, is used to understand need and inform decisions about play.	Resources and funding are focused on responding to need.
Supervised play provision for children and young people with disabilities is not meeting demand.	Co-design project with parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities to respond to gaps in provision.	Work with Interplay and Neath Port Talbot Special Need Support Group to listen to parents and carers.
		Identify funding that could be used to address gaps.
	Explore opportunities to use Section 106 and other funding to invest in increasing the availability of inclusive play provision equipment.	Co-design provision with parents and carers.
		Continue to work with Planning and other Council Officers to ensure the strategic use of Section 106 funding.
		Explore other funding opportunities.

8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>DIVERSE NEEDS GAP</b>		
Welsh Medium Play Provision	Support Early Years and Childcare Unit to pilot Welsh in Childcare Award	Increase provision of childcare (including play provision) in the Welsh Medium.
	Enable playworkers to participate in training to learn Welsh.	More playworkers with Welsh language ability.
	Make it easier for families to find play that is provided in the Welsh language	Work with Family Information Service and Dewis to showcase provision in the Welsh Language
	Help parent and carers to choose Welsh language provision.	Promote Clwb Cwtsh, Cymraeg I Blant and other programmes that enable parents and carers to try Welsh.
Partnership working with Menter Iaith.		
Traveller Play Provision	Work with Travellers Education Officer to engage with the community to see if they want play provision	Working with Welsh Language schools to understand and showcase what support is available for families.
		Letting the community inform decisions about play that affect them.
Supporting Young People with Diverse Needs	Collaborate with Youth Services to engage with young people including the LGBTQ community, young carers and those with additional learning needs.	The play wants and needs of children and young people with diverse needs are understood.
		Young people play a role in shaping the provision that for them.

8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>ACCESS GAPS</b>		
60% of parents say road traffic is a barrier to play.	Learn from the Cilfrew Village 20mph speed limit pilot. How does this impact on play within the village?	Partnership working with Road Safety Team.
		Listening to the community in Cilfrew Village.
		Working with Cilffriw Primary School
25% of young people said access to transport and 24% said safer routes would enable them to play more.	Feasibility Study: Wheels to Play  Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a scheme be created to help children and young people access play? For example, a programme where activities such as litter picking or volunteering can be traded for a cycle hire, bus vouchers and / or railcard.	Identify potential partners.
		Explore funding options.
		Feasibility study
		Pilot scheme if viable
86 play areas were assessed to have issues that impact their accessibility.	Share findings of Play Space Assessments with Parks Team and collaborate on a strategy to address accessibility barriers.	Play spaces assessment process is used to inform investment in play space for the benefit of children, young people and families.

8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>ACCESS GAPS</b>		
Families are not sure where to find out information about play.	A communications and outreach strategy for the Family Information Service to include Children’s Play.	A clear strategy for the promotion of play provision
		Effective use of outreach.
		Collaborative working with play providers and partners.
		Increased awareness of the Family Information Service.
	All play settings / activities are listed on the Dewis database. Starting with all provision being provided by the Local Authority being on Dewis within the first 3 months of the action.	There is a “one stop shop” to find information on play opportunities in Neath Port Talbot.
	Family Information Service and Dewis have clear, concise up to date and relevant information on play.	
Come and Play Events – Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a come and play events programme could be explored. This would involve working with Local Area Coordinators, Friends Groups and other community groups to deliver come and play events to bring people together in their local park or greenspace.	Families are re-connected with the provision in their area.	
Children and young people do not feel safe in some outdoor play spaces.	Work with the Community Service Partnership, Parks Team, and other partners to identify a strategy for addressing the perception that outdoor play spaces are anti-social behaviour hot spots and therefore unsafe.	Addressing parks and play areas that are perceived to be anti-social behaviour hot spots.
		Working with partners to address concerns.

