



CABINET

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 19th October 2022**

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

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DURATION OF THE MEETING**

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Part 1

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Chairpersons Announcement/s
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Public Question Time
Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services, 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.
5. Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022/2023 - As at end of September 2022 (Pages 5 - 16)

6. Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/2023 - As at end of September 2022 *(Pages 17 - 34)*
7. Treasury Management Monitoring 2022/2023 *(Pages 35 - 42)*
8. Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report 2021/2022 *(Pages 43 - 56)*
9. Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2027/2028 *(Pages 57 - 70)*
10. Response to the Welsh Government's Consultation Paper - 'A fairer Council Tax' *(Pages 71 - 82)*
11. UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Implementation *(Pages 83 - 162)*
12. The Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 - 2027: The Future of Work Strategy *(Pages 163 - 222)*
13. Corporate Plan Annual Report 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 *(Pages 223 - 380)*
14. Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Review *(Pages 381 - 384)*
15. Swansea Bay University Health Board - Independent Member (Local Authority) *(Pages 385 - 390)*
16. Quarter 1 (1st April 2022 - 30th June 2022) Corporate Indicators and Chief Executive's Directorate Service Level Indicators 2022/2023 *(Pages 391 - 412)*
17. 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

Thursday, 13 October 2022

Cabinet Members:

Councillors. S.K.Hunt, S.A.Knoyle, N.Jenkins, D.M.Peters, J.Hurley, S.Harris, J.Hale, A.Llewelyn, W.F.Griffiths and S.Jones

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

CABINET

19th October 2022

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Wards affected – All

Matter for Decision

Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 – As at end of September 2022

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with information in relation to delivery of the 2022/23 Capital Programme.

Background

On 1st March 2022 Council approved its Capital Programme for 2022/23; the report detailed planned Capital Expenditure totalling £70.415m for the financial year.

The purpose of this report is to update Members as to the delivery of this Programme as at 30th September 2022 and to seek approval for a further updated budget position.

Targeted Achievements

As Members are aware the following achievements are being targeted during this financial year:

- Completion of the build of the new Primary school which will replace Abbey Primary.
- Completion of the build of the third phase of works at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro-Dur, North campus.
- Continue with the development of the activity investment proposal at Margam Park.
- Progression with Pontardawe Arts Centre Cinema.

- Progress with the regeneration programme including Neath Transport hub and the completion of the Neath Town Centre redevelopment.
- Continued investment in Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Investment in school buildings and ICT.
- The Council's Waste Facility at Crymlyn Burrows will be remodelled as a Transfer Station with enhanced recycling capacity and facilities to accommodate the Council's expanding recycling operation.
- City Deal – Commencement of the homes as power stations and the remainder of the supporting innovation and low carbon growth projects.

Changes to the approved Budget

The updated Capital Programme now totals £72.540m with the main changes proposed being:

- Projects and funding carried forward from 2021/22 totalling £4.190m.
- Grant approvals received after the original programme was set of £13.083m, predominantly relating to Transport, Drainage Works, Universal Primary Free School Meals and Coal Tip Safety.
- Grants received totalling £4.025m were received at the end of 2021/22 and were used to displace NPT funded expenditure with these budgets now been allocated to fund 2022/23 projects.
- A budget of £1.029m has now been included in 2022/23 to assist with Covid Recovery Projects.
- Budgets totalling £1.998m had originally been included in 2022/23 for the Childcare Offer Grant at Cwmavon and YGG Blaendulais. £1.728m has now been re-profiled into 2023/24 to reflect the profile of the works required.
- Budgets totalling £8.920m had originally been included in 2022/23 for the City Deal Projects – SWITCH Building at Harbourside and Property Development Fund. £7.920m has

now been re-profiled into 2024/25 and 2025/26 to reflect the profile of the works required.

- In 2022/23 a budget of £1.460m had been included for the Crown site Building Development. Following a review of the timetable for planned works the updated budget for 2022/23 is now £0.855m with £0.605m re-profiled to 2023/24.
- In 2022/23 a budget of £8.772m had been included for Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley. £8.272m has now been re-profiled to 2023/24 to reflect the planned works on site.

Further details of the Budget changes are shown at Appendix 2.

Impact of COVID

The Covid pandemic has resulted in increased costs for some contracts due to the requirement to provide increased facilities on sites i.e. additional welfare provision to facilitate social distancing. Currently these increased costs are being met from existing budget resources.

2022/23 Capital Expenditure

Details of capital expenditure as at 30th September 2022 is outlined in Appendix 1 of this report

Financial Impact

All relevant details are set out in the body of the report.

Valleys Communities Impact

The Capital Programme provides investment in assets across the County Borough.

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts arising from this report.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

Risk Management

The capital programme is actively managed by managers and the Capital Programme Steering Group to comply with all relevant planning conditions, legislation, regulations and health and safety.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet approves and commends to Council:

- The approval of the updated proposed 2022/23 budget totalling £72.540m;
- And note the position in relation to expenditure as at 30th September 2022.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To comply with the Councils constitution in relation to budget virement, re-profiling between financial years and to update the Council's Budget projections for 2022/23.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Details of Capital Expenditure as at 30th September 2022

Appendix 2 – Details of Budget Changes as at 30th September 2022

List of Background Papers

Capital Programme working files

Officer Contact

Mr Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer

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Mr Ross Livingstone – Group Accountant - Capital and Corporate

e-mail: r.livingstone@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Capital Budget and Spend 2022/23 as at 30th September 2022

	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Budget £'000	Actual @ 30th September £'000
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning			
Abbey Primary	674	948	722
Cefn Saeson	1,017	1,253	1,148
Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur (North Campus)	716	979	976
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley	8,731	500	6
Capital Maintenance - ELLL	1,308	1,429	364
Capital Maintenance for Schools Previous Years Grants	6,271	6,186	1,893
Universal Primary Free School Meals	0	2,666	76
Supporting Learners with Additional Needs	0	889	0
Community Focused Schools	0	889	0
Childcare Offer Grant - Cwmavon, YGG Blaendulais	1,998	250	38
Hwb IT for Schools	604	0	0
Hwb IT for Schools (Grant)	0	455	0
Leisure Investment	224	226	27
Margam Park Activity Investment	2,337	384	52
Margam Park Stonework Repairs	320	328	85
Pontardawe Arts Centre Cinema	1,343	1,362	16
Music Support	222	209	192
Other – Education & Leisure	104	360	-129
Environment			
Highways and Engineering Maintenance	2,136	2,279	1,476
Match funding for grants (including flood prevention)	500	80	0
Additional major engineering works (Norton & Bevan Terrace)	250	250	0
Additional Highway Improvements Water Street	535	512	110
Drainage Grants	0	3,606	431
Additional Highway Works	295	342	82
Public Highway Works	0	750	0

	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Budget £'000	Actual @ 30th September £'000
Resilient Roads Fund - Castle Drive Cimla	0	484	39
Local Transport Fund (multiple locations)	0	912	248
Road Safety (multiple locations)	0	432	18
Active Travel Fund (multiple location)	0	716	79
Decarbonisation Strategy (DARE)	250	250	0
Covid Recovery	0	1,029	112
Covid Recovery - Catch Up, Clean Up, Green Up Capital Works	750	750	0
Major Bridge Strengthening - A474 Neath	289	295	1
Health & Safety	850	955	183
Neighbourhood Improvements	285	459	256
Pavilions	174	231	60
Disability Access	242	274	76
Street Lighting	100	345	59
Crymlyn Burrows Transfer Station - site improvements	5,755	6,158	1,986
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	1,065	1,060	41
Vehicle Replacement Programme	588	794	203
Environment Street Scene Works	821	974	225
Coal Tip Safety	0	1,417	39
Regeneration: Match Funding for WG & UK Government Funding Streams	1,580	1,484	0
Regeneration: Harbourside Infrastructure	350	485	29
Regeneration: Margam Country Park EV Charging and Public Facilities	0	373	1
Regeneration 6 Station Road	167	167	0
Regeneration: Neath Town Centre Redevelopment	1,598	3,451	2,373
Regeneration: Community Self Build Housing	150	150	0
Regeneration: Crown Buildings	1,460	855	219
Regeneration: Neath Transport Hub	695	2,202	1
Regeneration: Place Making 2	0	250	1
Regeneration: Employment & Business Start Up Space	485	484	0
Regeneration: Neath Strategic Hub	250	250	0

	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Budget £'000	Actual @ 30th September £'000
Regeneration: Valleys Task Force	74	132	0
Regeneration: Commercial Property Grant	215	232	1
Regeneration: Other	638	1,031	80
City Deal: The Technology Centre	0	383	176
City Deal: SWITCH Building at Harbourside	6,450	1,000	1
City Deal: Advanced manufacturing production facility at Harbourside	749	749	0
City Deal: Low Emission Vehicles (LEV)	500	500	0
City Deal: Air Quality Monitoring	415	415	0
City Deal: Hydrogen Stimulus	1,500	1,500	0
City Deal: Property Development Fund	2,385	0	0
City Deal: Homes as Power Stations	2,465	2,513	0
Other - Environment	346	484	118
Social Services Health & Housing			
Capital Maintenance	300	318	33
Hillside Secure Unit Improvement Works	100	799	657
Supported Living New Build	0	1,266	0
Efficiency & Warm Homes	0	70	78
Enable – Support for Independent Living	281	281	184
Disabled Facilities Grants	4,400	4,230	1,324
Other – Social Service & Housing	0	116	5
Other Services			
School IT/ Vehicle Financing	640	300	5
CCTV Replacement	31	223	183
Civic Accommodation Modernisation	250	250	0
Income Generation Proposals	274	0	0
Other - Corporate Services	0	44	30
Contingency	913	886	0
Total	70,415	72,540	16,689

Capital Budget Changes to 30th September 2022

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
Original Budget 1st April 2022	70,415	
Budget Changes		
2021/22 Funding Carried Forward to 2022/23	4,190	2021/22 funding carried forward to 2022/23.
Universal Primary Free School Meals	2,666	Additional 2021/22 grant received used to displace NPT Funding which is now to be spent in 2022/23 and new grant awarded in 2022/23.
Childcare Offer Grant - Cwmavon, YGG Blaendulais	-1,728	Re-profiled to 2023/24 to reflect planned spend.
Digital & Net Carbon Funding Plan	55	New grant awarded.
All Wales Play Opportunity	21	2021/22 grant received used to displace NPT Funding for 2021/22 which is now to be spent in 2022/23.
Community Focused Schools	889	New grant awarded.
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley	-8,272	Re-profiled to 2023/24 to reflect planned spend.
Hwb IT for Schools	-625	Re-profiled to 2023/24 to reflect planned spend.
Hwb IT for Schools (Grant)	455	New grant awarded.
Supporting Learners with Additional Needs	889	New grant awarded.

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
Margam Park Activity Investment	-2,000	Re-profiled to 2023/24 to reflect planned spend.
Makerspace at Port Talbot Library	80	New grant awarded.
Margam Orangery Improvement Works	40	Additional works required at Margam Orangery.
Other ENV (Cwmgors Roofing Works)	85	Re profiled to 2022/23 to reflect planned spend.
Margam Country Park EV Charging and Public Facilities	325	New grant awarded and NPT match.
Local Transport Fund - Neath Integrated Transport Hub	695	New grant awarded.
Resilient Roads Fund - Castle Drive Cimla Crown	462	New grant awarded.
	-600	Re profiled to 2023/24 to reflect planned spend.
Active Travel Core Allocation	716	New grant awarded.
Road Safety - 20mph	432	New grant awarded.
Neath Transport Hub	1,512	New grant awarded.
Rock Street Construction	3,193	New grant awarded (85% grant 15% match).
Match funding for grants (including flood prevention)	-420	Match funding for Rock Street Construction as above.
Flood Prevention Initiatives	-59	Match funding for Rock Street Construction as above.
Drainage Grants (Caenant Terrace, Grandison Brooks, Cryddan Brook & Stanley Place)	175	Additional grant awarded.
Drainage Grants (Small Scales)	144	New grant awarded (85% grant 15% match).

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
Flood Prevention Initiatives	-22	Match funding for Drainage Grants (Small Scales) as above.
Covid Recovery	1,029	New budget to assist with Covid Recovery.
Environment Street scene Works	25	Re profiled to 2022/23 to reflect planned spend.
Match Funding Regeneration	400	Additional grant received for Plaza reducing match funding required.
Health & Safety	174	Additional Health & Safety Schemes in 2022/23.
Members Community Fund Parc Glas Skewen	5	New scheme funded from Members Community Fund.
Vehicle Renewals	206	Increase in vehicle being purchased under the Vehicles Renewals Programme.
Highways and Engineering Maintenance (Drainage Fabian Way)	52	New scheme funded from Section 106.
Highways and Engineering Maintenance (L and A Centre Access Road - Remedial Road Repairs)	15	New grant awarded.
Place Making	-173	Additional grant spent in 2021/22.
Place Making	250	New grant awarded.
PEDG General	84	Budget to fund projects due to complete in 2022/23.
Neath Town Centre	1,042	Additional 2021/22 grant received used to displace NPT Funding which is now to be spent in 2022/23.
Neighbourhood Improvements	174	Transfer of capital spend from revenue to capital.
Coal Tip Safety	1,417	New grant awarded.

Budget Changes	£'000	Comment
City Deal: SWITCH Building at Harbourside	-5,535	Re-profiled to 2024/25 and 2025/26 to reflect planned spend.
City Deal: Property Development Fund	-2,385	Re-profiled to 2024/25 and 2025/26 to reflect planned spend.
Public Highway Works	750	Part of the additional General Capital Grant received at the end of 2021/22 that the Authority was able to carry forward to future financial years.
Hillside Secure Unit Phase 2	480	Additional 2021/22 grant received used to displace NPT Funding which is now to be spent in 2022/23.
Warm Homes	70	Additional spend to take place in 2022/23.
Supported Living New Build	1,371	Additional 2021/22 grant received used to displace NPT Funding which is now to be spent in 2022/23.
School IT/ Vehicle Financing	-340	Budget reduced to reflect spend.
Income Generation Proposals	-284	Re-profiled to 2023/24 to reflect planned spend.
Updated Budget as at 30th September 2022	72,540	



CABINET

19th October 2022

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Wards affected – All

Matter for Decision

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 – As at end of September 2022

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with information in relation to the Council's projected revenue budget position.

Background

This report sets out the Council's projected budget position based on information available as at 30th September 2022. The forecast is based on a number of assumptions around activity levels over the remaining nine months of the financial year.

Budget Management Responsibility

Under the Council's Constitution and Financial Procedure Rules Corporate Directors are responsible for managing their Budgets within the overall cash limit approved by Council.

A Corporate Director may exercise virements on budgets under his or her control for any amount on any one budget head during the year, following notification to the Chief Finance Officer provided that:

- a) overall expenditure and income is contained within the cash limit

- (b) except where virement would involve a significant variation in the level or nature of the delivery of the service approved by Council in the Revenue Budget.

Summary

At present it is forecast that the Council's budget will overspend this year by £2.646m after reserve transfers as detailed in the table below.

Summary 2022/23	Original			Revised	Projected	Variance	September	Variance
	Budget	Qtr 1 Virements	Qtr 2 Virements	Budget	Outturn		Reserves	after virements/ reserves
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning - Schools	96,074	0	0	96,074	99,703	3,629	0	3,629
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning - Other	29,005	-78	-3	28,924	31,075	2,151	-550	1,601
Social Services Health & Housing	93,640	-195	0	93,445	99,063	5,618	-3,476	2,142
Environment	43,808	-141	-18	43,649	45,100	1,451	327	1,778
Chief Executives	20,403	414	3	20,820	21,833	1,013	-330	683
Directly Controlled Expenditure	282,930	0	-18	282,912	296,774	13,862	-4,029	9,833
Fire Authority	8,503			8,503	8,503	0		0
Capital financing	20,496		18	20,514	20,514	0		0
Central Services	6,470			6,470	603	-5,867		-5,867
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	19,621			19,621	18,301	-1,320		-1,320
Net Budget	338,020	0	0	338,020	344,695	6,675	-4,029	2,646

Schools delegated budget

The delegated schools budget for 2022/23 is £96.074m. Any under or overspends in relation to this budget are funded via contributions to/from the delegated school reserves.

At present the delegated schools budget is showing a projected overspend of £3.629m; all overspends in relation to delegated schools are met from the ring-fenced delegated schools reserves.

Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning

The Education, Leisure and Lifelong budget for 2022/23 is £28.927m Presently the directorate is projected to overspend by £1.601m.

This overspend includes an estimated £900k for the additional pay award over and above what was funded in the original budget for 2022/23.

The remaining overspend is due to a pressure within the home to school transport budget where currently costs are expected to exceed the budget by £1.075m. This pressure has arisen due to a number of reasons including a lack of operators, rising fuel costs and rising wages which has resulted in an increase in retendered contracts.

Presently there is a £124k underspend in the out of county placements budget which is being used to offset the current overspend position. This is due to two out of county placements remaining vacant to date.

Free school meal rollout in primary schools has started to take place from September 2022 for all reception children in primary schools. Funding of £855k has been allocated to Neath Port Talbot, with monthly claims being submitted to WG in arrears for meals provided. Welsh Government are currently reviewing the rate received per meal to ensure the funding is sufficient.

Regular meetings with Celtic leisure are taking place in readiness for the transfer of services into the Council from April 2023. Presently, it is estimated that the council will need to make a circa £600k contribution to fund the Celtic leisure operating deficit for this financial year. This pressure will be funded from corporate reserves.

As in previous years it is anticipated that the Local Authority will need to make a contribution towards the legal and suspension costs of an ongoing investigation at a Neath Port Talbot school. It is estimated that this will be approximately £405k

Social Services, Health and Housing

The Social Services budget for 2022/23 is £93.445m. Presently the Directorate is projected to net overspend by £2.142m. This overspend includes an estimated £2.241m for the additional pay award over and above what was funded in the original budget for 2022/23.

The main service area experiencing budget pressures is the children's residential care budget where there is a £584k overspend. Step down provision is being explored for a number of placements which would ease the pressure, however there is no assumption in the forecast that step down will occur and there is no provision for additional placements. The current over spend is after taking in to account additional health income (£443k) which has been received following the development of a regional protocol on children with complex care.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to place children with more complex needs, this has been considered as part of the recruitment strategy and the amended foster plus scheme. By increasing the foster allowance, it should attract foster carers who are able to provide placements for young people whose needs are more complex. Out of the young people placed in residential care, three young people could step down into a foster care provision, however to date despite extensive searches both internally and externally no suitable matches have been identified.

There is also a projected overspend within the mental health external placements budget of £547k. This projection only includes any placements where costs have been agreed. It does not include placements agreed in principle and out to brokerage (currently 12), on the assumption that the additional cost will be offset by placement discharges. The projection only includes health funding that has been agreed.

During 2021/22 the Council received £848k from the Welsh Government's hardship fund to offset the increased costs of temporary accommodation for homeless people. The service is presently predicting an over spend of £876k with the level of demand for services is the highest it's ever been. Welsh Government have provided a grant of £285k which has been taken into account in this projected overspend position.

The learning disabilities external placement budget currently has a £570k overspend based on placements agreed. The projected costs are offset by the assumption that 25% (£544k) health funding will be agreed for 14 clients, this follows the work on the Joint Working Protocol for Adults with Complex Needs, in collaboration with Swansea Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board. Elderly direct payments is overspent by £146k due to an additional 7 users over and above the budget receiving direct payments.

A number of service budgets are underspent at the moment, which is helping the overall Social Services, Health and Housing budget to help offset areas experiencing pressures. Domiciliary Care is currently £1.36m underspent due to the reduction in placements in the external domiciliary care market. Community care is currently predicting a £302k underspend due to vacant posts in the first quarter. The service anticipates that these posts will be filled throughout the year. The elderly residential care budget is projected to underspend by £171k due to lower number of spot purchased placements. Foster placements are underspent by £124k mainly due to a lower number than anticipated of in house foster placements.

The following risk areas are currently being managed within the above directorate position but are listed here for information.

Within the domiciliary care service the increased cost of fuel and relatively low pay for demanding work is leading to difficulties recruiting and retaining staff. This is resulting in an inability to allocate care packages with approximately 150 people waiting for care at any one time and demand is likely to increase over winter. Neath Port Talbot are giving support to providers to enable them to pay 45p per mile but given the increase in fuel costs this is unlikely to be sufficient.

Residential care providers are also facing increased costs, particularly in energy and food which is placing them in financial difficulty, this potentially could lead to home closures. Low pay for demanding work leading to difficulties recruiting and retaining staff. A number of care homes have empty beds but cannot accept new residents as they do not have enough staff. Other Local Authorities have increased the fees in year and backdated to April 22 to offset these pressures, it is likely that NPT will have to follow suit.

Increased demand for people with complex dementia and care homes cannot accept the admission as they cannot meet the person's needs within the fees we pay. Care homes need to employ higher numbers of staff to keep people safe.

It's been eight years since the authority undertook a whole scale review of residential care home fees. There is now a need to carry out an open book exercise however this has the potential to significantly increase fees paid to homes.

Within the supported living budget, NPT have a high number of historically low fees that need to be reviewed our average hourly rate is around £17 but some fees as low as £15.80 and the average in other local authorities is about £19. Providers are struggling to recruit and retain staff

Environment

The Environment budget for 2022/23 is £43.667m. Presently the Directorate is projected to net overspend by £1.778m. This overspend includes an estimated £2m for the additional pay award over and above what was funded in the original budget for 2022/23.

Car Parking is anticipating a £285K overspend to the end of the financial year. This is due to a reduction of footfall in town centres resulting in reduced use of car parks and a reduction in civil enforcement tickets issued.

Increases in the cost of fuel has placed a pressure of circa £277k within the Environment budget as whole, with £224k of this pressure relating to the refuse and recycling service.

Alongside this an increase in the cost of gas and electricity, especially within the Quays building due to a new supplier, has led to a pressure of £207k within the civic buildings budget.

A potential increase in material prices has been identified which will impact upon the building maintenance and highway maintenance budgets in particular. The value of this increase is hard to quantify and will affect numerous budgets, it is being closely monitored.

Chief Executives

The Chief Executives budget for 2022/23 is £20.403m. Presently the Directorate is projected to overspend by £638k. This overspend includes an estimated £982k for the additional pay award over and above what was funded in the original budget for 2022/23.

Central budgets

There are a number of budget areas which are not managed by Corporate Directors and these are known as 'Central Budgets'. They

consist of the following areas and are overseen by the Chief Finance Officer:

	£'000
Levies and contributions	
Fire Authority	8,503
Other levies and contributions	270
Other Expenditure	
Capital Financing	20,496
Council Tax Support	19,616
Budget equalisation	2,200
Contingency	1,500
Covid hardship fund cessation	2,500

At present it is anticipated that these budgets will underspend by £7.187m, it is proposed below that some of this is used to offset the cost of the proposed 2022/23 pay awards.

This includes a projected underspend of £1.320m in relation to the Council Tax Support (CTRS) budget; due to the fact that the number of claimants has fallen from over 17,500 at the height of the pandemic to the current number of c16,000.

Pay award 2022/23

The current pay offer is 5% for teaching staff and a flat increase of £1,925 (pro rata) to all green book staff and Chief Officers. To date neither have been officially accepted. It has been calculated that the pay award over and above what was provided in the base budget for 2022/23 will be an additional £9.691m.

The WG settlement allowed for a notional 4% pay award, it is therefore proposed that funding be allocated to Schools and Service Directorates to the value equivalent of c4%. This will mean additional funding as detailed below:

Service Area	Funding to be provided £m
Delegated Schools	1.530
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning	0.645
Environment	0.926
Social Services, Health and Housing	1.135
Chief Executives Department	0.568
Total	4.804

In order to fund the above it is proposed that the following budgets are re-purposed:

Pay Contingency - £1m

Covid Hardship Relief - £2.5m

Medium Term Financial Plan equalisation - £1.3m

National Insurance / Social Care Levy

At the mini budget announcement on Friday 23rd September, the Chancellor confirmed the national insurance rise introduced earlier this year will be cancelled from 6th November. This has equated to an approximate £550k saving in year to the council which is included within the projections shown in this report.

Virements

Please see below proposed virements which will need to be agreed as cross directorate budget transfers.

Virements across directorates for information			
Directorate	Service Area	Value	Reason
To Chief Executives from Education, leisure & Lifelong Learning	Public Services Board	£ 3,233	Transfer of service
To Corporate budgets from Environment	Treasury management	£ 17,500	Repayment of waste recycling equipment
		£ 20,733	

Council Reserves

Under the Council's constitution the use of existing reserves by Corporate Directors requires prior consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. The current position in relation to reserve balances as at 1st April 2022 and commitments agreed to date is detailed in Appendix 1 of this report

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) - Financial outlook

A separate report in relation to the MTFP financial outlook is included on the agenda of today's Cabinet meeting. Members should be aware that the Council has also started the process of lobbying local and regional politicians to emphasise the case for additional funding for local government.

A copy of a letter sent to local and regional MS' and MP's is appended to this report

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment as this report summarises the Council's financial position

Valleys Communities Impacts

No Impact

Workforce Impacts

No Impact

Legal Impact

No Impact

Risk Management Impact

No Impact

Consultation

This item is not subject to external consultation

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- **Note** the contents of this report in relation to the current projected budget outturn and reserves position
- **Approve** the proposal to provide additional funding to schools and services equivalent to a c4% pay award; and approve the virements set out in the main body of this report.

Reason for Proposed decision

To update the Council's budget for virements and reserve movements, in accordance with the Council's constitution.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Reserve Schedule

Appendix 2 – Copy of lobbying letter

Background Papers

Budget Working Papers

Officer Contact

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Nicole Blackmore – Chief Accountant (Financial Planning)

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Appendix 1 – Reserve Schedule

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original budget reserves 2022/23	Additional movements to September 2022 £	Committed	Uncommitted reserves
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning					
<u>Delegated Schools Reserves</u>					
ERVR Primary	Cr8,161	0	0		Cr8,161
Primary Schools	Cr6,888,981	4,989,213	0		Cr1,899,768
Secondary Schools	Cr3,525,205	1,687,049	0		Cr1,838,156
Special Schools	Cr734,244	152,222	0		Cr582,022
Middle School	Cr1,471,681	962,076	0		Cr509,605
Repair & Maintenance	Cr161,160	0	0	0	Cr161,160
	Cr12,789,433	7,790,560	0	0	Cr4,998,873
<u>Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Other</u>					
Additional learning needs reserve	Cr1,051,000	0	0		Cr1,051,000
Equalisation Account-Education	Cr2,409,500	25,000	150,000	462,462	Cr1,772,038
Home to School Transport	Cr290,570	38,000	252,570		0
	Cr3,751,070	63,000	402,570	462,462	Cr2,823,038
Total Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Cr16,540,503	7,853,560	402,570	462,462	Cr7,821,911
<u>Social Services, Health and Housing</u>					
Homecare ECM Equipment reserve	Cr96,756	0	0		Cr96,756
Community Care Transformation Reserve	Cr4,206,561	66,000	2,640,900		Cr1,499,661
Children's Residential Placements	Cr276,000	0	276,000		0
SSHH IT Renewals Fund	Cr1,900,000	0	0		Cr1,900,000
Social Services Equalisation	Cr5,700,114	2,330,000	0		Cr3,370,114
Community Resilience Fund	Cr1,750,000	0	0		Cr1,750,000

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original budget reserves 2022/23	Additional movements to September 2022 £	Committed	Uncommitted reserves
Housing Warranties Reserve	Cr220,000	0	0		Cr220,000
Hillside General Reserve	Cr581,098	0	150,000		Cr431,098
Ring fenced homecare funding	Cr450,000	0	216,000		Cr234,000
Youth Offending Team Reserve	Cr167,897	0	0		Cr167,897
Adoption Service	Cr500,000	0	0		Cr500,000
Total Social Services, Health and Housing	Cr15,848,426	2,396,000	3,282,900	0	Cr10,169,526
<u>Environment</u>					
Transport Reserve	Cr281,541	60,000	0		Cr221,541
Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme	Cr125,894	81,301	0		Cr44,593
Swansea Bay City Deal	Cr333,786	112,786	0		Cr221,000
Local Development Plan	Cr365,014	31,890	0		Cr333,124
Parking improvement	Cr190,000	0	47,000	80,000	Cr63,000
DARE Reserve	Cr2,000,000	0	0		Cr2,000,000
Waste Reserve	Cr898,152	0	Cr90,000		Cr988,152
Winter Maintenance Reserve	Cr604,429	0	0		Cr604,429
Neath Market	Cr253,107	0	0		Cr253,107
Baglan Bay Innovation centre - dilapidation reserve	Cr177,517	100,000	0		Cr77,517
Renewable Energy Reserve	Cr17,959	0	0		Cr17,959
Environmental Health - Housing Equalisation	Cr130,000	35,000	0		Cr95,000
LAWDC Contingency Reserve	Cr815,177	0	0		Cr815,177
Workways - NPT	Cr290,435	0	0		Cr290,435
Environment Equalization Reserve	Cr1,065,291	287,278	221,500		Cr556,513
Metal box Reserve	Cr930,327	776,418	Cr626,000		Cr779,909

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original budget reserves 2022/23	Additional movements to September 2022 £	Committed	Uncommitted reserves
Pantteg Landslip Reserve	Cr500,000	0	0		Cr500,000
<u>Trading Account</u>					0
Operating Account -Equalisation	Cr36,043	0	0		Cr36,043
Vehicle Tracking	Cr92,186	0	0		Cr92,186
Vehicle Renewals	Cr2,330,047	Cr1,196,081	Cr177,600		Cr3,703,728
Total Environment	Cr11,436,905	288,592	Cr625,100	80,000	Cr11,693,413
<u>Chief Executives</u>					
Elections Equalisation Fund	Cr350,139	Cr15,000	0		Cr365,139
Health & Safety/Occupational Health	Cr40,501	0	0		Cr40,501
Digital Transformation Reserve	Cr1,170,000	0	0		Cr1,170,000
Schools IT Equalisation (HWB)	Cr600,000	0	330,000		Cr270,000
Development Fund for Modernisation	Cr76,032	0	0		Cr76,032
IT Renewals Fund	Cr1,233,394	400,000	0		Cr833,394
Chief Executives Equalisation Reserve	Cr164,236	50,500	0	80,000	Cr33,736
Organisational development reserve	Cr5,020,936	0	0	1,500,000	Cr3,520,936
Building Capacity	Cr155,295	138,000	Cr10,000		Cr27,295
Voluntary Organisation Reserve	Cr86,430	0	0		Cr86,430
Total Corporate Services	Cr8,896,963	573,500	320,000	1,580,000	Cr6,423,463
<u>Corporate Other</u>					
Insurance Reserve	Cr4,725,382	280,000	0		Cr4,445,382
Covid recovery	Cr2,800,000	0	0	2,317,000	Cr483,000
Income Generation Reserve	Cr1,713,230	0	0		Cr1,713,230

Description	Reserve Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Original budget reserves 2022/23	Additional movements to September 2022 £	Committed	Uncommitted reserves
Members Community Fund Reserve	Cr513,633	0		513,633	0
Capital support reserve	Cr683,447	0	0		Cr683,447
Hardship relief scheme	Cr2,000,000	0	0	2,000,000	0
Service resilience	Cr2,000,000	1,435,722	Cr148,294	564,278	Cr148,294
Discretionary fund	Cr1,401,836	0	0	1,401,836	0
Corporate Contingency	Cr4,567,000	702,000	201,685	746,887	Cr2,916,428
Treasury Management Equalisation Reserve	Cr8,594,046	325,000	500,000	Cr325,000	Cr8,094,046
Accommodation Strategy	Cr2,273,580	0	0		Cr2,273,580
Total Corporate Other	Cr31,272,154	2,742,722	553,391	7,218,634	Cr20,757,407
<u>Joint Committee</u>					
Margam Discovery Centre - Building	Cr59,774	Cr57,333	0		Cr117,107
- Maintenance Reserve					
Workways - Regional Reserve	Cr167,991	0	0		Cr167,991
Environment Legacy Reserve (SWTRA)	Cr59,728	0	0		Cr59,728
Substance Misuse Area Planning Board	Cr34,847	0	0		Cr34,847
WB Safeguarding Board Reserve	Cr113,265	0	0		Cr113,265
Intermediate Care pooled fund	Cr192,925	0	192,926		1
Total Joint Committee	Cr628,530	Cr57,333	192,926	0	Cr492,937
Total All Earmarked Reserves	Cr84,623,481	13,797,041	4,126,687	9,341,096	Cr57,358,657
General Reserve	Cr20,150,693	0	0	400,000	Cr19,750,693
TOTAL ALL REVENUE RESERVES	Cr104,774,174	13,797,041	4,126,687	9,741,096	Cr77,109,350

Appendix 2 – Copy of lobbying letter

Letter sent to Regional and Local MSs & MPs

Dear

Cost of Living Crisis and the consequential impact on the sustainability of local government services

I am writing to make you aware that the sustainability of the local government services delivered across Neath Port Talbot will be significantly challenged if additional Government funding is not provided.

Cllr Andrew Morgan, Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association, has recently described the economic outlook for local government as ‘austerity on steroids’. That is a sentiment with which I wholly concur.

The continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the escalating impact of the war in Ukraine have created unprecedented demands on our services and functions – impacts that derive directly from government policy responses to these global events. For example, presentations to our Housing Options service are some 400% higher than pre-pandemic; contacts to Children’s Social Services are some 300% higher than pre-pandemic and we see a similar picture of increased and more complex demands across adult social care and education services.

We are experiencing an unfunded pressure of £5 million in the current financial year and estimate unfunded and unavoidable pressures in 2023/24 to be at least £20 million. The years beyond 23/24 look equally challenging based on current assumptions. These pressures are not ‘one off’, they are annual recurring costs which need a permanent funding solution. Whilst we are in a position to manage some annual fluctuations using our reserve balances, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recognise that using reserves to fund recurring revenue costs is not a prudent or sustainable strategy.

/Cont.....

The Settlement provided by Welsh Government for 2022/23 and the indicative budgets published for the two subsequent financial years were warmly welcomed at the time they were announced. However, you can see that the funding made available for the current financial year and the funding proposed for the two subsequent financial years are significantly short of what is needed. At a time when many of our citizens are experiencing a cost of living crisis, significant increases in Council Tax to bridge the funding gap would intensify the hardship being experienced across our communities and must be avoided. Similarly, local businesses and community organisations are also distressed.

Without additional government funding, the only alternative for the Council is to cut jobs and services. After over a decade of austerity measures, there are no soft options left. The education of our children and young people, care and support for children and vulnerable people (including those who are homeless, refugees or asylum seekers), maintenance of the public realm and wider Council services will be degraded. Our capacity to realise the high level of developer interest in the area to boost the local economy will be placed at risk and our ability to help deliver the Welsh Government's policy objectives and related Co-operation Agreement will be similarly impaired.

As the MS/MP for Neath Port Talbot, it is important that you are fully briefed on the position so that you can work with us to press the Welsh and UK governments for sufficient additional resources to enable the Council to continue to support the NPT communities through the current crises, maintain the essential services that people rely upon and to bring about long term improvements in the environmental, cultural, social and economic wellbeing of the NPT area. Local Government demonstrated time and time again during the pandemic that it is uniquely placed to respond to the needs of local communities and local businesses whilst also playing a vital role in supporting the NHS. Once again, our residents, local businesses and partners are turning to us for local leadership and support and it is critical that we are enabled to fulfil this role.

I therefore invite you to make formal representation to the Local Government and Finance Minister and the incoming UK Government for additional budget allocations to be made available to the local government sector in this financial year and in subsequent years.

Yours sincerely



Leader of the Council

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER – HUW JONES

19th October 2022

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected - All

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2022/23

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out treasury management action and information for 2022/23.
2. This report will also be forwarded to the next Governance and Audit Committee in line with the Council's Treasury Management Practices Scrutiny arrangements.

Rates of Interest

3. Over the past year, the cost of living has risen sharply. The speed of this increase is called the 'rate of inflation'. It is the job of the Bank of England to keep this rate around their target of 2%, however, it is currently above this – mainly due to the higher price of goods coming in from abroad along with the increase in the cost of energy.
4. To reduce the rate of inflation, the Bank of England increase their interest rates. Since December 2021 the interest rates have increased as per below:

Effective Date	Bank Rate
19 th March 2020	0.10%
16 th December 2021	0.25%
4 th February 2022	0.50%
16 th March 2022	0.75%
5 th May 2022	1.00%
16 th June 2022	1.25%
4 th August 2022	1.75%
22 nd September 2022	2.25%

5. The following table provides examples of external borrowing costs as provided by the Public Works Loans Board (certainty rate) as at 5th October 2022:

	Equal Instalments of Principal		Annuity		Maturity	
	Previous 18Jul22	Current 05Oct22	Previous	Current 05Oct22	Previous 18Jul22	Current 05Oct22
	%	%	%	%	%	%
5-5.5 years	2.73	4.93	2.73	4.93	2.70	4.96
10-10.5 years	2.70	4.96	2.70	4.95	3.05	4.87
20-20.5 years	3.05	4.87	3.12	4.88	3.51	5.04
35-35.5 years	3.49	5.02	3.51	5.04	3.60	4.80
49.5-50 years	3.49	5.01	3.43	4.86	3.31	4.52

General Fund Treasury Management Budget

6. The following table sets out details of the treasury management budget for 2022/23 along with outturn figures for 2021/22. The budget consists of a gross budget for debt charges i.e. repayment of debt principal and interest, and interest returns on investment income.

2021/22 Outturn £'000		2022/23 Original Budget £'000
20,266	Principal and Interest charges	20,946
	Investment Income	
(167)	- Total	(200)
35	- less allocated to other funds	75
(132)	Subtotal Income	(125)
(291)	Contribution from General Reserves	(325)
	Contribution to General Reserves	
(176)	Contribution to/(from) treasury management reserve	
19,667	Net General Fund	20,496

NB: Other funds include Trust Funds, Social Services Funds, Schools Reserves, Bonds etc.

Borrowing

7. There has been now new loan agreements entered into since the last quarterly report to Cabinet.

Investments

8. The following are a list of investments as at 30th September 2022:

<u>Counterparty</u>	<u>Value (£)</u>	<u>Investment type</u>	<u>Investment start</u>	<u>Investment maturity</u>	<u>Interest rate</u>
Goldman Sachs International Bank	£5,000,000	Fixed	17 th Aug 2022	17 th Feb 2023	2.50%
Goldman Sachs International Bank	£5,000,000	Fixed	23 rd Jun 2022	23 rd Dec 2022	2.27%
Santander UK	£5,000,000	Fixed	20 th Jul 2022	20 th Jan 2023	2.28%
Nationwide Building Society	£5,000,000	Fixed	3 rd Aug 2022	3 rd Nov 2022	1.69%
Nationwide Building Society	£5,000,000	Fixed	15 th Aug 2022	15 th Nov 2022	1.80%
Cambridgeshire C.C.	£5,000,000	Fixed	6 th December 2021	6 th December 2023	0.40%
East Ayrshire C.C	£5,000,000	Fixed	13 th December 2021	13 th December 2022	0.45%
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	£5,000,000	Fixed	5 th May 2022	4 th May 2023	1.20%
Cornwall Council	£5,000,000	Fixed	15 th Aug 2022	17 th Oct 2022	1.73%
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000	Fixed	8 th Sep 2022	7 th Sep 2023	3.05%
DMO	£16,700,000	Fixed/ Overnight	N/A	N/A	1.800% - 1.975%
Santander	£9,100,000	Call Account	N/A	N/A	1.75%

9. Please note – the Council’s investment criteria (appendix 1) allows for a maximum investment for an F1 rated counterparty to be £15m. Santander are currently an F1 rated counterparty – however, the policy also allows for this to be temporarily exceeded in exceptional circumstances.

Investment Income

10. In line with the Council’s Investment Strategy, the 2022/23 original budget target for investment income is £200k, income for the financial year to date totals £345k. The interest rate forecasts are higher than used in the original budget calculation, so we are suggesting a revised budget of £700k for the financial year. This additional income will lead to a removal of the budgeted reserve contribution with further balances being contributed into reserves.
11. Members should note that the majority of investments are classified as ‘specified’ i.e. up to 12 months and are currently deposited with Local Authorities, Police, Goldman Sachs International Bank, Nationwide Building Society and Santander Bank.
12. The Council policy will allow investments up to a maximum of £25m for periods of more than 1 year and up to 5 years, and this will be considered when decisions on investing surplus funds are made. The Council has no such investments.

Financial Impact

13. All relevant financial information is provided in the body of the report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

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

Valleys Communities Impacts

15. No implications

Workforce Impacts

16. There are no workforce impacts arising from this report.

Legal Impacts

17. There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

Risk Management

18. Borrowing and investment decisions are made in line with the Council's Treasury Management Policy. The Council has appointed Link Asset Services to provide support and advice in relation to this policy.

Consultation

19. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

20. It is recommended that Members note the contents of this monitoring report.

Appendices

21. Appendix 1 - Specified Investments

List of Background Papers

22. PWLB Notice Number 380/22

Officer Contact

Mr Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer

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Mr Ross Livingstone – Group Accountant – Capital and Corporate

E-mail – r.livingstone@npt.gov.uk

Specified Investments

	Minimum 'High' Credit Criteria	Funds Managed	Max Amount	Max Duration
Term deposits				
Term deposits - Debt Management Office	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	1 year
Term deposits – local, police and fire authorities	N/A	In-house	£10m	1 year
Term deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1	In-house	£15m	6 months or 185 days
Callable deposits				
Callable deposits – Debt Management Agency deposit facility	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F2	In-house	£10m	
Callable deposits - UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+ or F1	In-house	£15m *	
Term deposits – non UK banks	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£5m	6 months or 185 days

* Where necessary this limit may be temporarily exceeded with the Authority's bankers only.



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER – MR HUW JONES

19th OCTOBER 2022

MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2021/22

Purpose of Report

1. This Council is required through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2021/22 (this report).
2. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code). Some information incorporated within this report has been provided by the Council's Treasury Advisors Link Asset Services.
3. Recent changes in the regulatory environment place a much greater onus on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.

4. This report also confirms that Council has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to the annual strategy report, which was submitted to Cabinet in March 2021 before being reported and approved by full Council.

Executive Summary

5. During 2021/22, the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements. The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year, with comparators, are as follows:

Prudential and Treasury Indicators	2020/21 Actual £000	2021/22 Mid-Year Estimate £000	2021/22 Actual £000
Capital Expenditure	58,769	82,410	70,624
Capital Financing Requirement	342,874	354,215	349,573
External debt(gross)	301,613	300,612	310,517
Less Investments	(52,500)	(55,000)	(73,300)
Net Borrowing	249,113	245,612	237,217

6. The full list of prudential and treasury indicators are to be found in Appendix 1. During the financial year the Council operated within its treasury limits and Prudential Indicators.
7. The financial year 2021/22 was once again a challenging environment as in previous years with low investment returns and continuing counterparty risk.

Introduction and Background

8. This report summarises:
- Capital activity during the year;
 - Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness (the Capital Financing Requirement);
 - Reporting of the required prudential and treasury indicators;

- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council has borrowed in relation to this indebtedness, and the impact on investment balances;
- Summary of interest rate movements in the year;
- Detailed debt activity; and
- Detailed investment activity

The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2021/22

9. The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.
- Actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

	2020/21 Actual £000	2021/22 Mid-Year Estimate £000	2021/22 Actual £000
Total capital expenditure	58,769	82,410	70,624
Resourced by:			
• Capital receipts	936	2,778	2,693
• Capital grants & contributions	46,304	56,230	48,105
• Capital Reserves and DRF	1,245	2,026	2,810
Unfinanced capital expenditure (to be funded from Borrowing)	10,284	21,376	17,016

The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

10. The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This figure is a gauge of the Council's debt position. The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and what resources have been used to pay for the capital spend. It represents the 2021/22 unfinanced capital expenditure (see Table 2) and prior years' net of unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.
11. Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure programme, the treasury service organises the Council's cash position to ensure sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through borrowing from external bodies (such as the Government, through the Public Works Loan Board [PWLB] or the money markets), or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.
12. Reducing the CFR – Statutory controls are in place to ensure that capital assets are broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. The Council is required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP, to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a repayment of the borrowing need. This differs from the treasury management arrangements which ensure that cash is available to meet capital commitments. External debt can also be borrowed or repaid at any time, but this does not change the CFR.
13. The total CFR can also be reduced by:
 - The application of additional capital financing resources (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
 - Charging more than the statutory revenue charge (MRP) each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).
14. The Council's CFR for the year is shown below, and represents a key prudential indicator.

CFR	2020/21 Actual £000	2021/22 Mid-Year Estimate £000	2021/22 Actual £000
Opening balance	342,874	343,055	343,055
Add unfinanced capital expenditure (as above)	10,284	21,376	17,016
Less MRP	(10,103)	(10,216)	(10,498)
Closing balance	343,055	354,215	349,573

15. The borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for net borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.
16. Net borrowing and the CFR – in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term the Council’s external borrowing, net of investments, must only be used for a capital purpose. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. Net borrowing should not therefore, except in the short term, have exceeded the CFR for 2021/22 plus the expected changes to the CFR over 2022/23 and 2023/24. The table below highlights the Council’s net borrowing position against the CFR which shows that we have self-funded the net position of £112.356m. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

	2020/21 Actual £000	2021/22 Mid-Year Estimate £000	2021/22 Actual £000
Net borrowing position	249,113	245,612	237,217
CFR	343,055	354,215	349,573
Self-funded	93,942	108,603	112,356

17. The authorised limit – the authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council does not have the power to borrow above this level.
18. The operational boundary – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year.

19. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary is acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

	Actual 2021/22 £000
Operational boundary	379,573
Authorised limit	399,573
Total Maximum Borrowing compared to Operational Boundary at any point during the year	311,014

The Council has maintained gross borrowing below the Authorised limit.

Treasury Position as at 31st March 2022

20. The Council's debt and investment position is managed by Finance Treasury Staff in order to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through Member reporting detailed in the executive summary, and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices. At the beginning and the end of 2021/22 the Council's treasury position was as follows:

	31 March 2021 Principal	Rate / Return	31 March 2022 Principal	Rate / Return
Fixed rate funding:	£m	%	£m	%
-PWLB	232.598	3.03%	241.597	3.72%
-Market (LOBO)	62.500	3.93%	62.500	3.93%
Other:				
WG Crown Loan	3.000	0.00%	3.000	0.00%
Salix	1.943	0.00%	1.846	0.00%
Temp Loans	1.571	0.18%	1.574	0.18%
Total debt	301.612		310.517	
Investments:				
- in house	52.500	0.16%	73.300	0.51%
Total investments	52.500			
Net Borrowing	249.112		237.217	

PWLB = Public Works Loans Board which is a body the Government has established to lend money to Local Government.

Market LOBO's = Lender Option Borrower Option – this is borrowing from the market when the lender has offered a long term loan but with options to continue or foreclose on the loan at various specific intervals.

Other:

WG Crown Loan = interest free loan from Welsh Government used to fund the purchase of the former Crown Building in Briton Ferry

Salix = interest free loan from Welsh Government via Salix Finance Ltd to be used towards funding new Street Lighting

Temp Loans = these include several loans the council have such as the Education Trust Funds and Welsh Church Act Funds.

The Strategy for 2021/22

21. The strategy for 2021/22 was approved by Council in March 2021 and included the following:

New Borrowing:

22. The cheapest borrowing will be internal borrowing by running down cash balances and foregoing interest earned at historically low rates. However this strategy can only be used as a short term measure therefore consideration will be given to entering into external borrowing.
23. The following types of loan arrangement will be considered (in no particular order):
- Temporary borrowing from the money markets or other local authorities.
 - Short dated borrowing from the market or PWLB.
 - Long term fixed rate market or PWLB loans

Investments

24. The Council continued with its main investment priorities:

- (a) security of capital
- (b) liquidity of capital

with the aim of achieving the optimum return commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. With investments being dominated by low counterparty risk considerations, relatively low returns were expected when compared to borrowing rates.

25. For balances generated through normal cashflow the strategy looked to utilise the business reserve (call account) and short dated deposits.

Debt Rescheduling

26. The strategy allowed for the use of investment balances to repay debt prematurely providing it was economically worthwhile and it enhanced the maturity profile of the debt portfolio.

27. No debt rescheduling was anticipated (or took place) in 2021/22 particularly as the PWLB rate structures have made it more expensive in recent years to do so.

Borrowing Outturn for 2021/22

28. The table below shows the new long term loans entered into during 2021/22.

Counterparty	£	Description
PWLB	£10m	Loan to support the council's capital programme

29. Treasury Borrowing – There were no short-term temporary loans taken out during 2020/21

Investment Outturn for 2021/22

30. Investment Policy – the Council's investment policy is governed by Welsh Government guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by Council in March 2021. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies supplemented by additional market data (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc).
31. As part of our planning for dealing with COVID19 pandemic, we decided to increase the amount of money invested in our Santander call account. This was done to ensure the Authority had enough liquid cash to deal with any unknown issues that would arise from the pandemic. The strategy says we can invest up to £15m with our own bankers, but this can be temporarily exceeded where necessary. Where this was exceeded, it was reported as part of the quarterly Treasury Management Monitoring Reports members received throughout the year.
32. All other investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy.
33. Resources – the Council's longer term cash balances comprise, primarily, revenue and capital resources, although these will be

influenced by cash flow considerations. The Council's cash resources comprised the following:

Balance Sheet Resources	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Balances and Earmarked Reserves	79,052	104,774
Provisions	5,629	3,885
Usable capital receipts	8,883	8,702
Total	93,564	117,361

34. Investments held by the Council – The Council received the following return on its investments

Average Investment £'000	External Interest Earned £'000	Rate of Return %	Benchmark Return %
80,315	167	0.21%	0.17%

35. The benchmark for funds managed in house is the 3 month LIBID uncompounded. The rate reflects a more realistic neutral position for core investments with a medium term horizon and a rate which is more stable with fewer fluctuations caused by market liquidity.
36. For information, the following table details the changes in bank rate:

Effective Date	Bank Rate
11 th March 2020	0.25%
19 th March 2020	0.10%
16 th December 2021	0.25%
4 th February 2022	0.50%
16 th March 2022	0.75%

Treasury Management Reserve

37. The below table shows the Treasury Management Equalisation reserve, broken down between General and Earmarked balances:

	<u>£000s</u>
General balances:	
Opening Balance as at 1 st April 2021 (excluding earmarked funding)	2,841
In year deficit	(308)
Total General Closing Balance	2,533
Earmarked balances:	
City Deal	5,561
Neath Town Centre	500
Total Earmarked Closing Balance	6,061
TOTAL Treasury Management Reserve	8,594

Performance Measurement

38. One of the key requirements in the Code is the formal introduction of performance measurement relating to investments, debt and capital financing activities. Whilst investment performance criteria have been well developed and universally accepted, debt performance indicators continue to be a more problematic area with the traditional average portfolio rate of interest acting as the main guide (as incorporated in the table in section 20). The Council's original performance indicators for 2021/22 were set out in the Annual Treasury Strategy approved by Council in March 2021.

Financial Impact

39. All financial impacts are detailed within the body of the report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

40. There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment for this report.

Valleys Communities Impacts

41. No implications

Workforce impacts

42. There are no workforce impacts resulting from this report.

Legal impacts

43. The report deals with the Council's legal requirements as set out in Local Government Act 2003.

Risk management

44. Compliance with the strategies outlined in this report should be sufficient in terms of managing risks in this area.

Consultation

45. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

46. It is recommended that Members note the 2021/22 treasury management function performance as set out in this report including the actual 2021/22 prudential and treasury indicators.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Prudential Indicators

List of Background Papers

Statement of Accounts 2021/22

Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact: -

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PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Mid-Year Estimate	2021/22 Actual
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Expenditure	58,769	82,410	70,624
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 st March	343,055	354,215	349,573
	%	%	%
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	6.63%	6.35%	6.46%
Authorised Limit for External Debt: Borrowing and other long term liabilities	393,055	404,215	399,573
Operational Boundary for External Debt: Borrowing and other long term liabilities	373,055	384,215	379,573
External Debt (Gross)	301,612	300,612	310,517
Less Investments	(52,500)	(55,000)	(73,300)
Net Borrowing Position	249,112	245,612	237,217

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing During 2021/22	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Original Estimate		2021/22 Actual
		Upper Limit	Lower Limit	
	%	%	%	%
Under 12 months	1	15	0	9
12 months to 2 years	9	15	0	2
2 to 5 years	4	40	0	3
5 to 10 years	1	60	0	5
10 years and above	85	100	15	81

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

19th OCTOBER 2022

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2027/28

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTORS' GROUP

FOR INFORMATION

Purpose of the report

This report provides Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan outlook (MTFP) for 2023/24 to 2027/28, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2023/24 during the autumn and winter.

Introduction

Members will receive a revenue budget monitoring report at this meeting. That report indicates that there is a significant budget pressure that has arisen in-year (circa £10 million) predominantly because of a pay increase in excess of what has been funded in the local government settlement and increased costs as a result of general inflation. Officers are working to identify measures that will reduce the in-year pressure in a sustainable manner. Some £7 million of measures have been identified at the time of writing with all council budgets being reviewed to reduce the pressure further, although we also cannot rule out further pressures given the volatile economic environment.

As part of the Council's robust financial management arrangements, work is also underway to develop the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2023-24 to 2027-28. The initial stages of this exercise involves making assumptions about costs and income patterns over the next period. This is a key stage in the process and will inform the detailed budget strategy work that will be developed over the autumn and winter months.

This report is the first formal report on progress.

Background

The Public Sector has faced a sustained period of real term reductions in funding levels for over ten years with Neath Port Talbot Council securing reductions in the revenue budget of circa £100 million in real terms since 2008. As well as finding genuine efficiencies and economies in the cost of services and functions, as has been the case in other councils, the scale of austerity measures imposed by the UK Government has also seen deep cuts in services and jobs, particularly in those services delivered under discretionary powers.

Following two years of operating in emergency response mode to deal with the global Covid-19 pandemic, the Council began to plan for recovery in the latter part of 2021-22. The recovery plan – Recover, Reset, Renew (approved by Council in March 2022) – provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on households, our communities, the local economy and our own services and functions.

Robust recovery plans have since been developed across the organisation to address the Covid-19 legacy which includes: high levels of need across education, housing and social services departments; and backlogs of work requiring attention in our environmental services where economic recovery has generated pent up demand whilst services re-purposed during the pandemic to support national priorities work are now addressing service backlogs. Income levels have also been impacted by the pandemic with many residents having made significant changes to their lifestyles during the pandemic period – this is particularly affecting theatres, car parks and leisure services where the number of paying customers is yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore, the labour market is far more competitive with post-pandemic unemployment rates at very low levels and more people seeking to fill jobs than there are people looking for work. This is placing pressure on recruitment and retention with consequential implications for pay and our wider employment offer.

It should be noted that alongside all of this, the Council is also implementing a series of policy initiatives set out in the Welsh Government's Programme for Government and related Co-operation Agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru – the first phase of an expansion of universal free school meals and the expansion of childcare provision being two examples. The Council has also submitted three significant applications to the Levelling Up Fund and has recently developed a regional investment plan (with other

local authorities in the region) to draw down our Shared Prosperity Fund allocation.

The combined impact of the pandemic and Brexit has also had a mixed impact across our local economy. Ongoing supply chain pressures, a highly competitive labour market and the rise in inflation are clearly having negative impacts. However, the county borough is also seeing an unprecedented level of investor interest from existing and new investors. Whilst the level of investor interest is very welcome, this is placing considerable pressure on Planning, Economic Development and other regulatory functions.

The Plan signed off prior to the beginning of this financial year was firmly set in the context of Recovery. However, within weeks of signing off the Plan, Russia invaded Ukraine and what has unfolded since has materially changed our operating environment. Energy prices and energy security are having major impacts across Europe and more widely. We estimate energy costs for the Council to rise by 162% in 2023-24 (circa. £8 million). Inflation has already reached levels not seen since the 1980's which is feeding through in terms of contract and other costs as well as contributing to a cost of living crisis across all of our communities. The Council is actively supporting the national humanitarian effort to support Ukrainian refugees. This is a task we have taken on willingly however, this is happening at a time when housing services are already operating under enormous pressure.

This all makes for a very challenging budget outlook.

Current Financial Strategy

To facilitate the delivery of Recover, Reset, Renew, the Council set aside funds to support the recovery work and this work is underway. Additionally, there was no increase to Council Tax to fund Council services in 2022-23 in recognition of the developing concerns at the time about cost of living. Furthermore, a one-off sum of £2 million was approved as part of the budget to alleviate financial hardship for those most in need. In June 2022, the Cabinet approved a hardship scheme that will be delivered in partnership with Warm Wales from October 2022 and in July 2022, the Cabinet approved an additional capital budget of £4.25 million to support recovery work to 'catch up, clean up and green up' the public realm.

As we develop the medium term financial plan, it will be important to remain focused on the recovery work to reduce levels of need in a sustainable way, to make further changes to the way we deliver services and functions to

increase income and reduce costs; and to grow organisational capability to sustain the Council into future years. These changes will take time to implement and will span a number of financial years. We must also simultaneously work to secure the investor interest in the area, working to grow and transition the local economy with the aim of bringing about longer term benefits for our community, achieving the net zero carbon targets and helping to address structural poverty and inequality.

Securing sufficient resources from the UK and Welsh governments is pivotal to achieving this. The economic shock that has resulted from the war in Ukraine means that the current year and indicative settlements for 2023-24 and 2024-25 are grossly inadequate. We must ensure that the UK and Welsh Governments are aware of the impact of this on our ability to complete our recovery work and sustain essential public services. The Leader of Council has written to both governments and to the Members of the Senedd and Members of Parliament who represent the county borough to make them aware of the scale and potential impact of the funding shortfall. The letter has been followed up by way of meetings through WLGA with the Minister for Finance and Local Government and with Senedd and Parliament representatives. Additionally, the political leadership is supporting the action taken by the Chair of NPT UNISON to petition the Welsh Government for a fair settlement for this Council. Councillors, staff and wider stakeholders have been invited to support this petition.

Budget Assumptions

Welsh Government, as part of the 2022/23 Local Government Settlement, provided indicative all-Wales settlement levels for the next 2 financial years: 3.5% for 2023/24; and 2.4% for 2024/25. These were set before the onset of the war in Ukraine and the economic shock that has been experienced across Europe and more widely since.

In recent weeks, the new Conservative UK Government has announced that it will act to limit the impact of escalating energy costs for all consumers. The exact amount of support available to this Council is currently being worked through. The Government has also announced its intent to reverse the recent increase in NI contributions, circa £1.4 million in 2023-24. Other UK Government announcements are scheduled for the end of October 2022 and will be key drivers and determinants of any additional funding being made available to devolved nations for 2023/24 and the prospects for settlement levels over the medium term.

The majority of additional costs and income losses incurred during the Coronavirus pandemic were funded by the Welsh Government through their

Hardship Fund. This Fund ceased on 31st March 2022 and it is now up to councils to meet any costs or financial shortfalls from loss of income from within existing resources. In this context, our medium term approach to financial and service planning is even more critical.