8.0 Action Plan

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Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>AGE GAPS</b>		
There is a shortfall in provision for children and young people aged 13 years and over.	Promote existing provision in partnership with Youth Services, PASS, Schools and other partners	Young people know the play opportunities that are available to them.
	Partnership project with the Youth Council to co-design a play opportunity, for example park enhancements or a session, with young people.	Young people inform the play provision that is provided for them.
	Prioritise future funding from WG to address play needs of diverse and older children	Identified funding would be used to address this need.
<b>TYPE GAPS</b>		
Address identified gaps in types of provision.	Work with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to address gaps identified through Childcare and Play Sufficiency Assessment processes.	Collaborative working to address gaps and ensure effective use of available funding and capacity.
	PSIG to collaborate on Open Spaces Assessment and other work to support the Local Development Plan refresh.	
Families would like to see the value of outdoor designated play spaces to be improved.	Use the Play Space Assessment process to inform investment in play spaces.	The quality of outdoor play provision is improved through collaborative working and strategic investment of funding.
Natural Play	Identify existing natural play toolkits and develop if necessary to explore and encourage the creation of natural play spaces.	Natural play provision is seen as sustainable and suitable option for play in Neath Port Talbot.
		Promote natural play to decision makers.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>WORKFORCE GAPS</b>		
Play workforce audit.	Collaborate with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to undertake a full workforce audit. Co-design a training plan in response to this audit.	More childcare staff with qualifications in play.
		Volunteers are able to access training.
		Awareness of training and its benefits increased in the sector.
40% of schools said play training for staff could help them to deliver more play in school.	Enable schools to participate in training provided through existing training programs e.g. Early Years and Childcare Unit training programme.	Schools are able to participate in the training they want and need.
	Explore opportunities to co-design a school specific training programme.	Engagement with schools.
		Funding analysis.
Quality Assurance Framework	Play Strategy Implementation Group to explore the feasibility of a Quality Assurance Framework for Play in Neath Port Talbot.	Training programme.
		Quality assurance framework.
		The quality of play is improved.

8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>POLICY GAPS</b>		
Policy and Strategy	Play Strategy Implementation Group to participate in the process to develop the Neath Port Talbot Culture and Leisure Strategy, Local Development Plan Refresh and other key policies.	Play is on the agenda.
Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG)	Refresh and reinvigorate the PSIG – agree on a vision for Play In Neath Port Talbot.	Broaden the membership.
		Update Governance and Terms of Reference.
		Quarterly meeting schedule with identified priorities.



8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>COVID-19 GAPS</b>		
Children and young people are unsure about returning to play post the Pandemic.	Collaborate with schools, youth services and other partners to create a programme of events and activities to reconnect children and young people with play.	Effective use of Summer of Fun Funding and other capacity.
	Family Information Service to share resources and information to address this barrier.	Collaborative working.
	A programme of events, activities, social media and online content to share and celebrate what play can do for children and families.	Reassure families and children post pandemic.
		Highlight events and activities.
Enhanced Family Information Service.		
Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.	A programme of events, activities, social media and online content to share and celebrate what play can do for children and families.	Strategic use of Summer of Fun and other funding.
		Raised awareness of play opportunities.

## 9.0 References

1. The Mental health Emergency (Mind Cymru, June 2020)
2. Children’s Mental Health Matters (Right to Play – accessed 18 February 2022)
3. To Lockdown and Back (Day, Percy-Smith, Rizzo, Erskine, Monchuk and Shah November 2020)
4. COVID-19 and Children’s Play, Play Safety Forum (accessed 18 February 2022)
5. Play: Health and Well-Being (Play Wales, May 2020)
6. Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit: Part One (Welsh Government)

### Figures

Figure: The Play Population <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/Local-Authority/2018-based/populationprojections-by-localauthority-variant-year>

Figure 2: What We Know About Children and Young People in Neath Port Talbot

- Neath Port Talbot Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2022
- Children receiving care and support by local authority and age group: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Childrens-Services/children-receiving-care-and-support/childrenreceivingcareandsupport-by-localauthority-agegroup>
- % of Children in low-income families: DWP Stat Explore
- ONS Mid-2020 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex

**10.0 Appendix 1**

**PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT**

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