The developing financial plan will set out the detailed basis of the medium term strategy with references to revenue spending, capital plans, income levels and reserves. The detailed assumptions underpinning these forecasts are included in Appendix 1 of this report. Members should note that the current economic environment is extremely volatile. Given the level of uncertainty a number of scenarios have been developed to aid planning. It is likely that assumptions will change as the MTFP continues to develop and iterate.

Key assumptions used in the construction of the revenue budget modelling to 2027/28 are shown below.

Income

Welsh Government Local Government settlement levels have been modelled on two scenarios:

Year	Realistic - based on current indications	Optimistic - increases in years 3-5
2023/24	3.5%	3.5%
2024/25	2.4%	2.4%
2025/26	2.4%	4.0%
2026/27	2.4%	4.0%
2027/28	2.4%	4.0%

Welsh Government have indicated that there is unlikely to be any additional funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25 unless additional funds are made available by the UK Government. The Welsh Government estimate that the current allocation to the devolved government is some £4 billion less in real terms given current inflation and energy costs.

The variability of the potential level of the Settlement from Welsh Government has a significant impact on the budget gap, at £2.6M per 1%.

Council Tax contributes circa 24% of total Council income. Council Tax

levels will be decided at the end of the budget process. Members will need to weigh up the costs of providing the essential services that the Council is required to provide against the pressure on households at a time when there is a cost of living crisis. Government decisions on the level of financial assistance to be provided to residents will clearly be a key consideration in determining policy on Council Tax levels.

The Council's budget is also underpinned by a number of specific grants which are used predominantly to fund staffing costs. If these grants cease or are fixed at current cash levels they will have an impact on future budgets.

Expenditure

At this stage in the process, the modelling has factored in assumed cost changes for current budgeted levels of activity. Uplifts have been included for pay and non-pay inflation, including the estimated additional unfunded cost of the 2022/23 pay award offers for teaching and non-teaching staff (noting the status of these being offers at this stage).

Two different scenarios are shown in the modeling below, one assumes that the pay award for 2023/24 will be 4%, the second scenario includes a pay award in line with this year's at 6%.

Energy costs are currently anticipated to rise by 162% next year however it is unclear at the moment whether the Government will intervene and provide any support. At present the support provided by Government only covers the period October 2022 to March 2023. Both scenarios assume that some support will be available and therefore include energy costs at 50% higher than in the current year

The assumptions below do not include any service pressures (growth) at this stage or any consideration for increased service demand. Corporate Directors have been asked to identify any pressures for consideration, these will then either be:

- Included in the MTFP model, which will increase the forecast budget gap
- Not built into the MTFP model and kept on a 'watch' list during 2023/24, accepting that this may lead to in year budget pressures which will need to be resolved on a permanent basis in future years

We know that we have budget pressures in relation to the rising cost of

providing home to school transport (£1.9m); bus subsidies (£368k); homelessness (£600k) as well as increased costs and growth in demand in education and both adults and children’s services. These are currently being quantified and will be fed into the model over the next period. We expect these to be very significant and to increase the funding gap beyond that shown in the table below.

The assumptions **do not** include any additional budget provision for indoor leisure services following the decision taken by the Cabinet back in February to return the services ‘in house’. At present it is anticipated that this increased cost will be c£4m pa. The business plan for leisure services, which will need to include options to mitigate this cost increase, is currently being prepared and will be reported to Members in due course.

Modelled budget gap 2023/24 – 2027/28 – Realistic WG settlement

Budget gap with pay at 4% in 23/24	21,731	15,241	12,257	11,740	12,110	73,080
	3.5%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	
Realistic WG Settlement	-9,033	-6,411	-6,564	-6,722	-6,883	-35,613
Remaining budget gap	12,699	8,831	5,693	5,018	5,227	37,467
Budget gap with pay at 6% in 23/24	26,331	15,425	12,401	11,888	12,262	78,308
	3.5%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	
Realistic WG Settlement	-9,033	-6,411	-6,564	-6,722	-6,883	-35,613
Remaining budget gap	17,299	9,015	5,836	5,166	5,379	42,695

Modelled budget gap 2023/24 – 2027/28 – Optimistic WG settlement

Budget gap with pay at 4% in 23/24	21,731	15,241	12,257	11,740	12,110	73,080
	3.5%	2.4%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	
Optimistic WG Settlement	-9,033	-6,411	-10,941	-11,378	-11,833	-49,595
Remaining budget gap	12,699	8,831	1,316	362	277	23,485
Budget gap with pay at 6% in 23/24	26,331	15,425	12,401	11,888	12,262	78,308
	3.5%	2.4%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	
Optimistic WG Settlement	-9,033	-6,411	-10,941	-11,378	-11,833	-49,595
Remaining budget gap	17,299	9,015	1,460	510	429	28,712

As shown above, all of our planning assumptions result in a significant budget gap being faced by the Council over a five year period.

The impact on our services and Council Tax levels is clearly going to be largely and directly determined by the level of settlement we receive from Welsh Government, the outcome of 2022/23 and 2023/24 pay negotiations and related funding arrangements.

It is also clear that the indicative resource levels as announced in the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review and thereafter distributed by Welsh Government, are now significantly out of line with inflationary and service pressures being faced across local government.

Balancing the budget – developing the financial strategy

Council officers are already reviewing activities and budgets to address the in-year pressure that has arisen.

A number of interventions are also underway to address cost and income pressures that have arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A number of strategies were identified in outline in Recover, Reset, Renew with the aim of delivering a net reduction in the revenue base budget requirement year on year. The invest to save and invest to earn interventions underway are

being funded through the use of reserve balances and will be delivered over a number of years. This work will now need to be expanded and accelerated and also tested against the priorities of the new Administration.

The areas under consideration include:

- Maintaining a robust budget discipline to reduce/contain expenditure and maximise income;
- Reviewing current base budgets to align with current patterns of working, in particular the move to hybrid working across many council services;
- Reviewing all budgets to identify activities that could be de-prioritised/delayed;
- Reducing/repurposing our current accommodation portfolio to reflect current models of working and the urgent need to reduce energy consumption; accelerating work to transition other buildings to renewable energy sources;
- Reviewing all transport arrangements across the Council with a view to reducing the overall cost of transport whilst also accelerating the transition to electric and hydrogen vehicles to impact positively on the net carbon targets;
- Reducing energy consumption and costs in relation to all other activity whilst also accelerating the move to more cost effective renewable energy sources;
- Extending and improving the range of on-line transactional services so more people choose to access services/make payments on-line;
- Implementing a pipeline of high impact automation projects to reduce cost/increase income;
- Identifying other technology solutions that can reduce the cost of services/increase income;
- Reviewing fees and charges;
- Accelerating the adoption of commercial approaches in discretionary services to increase income and meet customer need;
- Right-sizing the capacity/capability to draw in available grant funding to underpin the Council's service operations and to boost economic growth;
- Reviewing contracting and procurement arrangements to ensure we are optimising best value for money, local economic benefit and assisting in meeting net zero carbon targets;
- Reviewing the effectiveness of early intervention and prevention interventions to reduce the number of people needing high cost interventions;
- Continuing to build capacity and capability in our communities;
- Reviewing partnership arrangements to ensure they are delivering

added value.

Many of these interventions will take time to deliver so any savings arising may not be immediate.

The material change in the general economic climate since the 2022-23 budget and associated Corporate Plan were approved also requires a further set of options to be identified for urgent consideration in the event that sufficient government funding is not made available. In the first instance this will need to create contingency for discharging the statutory duty to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023/24.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indicated that he intends to deliver a 'medium-term fiscal plan' on 31st October 2022. This announcement will have a significant impact on the Welsh Government's budget setting process and related provisional local government settlement. In terms of the Welsh Government budget, the aim is to propose a draft budget 'within four weeks of any UK autumn fiscal event or by 13th December - whichever is the earliest'.

Work will continue to develop the Council's financial plan which will necessarily be based on a range of scenarios given the high degree of uncertainty. Regular briefings/reports to Members will be provided at relevant intervals.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment as this report is for information only.

Valley Communities Impacts

There are no specific impacts as a result of this report as it is for information only. Unless the financial outlook improves there will inevitably be impacts across the entire county borough and these will be considered as part of any formal decision making reports.

Workforce Impacts

There are no impacts from this report as it is for information only. Any workforce impacts arising from the emerging financial strategy will be identified as part of the strategy formulation process.

Legal Impacts

The Council has a statutory responsibility to set the 2023/24 budget prior to 11th March 2023. This report sets out for information the current financial outlook which will inform the steps that now need to be taken to comply with the above legal duty.

Risk Management

The financial outlook represents a risk in terms of the Council's ability to carry on delivering services at current levels and in the same format to the citizens of Neath Port Talbot. The current position will need to be reflected in the Council's strategic risk register.

Consultation

There is no requirement to consult on this report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members **note** the current position modelled in respect of the 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2027/28' and receive further updates as part of the annual budget setting process.

Reason for proposed recommendation

To ensure that Members are aware of the current medium term financial plan outlook prior to commencement of the formal process to set the Council's budget for 2023/24.

Implementation of decision

This item is for information only

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Details of inflation allowances included in MTFP

Background Papers

MTFP working papers

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Mr Andrew Thomas - Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

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Ms Nicola Pearce – Director of Environment and Regeneration

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Mr Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer

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Appendix 1 – Other inflation allowances include in budget model

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
<u>Major items of inflation</u>					
<u>Home to school transport</u>					
Inflation estimate	5.00%	5.00%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%
<u>External waste contracts</u>					
Inflation estimate	5.00%	5.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<u>Childrens placements</u>					
Inflation estimate	5.00%	5.00%	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<u>Adults placements</u>					
Inflation estimate	5.00%	5.00%	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<u>Domiciliary Care</u>					
Inflation estimate	9.00%	5.00%	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<u>Energy - Gas and Electricity</u>					
Inflation estimate	50.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
<u>Fire Service Levy</u>					
Inflation estimate	8.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

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CABINET

19th October 2022

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Wards affected – All

Matter for Decision

Response to the Welsh Government's Consultation Paper – 'A fairer Council Tax'

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with information in relation to the Council's proposed response to the above consultation.

Background

The Welsh Government are currently consulting on the first phase of proposed reforms to the council tax system in Wales. The consultation is '*seeking views from people and organisations on our broad ambitions to meeting our commitment to a fairer and more progressive system*'.

This first phase of the consultation is a technical consultation and does not incorporate any proposed changes to the actual system of council tax itself.

Consultation proposals

As mentioned above this first phase consultation is technical in nature and is seeking views on:

- completing a council tax revaluation of all 1.5 million properties in Wales to rebalance the system to reflect property values. The current system is now nearly twenty years out of date
- designing a new system of bands and tax rates that is more progressive, including considering adding more bands to the top and bottom ends of the scale if needed

- revaluing more frequently to keep council tax fairly distributed on a more regular basis.
- improving the framework of discounts, disregarded persons, exemptions and premiums to ensure the arrangements are aligned to our goals
- improving the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which provides support to low-income household

The consultation consists of seventeen specific questions and a further question providing respondents with the opportunity to raise any other pertinent issues.

The proposed responses are included in Appendix 1 of this report, Members will note that in relation to question 18 there are a number of issues raised in the response which we would wish the Welsh Government to also consider.

Further representation

If Cabinet are minded to support the responses included in Appendix 1 it is proposed that the Leader of Council also writes to the Welsh Government encouraging them to accelerate progress in consulting on the proposed second phase of council tax reforms.

It is imperative for the tax payers of Neath Port Talbot that the Welsh Government delivers on its co-operation agreement in relation to council tax where they pledge to:

‘Reform one of the most regressive forms of taxation – which disproportionately impacts poorer areas of Wales – to make it fairer’

Due to the current banding system Neath Port Talbot has traditionally had one of the highest band D council tax rates in Wales (currently 3rd out of 22). Given that the Welsh Government has committed to making the system fairer progress needs to be made on this sooner rather than later.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment as this report is a response to a Welsh Government consultation.

Valleys Communities Impacts

There are no impacts specifically as a result of this consultation response.

Workforce Impacts

No Impact

Legal Impact

No Impact

Risk Management Impact

No Impact

Consultation

This item is not subject to external consultation

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- **Approve** the proposed consultation responses as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- Support the proposal for the Leader of Council to write to the Welsh Government encouraging more progress to be made in delivering a fairer council tax system.

Reason for Proposed decision

To respond to Welsh Government consultation.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation with the consent of the relevant scrutiny chairperson.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed responses to WG consultation

Background Papers

WG consultation document 'A fairer council tax'

Officer Contact

Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer

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Appendix 1 – Consultation questions and proposed responses

Question 1

The council tax bands are currently based on property values from 1 April 2003, almost twenty years ago. Do you agree there should be a council tax revaluation in 2025, with property values based on 1 April 2023, to maintain the credibility of the system and distribute the tax burden more fairly? The purpose would not be to raise additional revenue through this exercise.

Proposed response

Yes but would need to give consideration to some sort of transitional relief if a property were to move up more than 1 band. No transitional protection if increased by 1 band.

Question 2

Do you agree the Welsh Government should consider adding more council tax bands (for example at the top and bottom ends of the scale) and refit the bands to help make the system more progressive?

Proposed response

Yes. Table 1 in your document provides property values in today's terms where a Band A is up to £103,000. Some dwellings, particularly caravans or studio flats do not have a value of £103,000 however have the highest estimated tax rate as a percentage value of their home. This could be addressed with the addition of bands.

Question 3

The Welsh Government is committed to considering transitional arrangements if needed to smooth the effects of reforms. What factors should we take into account when designing these arrangements?

Proposed response

Transitional relief should be simple to administer and for the tax payer to understand and be for no longer than 2 years (possibly decreasing the support in the second year) to allow tax payers time to adjust to the increase in payments or consider moving to a lower banded property. As transitional relief could mean a significant change to our IT systems a good lead time would be needed by software suppliers.

Question 4

Do you agree the Welsh Government's Revenue Support Grant to councils should be adjusted to take account of changes to revenues raised in each local area as a result of council tax reforms?

Appendix 1 – Consultation questions and proposed responses

Proposed response

Yes, one of the principles of the local government funding formula is that the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is adjusted to reflect a Council's ability to raise taxes locally.

Question 5

Do you agree there should be frequent council tax revaluations at least every five years in the future, to ensure the tax burden is shared fairly amongst taxpayers on a regular basis?

Proposed response

Significant work is involved in revaluations and the resulting queries from tax payers and for that reason a rolling 5 year review would be deemed appropriate, nothing less than 5 years.

This would -

- Allow a period of certainty for tax payers. Planning for changes more frequently could be a burden for tax payers and create insecurity.
- Be less onerous for the LA and VO who have to administer the changes and resulting queries with decreasing resources and budgets.
- Still be progressive, up to date and fair.

Question 6

When properties are significantly improved, properties are only reviewed and potentially re banded in certain circumstances, for example when the property is sold to a new owner. The Welsh Government is seeking views on whether this policy should change in the future

Proposed response

Consideration must be given to ensure that an immediate change in banding due to property improvements does not deter taxpayers in making improvements. Improvements in properties can enhance areas in the borough, improve housing conditions, and improve living conditions for families. If valuations were to take place every 5 years there may not be a requirement for any change in the current process.

Question 7

Do you have any views on rights of appeal for taxpayers or how council tax

Appendix 1 – Consultation questions and proposed responses

debt is managed? Please include any suggested improvements for either of these elements.

Proposed response

It would be beneficial if LA's could apply for an attachment of benefit or an attachment of earnings with the consent of the taxpayers without having to obtain a liability order. Many request this but we cannot accommodate them until we have a L/O and the taxpayer has then incurred additional costs associated with court action (currently capped at £70 in Wales).

Access to information held by HMRC on taxpayers employment information should be readily available in order to apply for an attachment of earnings for those taxpayers who do not engage with LA's for payment plans to discharge their debt.

Requests to DWP for attachment of benefit need to be dealt with more efficiently and timely as LA's often wait 3 to 4 months for responses and longer for payments which affects the recovery process and can sometimes mean cases are issued to the Enforcement Agent as an alternative method of collection.

Question 8

What are your views on how the Welsh Government, the Valuation Office Agency, councils, or other organisations can modernise the service provided to taxpayers and improve transparency of the council tax system?

Proposed response

Data sharing between Land Reg and Wales Revenue Service could be improved to provide a more joined up service ensuring the accuracy of the taxbase. Notification of property sales would be beneficial.

Question 9

What is your view on the existing discounts, disregarded persons, exemptions or premiums? For example, do you think the current rules are appropriate and fit-for-purpose? Are there particular aspects of the rules which you think need to change or new rules created?

Proposed response

Currently students / apprentices / SMI are disregarded for council tax purposes which can lead to a 25% discount. Apprentices are earning and many students have jobs, SMI customers claim higher rates of disability.

Appendix 1 – Consultation questions and proposed responses

Consideration should be given to remove the disregard for these people. There is no disregard for a person on JSA / IS of approximately £70 per week living with a liable person, many students, apprentices and SMI people have significantly more money than those in receipt of basic benefits.

Question 10

What is your view on whether the Welsh Government should have more flexibility in future to set the rules for the statutory 'single adult' and 'empty property' discounts?

Proposed response

There should be flexibility for Welsh Government to set rules. There should be consistency in the level of discounts for the statutory "single adult" throughout Wales for a consistent, fair and joined up approach

Question 11

What is your view on how reductions in council tax for properties adapted for use by people living with a disability could be amended, simplified or improved?

Proposed response

No comment

Question 12

Should the Welsh Government be able to amend titles and descriptions of any discount, disregarded person or exemption? Do you think any of the current titles should be changed? What would you consider to be a more appropriate term to replace 'severely mentally impaired'?

Proposed response

Yes Welsh Government should be able to amend descriptions as and when necessary. The only title that is considered inappropriate at present is the SMI. However it is difficult to come up with an alternative name, possibly consider Severe Cognitive Impairment. Whatever the name it must reflect the severity of the disability as merely calling it Disabled Discount will attract high volumes of people who consider themselves disabled.

Appendix 1 – Consultation questions and proposed responses

Question 13

The Welsh Government expects there to be a continued need to support low-income households in paying their council tax bills. Do you have any views about the design of the current scheme, including whether it should continue to be means-tested? Do you have any general views about the scheme?

Proposed response

It seems right that Council Tax Support is calculated using taxpayer's income / capital as this reflects their ability to pay. However changes in entitlement to UC mean data shares which result in monthly recalculations of CTRS for what can be very small changes in the amount of UC awarded. This in turn leads to monthly council tax adjustment notices being issues causing confusion for tax payers and frequently changing amounts payable. This is a burden to administer, costly in time, paper, postage and staff resources. A tolerance figure (possible no requirement to action any changes in UC of less than a set figure) would assist in reducing the number of recalculations required. A tolerance could also be applied to increases in other income to avoid constant recalculation of entitlement.

The current tariff income for capital can also be an administrative burden as capital can fluctuate month by month and doesn't represent the true value of income you would receive from that capital. The current tariff income rules could be removed but keep the qualifying limit for capital of £16,000. Anyone with capital exceeding £16,000 would not be eligible as is the case at present.

Question 14

Should Welsh Ministers have a duty to set a national scheme, to be administered locally by councils, which allows the Welsh Government to make in-year changes if required?

Proposed response

Yes a national scheme should be provide by ministers with in year changes to accommodate unexpected events/issues but these should be kept to a minimum and only for exceptional circumstances as this could impact on the administration of CTRS and resulting software changes.

Question 15

Should the existing local arrangements form part of the new national scheme

Appendix 1 – Consultation questions and proposed responses

for consistency, whilst acknowledging that councils still retain existing discretionary powers under legislation?

Proposed response

From the information provide it seems that all Welsh authorities deal with the two elements of the discretionary powers in the same manner. These could therefore form part of the national scheme and the period of backdating could be the only discretionary element.

Question 16

We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposed policies would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourable than English. What effects do you think there could be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Proposed response

No comment

Question 17

Please also explain how you believe the proposed policies could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Proposed response

No comment

Question 18

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Proposed responses

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Appendix 1 – Consultation questions and proposed responses

The amount of money included within the total Welsh Government Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) for CTRS has remained at £244m since the introduction of the scheme in 2013. The cost of the scheme in Wales for the 2021/22 financial years was estimated to be £287.6m (*source: WG Council tax Reduction Scheme Annual Report 2021/22*).

This means that by default the difference of £43.6m between the funding provided with the SSA and the cost to local authorities falls entirely on local taxpayers. This will disproportionately effect those Council's who have a greater number of households accessing the CTRS and is clearly unfair.

The Barnett Formula

Whilst not the subject of this consultation we feel that representation should be made to the UK Government in relation to reviewing the Barnett Formula. As Welsh Ministers will be aware the formula was introduced in 1979 as a temporary measure and has served its time. A thorough review is required in order that funding to the devolved administrations adequately reflects the needs of those countries.

Data Sharing

Better data sharing, especially between the WRA / LA's/ HMRC would benefit all involved in public service delivery

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

Wednesday 19th October 2022

Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration – S. Brennan

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Implementation

1. Purpose of the Report:

To seek Members approval on the proposed implementation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Neath Port Talbot, ensuring consistency with the South West Wales region.

2. Executive Summary:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda. The fund provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.

This report provides a background and overview to the Fund and sets out the proposed implementation of the Fund. The report follows on from the July 2022 Cabinet report where Members approved the

UKSPF regional Investment Plan which was subsequently submitted to UK government and is due for approval in October 2022.

3. Background and overview of UK Shared Prosperity Fund:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK Government’s Levelling Up agenda. The fund provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.

The fund will replace *some* aspects of European Structural and Investment Funds and will invest in domestic priorities and target funding where there is evidence of need including:

- Building pride in place
- Supporting high quality skills training
- Supporting pay, employment and productivity growth
- Increasing life chances

The Fund is a mix of revenue and capital funding and will be ‘unlocked’ via a three year Investment Plan. The Neath Port Talbot UKSPF allocation over 3 years, from April 2022 to March 2025 is:

3.1 Neath Port Talbot allocation

NPT	UKSPF Core	Multiply	Total
	28,448,295	5,938,236	34,386,531

Less 4% administrative fee for Lead Body

NPT	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Core	4,201,594	7,352,790	15,755,979	27,310,363
Multiply	877,032	1,534,806	3,288,869	5,700,707

3.2 UKSPF Investment Priorities and Interventions

There are 3 UKSPF Investment Priorities:

- 1) Communities and place
- 2) Supporting local business
- 3) People and skills

In addition to core UKSPF funding, there is funding specific to 'Multiply' which is currently focused on adult numeracy, however there is on-going discussion to allow more flexibility in the use of the Multiply fund.

3.3 UKSPF Interventions¹

There are a number of pre-approved interventions linked to each of the three priorities and projects will need to be developed in line with these flexible interventions.

3.4 UKSPF Outputs and outcomes²

There are specific outputs and outcomes which need to be delivered by UKSPF projects and these outputs and outcomes will be monitored and reported.

3.5 UKSPF Governance

The City and County of Swansea is the designated lead Local Authority for the purposes of the UKSPF in the South West Wales region.

Neath Port Talbot Council's Strategic Funding Programmes Team is leading the implementation of the UKSPF for the county borough.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-interventions-outputs-and-indicators>

In line with the UKSPF prospectus, local partnerships will be a core component of how the Fund will be administered locally and need to have a comprehensive and balanced membership. The Neath Port Talbot local partnership arrangements for UKSPF are being finalised and will be a consultative / advisory partnership.

The Local Authority Regional Directors Group will provide regional endorsement for the SPF projects in the South West Wales region.

Neath Port Talbot Cabinet will have the decision making role in respect of the UKSPF in Neath Port Talbot.

3.6 UKSPF Investment Plan

The regional Investment Plan was prepared by the four local authorities in South West Wales and submitted to UK government in August 2022 and is due for approval in October 2022.

The Investment Plan is a high level document which identifies challenges and opportunities supported by evidence.

Members approved the regional Investment Plan at the Cabinet meeting in July 2022.

The regional Investment Plan is at **Appendix 2** for information.

4. Implementation

Work is progressing on the implementation of the UKSPF programme on a regional basis to provide as much commonality as possible and consistency with the implementation statement in the regional Investment Plan and UKSPF guidance. This work is aligned to the following principles:

- That we must achieve a rapid start to ensure allocations are fully taken up each year of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme;
- That implementation will be devolved to the local level, despite the programme being structured around a regional plan and with a regional lead;
- That so far as possible, we minimise the number of legal agreements and SLAs in part by taking advantage of Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) guidance that we can deliver in-house if we wish;
- That the UKSPF's interventions will be planned and delivered by local authorities (delegated delivery model) working with local partners via a number of delivery models.

Proposed implementation

To ensure an evidence based, targeted approach to delivering the UKSPF it is proposed that the following implementation approach is adopted based on four delivery models:

4.1 Anchor Projects

These are thematic projects managed by anchor teams that will address the challenges and opportunities in the Investment Plan and will deliver major parts of the Investment Plan.

Each Anchor project will be delivered by an anchor team and co-ordinated through a local board / partnership structure to include organisations involved in the delivery of the UKSPF priority area.

The proposed anchor projects for Neath Port Talbot are:

- Place
- Valleys and villages
- Sustainable communities
- Economic development

- Employability
- Skills

Anchor projects need to determine how they add value to other funding programmes and investments in the area including Levelling Up Fund, national employment support programme, existing skills provision, Welsh Government business support programmes, City Deal projects and programmes, etc.

4.2 Third party grant schemes

Third party grant schemes will be integrated into the anchor projects to ensure alignment and complementarity of provision with the anchors and UKSPF priorities and will address the challenges and opportunities identified in the Investment Plan. In some areas grant schemes may be run by the sector such as a Third sector grant scheme, however there would be an expectation that the organisation running such schemes would report to the Anchor team. It is envisaged that in each Local Authority these will provide:

- Grants to voluntary and community groups (also town and community councils) under the Communities and Place theme.
- Grants to businesses under the Supporting Local Businesses theme for capital equipment and innovation to improve productivity, achieve decarbonisation and reduce waste, plus range of other options along business development cycle. Wage subsidies may be funded if targeted on disadvantaged workers.
- Grants primarily to the third sector and private sector to support activity previously supported by national provision e.g. employability.

4.3 Standalone projects

These will be invited by competitive bidding rounds to fill clear gaps in delivering the Investment Plan and meet local need, align to anchor projects, and are not being met by 1 and 2 above.

4.4 Commissioned projects

These will be specified and procured to deliver precisely defined activity that is not being fulfilled by 1, 2 and 3 above.

4.5 Project Development

Local Authorities have already started collating information on proposed UKSPF projects provided by Council officers and key strategic partners. These are not bids or applications for funding, but simply provide an indication of the types of projects that the Council and other organisations may wish to deliver, and also the magnitude of resources needed.

Officers have also been contacted by national (primarily Welsh) and some very local organisations seeking funding. We envisage that the best way of small local organisations accessing UKSPF will be through grant schemes, hence the intention to put these in place as quickly as possible. National bodies will be able to compete for funding for standalone or commissioned projects.

4.6 Cross-cutting Themes

It is anticipated that the cross-cutting priorities of Neath Port Talbot's Corporate Plan and Local Economic Recovery plan are reflected wherever possible in all UKSPF activity including Net zero and sustainable growth.

4.7 Anchor projects – initial proposals

The table below starts to map out how each UKSPF Priority will be delivered in Neath Port Talbot. It is a working document and will be

developed further following stakeholder consultation as the implementation work progresses.

The Skills anchor project also needs further consideration and dialogue with FE and HE as to the most appropriate delivery mechanisms to align to the gaps identified in the regional skills plan.

SPF Priority	Proposed Anchor Project	Proposed activity
Communities & Place	Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Master planning
	Valleys & villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valleys & villages growth fund
	Sustainable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable communities growth fund • Third Sector Growth Fund
Supporting local business	Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth fund • Sector development • SME support
People and skills	Employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment support • Third sector employability grants fund
	Skills incl multiply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills • Green skills (based on gaps identified in the regional skills plan)

5. Timeline

Date	Activity
13/04/2022	UKSPF Fund launched
April – July 2022	Investment Plan development and consultation with local partners and regional / national stakeholders
August 2022	Investment Plan submitted to UK government
August – October 2022	South West Wales regional working group developing UKSPF implementation plan, processes and governance structures.
October 2022	Investment Plan approval by UK government Finalise the design of the Anchor projects Key stakeholder engagement of Anchor projects
Winter 2022 / 23	Anchor project mobilisation period Launch grant schemes
March 2025	End of UKSPF funding period

6. Financial Impacts:

No implications.

7. 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.

See **Annex 1** for IIA

8. Valleys Communities Impacts:

The nature of the proposed Investment Plan will have a positive impact on the valley communities and is aligned to the Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan, Neath Port Talbot Economic Recovery Plan and the Wellbeing Assessments.

9. Workforce Impacts:

The Strategic Funding Programmes Team will manage the Fund at the local level, and recruitment is in progress to ensure sufficient resource is in place.

All UKSPF projects will need to ensure appropriate resource is included in the application for funding.

10. Legal Impacts:

No implications. Though it should be noted that any procurement activities will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

11. Risk Management Impacts:

There are no risk management issues associated with this report. The UKSPF application form will require applicants to develop a risk register which will be managed as part of the project plan. Due diligence checks will be carried out.

The Strategic Funding Programmes Team will programme manage the UKSPF in Neath Port Talbot to ensure compliant and effective delivery.

12. Consultation:

This item has been subject to external consultation. The following consultation has taken place:

Consultation event	Date
NPT Local Economic Forum – extended meeting	29/09/2022
Regional Local Authority Regeneration Directors	06/10/2022

A UKSPF engagement plan has been developed and is in delivery with regular engagement with local, regional and national stakeholders.

13. Recommendations:

It is recommended that, having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment screening:

- 1) Members agree the Implementation Plan as detailed in this report.**

- 2) **Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) to enter into grant agreements or associated documentation that might be necessary to draw down funding from the UKSPF.**
- 3) **Members to note that a report will follow seeking agreement on the Neath Port Talbot Anchor projects.**

14. Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To enable Neath Port Talbot Council to develop anchor projects and formally submit to the assessment process

15. Implementation of Decision:

The decision is an urgent one for immediate implementation, subject to the consent of the relevant Scrutiny Chair (and is therefore not subject to the call-in procedure.)

16. Appendices:

Appendix 1 - IIA
Appendix 2 - regional Investment Plan

17. List of Background Papers:

UKSPF Prospectus & additional information

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Officer Contact:

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Designation: Strategic Funding Programmes Manager

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Impact Assessment - First Stage

It is essential that all initiatives undergo a first stage impact assessment to identify relevance to equalities and the Welsh language as well as an evaluation of how the proposal has taken into account the sustainable development principle (the five ways of working); an incorrect assessment could ultimately be open to legal challenge.

The first stage is to carry out a short assessment to help determine the need to undertake a more in-depth analysis (the second stage).

Relevance will depend not only on the number of people/service users affected, but also the significance of the effect on them.

When completing the first step you must have regard to the following:

- Does the initiative relate to an area where important equality issues have been, or are likely to be, raised? (For example, funding for services to assist people who are victims of rape/sexual violence or individuals with particular care need; disabled people's access to public transport; the gender pay gap; racist or homophobic bullying in schools)
- Is there a significant potential for reducing inequalities, or improving outcomes? (For example, increasing recruitment opportunities for disabled people).
- Does the initiative relate to instances where opportunities to use the Welsh language are likely to be affected or where the language is likely to be treated less favourably? (For example, increase the number of Welsh speakers moving from/to a certain area; closing specific Welsh language services or put those services at risk services;
- Does the initiative relate to the improvement of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being? To what extent does the initiative prevent things getting worse? (For example, funding for services to assist in cultural well-being; changes in policies that promote independence and/or assist carers)

1. Provide a description and summary of the initiative.

Identify which service area and directorate has responsibility for the initiative.

2. Identify who will be affected by the initiative.

If you answer **Yes** to service users, staff or wider community continue with the first stage of the assessment

If you answer **No** to service users, staff or wider community or **Yes** to 'Internal administrative process only', go to **Question 5 – sustainable development principle**.

3. Using relevant and appropriate information and data that is available to you think about what impact there could be on people who share protected characteristics; whether they are service users, staff or the wider community.

Some things to consider include:

- transport issues
- accessibility
- customer service
- cultural sensitivity
- financial implications
- loss of jobs

Definitions of impacts (either positive or negative):

- High – likely to be highly affected by the initiative
- Medium - likely to be affected in some way
- Low - likely to be affected by the initiative in a small way
- Don't know - the potential impact is unknown

You **must** provide reasons, and indicate what evidence you used, in coming to your decision.

4. Using relevant and appropriate information and data that is available, think about what impact there could be on opportunities to use the Welsh language and in treating the language no less favourably than English.

Definitions of impacts are the same as in **Question 3**.

The classification 'Don't Know' should be categorised as 'High Impact' in both questions 3 & 4.

5. Consider how the initiative has embraced the sustainable development principle in accordance with the Section 7c of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

Give details of the initiative in relation to the 5 ways of working:

- **Long term** - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people
- **Integration** - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives
- **Involvement** - how people have been involved in developing the initiative
- **Collaboration** - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions;
- **Prevention** - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse

6. The most appropriate statement must be selected (and the relevant box ticked) based on the first stage of the assessment and an explanation of how you have arrived at this decision must be given.

In addition a summary of the how the initiative has embraced the sustainable development principle must also be included.

Where the first stage of the assessment indicates that a more in-depth analysis is required the second stage of the assessment will need to be completed and this will need to be started immediately.

A first stage assessment must be included as a background paper for all Cabinet/Cabinet Board/ Scrutiny Committee Reports.

Where the first stage assessment is completed by an accountable manager it must be signed off by a Head of Service/Director.

Impact Assessment - First Stage

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative description and summary:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.

To access its allocation, Neath Port Talbot is required to set out measurable outcomes that reflect local needs and opportunities. These should then inform the interventions we wish to deliver and we are able to choose from investment across three investment priorities of communities and place, local business and people and skills.

These interventions will be set out in a local Investment Plan which will feed into a regional investment plan and then submitted to the UK government for approval.

This first stage IIA relates to the development of the Neath Port Talbot Local Investment Plan.

Service Area: Property and Regeneration

Directorate: Environment & Regeneration

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			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Disability		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Gender Reassignment		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Marriage/Civil Partnership		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Pregnancy/Maternity		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Race		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Religion/Belief		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Sex		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.
Sexual orientation		X			L	The nature of this plan will have no impact on this characteristic.

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?
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People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		X				In line with the Council's Corporate Plan and Welsh Language policy, any publications or public communications regarding the project, to include press releases, social media posts, etc. will be translated into Welsh and will be released with no time delay
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		x				In line with the Council's Corporate Plan and Welsh Language policy, any publications or public communications regarding the project, to include press releases, social media posts, etc. will be translated into Welsh and will be released with no time delay

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			L	The nature of the investment plan will have no impact on biodiversity.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		x			L	The nature of the investment plan will have no impact on this biodiversity.

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

	Yes	No	Details
Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people			<p>The proposed project will support the Council's Corporate Plan to Recover, Reset, Renew, by delivering directly towards the following Well Being Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children get the best start in life • All communities are thriving and sustainable • Our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations • Jobs and skills - local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives			As above
Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative			As above
Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions			As above
Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse			As above

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

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	X
Reasons for this conclusion	
In line with Neath Port Talbot IIA screening form guidance, it has been determined that a full assessment is not appropriate in this instance, as the scheme will have a low impact on protected characteristics.	

A full impact assessment (second stage) is required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Julia Lewis	Strategic Funding Officer	J.Lewis	21.06.2022
Signed off by	Simon Brennan	Head of Service/Director	S Brennan	21.06.2022

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UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Investment Plan Drafting Template

Version 2
May 2022

Your location

To be eligible for funding, you will need to be applying on behalf of a lead authority in one of the [delivery geographies](#).

Select the lead authority: Swansea Council

For Scotland and Wales only: Who else is this investment plan being submitted on behalf of? Select all that apply

Carmarthenshire County Council

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Pembrokeshire County Council

Your details

Name:

Email address:

Phone number

Organisation name: Swansea Council

Local challenges and opportunities

In this section, we will ask you:

- If you've identified any challenges or opportunities, you intend to support
- Which of the UKSPF investment priorities these fall under

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

South West Wales has a diverse economy and a unique set of natural and cultural assets. Economically, our industrial heritage combines with some of the UK's most significant marine energy potential, driving major opportunities for decarbonisation and the growth of the UK's Green Economy. Environmentally, the coastline and countryside – including the Pembrokeshire Coast and Brecon Beacons National Parks and the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – contribute to a superb visitor offer and quality of life. Culturally, the region encompasses the dynamic, growing university city of Swansea, a diverse and distinctive network of rural towns and an increasingly vibrant Welsh language.

The region contains much diversity, especially within the rural/ urban dimension. Despite diversity across the region, there is substantial commonality, and some of the big opportunities have a region-wide footprint. However, some of them extend beyond the region itself, and outward facing links will be important. A range of key questions present themselves under the banner of community cohesion:

- How we respond to the needs of our ageing population so that people can live healthy, long and good lives;
- How we can continue to deliver excellent public services whilst unprecedented cuts to public spending continues;
- How we can reduce the gap between the least and most deprived in each county, especially our children and young people so that every child has the best start in life;

- How we help communities to sustain themselves and build a climate where people look out for one another;
- How we balance the changing expectations of a generation who demand services through new technologies, whilst making sure that those who are presently digitally excluded are not left behind;
- How we make sure we protect and enhance our local environment so that it can be appreciated for many generations to come;
- How to address loneliness, isolation, mental health;
- How we rebalance the distribution of opportunity and wealth between urban centres and rural / valley communities.

Common challenges across the region under the Communities and Place priority are:

Revitalising City Centre, Town Centres and Villages

Swansea City Centre, our towns and smaller communities are the focal points for economic and social activity across the region. The move away from the high street to internet and out-of-town shopping, coupled with a lack of fit for purpose commercial and retail premises were creating growing levels of vacant premises and declining footfall even before the covid pandemic.

Declining footfall and increasing costs are reducing businesses' ability to invest in the appearance of their premises. This has a negative impact on attractiveness of high streets and local pride in place, and creating a downward spiral. This situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic, with the failure of local and national retailers leading to increased numbers of vacant premises and successive lockdowns hitting footfall, marring the vibrancy of high streets across the region.

Springboard data for June 2022 shows that, whilst footfall in Swansea city centre is starting to recover it remains 24.2% below pre pandemic 2019 levels. In Pembrokeshire, vacancy rates remain above Wales' national average for Fishguard, Haverfordwest, Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock. Milford Haven town centre recorded the highest vacancy rate of A class units in Pembrokeshire in 2021 at 29%.

There is an imbalance in uses across places between retail, leisure, hospitality, residential – and the start of a shift that occurred during the pandemic to build on. There is a lack of smaller scale commercial space for micro businesses and opportunities to capitalise on the potential for co-working spaces in local communities to provide an alternative to the increase in home working that has occurred during the pandemic.

This is a continued need to invest in the city centre, town centres and villages across the region to:

- encourage sustainable growth and their transformation into places to live, work, learn and take part in leisure activities;
- Attract a greater diversity of uses;
- Enhance the town centre environment, public realm, heritage and cultural offer, both for existing residents and for new investors and visitors;
- Improve accessibility (for example, building on the experience of the new Port Talbot transport interchange);
- Secure alternative uses for redundant properties, including meanwhile use;
- Attract commercial investment;
- Develop opportunities for community ownership and leadership.

Up to this point a predominance of capital funding and lack of revenue support has constrained the ability to design targeted interventions to support communities and business such as events and other footfall generators.

Covid Recovery, Poverty and Cost of Living Crisis

In common with all parts of the UK, South West Wales continues to suffer from the impact of the Covid pandemic and subsequent global economic shocks impacting on cost of living. For example, approximately 21,000 working age adults and 7,500 children live on an income of less than 60% median in Neath Port Talbot, household incomes (£16,262 in 2019) in Swansea are below Wales (by 5.8%) and UK levels (by 24.1%) and growing more slowly, 29,444 households in Carmarthenshire are living in poverty. These lower wage levels are being squeezed by the cost of living crisis with rising energy and food costs making it

increasingly difficult for households to make ends meet, with fuel and food poverty impacts amongst others. Those in the most difficult circumstances prior to these shocks are now in an even worse position. Food banks are prevalent across the region.

The pandemic has increased loneliness and isolation, reduced confidence and had a negative impact on mental health. Limitations in information flow within communities, and an over-reliance on social media, leaves out significant part of demographics of places. We need to create opportunities to bring people back into local community activity, and build capacity in local communities and empower more grass roots activity to reduce the dependency on the public sector

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, commenting on DWP data from May 2020, Pembrokeshire has the highest rate of child poverty in Wales with 31.3% of children living in poverty after housing costs were taken into account. The effect of poverty on children has been well-researched, and is known to result in poorer physical and mental health, lower educational attainment and impaired life chances whether measured in terms of career progression, contact with the criminal justice system or life expectancy.

Poverty is found in every part of the region, and in many places there are above average rates of poverty and deprivation that will require more targeted interventions. In the 2019 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), Swansea has an above average proportion of its Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) featuring in the most deprived 10% in Wales, with 17 (11.5%) of its 148 LSOAs in the 191 (10%) most deprived. In Neath Port Talbot, the greatest concentrations of deprivation according to WIMD 2019 were in Sandfields and Aberavon within the Port Talbot urban area, Briton Ferry, parts of Neath and the area around Croeserw in the upper Afan Valley. More generally, the distribution of deprivation is associated with parts of urban Neath and Port Talbot and with the post-industrial upper Valleys.

With the continued increase in the cost of living the challenge is to improve living standards to ensure those in employment are not worse off than they were on benefits. There is an increased requirement for additional welfare rights support, debt advice, financial support and digital inclusion to access online services, as well as ensuring access to wellbeing enhancing facilities and open spaces, but also extends to involvement in and benefiting from community-based measures to reduce the cost of living.

Ageing population

Responding effectively to the needs of ageing population can place additional pressures on services, therefore helping people to age well and lead as independent lives as possible is both a challenge, and an opportunity. A key consideration in this regard is ensuring that older people have access to existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions to counter the effects of isolation. This extends to ensuring that older people have access to local sports facilities to enjoy appropriate and relevant activities to increase wellbeing. In addition, the rates of older people in poverty are increasing, thought in part to be as a result of individuals entering retirement with insufficient savings or earnings. This is made worse by the rising cost of living and compounded by the fact that pensioners have very little opportunity to increase their income to counteract these effects. Evidence also indicates that pensioners are least likely to check what benefits they are entitled to. It is therefore imperative that older people are able to benefit from community-based measures to reduce the cost of living.

Disability and Health Conditions

A significant cohort of individuals with disabilities or limiting health conditions exists across the region. It is particularly important therefore, that consideration is given to ensuring that these individuals are able to make positive contributions to their local communities and enjoy the services and activities available. There are opportunities here to ensure that improvements made to existing (or the creation of new developments) are designed with these individuals in mind. This is both an access issue and a relevance issue. In addition, individuals from this group are more likely to be detrimentally affected by the cost-of-living crisis and therefore there are opportunities here to support these individuals through inclusion in developments designed to counter these affects (as noted above). Since the onset of the pandemic, there has been an increased complexity in support needs seen with mental health issues, contributing to individuals needing longer and more intense periods of support.

There is much evidence which substantiates the positive impacts that the natural and built landscape can have on wellbeing, serving to counteract the sometimes-devastating effects of mental health issues for

individuals and their families. There are clear opportunities here for consideration to be given to the design of community-based interventions and in improvements made to the accessibility of these services.

Wellbeing

Covid-19 has had a severe impact on mental health. Mind Cymru has reported that more than half of adults (60% of those over 25) and three quarters of young people (74% of those aged 13-24), said that their mental health has worsened during the period of lockdown restrictions in spring 2021. Loneliness affects the mental health of young people more significantly than the mental health of older people. While over three quarters (78%) of young people said that loneliness had made their mental health worse during lockdown, this rose to 85% for 18–24-year-olds.

Isolation is not limited to older people - there are also many young people that lack the confidence and ability to access services, many of whom do not have access to transport.

Rural and Valley communities

South West region is characterised by rurality, which sets our places and destinations in stunning natural environment, but also presents challenges in delivery of and access to services in areas of very low population density, ongoing viability of small farming communities, transport connectivity, and balancing pressures of destination management from a tourism/visitor perspective, and sustainable development and survival of local communities.

All four counties have a significant part of their geography in rural settings, which read as a continuous green and coastal belts. Around the city core of Swansea and suburban town centres, 60% of the county is rural in nature, with significant pockets of semi-rural settlements interspersed with suburban zones. An estimated 61% of the population of Carmarthenshire live in rural settings. Beyond the coastal strip and the major towns of Neath Port Talbot, the county borough is extensively rural, containing several relatively remote, primarily post-industrial communities. North of the M4, settlement patterns follow the main valleys: east to west, these are the Afan Valley, the Vale of Neath, the Dulais Valley, the upper Swansea Valley and part of the upper Amman Valley around Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen. Rural Neath Port Talbot also contains important natural and heritage assets, including Afan Forest Park and the Aberdulais Falls. These read across to Clydach, Mawr and Pontardulais in Swansea county, leading through to Ammanford and the West. Carmarthenshire is characterised by a relatively high number of sparse settlements anchored by three main towns; Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford. Home to over 190,000 people it is the 4th largest county in Wales in terms of population size and exhibits a comparatively low population density of 80.2. Carmarthenshire's topography is one that creates a number of challenges and subsequent opportunities, the most pertinent are explored below in the context of some key themes.

These communities face unique challenges and opportunities when compared to the urban areas that are consistent with the rural economy across Wales. Close proximity to larger urban centres in the region often overshadows the unique rural challenges faced in the region.

Public transport is a major challenge and a barrier to accessing employment to those within valley and rural communities. Reliance on public transport has become more and more difficult due to service bus cuts - where buses do run they run on a limited time schedule which is not appropriate for early morning or late evening shift working. Transport availability impacting on the health of residents within rural and valleys areas due to being unable to attend hospital, dental and GP appointments.

Tourism is a key sector in the rural economy, and there is an established and growing network of local food and drink producers that are putting South West Wales on the map as a food destination.

The stunning natural environment is at the heart of the 'quality of life' proposition, and of central importance to the wider region's tourism offer and to its attractiveness to potential residents and investors. The close proximity of the natural environment and dense urban settings is both a challenge and a major unique selling point, but needs to be handled sensitively and sustainably.

Links between production and the network of large and small retail centres throughout the region were highlighted during the early months of the Covid pandemic, and even a small shift in buying habits was more

than small traders could cope with, pointing to a 'making do' situation on smaller high streets that retains vibrancy and a good income for small traders where appropriate.

Delivery of services and the subsequent access to those services creates specific challenges including:

- Lower population densities make achieving relative economies of scale difficult, this can include a low number of customers for services to support, making delivery costs expensive as well as limiting potential engagement opportunities.
- Large travel distances increase the time and cost for accessing services, this can hinder an individual's ability to feel connected to their communities, worsen isolation and reduce feelings of local pride and belonging. This is especially pertinent for marginalised groups.
- Poor digital connectivity and issues with 'the last mile of connectivity' remain a significant challenge for many in the most rural areas, although this has improved somewhat in recent years.

There is a need for interventions to support the recovery and growth of rural towns and their surrounding areas, including opportunities to enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities through focusing investment to create quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in.

Access to Services

21.4% of Carmarthenshire's and 38% of Pembrokeshire's Lower Super output areas are identified within the top 10% most deprived in relation to access to services (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019). This is largely due to the rurality of the counties. The third sector plays a significant role in delivering services and reaching vulnerable residents within these counties, and across the wider region, which has been particularly evident during the pandemic. There are opportunities to expand and build on the third sector's role in delivering effective and resource efficient services and to further support structural changes within the sector.

Climate emergency/ decarbonisation and Nature Emergency

Dealing with the climate and nature emergency, and contributing to net zero ambitions by supporting local communities and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, improve habitats and enhance biodiversity. This includes the need to consider climate risks and interventions for climate adaptation and maximising the potential for renewable energy and increasing green infrastructure and urban greening in communities vulnerable to climate change. There is a lack of signage and legibility of green spaces where these intersect with urban settings.

Environmental challenges include:

- Air quality;
- Flooding in our main town centres;
- A lack of green space and play space required to enhance biodiversity and improve health and well-being.
- Loss of habitat and key infrastructure as a result of flooding, storms and erosion, agricultural intensification. Invasive non-native species and development pressure worsened by the effect of climate change and a need to improve resilience of infrastructure on the back of this
- Reduced biodiversity

Linked to town centre regeneration, there is still a challenge in achieving accessible good quality green spaces, and access to the natural environment from our urban spaces across the region. Consideration needs to be given to access for marginalised groups.

More needs to be done to reap the benefits of green infrastructure in all its variations from buildings and infrastructure to low carbon climate resilient infrastructure, renewable energy generation and skills development to prime the workforce for the Green economy.

In addition, more needs to be done to harness the potential of the circular economy which is a key element of the net zero agenda and has many elements (from re-fit, repair, re-making through sustainable design and manufacture to considerations of natural resources and land use). In addition, the circular economy approach can also be used to engage citizens and raise awareness of climate change and the decarbonisation agenda.

This will promote investment in a more circular / regenerative economy - promoting more sustainable use of our natural resources and using waste as a resource.

Crime

A rise in anti-social behaviour has been recorded across town centres. In the year to June 2021 there was a 5.7% decrease in overall recorded crimes in Swansea, on the previous 12 months, but the biggest increases (over +10%) occurred in possession of drugs and public order offences. Anti-social behaviour and street homelessness are influencing perceptions of local high streets and there are opportunities to introduce targeted structured longer term interventions to address these issues. New Public Space Protection Orders have been put in place for parts of Swansea City Centre, Morriston high street and Haverfordwest. Of the 10% (190) most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales in terms of Community Safety, six are within Carmarthenshire which cover the three community areas of Carmarthenshire's biggest three towns; Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford, 15 are in Swansea, 6 in Pembrokeshire and 5 in Neath Port Talbot.

Some of the challenges linked to Anti-Social Behaviour are as follows:

- Difficulty to evidence the issues and put in place appropriate interventions due to under reporting;
- Youth disengagement and the need for diversionary activities in our communities, particularly post covid / lockdown;
- Public perception - there has been significant investment recently to regenerate and develop our towns which is overshadowed by bad press and media about a small number of individuals causing issues;
- Neighbour disputes have increased dramatically during lockdown and there continues to be issues around some of these, despite restrictions lifting.

Challenges around domestic abuse is as follows:

- The changing picture of domestic abuse as technology has moved on over the past few years - we are seeing more issues about stalking, scams, cyber-crime in domestic abuse cases;
- Number of victims with very complex needs who need more than just support for domestic abuse but other factors like mental health or addiction, we need to make it easier for people to access the support;
- There have been gaps in Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) delivery throughout lockdown and we are now seeing the effects of that, with children not as aware of healthy relationships as they would have been, or consent and similar topics.

Tourism, Sport & Leisure, Culture

Tourism and cultural activities are an important driver for the region, both in terms of employment and economic contribution. There are opportunities for further growth. Experience of place is a key mission of the Regional Economic Delivery Plan based on the rich fabric of destinations interspersed throughout the region. The sheer variety of offer within easy travel reach presents a compelling offer, but challenges remain, and securing sustainable growth with respect to net zero and respecting impact on local communities and how to harness the opportunity successfully to their benefit not detriment. This sector has also been severely impacted by the effects of the pandemic and behavioural change which has a lasting legacy for workforce and capacity. Research shows that leisure and cultural activities are key to ensuring we have positive well-being and help alleviate loneliness and provide a sense of purpose. Increasing access to such facilities is also a key priority.

Some of the key challenges include:

- Encouraging overnight stays to increase the economic contribution of tourism;
- Establishing regional destinations as an 'alternative' destination with on-going investment in the tourism product;
- Changing the perceptions of parts of the region as predominantly urban or industrial area to gain recognition for regional assets in terms of valley and rural areas, coast and urban areas.

Swansea received over 4.79m visitors in 2019, with tourism generating over £477m expenditure in the local economy. Investment is needed in tourism, cultural, sporting and leisure assets across the county to improve quality, breadth and sustainability of the 'experience' offer for both visitors and residents alike. Promotion of this offer more widely will raise the profile of Swansea as an attractive place to live, work, visit, study and

invest and increased participation of local residents in cultural, sporting and leisure activities will have a positive impact on wellbeing

Heritage

In some areas there is a lack of interpretation of key sites and destinations and understanding of heritage of these places for local and civic pride, and reading as a destination on the back of those stories. For example, in Swansea whilst there is a rich industrial heritage there are difficulties supporting key listed buildings and structures and 'heritage for heritage sake' is impacting on lack of civic pride in place. Run-down buildings and facilities in parts of county, and in particular character features e.g. locally manufactured brick and pennant stone features, are not understood or emphasised.

Active Travel

Overall priority of private vehicles is also having a major impact on legibility of places, and damaging character and destination. Active travel routes need to take priority to enable people to move safely and sustainably between local communities to access local services and employment. Large sections of our population are in transport poverty needing to spend 10% or more of their income to run a car for example (Sustrans Cymru).

Transport is frequently raised as an issue which exacerbates loneliness and isolation. Smaller and lower density rural and valley communities face particular challenges where access to public transport is poor especially for those with mobility issues. Even in urban areas people have difficulty accessing transport as in many instances they cannot get to the bus stop. Community transport is provided to enable older people, many of whom live alone, to access social activity which reduces isolation and keeps attendees mentally active, but employment zones are often difficult to reach with limited timetables from mainstream transport providers, which needs consideration. Timing of services rarely takes account of shift working patterns etc.

Digital

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we live our lives for many of us. Being online has been invaluable during the pandemic, allowing us to remain connected with family and friends, access information and guidance, work from home and use a wide range of services. While many have embraced new ways of accessing digital services, however, there is an increasing digital divide - 11% of our citizens remain offline and excluded from the vital services they need as more and more government and local authority services go online. The lack of digital skills and internet access have a huge impact on people's lives. Access to digital connectivity, technology and skills, are essential to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity, and nobody gets left behind in this digital society. 41% of people aged 75 plus still do not use the internet. Support for older people to get online is a priority to reduce social isolation and have access to the essential services they need.

Welsh Language

A key overarching theme to be considered in the capitalisation of the opportunities mentioned above is the Welsh language. This extends to the protection, promotion and facilitation of the Welsh language in everything that we do, recognising its importance in creating a sense of place for Carmarthenshire and its people. This is in line with the Welsh Government's ambition to have 1 million people in Wales speaking Welsh by 2050 and more local strategic ambitions at a Carmarthenshire level.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Each local area is working constructively through local regeneration partnerships to formulate responses to the challenges set out above. These are presented in the context of our South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan, and relevant local plans and strategies.

Regional Economic Delivery Plan

The Regional Economic Delivery Plan's three 'Missions' will guide future activity over the next ten years and beyond. They are designed to give a clear direction of travel, while remaining sufficiently broad to accommodate a wide range of potential investments that will come forward over time. The three high-level Missions are as follows:

Mission 1: A UK leader in renewable energy and the net zero economy

Looking to 2030, we aim to make South West Wales a UK leader in renewable energy. That means taking advantage of our natural assets and our industrial and R&D capabilities to build an internationally-significant presence in future fuel technologies and to drive the decarbonation of our industrial base and the wide economy

Key Actions:

- Additional Capacity to drive forward the agenda
- Progressing the region's major renewable energy generation projects
- Attracting and driving forward industrial investment
- Decarbonising transport and the housing stock

Mission 2: Building a strong, resilient, and embedded business base.

"Business is at the centre of our strategy to 2030. It will be through the expansion of existing firms and the start-up and attraction of new ones that new employment will be generated and productivity growth secured. That means supporting sustainable business growth – both at the 'leading edge' of technology and innovation and across the economy"

Key Actions:

- Accelerated adoption and innovation support (linked with the recommendations of Wales 4.0 in relation to business, skills and innovation support)
- 'Progressive procurement' within a local business and supply chain development system

Mission 3: Growing and sustaining the South West Wales 'experience' offer

"South West Wales enjoys a superb environment and a unique 'quality of life' offer. This is a key asset for the region, and one which we must protect and enhance. We will make South West Wales known for the quality and breadth of its 'experience' offer', bringing together urban and rural environmental quality, 'quality of life' and culture. This will support a high-value visitor economy – but it will also be locally owned and a central part of our investment proposition".

Key Actions:

- Targeted and coordinated capital investment, including in town and city centres
- Balancing of initiatives at a regional, local and community-driven scale

Cities, Towns and Villages

South West region contains the second largest and smallest of Wales' cities in Swansea and St David's.

The larger district centres in Swansea were largely born of the legacy of the industrial revolution as dormitory zones for the major metal and mining industries across the county, but as the worst effects of the industries fade, attention is turning to telling the story and as part of that enabling local entrepreneurship in all its senses to flourish from a strong base of community and voluntary activity to new micro businesses across all sectors many of whom are beginning to breathe new life into ailing high streets. There is a need to create affordable, attractive and sustainable places to live, learn, work and play across all settings which enhance footfall and patronage to embed local resilience to help weather current and future shocks.

Revitalisation of City Centre, Town Centres and Villages

- Achieving positive influence on places to help foster successful balance of commercial premises of differing sizes, affordable and market housing and complementary facilities.

- Easing 'reading' and navigation of places through softening of public realm, clear and attractive signage and making the most of digital technologies
- Meanwhile space support building on successful pilots and emerging learning and changes in working practices to reduce vacancy rates on high streets and increase footfall to support local businesses
- Increase in events, cultural, sporting and leisure activities to add vibrancy and drive footfall in the city centre and high streets
- Building 'passcards' to enable fluid access to local and central venues to work
- Targeting investment on core towns and villages to strengthen their offer and help them become centres for growth, locations for key hubs to re-engage communities and achieve holistic provision of services.
- Working in partnership, to build sustainable places with excellent public transport and active travel infrastructure, integrated green infrastructure, and critically, mixed-use town centres that meet local needs.
- build on the key role that town centres have in building sustainable places as identified by the Welsh Government Town Centre First principle, which requires new commercial, retail, education, health and public services to be located in town centres.
- Following place-based regeneration model for town centres following the 'Placemaking Wales' approach to create sustainable places and ensure they are appropriate to the place and best support the community
- maximise the opportunities of our town centres and to boost the variety of services on offer in towns – creating flexible working and living space; and increasing access to services and leisure. A number of activities are emerging from the strategy for towns including:
 - The conversion of vacant commercial floor space into residential accommodation;
 - Enhancement and upgrade of vacant commercial floor space into beneficial business use;
 - The provision of green infrastructure and biodiversity projects;
 - The provision of small-scale public realm enhancement schemes;
 - Small-scale acquisitions;
 - The development and enabling of local markets;
 - The establishment of temporary meanwhile or pop up uses in vacant premises;
 - Collective external shop frontage enhancements;
 - Digital towns to support Wi-Fi analytics and Lora Wan networks;
 - Provisions supporting or facilitating active travel routes;
 - Dedicated support to provide toilet provisions;
 - The provision of outdoor play facilities, multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and outdoor recreational pursuits.

Covid Recovery, Poverty and Cost of Living

- Activities to help people emerge from pandemic isolation and embrace opportunities through existing and new community activities, e.g. utilise community buildings to create easily accessible 'warm places' in local communities that can provide a focal point for services and create a place for people to meet, eat and use shared facilities. Helping people to reduce costs and addressing loneliness and isolation.
- Improve local measure for information flow within communities outside of social media
- Providing opportunities for people to engage in volunteering and local community activity, to build capacity in local communities and empower more grass roots activity to reduce the dependency on the public sector
- support communities with the cost-of-living crisis with a focus on fuel and food and other poverty that impacts on our citizens. Build on the work of the 'safe and well' initiative established as the humanitarian response to the pandemic and continue to maximise the impact of working in partnership with the Third Sector.
- The Covid-19 pandemic placed significant strain on our local communities, places and services - introducing socio-economic challenges and exacerbating existing ones. As part of the effort to build back stronger and encourage investment we need to focus our attention to the areas of the region that are key to delivering these outcomes.

Maximising Heritage, Tourism, Culture and Sport Potential

- Feasibility and works for conservation areas and key listed and other important historic structures that embody pride in place, unique selling points and destination, including enhancement of features

constructed of local materials and character e.g. locally manufactured brick and pennant stone features that are not understood or emphasised;

- Better means of telling the story of places for local communities and visitors
- Step-change in interpretation of key sites and destinations and understanding of heritage of these places for local and civic pride and reading as a destination on the back of those stories
- Building capacity and investing in tourism, leisure, sporting and cultural facilities and activities to improve quality of life and the 'experience offer' for residents and visitors, and improve health and wellbeing
- Supporting implementation of key masterplans
- Maximising the potential of the region coast, valley and rural, urban centres, heritage and culture
- heritage-led tourism regeneration opportunities for the development of the visitor economy including community focus to enable heritage groups to play an integral part in the decision making process around the future of heritage assets and sites alongside other key partners.

Rural and Valleys Communities

- Building on the momentum developed through the Rural Development Programme to support active, resilient and connected rural communities and businesses
- Developing shorter circular supply chains between consumers, producers and suppliers, linking rural and urban areas
- learn lessons from the Leader approach and will develop the opportunity of creating a fund to support our valley and rural communities. Work with partners to develop a strategy to target investment in our valley and rural communities and villages.

Active Travel

- Rebalancing priority of private vehicles vs pedestrians and introducing active travel to improve legibility of places, and enhance character and destination
- Maximising the opportunities of alternative accessible models of transport – utilising community transport, car clubs, car schemes, wheels 2 work and also utilising electric vehicles

Decarbonisation/ Climate Adaption and Supporting Nature Recovery

- Enhancing biodiversity and the connectivity of habitats across the region by investing in green infrastructure in local communities
- Improving energy efficiency and carbon footprint of community facilities
- Capitalising on the potential for low carbon energy generation
- Improving signage and legibility of green spaces where these intersect with urban settings
- Working with partners to develop a more circular / regenerative economy - promoting more sustainable use of our natural resources and using waste as a resource to mitigate against climate risks and develop interventions for climate adaptation.
- Investing in specific proposals to adapt to changing climate patterns
- Supporting small scale improvements to air and water quality, and mechanisms to unlock development in areas currently restricted by high nutrient levels
- Natural solutions to challenges linked to climate change, health, wellbeing and cost of living (e.g. flood and nutrient load attenuation, community food growing and access to greenspace)

Crime

- Targeted structural long term interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour on local high streets
- There are opportunities to use innovative solutions to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour, to further develop links with Youth Justice and the Youth Service to look at bridging any gaps and further improve on services. There is an opportunity for a joined up approach across all UKSPF priorities to tackle disengagement.
- It is important to continue to increase awareness of all forms of domestic abuse, through a variety of means, and ensure appropriate training is available.

Digital

Digital transformation over the last few years has changed dramatically. The pandemic has forced us to be more digitally connected. People are now able to work from home in a seamless way, which has improved connectivity and collaboration. Still need to provide opportunities for those who are digitally excluded.

Linking in with community groups to deliver digital inclusion sessions in community building to those who do not have internet access or digital equipment. We need to work with individuals and groups to keep them safe when using digital technology and how to use their equipment and devices correctly to get the best out of digital services.

The Council will work with the Third Sector to ensure organisations are promoting digital inclusion by linking in and identify areas that need support to access digital services.

Reasonable broadband provision across the region opens up opportunities for rural businesses and communities to find additional and innovative ways of exploiting digital infrastructure to improve their communities and place.

Community cohesion

- There is an opportunity for Local Area Coordinators to work with the community to identify and respond to the challenges, needs and opportunities of their local areas.
- Provide capacity support to build on community activities which increased during the pandemic and build resilient communities.
- Work with partners to enhance and support community/cultural/heritage and sporting facilities that are important to our communities.
- There is an opportunity to maximise volunteer effort in communities building on the work that has started during the pandemic where communities are taking pride in where they live.

Foundational Economy

There is potential to explore new approaches to community-led economic development, building on the more active use of local public sector procurement, small business growth in the foundational economy. The establishment of community ownership models, where these present opportunities to retain local wealth from key assets (for example through energy generation, where receipts from local renewable energy schemes could help to incentivise take-up); or where community-owned assets might generate a long term return from economic goods that might prove otherwise commercially unattractive (e.g., small-scale commercial property).

Opportunities to drive local business development through 'progressive procurement' models. Typically, these involve weighting local employment and supply chain benefits within the procurement process; and breaking down commissioning into smaller lots to enable smaller local firms to compete.

A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales (FRIW)

Our proposals under this priority are consistent with the outline of the Framework for Regional Investment in Wales and consistent with the priorities outlined therein.

Priority 1: More Productive and Competitive Businesses

"We want to drive recovery and prosperity by supporting entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses to create and retain sustainable jobs that reflect the principles of Fair Work Wales. We will help businesses to take advantage of opportunities to grow and strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of businesses and social enterprises of all sizes, particularly micro to medium sized businesses. This includes supporting businesses in their efforts to create or improve their share of the export market"

Priority 2: Reducing the Factors that lead to Economic Inequality

“We want to maximise the number of people able to participate in good quality, sustainable work, for which they receive fair pay, ensuring this is shared fairly across geographies and demographics, particularly amongst under-represented groups. Evidence³⁹ shows that inequality has a negative impact on economic growth and social outcomes. In the short term we will focus our efforts on supporting those who have been most adversely affected by the economic impact of the Covid pandemic, notably young people, those in low paid and insecure employment, women, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, and disabled people”

Priority 3: Supporting the Transition to a Zero-Carbon Economy

“The climate crisis is the global challenge of our age. The risks are real for every citizen and business but are greatest for those who are already at a socio-economic disadvantage. The transition to a zero-carbon economy will bring opportunities for clean, energy efficient economic development, quality jobs and global market advantages, as well as benefits to our environment, our health, our natural capital, and our ecosystem services”

Priority 4: Healthier Fairer, more Sustainable Communities

“A workforce that is healthy and happy, and well-connected communities that are strong and resilient, are economic assets which benefit everyone. The link between well-being and economy has never been clearer. We want to help ensure that communities of place and of people have the resilience and structures they need, so that the people living here can live long, happy lives and fulfil their potential to contribute productively to our economy and society”

Link to Levelling Up Missions

Mission 7. By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years

For men, Healthy Life Expectancy is above the Welsh average (61.5 years) for the period 2018-2020 in both Swansea (61.9 years) and Pembrokeshire (61.8 years) but below in Carmarthenshire and Neath Port Talbot (both 59.7 years). For women, the picture is different with only Pembrokeshire, at 65.8 years, having Healthy Life Expectancy above the Welsh average (62.4 years) for the period 2018-2020, and Carmarthenshire (61.8), Swansea (60.5) and Neath Port Talbot (57.9) all below

The absolute gap in healthy life expectancy for females at birth in each county is starkly different with a 3.3 year gap when comparing the least to the most deprived fifth in Pembrokeshire, 8.9 year gap in Carmarthenshire, 17.2 year gap in Neath Port Talbot and 19.8 year gap in Swansea for the period 2018-2020. For males, the absolute gap in healthy life expectancy is lowest in Neath Port Talbot with a 10.2 year gap between the least to most deprived fifth, followed by Carmarthenshire at 10.8 years, Swansea at 14.9 years, and Pembrokeshire with the largest gap at 15.1 years, for the period 2018-2020.

These values pre-date the pandemic consequently, it is not known what impact the pandemic will have had to these values. Data from Public Health Wales Observatory

https://publichealthwales.shinyapps.io/PHWO_HealthExpectanciesWales_2022/

Mission 8. By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Mental wellbeing scores, according to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, are available for people aged 16 and over from the National Survey for Wales. This data shows that mental wellbeing levels for 2018-19 (the latest data available) were lowest in Pembrokeshire (49.7), followed by Swansea (50.3) and Carmarthenshire (51.1), with only Neath Port Talbot (52.1) above the Welsh average (51.4).

Mission 11. By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.

There is an opportunity for a collaborative approach, working with partners and the community to achieve this target.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

In the years leading up to the Covid pandemic, the South West Wales economy performed strongly in generating new jobs: By 2019, there were some 322,000 jobs in the region, an impressive increase of 20,000 on the 2013 figure.

Reflecting the region's population distribution and historic industrial development, the largest concentrations of employment are in the east, around Swansea Bay. Swansea itself accounts for around 40% of jobs in South West Wales (and is its main commuter destination), and the area around Swansea Bay and Llanelli is defined in Future Wales as a 'National Growth Area' for new jobs and housing. The east of the region also contains a distinctive and extensive concentration of manufacturing activity at Port Talbot, including the UK's largest steel plant and the Port Talbot Waterway Enterprise Zone.

Further west, around 20% of national energy supplies enter Britain via Pembrokeshire, with the Haven Waterway a major centre for existing energy infrastructure and the exploitation of new opportunities. More broadly, Carmarthen and Haverfordwest have important roles as regional centres, supporting an extensive rural economy and food production industry. Reflecting the environmental quality, the region enjoys extensive environmental designations, including the two National Parks and AONB and special protections along much of the coast. This environmental quality supports a large, important and growing visitor economy as well as delivering significant wellbeing benefits to our local residents.

However, there is still a large and persistent productivity gap with the rest of the UK. The region's economic weaknesses are largely structural, linked with long-term processes of industrial change (which in some respects are still ongoing), and are shared with other regions in Wales and the UK. Realising the scale of many of the region's future growth opportunities will require sustained public investment, alongside the private sector.

'Transformational' growth opportunities need to be balanced with the conditions for incremental improvements in resilience, capacity and capability across the whole of economy. There are distinctive opportunities at the 'leading edge' linked to the expertise within Swansea University and University of Wales Trinity Saint David – but long-term employment resilience and wage growth will depend on the sustainability, productivity and expansion of the wider stock of SMEs in the region.

Common challenges across the region under the Supporting Local Business priority are:

Low Productivity and Wage levels

There is still a large productivity gap in South West Wales, which impacts on local prosperity. Productivity (the amount of GVA generated for every filled job) was around £46,300 in South West Wales in 2020. The gap with the rest of the UK has narrowed slightly over time, but it is still substantial: in 2020, productivity was around 80% of the UK level. As well as generating higher output per worker, the key challenge is ensuring that the productivity gain is captured locally in pay, conditions and business opportunities.

In all parts of the region average gross weekly pay for full time workers is below the UK average, with only Neath Port Talbot, at £596.80, having wage levels above the Welsh rate (£562.80). In broad terms the region has an overrepresentation of employment in lower paid, lower skilled sectors and a lower quota in high paid and skilled sectors.

Key Sectors

The region has strengths across a number of sectors - some of which align to the region's science and research assets in health & medicine, engineering & manufacturing and computing & data science – including advanced manufacturing, agri-food, creative industries, energy, health, care & life sciences and software/digital. The majority fall outside the traditional foundational economy and offer the greatest potential for higher productivity, higher wages, higher levels of growth and higher employment potential.

Neath Port Talbot has a distinctive economy in terms of its sectoral balance, with manufacturing accounting for around 25% of total output and 19% of employment (compared with 10% in the UK and 17% in Wales).

While manufacturing's share of output has fallen over the past twenty years (from 37% in 1998) and with a sharp contraction – mainly accounted for by the steel industry – in 2014/15, it has since stabilised and remains highly significant. Neath Port Talbot remains one of Wales' most important manufacturing locations, so the challenge is to build resilience and growth through strategies that focus on diversification, upskilling, developing supply chains to support growing sectors such as renewable energy and the introduction of technological advancements.

Local challenges in Pembrokeshire relate to weakened traditional key strategic sectors, which have been affected by the restrictions imposed during the pandemic, the loss of EU workers or which otherwise need to adapt to the post-Brexit environment, and increased costs in their supply chains. Sectors particularly affected by difficulty recruiting staff include the hospitality and leisure, construction, retail and care sectors. Price increases in the supply chain are particularly evident in the construction industry, and in catering/hospitality.

Reliance on Micro and Small Businesses

There are some important major employers (such as the Valero refinery in Pembroke and Tata Steel in Port Talbot and Llanelli), but the region's business profile is skewed towards micro and small businesses, with 94.3% of all enterprises being micro businesses (0-9 employees).

In Pembrokeshire, in particular, there is still a preponderance of lifestyle businesses that lack innovation potential or dynamism, and which cannot offer career progression for those working in them, although this is now slowly changing.

If we are to realise notable economic growth and increase productivity, there is a need to focus on supporting small businesses to upscale including social enterprises, co-operatives and employee owned businesses as well as traditional SMEs. Through utilising the rich foundation that already exists we will increase local spend and harness the potential for more localised growth in community wealth and wellbeing, drawing together business, people and place. Social businesses are good employers who often provide work and training opportunities to people considered furthest from the workplace and they usually employ people within a very close proximity to the business's base. There are opportunities to further develop growth in this sector.

An over-reliance on micro and small sized enterprises presents unique challenges and requires business support mechanisms which are targeted, yet flexible and consider the unique set of challenges and barriers to scaling up those businesses face. These include;

- Talent recruitment and retention – Several sectors have faced recruitment and retention challenges following the pandemic. Difficulty accessing the right skills, in the right place, at the right time, stunts a business's ability to meet demand and, in some instances, diversify their service or offering.
- Access to finance and investment – Businesses are often constrained in starting or growing owing to lack of affordable or available finance. The finance support landscape can be complicated for smaller businesses to navigate, and without a dedicated resource seeking out these opportunities many small businesses miss out on financial support available. In many cases the businesses are viable enterprises but lack the sufficient cash within the business and/or personally to make investment. The result of this is that business growth and levels of self-employment/start-ups are stifled. This is evidenced in applications to the Swansea Start-up scheme where it is often cited that the existence of the grant fund has been the primary catalyst in allowing the business to begin trading. Over 40% of respondents to the Swansea Business Needs Survey highlighted that finance (or lack of access to this) is their primary barrier to business growth. In terms of overall business barriers this ranks only second behind overhead/premises costs which in some respects can be related to the former.
- Achieving economies of scale – It is more difficult for smaller businesses to achieve economies of scale since they lack the resources and capital to take advantage of the benefits presented, in many instances the risks far outweigh the benefits of exploring these options, simply because of their size.
- Taking advantage of procurement opportunities – Many small businesses report barriers in taking advantage of local procurement opportunities. Recent primary intelligence gathered indicates that many businesses find the process complicated, or they lack the skills and capacity to undertake the bidding process. Advancing progressive procurement is a key objective in the Regional Economic Delivery Plan, with a focus on community wealth building.
- Access to suitable premises – There is recognition that access to modern and appropriate premises offer businesses a competitive advantage, providing access to customers and infrastructure which will support the business to grow and develop.

- Access to and making better use of technology – Digital connectivity is an overarching priority for Carmarthenshire and is a key driver in achieving economic growth. Ensuring that businesses have access to ultra-fast and ultra-reliable digital connectivity is crucial, and whilst progress has been made in identifying coverage problems across what is predominantly a rural county, work continues to intervene and improve connectivity where the need exists. This will ensure that businesses are able to confidently operate and compete in a global economy whilst retaining their base in Carmarthenshire.

Low Business Start up Rates

With the exception of Pembrokeshire, the region has a lower 'enterprise density' (the number of enterprises relative to the working age population) than the UK average and in all parts of the region the start-up rate is lower than in the rest of the UK. 5 year survival rates are above the UK average (39.6%) in all counties, while only Swansea (39.9%) and Neath Port Talbot (40.0%) fall below the Welsh average (40.4%)

A stagnant start-up rate is a barrier to growth and suggests a lack of confidence and capacity within the economy. Evidence highlighted in recent work on the Innovation prospects for Carmarthenshire suggests that the potential entrepreneurial capacity of the county is amongst the highest in Wales. Therefore, whilst current businesses within the county need relevant support there is also a need to focus on creating an ecosystem which harnesses existing entrepreneurial flare across the region and making South West Wales an attractive place to start a business.

Whilst many individuals looking to start-up their own business have a strong vision and technical skillset for the business they would like to run, they often lack the necessary business skills in the day-to-day running and management of their enterprise. This often presents in poor understanding of cash flows, marketing plans and/or business strategy.

This issue is exacerbated by the perceived confusing business support landscape. Many are unaware of the support available or overwhelmed by the array of organisations operating in this area. In Swansea, the lack of a Business Centre and Start-up incubators intensifies the issue. The result means that entrepreneurs struggle to access important funding streams owing to schemes' requirements of basic business plans, cash flow forecasts and/or business strategy.

The Swansea Business Needs Survey identified that over 30% of respondents did not access the available business support services because they found the avenues too confusing and/or overwhelming. Almost half of all respondents to the survey were unaware of the support available and in many cases will have wrongly assumed that there is no accessible support available to them.

An opportunity exists to provide targeted and local level support to individuals looking to start a business. This support would serve to complement existing business support initiatives and look to create a wrap-around level of support that is easily accessible and delivered by individuals with invaluable knowledge of the local business landscape.

South West Wales has a strong base of social businesses and has the potential to stimulate more. Research illustrates that social businesses offer additional social impact and value in South West Wales with missions that involve actively improving local communities, improving health and well-being, addressing social exclusion and supporting vulnerable people. Supporting Pre-start/ new start support and small grants for early-stage social enterprises is therefore important, working with communities on the ground to formulate enterprising ideas that address economic and social issues within their area.

Lack of Available Premises

There is a widely-recognised gap between demand and supply for industrial sites and premises, as low rents (and in some cases high remediation and infrastructure costs on ex-industrial land) make viability challenging, especially west of Swansea. The evidence is that this acts as a brake on business expansion, both to new investors and to existing local businesses seeking 'grow-on' space. In terms of office space, Swansea dominates the market, although Swansea's Local Development Plan identifies a lack of available, high quality office space to meet inward investment and economic growth needs, combined with an oversupply of sub-standard office space at central and out of town locations. It is generally regarded that public sector investment is needed before commercial developers are willing to invest.

Access to short-term, affordable premises is limited, and business rates provide a further barrier for small scale, local, independent businesses looking to start up or relocate, particularly around Swansea city centre. This has been highlighted by the Swansea Meanwhile Spaces Pilot Project which has worked to match vacant High Street premises with would-be occupiers, many of whom are micro-scale, start-up and/or locally owned enterprises.

Rising Costs

The spiralling costs of fuel and raw materials (including food) is a significant challenge for businesses and is directly impacting their ability to remain profitable, and in some cases causing business closures. From 2020 to 2021 the average cost of Electricity and Gas for non-domestic consumers rose by 11.8% and 24.4% respectively. Such costs have escalated further in Q1 and Q2 of 2022 and this is a major contributory factor to the rising rate of inflation which is at a level unseen since February 1982 and was recorded at 9.1% in May 2022. Rising interest rates will negatively impact consumer spending and stagnate economic growth, causing further difficulties for local businesses.

Decarbonisation

Currently, regional carbon emissions are much higher than the Wales and UK average. These mostly reflect the role of the huge Tata works at Port Talbot, an industrial installation of national significance that remains reliant on coal inputs.

Neath Port Talbot generated around 7,165 kt of CO₂ emissions in 2019. Between 2005 and 2019, total UK emissions fell by around 36%. Neath Port Talbot's reduction was much smaller – around 9% - from a substantially higher base. While domestic, public sector and commercial emissions largely fell in line with the UK average, the difference in Neath Port Talbot is accounted for by the steelworks at Port Talbot, with the county borough's distinctive industrial structure driving the highest carbon intensity of any local authority area in the UK.

This points to a key environmental and economic risk in the context of the commitment to net zero by 2050 and a nationally significant industrial base with significant challenges in effecting low carbon transition in the medium term.

In striving to meet net zero carbon targets by 2050, businesses across the region have a vital role to play by making changes to save energy, reduce waste and carbon emissions and introduce more climate friendly related policies. However, access to expert advice and training will be a necessity in order to provide the necessary knowledge and recommendations required to deliver these changes.

Localism/ Foundational Economy

The foundational economy is a crucial element of the region's economic identity and makes an incomparable contribution to social wellbeing. This is substantiated by the high numbers of businesses operating within sectors that are deemed foundational. These include, but are not limited to; Wholesale, Retail, Transport, Hotels, Food and Communication. In Carmarthenshire alone there are 3,130 businesses operating within these sectors generating turnover of £2,441 million and employing over 20,000 people. Additional broader sectors include; Construction and Tourism, both key economic and employment drivers within Carmarthenshire and the region as a whole. The importance, therefore, of the foundational economy to the region cannot be overlooked. The effects of the pandemic were acutely felt by businesses operating within these sectors and whilst recovery is progressing well, challenges remain.

The opportunities afforded through the localism approach will look to address some of the most pertinent challenges, ensuring that these businesses are supported to access the right skills at the right time, have access to increased capital investment, have access to better infrastructure and make better use of technology. This will safeguard them, fostering sustainable growth and increased resilience.

Developing sustainable local supply chains will boost the foundational economy and have a direct benefit on the environment, improve continuity of supply, enhance corporate reputation, encourage new partnerships and reduce operational costs. Businesses need support in accessing local supply chains and tendering for local contracts.

Welsh Language

In Carmarthenshire in particular, the Welsh language is an important consideration in terms of business support and at a county level much work has been done in recent years to support businesses to improve and take advantage of their Welsh offer. There is recognition that more can be done in this space, therefore where possible and applicable businesses should continue to be supported to develop their Welsh language presence and offer. This serves to meet the needs of the 43.9% of the local population that speak Welsh but also is an important consideration in the ability of businesses to play a key role in the cultural landscape of the county.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Each local area is working constructively through local regeneration partnerships to formulate responses to the challenges set out above. These are presented in the context of our South West Regional Economic Delivery Plan, and relevant local plans and strategies. A consistent menu of project interventions is evolving, but the specific context of local need and requirements is presented below.

Regional Economic Delivery Plan

The Regional Economic Delivery Plan's three 'Missions' will guide future activity over the next ten years and beyond. They are designed to give a clear direction of travel, while remaining sufficiently broad to accommodate a wide range of potential investments that will come forward over time. The three high-level Missions are as follows:

Mission 1: A UK leader in renewable energy and the net zero economy

Looking to 2030, we aim to make South West Wales a UK leader in renewable energy and the net zero economy. That means taking advantage of our natural assets and our industrial and R&D capabilities to build an internationally-significant presence in future fuel technologies and to drive the decarbonation of our industrial base and the wide economy.

Key Actions:

- Additional Capacity to drive forward the agenda
- Progressing the region's major renewable energy generation projects
- Attracting and driving forward industrial investment
- Decarbonising transport and the housing stock

Mission 2: Building a strong, resilient, and embedded business base.

"Business is at the centre of our strategy to 2030. It will be through the expansion of existing firms and the start-up and attraction of new ones that new employment will be generated and productivity growth secured. That means supporting sustainable business growth – both at the 'leading edge' of technology and innovation and across the economy".

Key Actions:

- Accelerated adoption and innovation support (linked with the recommendations of Wales 4.0 in relation to business, skills and innovation support)
- 'Progressive procurement' within a local business and supply chain development system

Mission 3: Growing and sustaining the South West Wales 'experience' offer

"South West Wales enjoys a superb environment and a unique 'quality of life' offer. This is a key asset for the region, and one which we must protect and enhance. We will make South West Wales known for the quality and breadth of its 'experience' offer, bringing together urban and rural environmental quality, 'quality of life' and culture. This will support a high-value visitor economy – but it will also be locally owned and a central part of our investment proposition".

Key Actions:

- Targeted and coordinated capital investment, including in town and city centres
- Balancing of initiatives at a regional, local and community-driven scale

Carmarthenshire Opportunities

Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan (CERDP)

Theme 1 - Business

“Safeguarding our existing businesses, supporting new start-ups and growing businesses in our foundational and growth sectors to become more productive and competitive”

Theme 2 – People

“Protecting jobs, responding to significant expected unemployment, helping people gain the skills needed for the jobs that will exist, and creating new and better-skilled employment”

Theme 3 – Place

“Ensuring a fair distribution of opportunities through investing in the infrastructure and adaptation of our strategic growth areas, town centres, the rural economy and regenerating our most deprived communities”

Four cross-cutting priority ambitions:

- Ultra-reliable digital connectivity, digital culture and skills – improving connectivity, tackling the associated challenges to deployment and intervening to make improvements in digital connectivity both now and for the future.
- Skills - supporting people and businesses to retrain, re-skill, and up-skill through blended traditional, online and work-based learning.
- Green economy – adding economic value through keeping resources in use and where waste is avoided, invest in low carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure, renewable energy and sustainable homes.
- Fair and equal economy and support for the Welsh language and culture – supporting peoples culture and well-being with local, fair, decent and secure employment

Exploring the Innovation Prospects for Carmarthenshire (EIPC)

The purpose of this study was to review the current position of Carmarthenshire and to inform CCC’s local innovation strategy in the coming years. The following 4 opportunities conclude the report and have been derived from consultations with stakeholders and documentary analysis:

- Opportunity 1 - Digital: Enhancing Digital connectivity and exploiting Digital opportunities across Carmarthenshire
- Opportunity 2 - Health: Development of a dispersed living laboratory
- Opportunity 3 - Foundational Economy: Sustainable food procurement
- Opportunity 4 - Circular Economy: Leveraging a CE approach for the Net Zero Agenda

Neath Port Talbot Opportunities

The **Neath Port Talbot Economic Recovery Plan** identifies a number of opportunities which fall under the Supporting Local Business Investment Priority, including:

Transitional Economic Base

one of the four key areas for action in the Neath Port Talbot Economic Recovery Plan is *'Entrepreneurial and resilient economy: Strengthening our SME base – in all sectors and across the county borough - through a better coordinated approach to support, premises and finance and a renewed focus on sustainable 'indigenous' business growth at community level'*

Neath Port Talbot has a distinctive economy, with a large industrial base, including the UK's largest original steel producer and a wide range of SME manufacturers. It also contains significant opportunities for future growth, especially associated with the major waterfront sites and the Enterprise Zone, the potential for industrial decarbonisation and the prospect of future Freeport designation. In addition to the concentration of strategic sites and industries in the M4 Corridor, the county borough is diverse, including the towns of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe; and the Afan, Amman, Neath, Dulais and Swansea Valleys. Looking beyond Neath Port Talbot itself, there are strong links with Swansea, and along the M4 to Cardiff and beyond.

Sectors

Neath Port Talbot Council is ambitious for the future and takes a proactive approach to economic development and providing support to encourage innovative business growth. As the economy emerges from the Covid-19 crisis, and to complement the Wellbeing Assessments, the Council has developed an Economic Recovery Plan for the medium-to-long term, focused on achieving employment and business growth within a more diverse and resilient economy.

Employment concentrations are smaller and more dispersed in the post-industrial and rural parts of the county borough, with, in general more limited prospects for employment growth at scale although there are significant opportunities coming forward, such as the Global Centre for Rail Excellence at Onllywn).

Decarbonisation

Despite the substantial challenges presented by high industrial carbon intensity, Neath Port Talbot has significant opportunities associated with industrial decarbonisation (which is itself a key focus of the Regional Economic Delivery Plan).

In May 2020, Neath Port Talbot Council launched its Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy (DARE) Strategy – which sets out how the Council will act to counter climate change, both by reducing its own carbon footprint and by working with others to bring forward key investments in renewable energy and low carbon technologies. During a recent visit in March 2022 by the UK's Climate Change Committee, they commented on how impressed they were to see the Council not just writing reports but actually delivering on its initiatives. They were also impressed at the collaborative nature of working arrangements across the county borough between industry, academia and local government which works incredibly well for all concerned. A number of opportunities linked to decarbonisation include:

- Advanced Manufacturing in low carbon technologies
- Demonstrating the potential of low carbon technologies and industries
- Developing renewable energy potential
- Decarbonising infrastructure and the built environment – Neath Port Talbot CBC recently commissioned a ground breaking initiative with the construction of the award winning £7.9m Bay Technology Centre which was completed in 2022 and is the first commercially energy positive building in Wales which has recently won the prestigious Net Zero Award in this year's Constructing Excellence Wales (CEW) Awards held in June.
- Significant potential to take a lead in the drive to decarbonise the economy, through existing assets (e.g., the Hydrogen Centre at Baglan and renewable energy capacity) and scope for innovation and adoption within industry.

The Council will work with **academia** and **industry** to realise these opportunities via direct support through growth funds and support.

The Council also recognise that SMEs will be key to successfully delivering any decarbonisation programme as they will need to adapt to new employment opportunities. This presents a challenge as the pandemic has affected investment and work schedules so finding the time and resources to invest in upskilling staff or in new ways of working such as retrofitting and green skills, may not be at the forefront of their immediate plans. In addition, there does seem to be a disconnect between Net Zero policy goals and the appetite of business to

engage – until there is a market for these new skills and products, SMEs may not be keen to “buy into” these new concepts.

Capacity for growth – Infrastructure

There are a number of opportunities for growth including:

Transport – to maximise road infrastructure, rail connections and the Port of Port Talbot

Digital connectivity – ensuring all premises have high speed reliable digital connectivity

Commercial property - Despite Neath Port Talbot’s position as a major industrial location and evidence of high demand for industrial stock, supply remains relatively constrained with a viability gap and the need for direct public intervention to bring forward significant schemes to address the lack of industrial premises across the county borough including the valley and rural areas. .

Key area for action in the Neath Port Talbot Economic Recovery Plan - Transformational investment and change: Ensuring continued investment in (and the capacity to deliver) our major strategic sites at Port Talbot Waterfront and Baglan Bay; the key opportunity associated with the Global Centre of Rail Excellence; and the range of long-term – but in some cases emergent – actions to support industrial decarbonisation.

Key employment sites

There are nationally-significant strategic sites (e.g. at Baglan Bay) with potential for major development over time – the sites are linked with excellent connectivity and have significant commercial interest. There are a number of strategic sites with potential for further growth, including:

Baglan Energy Park

Harbourside

Port Talbot docks

Opportunities to build on the knowledge base include the fact that much of Swansea University is within Neath Port Talbot, with potential for stronger industry links and the role of the universities as economic drivers themselves. The **Swansea Bay City Deal** projects and programmes have been designed to provide a catalyst for future opportunities which will be progressed with the UKSPF programme of interventions.

The opportunities listed above together with skills provision outlined in the People and Skills section will improve productivity and increase pay, giving everyone the opportunity to access value added jobs. The Council also recognises the opportunity of the Third Sector contribution to the local economy

Pembrokeshire Opportunities

Within Pembrokeshire, the following opportunities will be likely to form the basis of UK SPF “Supporting Local Business” investments, subject to the assessment and selection process:

Strategic Development Sites. The Port of Milford Haven (including onshore energy sites), Pembroke Dock (Port of Pembroke) and Pembroke Dock Llanion are all important strategic sites around the Milford Haven waterway that are critical to our ambition to create the UK Green Energy Capital contributing at least 20% of the UK’s hydrogen production and 10% of the UK’s Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) targets, as set out in the British Energy Security Strategy. The Milford Haven Waterway Future Energy Cluster will also support the development of low carbon liquid fuels, CO₂ shipping, marine renewables and energy storage, thus playing a pivotal role in supporting an accelerated transition to a net zero economy while stimulating substantial economic growth.

This context provides important opportunities to enhance suitable industrial, commercial and office spaces to support energy, marine, engineering and related sector growth around the Milford Haven Waterway, including strategic developments such as an expansion to the Bridge Innovation Centre and associated improvement at Pembrokeshire Science Park at Llanion.

Other significant sites are starting to see the benefit of feasibility work, promotion and wider support from the county and its Private Sector Partners. These include Withybush Airport, where recent feasibility work has identified relatively modest investments that could support the airport’s ability to service the tourist market, in particular. At the same time we are currently exploring a number of leads with aviation innovations, both in terms of enhanced attractions and innovations in the industry which could support a new industry era. Opportunities also present themselves at Trecwn, a former MOD owned site in north Pembrokeshire

which has potential for redevelopment and renewal. Its rail and road accessibility, in addition to its close proximity to Fishguard Bay are making the site increasingly attractive to both energy producers and manufacturers. Modest infrastructure investments will secure such developments, enabling much needed employment opportunities in the north Pembrokeshire.

Pembrokeshire Food Park

Pembrokeshire benefits from some of the best quality agricultural land in Wales, an asset we should seek to capitalise upon for the county, its community and in support of wider Welsh and UK food sustainability. Pembrokeshire has benefited from EU and Welsh Government investment to catalyse development of Pembrokeshire Food Park, a joint venture with Welsh Government. This investment has supported further development by the private sector and the creation of Pembrokeshire Creamery alongside the successful and expanded Puffin Produce. Further planned joint venture developments include the creation of a series of incubator units to support fledgling food businesses in the County. We are keen to work with local food businesses to further enhance this trend, seeking funding to invest in development to meet increased demand.

Swansea Opportunities

Swansea Economic Recovery Action Plan

To support the recovery of the local economy from the covid-19 pandemic the Council in conjunction with Regeneration Swansea partnership has developed an economic recovery action plan for Swansea, This sets out the additional actions we need to take to support businesses, support individuals and improve resilience of the local economy in light of the pandemic.

The Economic Recovery Action Plan is focusing on the key aims of:

- Raising Confidence – driving footfall in city and district centres to support local businesses
- Supporting Businesses – business support, small scale financial assistance, access to premises and local supplier development to support start up and existing businesses
- Championing Local Food – to increase accessibility to and promotion of local food, and raise the profile of Swansea as a food destination
- Supporting Tourism – improving market intelligence, destination marketing, online marketing and business engagement and partnership working
- Developing Skills & Employability – extending and adapting employability provision including paid work placements and support for self-employment/ entrepreneurship
- A Sustainable Economic Recovery – new Regional Economic Delivery Plan, regeneration of the city centre and district centres, supporting move towards net zero carbon by 2050, building capability and promoting investment in green infrastructure

Within the context of the REDP and the Swansea Economic Recovery Plan, the following opportunities have been identified through local partnership discussions to respond to local challenges:

Low Productivity and Wage Levels

- Maximising the potential of the research and development expertise in the region's Universities to support local business growth, innovation and productivity gains.
- Securing high profile business conferences to capitalise on new Digital Arena

Reliance on micro and small businesses

- Locally tailored wrap around support for small businesses, complementing Business Wales provision, to support growth and job creation
- Progressive procurement to drive local business development opportunities and shorten supply chains

Low business start up rate

- Small scale business grants to overcome cost barriers to starting new business/ self-employment and co-ordinated local business support offer, complementing Business Wales provision, to nurture start-ups and improve survival rates

Lack of available premises

- Meanwhile space support building on successful pilots and emerging learning to provide low cost opportunities for start up businesses and reduce vacancy rates on high streets

Rising Costs

- Advice and small scale grant support for small businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and associated energy costs – building on pilot green innovation grant introduced with CRF funding

Decarbonisation

- Advice and small scale grant support for small businesses to reduce their carbon footprint – building on pilot green innovation grant introduced with CRF funding
- Developing the market and building expertise for new ideas such as green infrastructure
- Exploiting the potential for local carbon energy sources

Link to Levelling Up Missions

Mission 1. By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Average earnings in South West Wales (workplace based) have risen by 25.1% since 2011 to stand at £559.30 in 2021, however this is below both the Welsh (£562.80) and UK (£612.8) levels. At county level, Pembrokeshire has the lowest average earnings at £532, with Neath Port Talbot the highest at £596.80 in April 2021.

The employment rate in South West Wales has improved over the last ten years, from 64.8% in 2011 to 71.7% in 2021, although it still lags behind the Welsh (73.1%) and UK (74.7%) levels. Across the region, Pembrokeshire has the highest employment rate at 74.4% with Carmarthenshire having the lowest at 69.1% in 2021.

In 2020, productivity (measured as GVA per filled job) was around £46,300 in South West Wales. The gap with the rest of the UK has narrowed slightly over time, but it is still substantial: in 2020, productivity was around 80% of the UK level. Productivity is highest in Neath Port Talbot at £48,600 in 2020 and lowest in Carmarthenshire at £43,100.

Mission 2. By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

The local authorities work effectively with academia and industry by creating the right environment to ensure the region maximises the opportunity of RD&I public investment to support the growing research, development and innovation clustering across the region.

A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales (FRIW)

The proposals for this priority sit comfortably within the Welsh Government Framework for Regional Investment in Wales described as follows:

Priority 1: More Productive and Competitive Businesses

“We want to drive recovery and prosperity by supporting entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses to create and retain sustainable jobs that reflect the principles of Fair Work Wales. We will help businesses to take advantage of opportunities to grow and strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of businesses and social enterprises of all sizes, particularly micro to medium sized businesses. This includes supporting businesses in their efforts to create or improve their share of the export market”

Priority 2: Reducing the Factors that lead to Economic Inequality

“We want to maximise the number of people able to participate in good quality, sustainable work, for which they receive fair pay, ensuring this is shared fairly across geographies and demographics, particularly amongst under-represented groups. Evidence³⁹ shows that inequality has a negative impact on economic

growth and social outcomes. In the short term we will focus our efforts on supporting those who have been most adversely affected by the economic impact of the Covid pandemic, notably young people, those in low paid and insecure employment, women, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, and disabled people”

Priority 3: Supporting the Transition to a Zero-Carbon Economy

“The climate crisis is the global challenge of our age. The risks are real for every citizen and business but are greatest for those who are already at a socio-economic disadvantage. The transition to a zero-carbon economy will bring opportunities for clean, energy efficient economic development, quality jobs and global market advantages, as well as benefits to our environment, our health, our natural capital, and our ecosystem services”

Priority 4: Healthier Fairer, more Sustainable Communities

“A workforce that is healthy and happy, and well-connected communities that are strong and resilient, are economic assets which benefit everyone. The link between well-being and economy has never been clearer. We want to help ensure that communities of place and of people have the resilience and structures they need, so that the people living here can live long, happy lives and fulfil their potential to contribute productively to our economy and society”

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

South West Region works through its Regional Skills Partnership in coordination and understanding of skills needs working closely with business and providers to understanding the evolving landscape of need and demand.

Common challenges across the region under the People and Skills priority are:

High Economic Inactivity Rates

In South West Wales 20.9% of the working age population (excluding students) were economically inactive in December 2021, above both the Wales (19.9%) and UK (17.6%) averages. Carmarthenshire has the highest economic inactivity rate of the 22 local authorities in Wales at 23.8%. The rate in Neath Port Talbot (21.1%) and is above the Welsh average, while both Swansea (19.5%) and Pembrokeshire (19.3%) are below the Welsh average, but above UK rate. Students are excluded from these figures as the region has an above average level of students.

A number of factors have likely contributed to this higher rate across the region, including:

- The region is home to an above average level of people with disabilities and long-term limiting health conditions which pushes them further away from the labour market.
- The region is home to an above average level of people who are retired.

This is a significant barrier to growth for the region, as the economically inactive represent a significant source of labour supply which is a crucial element of a well-functioning labour market. This is also concerning given that being inactive for a long period of time can negatively impact a person’s wellbeing, health and life-satisfaction. This is therefore a fundamental issue to address in the ambition to improving the life-chances of individuals and grow the local economy.

A key challenge is engagement with the economically inactive, which requires community-based interventions to support to overcome barriers, build confidence and increase motivation to start looking at skills and employment.

Following the pandemic, an increased number of economically inactive have low confidence, are isolated, have disengaged with their communities, and therefore, have difficulties accessing the support needed. There

is a need to raise aspirations and awareness of opportunities and to create pathways to accessing the skills and support needed to progress into employment.

Unemployment

Claimant count unemployment rates vary across the region from 3% in Carmarthenshire in May 2022, 3.1% in Pembrokeshire, 3.2% in Neath Port Talbot and 3.6% in Swansea - which is above the Welsh level (3.4%) but below the UK (3.8%). In Swansea, unemployment rose rapidly at the start of the pandemic, and while the unemployment rate has gradually decreased over the past 2 years it is yet to reach levels seen prior to the pandemic in March 2020 (3.4%). In common with other counties, there is significant disparity in unemployment across different local areas of Swansea with disadvantaged areas experiencing unemployment rates above the average - Townhill (8.1%), Penderry (6.9%), Castle (6.6%) in contrast to other areas below the average; Mayals (1.1%), Llangyfelach (1.3%). There is a challenge to ensure that people from the most disadvantaged communities across the region are not excluded, and provision is in place to ensure inequalities to accessing opportunities are reduced within communities.

Barriers to Skills and Employment

Unemployed and economically inactive people in the region face a range of complex barriers, which prevent them from accessing skills and employment opportunities. A challenge under this priority is to engage with, support and motivate the economically inactive and unemployed to overcome these barriers to progress them into the labour market.

The effects of the pandemic have increased loneliness and isolation, reduced confidence, motivation, self-belief and aspirations and has had a negative impact on people's mental health and their ability to engage with support services. A key challenge is rehabilitating these individuals to become more confident leaving the house and increasing their motivation levels to look for employment. This challenge is even more acute due to delays in accessing specialist support services including counselling and therapy support. There is a need for consistent one to one support e.g. a key worker.

Some of the key barriers people face include:

- Lack of Confidence and motivation, wellbeing and aspiration.
- Social isolation, digital exclusion.
- Issues with mental and physical health
- Low or no skills, lack of specific skills or qualifications, lack of experience in the workplace.
- Rising costs of living-poverty, transport barriers
- Availability of quality, flexible and affordable childcare
- Geographical locations make learning inaccessible for some living in our valley and rural areas as transport is a major barrier, especially when most learning provision is in town centre locations.

On skills, a key challenge for local people in accessing opportunities is the lack of relevant qualifications, knowledge of skills needed and life and employability skills. A further challenge is to support people to recognise their personal skills and abilities and to help them, through a personalised skills plan to identify and source the right skills needed aligned to the local labour market demand. This would equip people with the skills needed to access to more opportunities to capitalise on local economic growth and economic development opportunities such as the City deal, in turn, ensuring the local communities are more prosperous and productive.

There are opportunities to provide intensive, wrap-around, one-to-one support led by a key worker to move these individuals closer to the labour market which would provide tailored mechanisms to make the movement from inactivity to employment as simple a transition as possible. This should be in the format of a cohesive system where careers guidance is provided in conjunction with the identification of skills needs which are directly related to the ambitions of that person and the needs of the local economy. This extends to highlighting and promoting the importance of work as well as exploring development in the context of basic skills, work-ready skills and vocational training to reduce the chances of drop-off and discouragement.

Vulnerable groups

There is a gap in current provision focussing on employability and skills for key groups of vulnerable individuals with further complex barriers and challenges to entering the labour market. Investment is needed

to provide intensive key worker support and focussed interventions to address the inequality to accessing opportunities for these disadvantaged individuals. Key groups include the following:

- Children Looked After (CLA) aged 16+ and Care leavers
- Young people post 16 linked with the Youth Offending Service
- Young people pre-16 with Additional Learning Needs or at risk of becoming NEET
- Vulnerable young people 16-24 who are disengaged from the labour market.
- People affected by work limiting health conditions and disabilities
- Refugees and Asylum seekers
- BAME
- Women
- Prison leavers and ex-offenders
- People with care responsibilities
- Individuals from Jobless households
- Individuals linked to and referred by the Community Health team
- Over 50s unemployed due to the pandemic

Qualifications Levels Below UK Average

Over time, there has been a steady improvement in qualification levels in the region: in 2021, 36% of the working age population was qualified to NVQ4+, compared with 22% in 2004, and the proportion with no qualifications halved over the same period (partly as new entrants to the labour market gradually replace those who leave). But in relative terms, there is still a gap with the rest of the UK, and substantial variation across the region.

The pace of transition to attain higher-level skills has been slower in Neath Port Talbot, for example, than the rest of Wales and the UK and just 29.3% of the Neath Port Talbot workforce is qualified to NVQ4+, compared to 38.7% for Wales and 43.5% for UK. Swansea has a higher proportion of working age residents with qualifications to NVQ level 3 and above than Wales and UK average however, 7.7% have no qualifications and 8.4% are at NVQ level 1, therefore, 16.1% are considered low or no skilled (APS 2021). Carmarthenshire exhibits a higher than average number of people with no qualifications and a lower proportion than average of people with higher level qualifications.

A barrier to employment for many is a lack of qualifications or skills. This applies to those that have no qualifications at all and those that wish to re-skill or up-skill to better themselves and seek higher level or alternative employment. Skills levels likely impact on residents' ability to access better-paid local employment. In Neath Port Talbot for example, where average skill levels are lower median annual pay at workplaces is around £29,000 – higher than the Welsh average. But the average pay commanded by Neath Port Talbot residents is substantially lower, at around £27,000.

There is an opportunity to support those with no qualifications to gain basic skills qualifications and those up to level 2, which could act as a gateway to gaining employment but also higher-level qualifications. These basic skills include (but are not limited to); English, Maths and ESOL. This would serve to address the gaps in current DWP and Welsh Government provision and allow for the development of local-level interventions which meet local needs.

Furthermore, there is a specific need to develop digital skills and increase levels of digital inclusion. The world of work is changing and reliance on digital technologies within the work-place is increasing at rapid rates. Providing individuals with relevant and transferrable digital skills will therefore not only improve their employability but also make them more confident with regards to accessing wider services online.

Local Skills Needs – Supply and Demand

To create a growing and resilient regional labour market, it is imperative to equip individuals with the skills required by local employers. This is in respect of the skills required now and those that will be required in the future. A forward-looking approach will ensure that local people are able to benefit from future opportunities which present themselves. This is also a crucial step in reducing what is termed as 'brain drain' whereby highly qualified individuals leave the area to take up higher paid employment elsewhere. Developing a

stronger skills base will also increase the chance of attracting new businesses to the region and growing existing ones to improve prosperity.

Much work has been undertaken to map regional skills needs by the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership, with employers from key strategic sectors in the region reporting a number of in-demand and desired skills, as outlined below:

Manufacturing & Engineering – Problem solving skills, leadership and management skills, computer literacy skills, skills in new technology.

Construction – Work-readiness skills, communication skills, problem solving skills and manual dexterity.
Agri-food – Comprehension skills, communication skills, leadership and management skills and food manufacturing skills.

Financial, Professional and Digital – Advanced/specialist IT skills, Coding/web development skills, skills in new technology and basic IT skills.

Health and Social Care – Health care skills, communication skills, basic IT skills and skills in new technology.

Public Services – Advanced and basic IT skills, problem solving, oral Welsh language skills, communication skills, leadership and management skills and HGV/LGV driving skills.

Tourism, Leisure and Retail – Marketing skills, chef/kitchen skills, advanced and basic IT skills and coding/web development skills.

Creative Industries – Advanced and basic IT skills, skills in new technology, entrepreneurial skills, coding/web development, creative content development skills and marketing skills.

Taking these skills needs into account, there are clearly opportunities to focus skills delivery in some key areas, with this evidence further substantiating the need to develop the digital and general work readiness skills of individuals. These could be addressed through basic skills delivery up to level 2 with more specialist skills delivered via other methods such as work-based learning or through vocational delivery.

A key challenge is delivering qualifications for employers / employees that respond to current and emerging challenges, opportunities and local skills needs and will complement broader place-based investment across the region. In doing so it will target activities which capitalise on the opportunities and needs of the local area and meet the needs of an increasingly green and digital economy, whilst also providing a universal offer to businesses experiencing workforce challenges and / or demonstrating growth potential of all sizes and across all sectors.

Working in conjunction with local providers, support would serve to fund gaps in local skills provision and explore alternative delivery methods. This could be in the format of bite-sized, module-based delivery of both an accredited and non-accredited nature. This creates a skills system which is innovative and flexible in its approach and aligns with the needs of employers and recommendations made by the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership. In line with this there is an opportunity to improve linkages between schools, further education colleges and higher education to offer a 'skills escalator' model of skills development aligned to the needs of industry.

As a result of the region's older population there is also an opportunity to provide tailored support to those in employment to access skills provision. This would serve to reduce the loss of skilled individuals from the labour market and support retention in some sectors where an ageing workforce is a concern. These issues are more acute (although not exclusive) in the Construction and Manufacturing and Engineering sectors.

Upskilling the existing workforce

Local businesses within the region want to improve the skills and abilities of their staff, but cannot afford the time and the expense, making it prohibitive for the business to progress their workforce. Subsidised in-work skills programmes would be a huge step to breaking down the barrier and ensuring that the existing workforce were able to upskill and retrain for their professional development. This also leads to increased economic prosperity for the area and a skilled workforce.

Careers Advice and Guidance

Evidence indicates that several key sectors have and continue to experience challenges in attracting, retaining and recruiting suitably skilled staff to meet their needs. A number of issues culminate in creating these recruitment challenges, with a lack of skills and the perception of sectors being primary contributory factors.

Careers, advice and guidance plays a key role in dispelling myths and improving the perceptions of sectors. Sectors that report being particularly affected by this include; Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Tourism, Leisure and Retail, Construction and Agri-food. These are all sectors of strategic importance for the region, it is therefore crucial that people are aware of the opportunities presented by these industries. This is an important step in the creation of a pipeline of talent armed with the desired skills to feed into the labour market, which would be to the benefit of local businesses and in turn our local economy.

To this end, there is an opportunity to provide careers, advice and guidance in a more cohesive way at a local level, taking into account the skills needs of local employers. Working in conjunction with organisations already delivering such services will serve to reduce duplication and complement what is already offered. The delivery of careers, advice and guidance should also consider the gender profiles of many sectors and attempt to dispel the typical gender stereotypes associated with some sectors. This would address the significant gender disparity evident across many areas of the economy which relates to employment, the gender pay gap and opportunities to prosper more generally.

In Pembrokeshire, one challenge that has been identified is ensuring young people are equipped to make well-informed career choices, so that they acquire the skills and qualifications needed not just in the traditional industries in Pembrokeshire, but in new and emerging sectors especially in (but not limited to) the marine renewable energy sector.

Young people

There is a lack of understanding around the different learning pathways from pre-16 to post-16 for some of our young people. Options are not communicated effectively to ensure young people understand the full range of options available, from Further Education, Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships. Some of our young people are not accessing appropriate interventions / support and it is not until a later stage that they are identified. Improved communication in our schools is essential ensure all our young people explore the different choice of pathways of learning and development.

Early intervention is needed to identify vulnerable learners or those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and to ensure appropriate provision is in place to support learners overcome challenges and prevent risk of permanent exclusions and reduce the risk of young people becoming NEET post-16/Key Stage 4. Young people at all ages and key stages in education have been negatively affected by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated absences from the school environment. Further work is needed to understand the scale of the impact in schools and the challenges presented in order to develop interventions to positively improve learning, basic skills and attainment at all pre-16 levels.

Across the region there is also a need to ensure that young people who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) are re-engaged in the labour market, and that young people remain engaged in learning, training or employment. Entrepreneurial young people must also be encouraged and supported to start-up their own businesses, though interventions to achieve this may better fit under the Supporting Local Business theme.

Latest employment statistics in Swansea have shown an increase in the number of 16-24 year olds on non work-related benefits and therefore, economically inactive. The pandemic has caused issues for young people in the area, such as loss of confidence and key skills, which needs to be addressed. (DWP consultation)

International Students and Refugees

A specific challenge identified in Swansea relates to resident international students and refugees, who are skilled and highly motivated to take up employment opportunities, but are faced with issues transferring their overseas qualifications, which is a barrier to them accessing local opportunities.

Basic skills

There is a large proportion of people in the region who lack basic skills. Interventions and investment are needed to address literacy, numeracy, ESOL and digital literacy skills. There is a significant challenge to engage with people who are not ready to admit to their skill deficit. Programmes need to be available with a softer approach to entice learners. Existing services need to be delivered in the communities, at local and micro-local level, building on what they already do by offering additional support in a way that does not directly target basic skills in the short term and will aid progression in the long term. This could be delivered as part of a wider community and employability support provision.

Covid Recovery and Cost of living

Household income in South West Wales is below the Wales and UK average, with Gross Disposable Household per head in 2019 standing at £16,646; which is 77.7% of the UK level. The increase in the cost of living and rising energy and food prices will place further pressures on household income. Having basic living skills is imperative to be able to adjust and adapt to these changes. Support and training on functional numeracy skills would help individuals to understand their finances; bank statements, price comparison and contract fees. The pandemic has expedited the need for digital skills to access services and employment but has also left many people who are digitally excluded isolated throughout the pandemic.

Advancement of Digital Skills

There is an issue with a widening gap in digital skills in Swansea. Investment is needed to assess and address the current and future digital skills needs and for the development of basic and advanced digital skills provision, to ensure people and businesses have the skills to take advantage of the latest technologies and tools.

The lack of digital skills and internet access have a huge impact on people's lives. Digitally excluded citizens need access to digital connectivity, technology and skills, which are essential to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity. In Swansea, there is a need to increase participation and improve outcomes in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects.

Green Skills and Skills for Net Zero

The region has a number of ambitions aligned to both the communities and place and business support investment themes with regard to the green agenda and net zero. There is a challenge to raise awareness of green skills and to address the deficit in skills and capacity to meet the local needs in dealing with the changing environment linked to green recovery, green energy, changing food systems, transport systems, green spaces and green infrastructure.

The imminent challenges facing the built environment sector, as an example, will require a rapid response to skills development to ensure it has a skilled and competent workforce that is able to respond to the emerging zero carbon agenda. The education sector will need to provide innovative training solutions to upskill the existing workforce and also provide new entrants with the skills they need to support the evolving needs of this particular sector. Priority solutions include:

- Upskilling programmes to meet the expectations of green construction, from basic to advanced, in terms of understanding of whole house solutions
- Training programmes around the installation of renewable products, as well as a robust accredited assessment of suitability/competence of the installation.
- Training programmes to meet offsite construction, from a manufacturing perspective to support local companies

As new innovations, come forward, we need to look at effective and responding skills development and training solutions, with the establishment of a centre of expertise. This is especially pertinent for the

Construction and Engineering and Manufacturing sectors where future skills needs relate to specialist engineering skills, retrofit skills, smart manufacturing skills and renewable energy skills.

Welsh Language

When taking into account skills provision in a Carmarthenshire context, consideration must be given to the development of provision which allows individuals to undertake learning through the language of their choice. With 43.9% of the population able to speak Welsh there is a clear argument that the demand would exist. This also serves to meet the needs of local employers whereby Welsh language skills have been highlighted as important by the Creative Industries, Health and Social Care and Retail, Tourism and Leisure sectors.

Enrichment and Volunteering Opportunities

There is an argument to suggest that the provision of enrichment and volunteering opportunities may provide similar benefits as those provided by work experience opportunities. Work experience has traditionally been considered something that younger people do as part of their statutory education, however there are benefits to be realised for all age groups and people from all backgrounds. Taster sessions in relevant industries may serve to reduce drop-off and highlight the wider benefits to be realised by being in work rather than the traditional focus of financial reward. The same can be said for volunteering placements within the region's many third sector and smaller community groups. Taking part in such schemes would provide a stepped approach to entering the labour market, removing some of the pressure that those furthest away may feel when making the transition straight into paid employment. There are opportunities to explore the viability of such an approach across the region, looking at lessons learned from similar initiatives.

Multiply

Many economically inactive people have not positive experiences in school or college therefore there is a need to engage and learn in an innovative way which is different to formal learning environments. Community based interventions will need to be considered for the delivery of functional numeracy to increase engagement due to reduced confidence and increased isolation economically inactive people face following the pandemic.

In delivering the Multiply initiative, we anticipate that the challenges will be:

- The shortage of numeracy tutors.
- Recruitment of learners, due in part to the stigma attached to the lack of basic skills.
- The focus on numeracy alone is unlikely to address the full needs of learners, who will often also lack basic literacy and digital skills. As such, Multiply may need to be delivered alongside other provision, or risk being less effective than it might otherwise be.
- There will be a complex interaction with pre-existing Welsh Government support that must be navigated.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Each local area is working constructively through local regeneration partnerships to formulate responses to the challenges set out above. These are presented in the context of our South West Regional Economic Delivery Plan, and relevant local plans and strategies. The intention is to generate a regional 'menu' of activities on a consistent basis that adapt according to specific local need.

Regional Economic Delivery Plan

The Regional Economic Delivery Plan's three 'Missions' will guide future activity over the next ten years and beyond. They are designed to give a clear direction of travel, while remaining sufficiently broad to accommodate a wide range of potential investments that will come forward over time. The three high-level Missions are as follows:

Mission 1: A UK leader in renewable energy and the net zero economy

Looking to 2030, we aim to make South West Wales a UK leader in renewable energy and the net zero economy. That means taking advantage of our natural assets and our industrial and R&D capabilities to build an internationally-significant presence in future fuel technologies and to drive the decarbonation of our industrial base and the wide economy.

Key Actions:

- Additional Capacity to drive forward the agenda
- Progressing the region's major renewable energy generation projects
- Attracting and driving forward industrial investment
- Decarbonising transport and the housing stock

Mission 2: Building a strong, resilient, and embedded business base.

"Business is at the centre of our strategy to 2030. It will be through the expansion of existing firms and the start-up and attraction of new ones that new employment will be generated and productivity growth secured. That means supporting sustainable business growth – both at the 'leading edge' of technology and innovation and across the economy".

Key Actions:

- Accelerated adoption and innovation support (linked with the recommendations of Wales 4.0 in relation to business, skills and innovation support)
- 'Progressive procurement' within a local business and supply chain development system

Mission 3: Growing and sustaining the South West Wales 'experience' offer

"South West Wales enjoys a superb environment and a unique 'quality of life' offer. This is a key asset for the region, and one which we must protect and enhance. We will make South West Wales known for the quality and breadth of its 'experience' offer", bringing together urban and rural environmental quality, 'quality of life' and culture. This will support a high-value visitor economy – but it will also be locally owned and a central part of our investment proposition".

Key Actions:

- Targeted and coordinated capital investment, including in town and city centres
- Balancing of initiatives at a regional, local and community-driven scale

Within the context of the South West Regional Economic Delivery Plan and Local Economic Recovery Plans, the following opportunities have been identified through local partnership discussions to respond to local challenges:

Addressing economic inactivity

- Community based activity to engage with the economically inactive
- Employability and skills provision where there are current gaps in local provision- Opportunity to create pathway into employment to include pre-engagement, employability, skills and training, volunteering and paid placements activity tailored to individual's and local labour market needs.
- Provision of a person-centred, 1-2-1 mentor/key worker led pre-engagement and intensive wraparound employability support to move closer or into the labour market.
- Life skills support for health and wellbeing, confidence building and motivation, teamwork, job search skills, communication and presentation skills.
- Project activities will compliment, align and add value to existing provision ensuring there is additionality and no duplication

Maximising potential of unemployed people and in-work support

- Develop in-work support provision linked to employment support and skills to upskill and retain staff by providing access education and training.
- Enhance skill levels through life and career skills provision for the unemployed unable to access support and funding to overcome skills and training barriers

Reducing barriers to skills and employment

- Coordinated approach to provide a more holistic support offer with delivery partners bringing specialisms together to support key groups with different needs to overcome complex barriers
- look to develop a learning and development model/network to enhance provision out into our communities, making it accessible for all.
- Pre-engagement and Employability wraparound support by dedicated key workers throughout the pathway with an initial assessment of needs and skills to identify barriers and develop a personal, bespoke action plan.
- Intensive 1-2-1 mentoring support tailored to the individuals needs to overcome barriers and identify suitable pathways.
- Skills re-engagement pathway for young people exiting full-time education.
- Intervention opportunities for skills and training, volunteering, work tasters, paid work placements, employment and engagement with mainstream provision.
- Life skills support for confidence building and motivation, teamwork, job search skills, communication and presentation skills.
- Advice on benefits and budgeting.

Supporting Skills

- Mapping skills and forecast future demands and shortages in the labour market.
- Opportunity to align skills and employability provision to support local and regional skills needs.
- Opportunity to partnership working to maximise training provision and to deliver skills support within communities
 - Basic Skills training, ESOL, employability and life skills (for confidence building and motivation, teamwork, job search skills, communication and presentation skills.), technical and vocational training, qualifications, work related training, licences, Digital skills, green skills and workplace skills.
- Green skills provision to ensure there is a suitably skilled workforce in the region to achieve the UK government goals of net zero.
- Engagement and softer skills development programme for young people.

Recovery from the Covid pandemic and impact of the rising cost of living

- Health and Wellbeing Interventions
- Advice on benefits and budgeting including numeracy skills.
- Opportunity to provide funding where finance is a barrier to people to accessing skills, education and employment (Work related training, licences, qualifications, travel, childcare, clothing and equipment)

Employer Challenges

- Engagement with employers to understand needs and challenges
- Job and skills matching service through employability provision
- Provide opportunities for employers and people with paid work opportunities, work trials, taster days and volunteering
- Opportunity for businesses and employers to retain and upskill staff through training

Technology assisted learning

Using technology to support learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills, embedding this in all learning. Opportunity to take this out into the communities will remove the barriers such lack of digital resources and accessibility.

Paid work placements - Evaluations of previous employment programmes e.g. Workways+, Kickstart and the CRF funded Job Start indicate the benefit of 'Paid Work Opportunities'. The individual seeking work is placed in appropriate paid work placements and the programmes funds businesses to support individuals on these placements. This is an opportunity under UKSPF that the Council would wish to progress to ensure this element adds value to the employment support provision.

Aligning skills and employment support – there is an opportunity to work with partners to link local support services and mainstream provision across the region to ensure barriers to employment are overcome where possible, including working with partners to deliver employability skills to those with protected characteristics and additional learning needs.

Mentoring support – to maximise the opportunity of experience in offering high level mentoring support. From school leavers to adults through a holistic and innovative approach is adopted looking at all barriers which prevent an individual progressing into education, employment or training. A number of proven techniques and strategies are used to ensure that an individual has the tools to grow and sustain education and/or employment.

Young people

The New Curriculum will increase engagement activity within our schools to ensure that learners are aware of the skills that employers consider to be essential while highlighting the softer skills as being as pertinent as technical or practical skills. There is an opportunity to develop interventions to prevent youth disengagement and provide alternative curriculum pathways.

There is an opportunity to implement additional provision for early identification of learners with Additional Learning Needs at all levels of education and to develop a programme of interventions for learners such as specialist teaching or alternative training provisions that are linked to an Individual Development Plan. Currently there is only provision in place for learners with more severe or complex needs, thereby leaving a gap in provision for those with more moderate additional learning needs. The Covid-19 pandemic had negatively impacted learners at all levels which has triggered an increase in learners falling behind in attainment levels along with an increase in behavioural issues and exclusions. Provision is needed to support both pre and post-16 to overcome these challenges and thereby reduce the risk of school exclusions and the risk of becoming NEET. Early intervention will also alleviate demand on post-16 employability provision.

Adult learning

There is an opportunity with UKSPF and Multiply to work with schools and parents to increase their adult literacy and numeracy skills to support their children's learning and increase their own skills.

Wellbeing interventions

There is an opportunity to develop a programme of engagement and leisure courses, which will allow providers to recognise and identify skills needs, with a focus on the individual's emotional and mental health initially. Once health and well-being is addressed and people have more confidence basic skills can be identified.

Learning infrastructure

There is an opportunity to improve venues to be fully functional to provide learning where literacy and numeracy can be wrapped around courses for healthy eating, understanding food labels, budgeting, and cooking on a budget.

Skills networks

There is an opportunity to further develop and expand partnerships to map out gaps between leaving school and progressing into employment to identify what skills are needed, and developing additional programmes to support these people. By carrying out mapping exercises across employers in the region it will be possible to identify what skills are required and develop a bespoke curriculum to meet employer needs.

Opportunity to work collaboratively to improve systems for assessing learners' additional learning needs, making sure that those learners gain appropriate support, and monitor the progress made by learners receiving support. This intervention will identify any skills deficit and identify appropriate support.

A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales (FRIW)

Priority 1: More Productive and Competitive Businesses

"We want to drive recovery and prosperity by supporting entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses to create and retain sustainable jobs that reflect the principles of Fair Work Wales. We will help businesses to take advantage of opportunities to grow and strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of businesses and social enterprises of all sizes, particularly micro to medium sized businesses. This includes supporting businesses in their efforts to create or improve their share of the export market"

Priority 2: Reducing the Factors that lead to Economic Inequality

“We want to maximise the number of people able to participate in good quality, sustainable work, for which they receive fair pay, ensuring this is shared fairly across geographies and demographics, particularly amongst under-represented groups. Evidence shows that inequality has a negative impact on economic growth and social outcomes. In the short term we will focus our efforts on supporting those who have been most adversely affected by the economic impact of the Covid pandemic, notably young people, those in low paid and insecure employment, women, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, and disabled people”

Priority 3: Supporting the Transition to a Zero-Carbon Economy

“The climate crisis is the global challenge of our age. The risks are real for every citizen and business but are greatest for those who are already at a socio-economic disadvantage. The transition to a zero-carbon economy will bring opportunities for clean, energy efficient economic development, quality jobs and global market advantages, as well as benefits to our environment, our health, our natural capital, and our ecosystem services”

Priority 4: Healthier Fairer, more Sustainable Communities

“A workforce that is healthy and happy, and well-connected communities that are strong and resilient, are economic assets which benefit everyone. The link between well-being and economy has never been clearer. We want to help ensure that communities of place and of people have the resilience and structures they need, so that the people living here can live long, happy lives and fulfil their potential to contribute productively to our economy and society”

Link to Levelling Up Missions

Mission 1. By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Average earnings in South West Wales (workplace based) have risen by 25.1% since 2011 to stand at £559.30 in 2021, however this is below both the Welsh (£562.80) and UK (£612.8) levels. At county level, Pembrokeshire has the lowest average earnings at £532, with Neath Port Talbot the highest at £596.80 in April 2021.

The employment rate in South West Wales has improved over the last ten years, from 64.8% in 2011 to 71.7% in 2021, although it still lags behind the Welsh (73.1%) and UK (74.7%) levels. Across the region, Pembrokeshire has the highest employment rate at 74.4% with Carmarthenshire having the lowest at 69.1% in 2021.

In 2020, productivity (measured as GVA per filled job) was around £46,300 in South West Wales. The gap with the rest of the UK has narrowed slightly over time, but it is still substantial: in 2020, productivity was around 80% of the UK level. Productivity is highest in Neath Port Talbot at £48,600 in 2020 and lowest in Carmarthenshire at £43,100.

Mission 6. By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

Over time, there has been a steady improvement in qualification levels in the region: in 2021, 36% of the working age population was qualified to NVQ4+, compared with 22% in 2004, and the proportion with no qualifications halved over the same period to 8% (partly as new entrants to the labour market gradually replace those who leave). But in relative terms, there is still a gap with the rest of the UK (where 43.5% are qualified to NVQ4+), and substantial variation across the region. In Neath Port Talbot only 29.3% are qualified to NVQ 4+, compared to 39.4% in Swansea.

Mission 7. By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

For men, Healthy Life Expectancy is above the Welsh average (61.5 years) for the period 2018-2020 in both Swansea (61.9 years) and Pembrokeshire (61.8 years) but below in Carmarthenshire and Neath Port Talbot (both 59.7 years). For women, the picture is different with only Pembrokeshire, at 65.8 years, having Healthy Life Expectancy above the Welsh average (62.4 years) for the period 2018-2020, and Carmarthenshire (61.8), Swansea (60.5) and Neath Port Talbot (57.9) all below

The absolute gap in healthy life expectancy for females at birth in each county is starkly different with a 3.3 year gap when comparing the least to the most deprived fifth in Pembrokeshire, 8.9 year gap in Carmarthenshire, 17.2 year gap in Neath Port Talbot and 19.8 year gap in Swansea for the period 2018-2020. For males, the absolute gap in healthy life expectancy is lowest in Neath Port Talbot with a 10.2 year gap between the least to most deprived fifth, followed by Carmarthenshire at 10.8 years, Swansea at 14.9 years, and Pembrokeshire with the largest gap at 15.1 years, for the period 2018-2020.

These values pre-date the pandemic consequently, it is not known what impact the pandemic will have had to these values. Data from Public Health Wales Observatory
https://publichealthwales.shinyapps.io/PHWO_HealthExpectanciesWales_2022/

Mission 8. By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Mental wellbeing scores, according to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, are available for people aged 16 and over from the National Survey for Wales. This data shows that mental wellbeing levels for 2018-19 (the latest data available) were lowest in Pembrokeshire (49.7), followed by Swansea (50.3) and Carmarthenshire (51.1), with only Neath Port Talbot (52.1) above the Welsh average (51.4).

Interventions

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Interventions you've chosen for each year of funding
- Outcomes you want to deliver
- Any interventions that are not listed here
- How these interventions fall under the UKSPF investment priorities, and your rationale for them
- Interventions not included in our list will be assessed before being approved, where you will need to show a clear rationale, how the intervention is value for money, what outcomes it will deliver and how you will monitor and evaluate the intervention. This may include a theory of change or logic chain.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	✓
Jobs safeguarded	✓
Increased footfall	✓
Increased visitor numbers	✓
Reduced vacancy rates	✓
Greenhouse gas reductions	✓
Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	✓
Improved perception of facilities/amenities	✓
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	✓

Increased users of facilities / amenities	✓
Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project	✓
Increased use of cycleways or paths	✓
Increase in Biodiversity	✓
Increased affordability of events/entry	✓
Improved perception of safety	✓
Reduction in neighbourhood crime	✓
Improved engagement numbers	✓
Improved perception of events	✓
Increased number of web searches for a place	✓
Volunteering numbers as a result of support	✓
Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support	✓
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	✓
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	✓
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	✓
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

W1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.

W2: Funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding, and investment in locally owned renewable energy generation and waste management to improve the transition to low carbon living This could cover capital spend and running costs.

W3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features and biodiversity improvements into wider public space.

W4: Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural and heritage offer, including improvements to access to sites to counter the effects of isolation, particularly for older people and disabled people.

W5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'

W6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities

W7: Support for active travel enhancement and other small-scale green transport infrastructure projects, having regard to the Wales Transport Strategy

W8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns and year-round experiences which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.

W9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places

W10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together

W11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups

W12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration.

W13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.

W14: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies

W15: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

Following extensive consultation, no additional interventions proposed at this stage.

Explain how each intervention meets the Communities and Place investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

N/A

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

N/A

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Communities and Place investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

The region has consulted widely in local areas and a range of key programmes have been identified that sit under this investment priority. The following are examples of anticipated projects and programmes:

Historic structures and conservation area feasibility and project fund

Village and town centre small scale improvements recognisable to people in their places to fund both capital and revenue including support to shift towards more diverse town centres, creating digitally smart environments and embracing the greening of town centres and decarbonisation plus dedicated officer support to provide capacity and coordination. To interface carefully with Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme and building on successful ongoing development journey particularly around already identified key sites and priorities throughout the region. A mix of interventions is anticipated bridging across multiple interventions.

Meanwhile Spaces programme – to utilise vacant high street premises to provide opportunities for micro businesses to start trading, add vibrancy and drive footfall

Cultural capacity programme including activities that support the wellbeing of local communities in a range of areas from access to services, sports and leisure facilities, local culture and heritage through to addressing fuel poverty and climate change, e.g. warm hubs.

Pilot Green Energy support programme

Rural economic regeneration and community development programme – targeted rural programme that builds on the momentum of the previous Rural Development Programme across South West region. This will include work on the rural market towns across the region and valleys communities to support their development and sustainability

Community led projects and support for social enterprises designed to create more vibrant and sustainable communities.

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

All grants will be delivered in line with UK Subsidy Rules.

A broad mix of interventions is proposed, some of which will constitute subsidy for particular activities. The region has considerable experience of managing subsidy control, which will be achieved by:

- Careful screening of activities at application stage through carefully designed questions on application forms and guidance
- Checking off at financial claim stage where appropriate
- Ensuring full visibility and use of subsidy control exemptions and thresholds including Minimum Financial Assistance, as necessary, including appropriate use of procurement and commissioning in some cases.

Regional and local administrative teams will be alert to these requirements and ensure interventions are carefully designed to ensure full compliance and administrative requirements kept manageable to ensure focus on project delivery.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	✓
Jobs safeguarded	✓
Increased footfall	✓
Increased visitor numbers	✓
Reduced vacancy rates	✓
Greenhouse gas reductions	✓
Number of new businesses created	✓
Improved perception of markets	✓
Increased business sustainability	✓
Increased number of businesses supported	✓
Increased amount of investment	✓
Improved perception of attractions	✓

Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm	✓
Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity	✓
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	✓
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	✓
Number of new to market products	✓
Number of R&D active businesses	✓
Increased number of innovation active SMEs	✓
Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services	✓
Increased number of innovation plans developed	✓
Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support	✓
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	✓
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	✓
Number of businesses increasing their export capability	✓
Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	✓
Number of businesses with improved productivity	✓
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	✓
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	✓
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

W16: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.

W17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally

W18: Supporting Made Smarter Adoption: Providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; industrial internet of things; virtual reality; data analytics. The support is proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing.

W19: Increasing investment in research and development at the local level. Investment to support the diffusion of innovation knowledge and activities, in both economically important and emerging areas. Support the commercialisation of ideas, encouraging collaboration and accelerating the path to market so that more ideas translate into industrial and commercial practices. Investment in doctoral training centres

W20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services. Grants to increase the research capacity and level of collaboration between firms to share best practice

W21: Funding for the development and support of appropriate innovation infrastructure at the local level.

W22: Investing in enterprise infrastructure and employment/innovation site development projects. This can help to unlock site development projects which will support growth in places.

W23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.

W24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.

W25: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors

W26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.

W27: Funding to develop angel investor networks nationwide.

W28: Export Grants to support businesses to grow their overseas trading, supporting local employment and investment.
W29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity.
W30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.
W31: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies
W32: Funding to support progression of small businesses into productive medium sized firms
W33: Investment in resilience infrastructure and nature based solutions that protect local businesses and community areas from natural hazards including flooding and coastal erosion.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS LIST?	
State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these	
Following extensive consultation, no additional interventions proposed at this stage.	
Explain how each intervention meets the Supporting Local Business investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.	
N/A	
Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention's planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.	
Yes	No
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.	
N/A	

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?
Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Supporting Local Business investment priority and the location of the proposed project.
<p>The region has consulted widely in local areas and a range of key programmes have been identified that sit under this investment priority. These include learning from existing funded programmes under EU Structural Funds and UK Community Renewal Fund pilots. A number of emerging areas of activity include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for indigenous growth SMEs • Supporting innovation with shared space, equipment, start up space • Collaborative measures to support economic growth <p>The following are examples of anticipated projects and programmes:</p> <p>Business Start-up and Growth Fund - targeted capital/revenue fund to support the development and growth of local businesses and to drive local employment.</p>

Rural economic regeneration programme – targeted rural programme that builds on the momentum of the previous Rural Development Programme and offers support to rural businesses.

Tourism, culture and heritage fund – support to increase the local economic impact of the visitor sector by improving the visitor experience within towns and key tourist "hotspots" across the region

Property Development Funds - package of assistance to support developers and owner occupiers to invest in construction, expansion and refurbishments of property to meet the infrastructure needs of local businesses and to address the current viability gap which exists across the region.

Business support services that dovetail and complement Welsh Government Business Wales provision and ensure successful integration with other relevant interventions under Communities and Place to maximise business survival rates and economic vibrancy.

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

All grants will be delivered in line with UK Subsidy Rules.

A broad mix of interventions is proposed, some of which will constitute subsidy for particular activities. The region has considerable experience of managing subsidy control, which will be achieved by:

- Careful screening of activities at application stage through carefully designed questions on application forms and guidance
- Checking off at financial claim stage where appropriate
- Ensuring full visibility and use of subsidy control exemptions and thresholds including Small Amounts of Financial Assistance, as necessary, including appropriate use of procurement and commissioning in some cases.
- Smaller grants will be delivered in line with the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance under Article 3.2(4) of the Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA).
- For property grants we will utilise SC10250 (Capital Investment and Employment Aid Scheme) which will provide same cover as previous GBER rules (SA. 60356 / 49737 / 39123)

Regional and local administrative teams will be alert to these requirements and ensure interventions are carefully designed to ensure full compliance and administrative requirements kept manageable to ensure focus on project delivery.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support	✓
Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups [and/or] increased employability through development of interpersonal skills	✓
Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	✓

Number of people in supported employment [and] number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services	✓
Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services	✓
Number of people engaged in job-searching following support	✓
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	✓
Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months	✓
Increased employment, skills and/or UKSPF objectives incorporated into local area corporate governance	✓
Number of people in education/training	✓
Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	✓
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	✓
Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace	✓
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	✓
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	✓
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills	✓
Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training.	✓
Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions	✓
Number of people with proficiency in pre-employment and interpersonal skills (relationship, organisational and anger-management, interviewing, CV and job application writing)	✓
Multiply only - Increased number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2.	✓
Multiply only - Increased number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2.	✓
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

W34: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer to mainstream provision and to gain and retain employment, including wraparound support to people undertaking apprenticeships, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps. Funding for vocational training for economically inactive people, where the provision is additional to that funded via mainstream provision.
* via Multiply

W35: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills** provision for people who are not economically inactive and who are unable to access other training or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications.
*where not being met through Department for Work and Pensions or Welsh Government provision.

W36: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.

W37: Interventions to increase levels of digital inclusion, with a focus on essential digital skills, communicating the benefits of getting (safely) online, and in community support to provide users with the confidence and trust to stay online.

W38: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.
W39: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that cannot be met through mainstream funding.
W40: Green skills courses targeted around ensuring we have the skilled workforce to achieve the government's net zero and wider environmental ambitions.
W41: Retraining and upskilling support for those in high carbon sectors, with a particular focus on transitioning to green, and Industry 4.0 and 5.0 jobs.
W42: Funding to support local digital skills.
W43: Funding to support engagement and softer skills development for young people, with regard to the work of Careers Wales/Working Wales.
Multiply interventions
W44: Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal qualifications.
W45: Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression.
W46: Courses aimed at prisoners, those recently released from prison or on temporary licence
W47: Courses aimed at people who can't apply for certain jobs because of lack of numeracy skills and/or to encourage people to upskill in order to access a certain job/career.
W48: Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses.
W49: Innovative programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace.
W50: New intensive and flexible courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths in Wales, leading to an equivalent qualification (for more information on equivalent qualifications, please see Qualifications can cross boundaries (sqa.org.uk))
W51: Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.
W52: Courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system
W53: Activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners – for example, those not in the labour market or other groups identified locally as in need.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

The region intends to use the “Cynnydd” type of intervention developed for use with young people most at risk of becoming NEET, as assessed by reference to their educational achievements, school or college attendance and behaviour alongside professional judgement to provide a “blended” approach to the assessment of the risk attached to each individual. This appears to fit under intervention W43 except that some of the young people involved maybe as young as 11.

The region also intend to train trainers so that they are able to deliver numeracy skills training in support of the Multiply initiative, due to the shortage of such trainers in Pembrokeshire and across the South West Wales region.

Explain how each intervention meets the People and Skills investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

Cynnydd is a bespoke Welsh solution to local and regional issues that are addressed within the framework of the Welsh legislative, policy and institutional arrangements. It is broadly aligned with the People and Skills objective of “Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support, including access to basic skills” but rather than being a reactive approach to tackling an individual’s isolation from the labour market, it

is a proactive, preventative approach that is proven to avoid economic inactivity occurring in the first place. Evaluation evidence shows that the pandemic, which interrupted delivery to some extent, has intensified the level of anxiety, school phobia, poor social skills and poor mental health amongst the target group so increasing their risk of becoming NEET in later life.

The final interim evaluation report concludes “*evidence also demonstrates that where participants have engaged, the operation has been very successful in generating positive outcomes with 69% of the closed cases to date exiting the operation at a reduced risk of NEET. This is higher than expected (62%) despite the needs being more intensive than anticipated. Thus, the operation should be commended for its success rate with participants.*”

The Cynnydd operation is continuing until November 2022. The final evaluation, which will be available by February 2023 will include an analysis of return on investment. However an *ex ante* assessment demonstrated that a tailored intervention such as Cynnydd provided a significantly better return to the public investment than either a generalised intervention or the “do nothing” option.

The shortage of numeracy basic skills trainers was identified in consultation with adult education services in local authorities and further education colleges across South West Wales. This consultation was conducted as a part of the preparatory work behind this Investment Plan.

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention’s planned activity?
All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes	No
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Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

ENGLAND ONLY: People and Skills interventions can only be used in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 if you have identified a local voluntary and community provision, previously supported by the European Social Fund, at risk of closure. If you have not identified a suitable provision, you will not be able to select interventions for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and your investment plan will not be approved.

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS for 2024-2025 WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Yes

Describe the projects for 2024-25, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

N/A

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?
All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

N/A

HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A LOCAL VOLUNTARY PROVISION AT RISK AS PART OF YOUR PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?

Yes	No
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(If Yes) Describe the local voluntary provision at risk and your rationale for supporting it.

N/A		
Provide the European Social Fund Project Names and Project References for this voluntary and community provision at risk.		
What year do you intend to fund these projects? Select all that apply.		
2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Describe the projects for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.		
N/A		
Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.		
Yes	No	
Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.		
N/A		

SCOTLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY	
HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?	
Yes	
Describe the projects, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.	
<p>The region has delivered a strong package of support measures under this theme for more than a decade, and more recently used the UK CRF opportunity to trial potential successor arrangements at local level and has consulted extensively at local level to understand priorities and nature of interventions going forward.</p> <p>Key measures that will be consistent across the region include:</p> <p>Supporting people into work - A bespoke multi-agency programme of tailored support to reduce economic inactivity and to support those furthest from the labour market back into work. The project will offer a menu of training opportunities including access to basic skills, employability support, mentoring and work placements to improve employment outcomes for specific cohorts who face labour market barriers including 50+. This could build on good practice on Pathways to Work Swansea CRF project.</p> <p>Youth engagement provision – pre and post 16 provision to support young people to attain positive outcomes. This would involve the development of a programme of activities to engage children and young people. The project would work with those at risk of NEET or already NEET children and young people using preventative youth support approaches to engage with people who often have a range of complex needs. The project will include a series of bespoke youth support packages designed to support the individual towards better outcomes. Within the offer will be a number of posts including these linked to digital and media; emotional health and wellbeing; and youth work.</p> <p>Projects of this nature have been successfully delivered previously. These initiatives will build on lessons learned from previous projects of this nature that have been successfully run across the</p>	

region. This could include engaging with schools and colleges to include employability, childcare and construction.

“Cynnydd” type of intervention developed for use with young people most at risk of becoming NEET, as assessed by reference to their educational achievements, school or college attendance and behaviour alongside professional judgement to provide a “blended” approach to the assessment of the risk attached to each individual. This appears to fit under intervention W43 except that some of the young people involved maybe as young as 11. Cynnydd is a bespoke Welsh solution to local and regional issues that are addressed within the framework of the Welsh legislative, policy and institutional arrangements. It is broadly aligned with the People and Skills objective of “Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support, including access to basic skills” but rather than being a reactive approach to tackling an individual’s isolation from the labour market, it is a proactive, preventative approach that is proven to avoid economic inactivity occurring in the first place. Evaluation evidence shows that the pandemic, which interrupted delivery to some extent, has intensified the level of anxiety, school phobia, poor social skills and poor mental health amongst the target group so increasing their risk of becoming NEET in later life.

A broad range of other emerging areas of activity include:

- Paid work experience
- Paid Placements project/apprenticeship support scheme.
- Prison leavers programme.
- (Potentially) NHS skills and placement project
- Pilot Green skills programme
- Addressing current and future skills needs of local employers
- Refugee and Asylum seeker employability and skills project - Swansea as city of sanctuary
- Pilot Skills and Brokerage service (GCS)
- Intensive In-work Support
- Supporting basic and life skills, so individuals are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society (linking to Multiply).
- Early intervention to provide young people and adults with the the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life independently
- Environmental projects to support group interaction, mental health and wellbeing.
- Structured sessions providing practical financial, budgeting, housing and money management.
- Pre-engagement programme.
- Enhance apprenticeship provision. Ensuring there is a flexible offer to young people not in education, employment or training – to include outside of normal office hours to support the needs of young people.
- Early identification and intervention for those transitioning to post 16 destinations.
- Targeted school support for school holidays

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes	No
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Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

All programmes will be delivered in line with UK Subsidy Rules.

A broad mix of interventions is proposed, some of which will constitute subsidy for particular activities. The region has considerable experience of managing subsidy control, which will be achieved by:

- Careful screening of activities at application stage through carefully designed questions on application forms and guidance
- Checking off at financial claim stage where appropriate
- Ensuring full visibility and use of subsidy control exemptions and thresholds including Minimum Financial Assistance, use of streamlined routes, as necessary, including appropriate use of procurement and commissioning in some cases.

Regional and local administrative teams will be alert to these requirements and ensure interventions are carefully designed to ensure full compliance and administrative requirements kept manageable to ensure focus on project delivery.

Approach to delivery and governance

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Structures you have in place to support delivery
- Support you have from stakeholders and the local community
- How you've engaged with MPs as part of your investment plan
- Opportunities you have identified to work with other places

Places need to show how MPs that cover the lead local authority have been engaged on the investment plan and whether they support it. More detail on the role of MPs can be found here.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Have you engaged with any of the following as part of your investment plan? Select all that apply.

Public sector organisations YES	Private sector organisations YES	Civil society organisations YES
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Describe how you have engaged with any of these organisations. Give examples where possible.

Meetings and engagement with the following:

- Local authority internal officer groups in Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire
- Engagement sessions via local Councils for Voluntary Services in each local authority area
- Consultation sessions with local multi-sector regeneration partnerships in each local area
- Business Advisory Groups
- Regional Learning & Skills Partnership – Business event on 20th June 2022
- Regional Adult and Community Learning engagement group
- Regional engagement online 18 July 2022

External Stakeholder digital consultation exercise in each local area

- Various networks spanning over 200 organisations

Summarise the governance structures you have in place, including how any advisory panels or associated partnership groups are made up

Each local area has a comprehensive local regeneration partnership with the following membership and links:

- Higher Education
- Further education

- Third sector/CVCs
- Representatives from the Business Advisory Groups/Business Improvement Districts
- Rural regeneration groups
- Strategic Town Fora representatives
- Social Business Wales
- Small Business Federations
- Chambers Wales
- Regional Learning & Skills Partnership

Each partnership has discussed the key principles and programme challenges and opportunities outlined in this plan.

MPs and MS' have been engaged across the region including:

MPs

Simon Hart
 Nia Griffiths
 Stephen Crabb
 Jonathan Edwards
 Geraint Davies
 Tonia Antoniazzi
 Carolyn Harris
 Stephen Kinnock
 Christina Rees

MS'

Eluned Morgan
 Joyce Watson
 Cefin Campbell
 Adam Price
 Lee Waters
 Jane Dodds
 Samuel Kurtz
 Paul Davies
 Mike Hedges
 Julie James
 Rebecca Evans
 David Rees
 Jeremy Miles

Some members are opting to take part in local partnerships, others prefer to be engaged separately on an ongoing basis and kept apprised of developments.

Confirm all MPs covering your lead local authority have been invited to join the local partnership group.

Yes

Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan?

No

(If Yes) Who are the MPs that are not supportive and outline their reasons why.

There are no indications of MPs not being supportive.

PROJECT SELECTION

Are you intending to select projects in any way other than by competition for funding?

No

(If Yes) Describe your approach to selecting projects, and why you intend to do it this way.

The programme presents an exciting opportunity to design and deliver local interventions with regional consistency, and to pool and commission activity across places where this makes sense and adds value for the people and communities receiving support.

South West region is keen to design interventions to ensure that funding is directed to projects that make sense to people and businesses, with the focus on delivery and layering of bureaucracy as far as possible. Funding arrangements should ensure they follow the constitutional arrangements for organisations in receipt of funding and factor potential impact of administrative burden created by complex legal and financial arrangements and aim to keep these to the minimum required to ensure effective delivery and added value.

Whilst there is a need to accommodate transition from existing programmes to an extent, exit strategy remains a key question for any activity of any scale by any organisation, and organisations will be expected to articulate this point carefully in applications - the programme activity should be about enabling and supporting sustainable activities, not creating long-term dependencies.

The region consists of four partner local authorities with well over a decade of constructive and positive collaborative working, with individual local allocations. The understanding is that the allocations are fundamentally local allocations with a regional oversight to share good practice, consistency and good programme management, whilst allowing each local area the flexibility to adapt programmes to meet the subtle differences in local need, as well as addressing a large number of challenges and opportunities held in common.

The region intends to use 4% of the funds between Swansea as lead authority working closely with small teams in each individual local authority to ensure seamless delivery of the programme. A collaborative approach has worked well between the partner authorities over a number of years on a range of programmes including most recently the Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme which follows the same basic model as proposed here.

The approach will be finalised once the project guidance is issued during August but the working intention is to deploy the following delivery methods in all cases being clear on local and regional benefit of activities proposed:

- Carefully chosen grant schemes that enable businesses and communities to benefit from programme opportunities
- Commissioned activity at local and regional where there is a direct benefit to the people in their communities and businesses across the region, with direct applicability during the programme period
- Procured activity at local and regional level
- Opportunities to work across regions where appropriate and value added and where there is specific evidence of local benefit
- In-house delivery where appropriate and commensurate with organisational duties
- Ensuring appropriate match funding input depending on scale and nature of activity and avoiding paper-chase distracting from project delivery
- Ensuring genuine engagement from project deliverers and evidence of capacity to deliver
- Ensuring project deliverers have sufficient capacity to manage and deliver projects effectively
- Multi-agency approaches where appropriate and ensuring sufficient administrative capacity to operate projects effectively.

Guidance-permitting these approaches will be used individually or in combination subject to the needs of particular activities and projects.

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
To be developed over the period of SPF	
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
N/A	
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?	
<p>South West Wales region and key places where existing cross-boundary working relationships will continue. As described above, a key concern is ensuring that programme management does not lead to excessive bureaucracy and legal and financial overheads. The current working intention is developing a pragmatic approach to project design that enables effective collaboration, regional consistency and local accountability and visible delivery.</p>	

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
To be developed over the period of SPF	
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
N/A	
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?	
<p>South West Wales region and key places where existing cross-boundary working relationships will continue. As described above, a key concern is ensuring that programme management does not lead to excessive bureaucracy and legal and financial overheads. The current working intention is developing a pragmatic approach to project design that enables effective collaboration, regional consistency and local accountability and visible delivery.</p>	

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.

Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
To be developed over the period of SPF	
Describe any interventions not included in this list?	
N/A	

Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?

South West Wales region and key places where existing cross-boundary working relationships will continue. As described above, a key concern is ensuring that programme management does not lead to excessive bureaucracy and legal and financial overheads. The current working intention is developing a pragmatic approach to project design that enables effective collaboration, regional consistency and local accountability and visible delivery.

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

How have you considered your public sector equality duty in the design of your investment plan?

All four partner local authorities have published their Strategic Equality Plans for 2020-24 on their public websites below.

[Strategic Equality Plan – Neath Port Talbot Council \(npt.gov.uk\)](http://npt.gov.uk)

[Strategic Equality Plan - Appendix A.pdf - Swansea Council \(swansea.gov.uk\)](http://swansea.gov.uk)

[Strategic Equality Plan - Carmarthenshire Council \(carmarthenshire.gov.uk\)](http://carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

[Strategic Equality Plan 2020 - 24 - Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

All activities carried out by the local authorities including the design of this investment plan takes account of our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

How will you consider your public sector equality duty when implementing your investment plan, including in the selection of projects?

When implementing the investment plan and during project selection we will pay due regard to how the applicants have considered the equalities impacts of their proposals, the relevant affected groups based on protected characteristics and any measures proposed in response to these impacts.

RISKS

Have you identified any key risks that could affect delivery, for example lack of staff or expertise?

Yes	No
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(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.

Budgets have been set for the first year of programme delivery with indications that carry forward into future years will not be possible. The speed of design and implementation of the project development and approval process will therefore be time critical and failure to proceed at pace will risk funds being lost to the region. This will be mitigated by the dialogue already initiated with potential project delivers and early thinking on shaping of interventions to ensure the programme is up and running as quickly and efficiently as possible. This is subject to UK Government guidance being issued in a timely manner.

Multiply funding is provided at a considerable scale, quick resolution of early doors concerns will enable a swift start to capacity building and effective use of the funding opportunity.

Staff in the partner local authorities at senior management and programme level are in place and have the experience and expertise to design and implement this programme in a timely and efficient manner.

Managing demand and expectations particularly for legacy funded schemes where there could be loss of staff with experience and expertise. Some form of bridging arrangement is likely to be required but not an automatic refunding of legacy schemes.

As with the delivery with the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF), programme level risk register for each priority will be developed, as well as ensuring that individual SPF projects maintain their own registers, which assess the seriousness of a risk, mitigation measures, reporting procedures and details of risk owners and actionees

Have you identified any key fraud risks that could affect UKSPF delivery?

No

(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.

No key fraud risks have been identified that would affect UKSPF delivery or otherwise

Partner local authorities all have effective systems for due diligence and robust Financial Procedure Rules in their constitutions which will be followed for this programme. These document in detail how the local authorities deal with risk management and control of resources, this includes procedures for:

- Risk Management
- Internal Control
- Audit Requirements
- Preventing Fraud, Corruption and Malpractice assets.

The partner authorities have grants manuals and accounting instructions in place that create a robust oversight and rigorous financial management.

Capacity and capability

In this section, we will ask you about:

- The capacity and capability of your team to manage funding
- The resources you have in place for work related to UKSPF

Your answers here will help us know how to support you with delivery. They will not affect the amount of funding you will get.

Answer as honestly as possible.

TEAM RESOURCE

How many people (FTE) will be put in place to work with UKSPF funding?

The working proposal is to create an effective administrative capacity linking the lead regional team in Swansea with local capacity in each of the four component authorities to ensure that the programme can effectively manage a strong portfolio of activities across the region, with effective and seamless communication and effective tangible delivery.

Describe what role these people will have, including any seniority and experience.

Swansea regional lead and day to day delivery

The lead Head of Service for Shared Prosperity Fund is Phillip Holmes, Head of Planning and City Regeneration in Swansea, whilst the lead Senior Manager is Paul Relf, Economic Development & External Funding Manager. The team responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund on a regional basis will be headed up by Paul. Key personnel in the Economic Development and External Funding Team are detailed below who will be involved with the design and development of SPF both at regional level and at a local level in Swansea.

Key Personnel in Swansea:

- Paul Relf – Economic Development & External Funding Manager – over 20 years' experience in the development of economic policy, grant funding, programme and project design and delivery.
- Clare James – Economic Development Manager – over 20 years' experience in the development of economic policy, programme and project design and delivery.
- Elliott Williams – External Funding Manager – over 10 years' experience in grant funding and the development and delivery of programmes and projects.
- Richard Horlock – Principal External Funding Officer - over 10 years' experience in the delivery of programme and project delivery.
- Neil Stokes – External Funding Programme Officer - over 5 years' experience in the delivery of programmes and projects.
- Lukasz Dymarkowski – External Funding Programme Officer – over 5 years' experience in the delivery of programmes and projects.
- Hannah Healy – External Funding Officer – over 10 years' experience in the delivery of programmes and projects.

Additional staff will be seconded to the delivery of SPF at the appropriate time, however it is worth noting that the team is currently made up of over 60 members of staff with a wide range of experience in the development and delivery of both capital and revenue projects, including employability and skills schemes, business support, physical regeneration and heritage schemes, plus, rural, culture and tourism and education interventions. Skill sets include policy and project development, project management, finance, procurement and legal expertise. The team is also able to access subject matter expertise from a wide range of colleagues and services both within the Local Authority and externally through a robust network of public, private and third sector partners and has experience in doing so to develop and deliver a strong and varied portfolio of activities. Over recent years the team has secured funding, developed a portfolio of projects in excess of £100m and played a key role in the implementation of those projects at both a regional and local level.

Neath Port Talbot

Day-to-day delivery

Lisa Willis – Strategic Funding Programmes Manager. Over 20 years' experience in project and programme management, grant funding, strategic policy, governance and assurance.

Claire Williams – Strategic Funding Manager. Over 10 years' experience in project and programme management, monitoring and evaluation, compliance and assurance.

Julia Lewis – Strategic Funding Officer. Over 10 years' experience of project and programme coordination and monitoring.

Strategic Funding Officer – Loreen Jenkins. Over 10 years' experience of grant funding, finance and claims, monitoring and compliance.

Strategic Funding Officer – to be appointed. To support the delivery of the UKSPF in Neath Port Talbot.

The team works closely with internal and external partners from the public, private and third sectors and academia, across a wide area of priority areas including: regeneration, economic development, community coordination, employability, skills, transport and heritage.

Additional support from:

Nicola Pearce – Director of Environment and Regeneration. SRO for UKSPF in Neath Port Talbot.

Simon Brennan – Head of Property and Regeneration

Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer

Craig Griffiths – Head of Legal Services

Chris Millis – Head of Education Development

All of the Council Officers in the roles identified above have extensive experience of project delivery and management in their own respective fields.

Track record

Neath Port Talbot Council has strong capability and capacity, with a successful track record of securing funding from a range of WG, European Structural Investment Funds, Lottery and LEADER and ensuring successful delivery, project compliance, monitoring and reporting for a wide variety of local and regional, revenue and capital funded projects. Some examples include:

- PDR Harbour Way Transport Scheme - £111m
- 21st Century Schools Programme - £122m
- Neath Port Talbot Regeneration - £15m
- Vibrant and Viable Places - £35m
- UK Community Renewal – suite of six local projects - £2.4m

Carmarthenshire

Day-to-day delivery

Helen Morgan – Economic Development Manager – over 20 years' experience in programme / project delivery

Rhian Philips – Economic Development Area Manager – over 20 years' experience in programme / project delivery

Beth Walters – Regional Engagement Team Manager – over 10 years' experience in programme / project delivery

Jayne Prichard – Senior Coordinator – over 20 years' experience in programme / project delivery

Jonathan Hancock – Bureau Coordinator – over 20 years' experience in programme / project delivery

All 5 have had extensive experience of external funding, including the Lottery and the EU Structural Funds (ERDF / ESF) and EU LEADER Programme.

Support from

Jason Jones – Head of Regeneration

Randal Hemingway - Head of Financial Services

Linda Rees Jones – Head of Legal Service

Helen Pugh – Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance

Chris Moore – Director of Finance

Pembrokeshire

In Pembrokeshire, this role will be taken by the External Funding Team with in the Finance Division of the Resources Directorate. It is anticipated that the following staff will be available to work on UK SPF. These staff will move onto UK SPF work as they complete work on EU and UK CRF programmes.

External Funding Manager	0.3 FTE
External Funding Officer	2.1 FTE
Senior Grant Officer	0.2 FTE
Grant Officer	3.5 FTE
Performance & Monitoring Officer	1.0 FTE

Pembrokeshire may in addition need to appoint one or more further Grant Officers, and make use of a Subsidy Control Officer currently being recruited, and will also seek support from Legal and Human Resources teams.

External Funding Manager

Managing and overseeing the work of the External Funding Team. Lead for Pembrokeshire County Council on the UK SPF. Direct supervision of External Funding Officers, Senior Grant Officer and Subsidy Control Officer. Worked on UK, EU and Welsh Government grant programmes with over 25 years' experience.

External Funding Officer

Application appraisal; liaison with projects awarded UK SPF to problem-solve and ensure that projects remain on track and compliant with funding conditions; sense-checking of claims and monitoring reports; local publicity initiatives; compilation of non-financial audit evidence (e.g. procurement evidence). Direct supervision of Performance & Monitoring Officer. Postholders have at least 20 years of grant management experience.

Senior Grant Officer

Supervision of Grant Officers. Accountancy qualified and with over five years' experience of grant management.

Grant Officers

Preparation of grant claims, production of estimates and compilation of audit evidence. Accountancy qualified to AAT or part-qualified ACCA.

Performance & Monitoring Officer

Monitoring and verification of outputs and outcomes; production of statistical reports. Experience mainly on ESF programmes with over five years' experience.

Subsidy Control Officer

Ensuring that all UK SPF projects delivered through Pembrokeshire County Council are compliant with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and related legislation. New post, but will be supported by the External Funding Manager.

- Strong capability: Has extensive experience and/or a proven track record of delivery in this area.
- Strong capacity: High degree of confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Some capability: Has previous experience of delivery in this area.
- Some capacity: Confident that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Limited capability: Does not have previous experience and/or no track record of delivery in this area.
- Limited capacity: Limited confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area. Additional resource may be needed to support delivery.

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

How would you describe your team's current experience of delivering funding and managing growth funds?

✓ Very experienced	Some experience	No previous experience
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How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?

✓ Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
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How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for procurement?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong capacity	Some capacity	Limited capacity
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for subsidies?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for subsidies?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong capacity	Some capacity	Limited capacity

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Communities and Place interventions you have select?

Yes

How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?

Strong capability Some capability Limited capability

Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.

N/A

Describe what further support would help address these challenges.

Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.

How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?

Strong capability Some capability Limited capability

Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.

N/A

Describe what further support would help address these challenges.

Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Supporting Local Business interventions you have select?

Yes

How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?

Strong capability Some capability Limited capability

Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.

N/A

Describe what further support would help address these challenges.

Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.

How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong capability	<input type="checkbox"/> Some capability	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.		

PEOPLE AND SKILLS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the People and Skills interventions you have select?		
Yes		
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong capability	<input type="checkbox"/> Some capability	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited capability
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
N/A		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong capability	<input type="checkbox"/> Some capability	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
Further staff capacity is likely to be need within project interventions.		

SUPPORT TO DELIVERY UKSPF	
All lead authorities can use up to 4% of their UKSPF allocation to support the delivery of their chosen interventions but by exception, lead authorities will be able to use more than 4%. Are you planning to use more than 4%?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
(If Yes) Explain why you wish to use more than 4%.	
Initial proposal is to work within the 4% allocation.	

Approvals

Before submitting your investment plan, you should have approval from your:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Section 151 Officer
- Leader of your lead authority

Do you have approval from your Chief Executive Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes**
- No

Do you have approval from your Section 151 Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes**
- No

Do you have approval from the leader of your lead authority for this investment plan?

- Yes**
- No

If you do not have approval from any of these people, please explain why this is:
--

N/A

Additional documents

You will have received an email giving you access to a folder where you will need to upload supporting evidence to your investment plan. All applicants must complete and upload the following spreadsheet to the folder prior to submitting their investment plan:

- UKSPF Expenditure Profile spreadsheet
- UKSPF Indicative Deliverables spreadsheet

Your investment plan submission will be considered incomplete without the required documents.

Have you completed and uploaded the two spreadsheets to the SharePoint folder as requested?

- Yes**
- No

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

19th October 2022

Report of the Head of People and Organisational Development – Sheenagh Rees

Matter for information

Wards affected: all wards

The Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027: The Future of Work Strategy

Purpose of the Report:

To inform Cabinet of the Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027: The Future of Work Strategy which will be considered at the next Personnel Committee on the 24th October 2022.

Executive Summary:

The report provides background to the development of the draft Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027 which is attached at Appendix 1. The plan was developed over a number of months during which we listened to what's important to our employees and managers at every level and our trade union partners. We also worked with Audit Wales and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) to ensure our people practices are the best they can be. A consultation in relation to the plan was launched in August 2022, and all employees have been encouraged to provide feedback, either by email to futureofwork@npt.gov.uk or by attending one of 10 focus group sessions arranged. Face to face consultation also took place with our recognised trade unions across the council. The feedback has been collated, analysed and considered and the report sets out how we will respond to this feedback, including amendments to the Delivery Plan.

Background:

The Council's Workforce Plan 2017 – 2022 ended in March 2022. Work to develop a new Strategic Workforce Plan for 2022 – 2027 began in 2021, aligning to the development of the Corporate Plan which was launched in April 2022. We co-produced the plan with key stakeholders; this included:

- Engagement activity to help us understand what's important to employees at every level and our trade union partners. We used surveys, workshops, drop-in sessions and focus groups.
- We worked with Heads of Service and Accountable Managers to understand what matters to them and their priorities for their teams and the services they delivery. This has been used to develop and determine our workforce priorities for the next 5 year period.
- We worked with our trade union partners to ensure the workforce plan is underpinned by fairness and transparency.
- We informed our approach with the outcome of an **Audit Wales** review of workforce planning across the council, carried out in 2021 / 2022. This highlighted strengths in our established approach and recommended areas for improvement.
- We worked with the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) via their **People Development Partner (PDP) Scheme** which seeks to recognise organisations that are demonstrating a real commitment to better work and working lives. As part of the scheme, the CIPD carried out a People Impact Survey to determine how the council's current people capability aligns to CIPD standards. This provided us with feedback on our strengths and key areas for improvement, feeding in to the priorities set out in the draft plan.

Summary of the Strategic Workforce Plan

The Strategic Workforce Plan supports the council's strategic priorities and describes what the workforce will need to look like to deliver these priorities. By aligning the Strategic Workforce Plan to the council's Corporate Plan, we will ensure that the plan focuses on embedding the council's purpose, vision and values across the council's workforce.

The aim of the strategy is simple: we want to have the right number of people, with the right skills and attitudes, in the right place, at the right time, to deliver council services.

Our workforce priorities are:

- **Resourcing Neath Port Talbot**
- **Developing and Retaining Talent**
- **Employer of Choice: Employee Experience and Engagement**
- **Developing the Future of Work**
- **Knowledge and Skills Development**
- **A Safe Workplace: Supporting the health and well-being of our employees**
- **An Inclusive Workplace where all employees can be themselves**
- **Actions to support the council's well-being objectives**

Attached to the Strategic Workforce Plan is a delivery plan which sets out what the council plans to achieve in the first 12 months of the plan, to 31st March 2023.

The Council has established a Future of Work delivery team to supplement the resources of the People & Organisational Development Service; this team includes HR, OD and Engagement professionals, as well as a seconded trade union officer. This additional capacity will help ensure that the ambitions of the strategy will be realised over the course of the next 3 – 5 years.

We will be monitoring the progress of actions to deliver this plan to see if our actions are having the right impact or not. We will also review the plan every year to check that it remains fit for purpose. The OD Programme Board chaired by the Chief Executive, will oversee progress of this plan and the other enabling project identified in the Corporate Plan, and regular update reports will also be provided to the Personnel Committee.

Consultation:

Internal consultation across the council's workforce began in August 2022. The draft plan was widely shared with every employee receiving a link to the plan via Yammer or GovNotify. A summary video was prepared, which

is available on the internet, and trade unions have been consulted in face to face meetings. Articles in the Sway and agenda items at Corporate Director Group, Corporate Management Group and the regular Accountable Manager briefing have encouraged participation in the consultation. 10 Focus Groups have been held, attended by employees from across the council and from a range of occupations and levels, to provide feedback in facilitated sessions led by the trade union officer who has been seconded to the Future of Work (FOW) Team. Employees have also been able to provide feedback via a dedicated email address: thefutureofwork@npt.gov.uk.

Summary of Feedback:

The feedback received from all the consultation activities described above has been collated, analysed and summarised by the trade union representative seconded to the FOW team, supported by his FOW colleagues. This is important as it underlines the transparency of our approach and continued commitment to partnership working with our trade union colleagues. A high level summary of feedback is set out below, and more detailed summary of the feedback can be found at **Appendix 2**.

- The Strategy has widespread support across the range of respondents, including trade unions, managers at all levels and employees at all levels. The workforce priorities set out in the strategy have been confirmed through the consultation exercise.
- “Front line” employees found it more difficult to relate to the strategy than “office based” employees, and this was also raised by the teaching associations who liked the document itself, but could not see how the values and priorities relate to school based employees.
- The majority of feedback relates to either operational issues, including how managers implement policy and process consistently and fairly, consistency of communication and our systems, applications and processes, and / or suggestions around delivery actions to support the workforce priorities.

- An important point raised through the consultation relates to the challenge of implementing the strategy; that top down support will be required if this strategy is to be successful, from Corporate Directors and at every level throughout the council.

Response to the feedback:

- It is clearly important that we develop a Communications and Engagement Plan to support both the implementation of the plan, and ensure that across our council employees understand how it relates to them. An important first step will be to feedback on the consultation exercise.
- Regular updates will ensure employees know how we are implementing the strategy and the delivery, and whether we are doing what we said we will do. For example, taking on board feedback received, we will feedback in detail around the work of the Recruitment Taskforce, to ensure that there is widespread knowledge about the work of this team and confidence that we are listening to what's important to our employees and managers, e.g. we are already developing actions to address points raised around job evaluation, pay and grading, career pathways, succession planning, etc.
- An action in the Delivery Plan focuses on rolling out Yammer to every employee in the council, as well as ensuring that we are using this new workplace tool effectively. We will ensure that employees know what the plan is and how they can help us shape how we develop Yammer.
- We will also focus on developing actions within the Delivery Plan around the cascading of key workforce information across the council; whilst corporate tools such as Yammer support this, it is important that we have effective cascading of information from senior levels to employees at operational delivery level.
- The development of comprehensive employee development programmes over the 5 year lifetime of this strategy will support the

embedding of council values across the whole workforce. This includes the role of our leaders and managers at every level, being absolutely clear about the leadership role they are expected to provide, role modelling the council values.

- By March 2023, we aim to have developed our strategic approach to Leadership and Management, and worked with our senior management team to define what leadership means in NPT. A climate check of where we are now will give us a baseline assessment, and this activity will provide a solid foundation to build on, providing comprehensive development programmes to support our leaders and managers do their jobs effectively and competently. This is clearly not a quick fix situation, this will take some time to have impact, but overtime will start to address issues raised in the consultation relating to consistency, fairness, the embedding of values including the approach to occupational health and safety, but also ensuring that our managers and leaders feel supported and that they really are equipped and empowered to do their jobs.
- We will include the development of a Corporate Induction into the delivery plan for 2023 / 2024.
- We intend to develop our approach to employee performance management and appraisal and how it supports career development and talent management over the lifetime of this strategy.
- We will include actions in this year's Delivery Plan relating to mentoring and work shadowing.
- This year we will establish a working group to look at how our approach to our employment framework can be more inclusive – so employees do not feel that they are overlooked in our strategic or operational approaches.

Financial impacts:

The Council spends 45% of gross expenditure on its workforce.

Integrated impact assessment:

A full impact is not required as at this stage there is no identified adverse impact on any protected group; there may of course be equality impacts through the consequential implementation of actions set out in the Delivery Plan. Regular monitoring, including equality monitoring, will help the council to identify if any adverse equality risks do occur in practice and take action to remedy this. This monitoring will also consider if actions are having the positive impacts intended on protected characteristics and review our delivery plan accordingly. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce impacts:

The strategic workforce plan sets out the priorities for the council's workforce over the next 5 years. It describes how we intend to recruit, retain, develop, motivate, engage, reward and recognise our workforce.

Legal impacts:

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts:

Workforce planning seeks to mitigate any identified workforce risks. For example the plan identifies the threat that the challenging and competitive recruitment market poses to employers across the UK, and the actions the council is taking to mitigate this threat.

Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the Strategic Workforce Plan and that it will be considered at a meeting of the Personnel Committee on the 24th October 2022.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – The Strategic Workforce Plan: the Future of Work Strategy

Appendix 2 – Summary of Consultation Feedback

List of Background Papers:

None

Officer contact:

Sheenagh Rees, Head of People and Organisational Development,
telephone number: 01639 763315, email: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk



THE FUTURE OF WORK STRATEGY

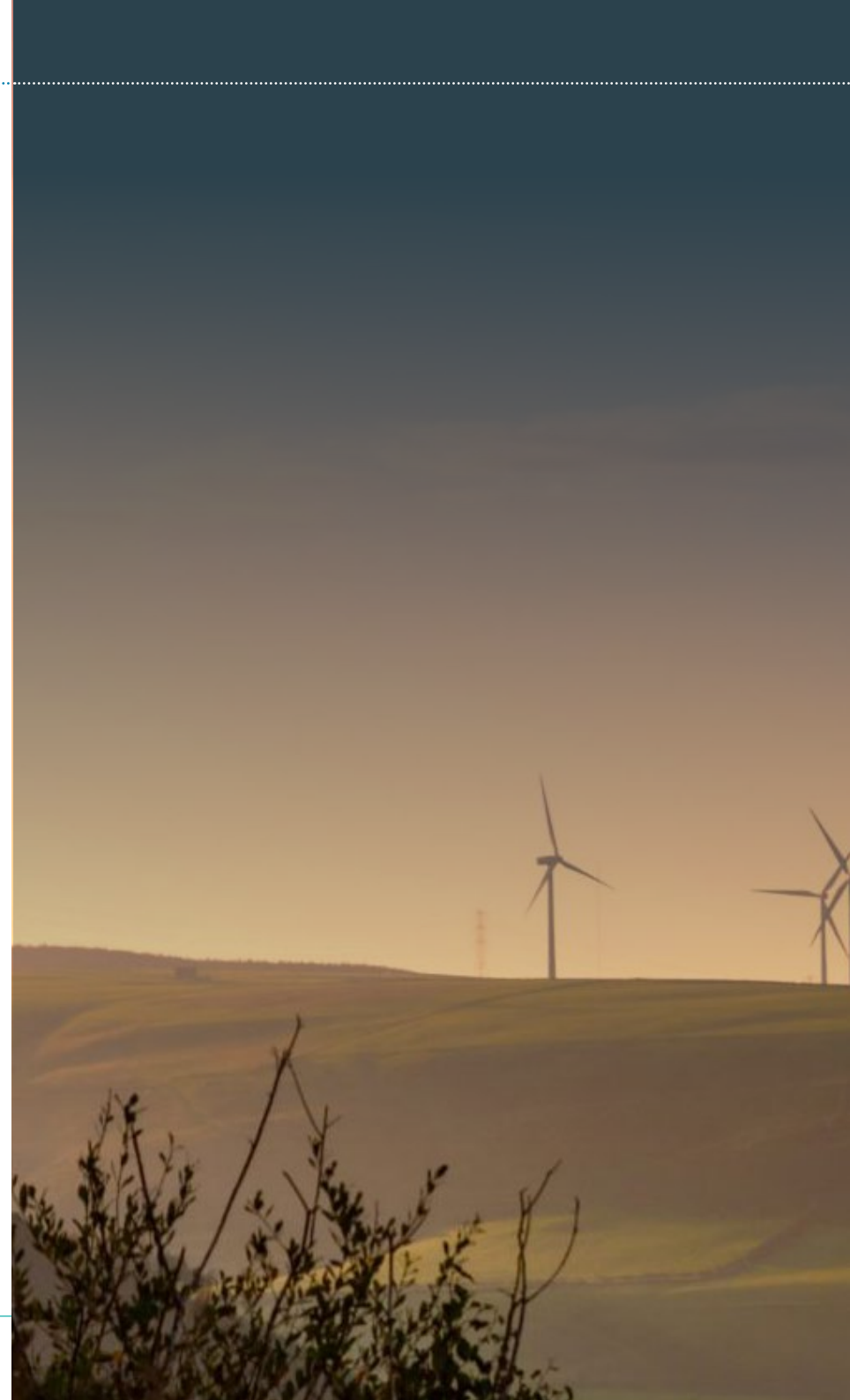
Strategic Workforce Plan
2022-2027



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

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2.	What is the Strategic Workforce Plan?	7
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Foreword

Our services are delivered by people and it is the people who make this council what it is. We are extremely proud of the way in which our employees stepped up and helped during the global pandemic over the last two years, supporting our communities and businesses, and for the way in which they have helped to protect the NHS and public health.

As we now start to look to the future, taking into account the impact that Covid-19 has had on our community and our workforce, this strategy sets out how we intend to shape Team NPT over the next 5 years, to ensure that together, as one council, we can focus on doing what matters to our residents, local businesses and investors, helping our residents to live good lives.

Operating in a challenging recruitment market, we need to ensure that we can continue to attract, retain and motivate the best employees with the right skills to deliver services that are the best they can be for the people of Neath Port Talbot.

Through this Strategic Workforce Plan, we aim to ensure our people are well led, supported, trusted and recognised for the contribution they make. We want our people to be treated fairly and with respect and also encouraged to bring forward ideas about how we can improve what we do. We will develop a workforce which is representative of its communities and people will have equal opportunity to progress in our organisation.

We will develop a culture where people are accountable for and recognised for what they do and how they do it. We will develop an employment framework that is fit for the future of work.



Cllr Steve Hunt
Leader of Council



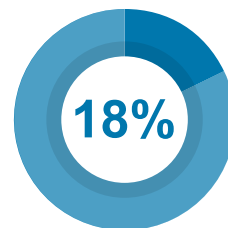
Mrs K Jones
Chief Executive



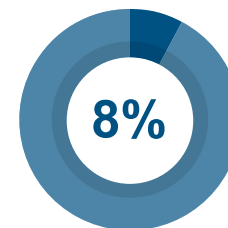
We are Team NPT



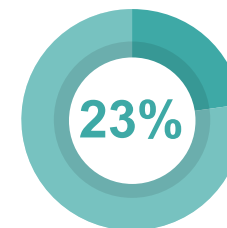
We employ
6,385
employees



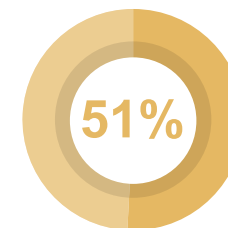
work in
Social Services



work in
Corporate Services



work in
Environment
& Regeneration



work in
Education, Leisure
& Lifelong Learning

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40%
are employed
in schools



70% are female
30% are male



95% of those employed in
our lowest paid pay
band (Grade 1) are female

37% of those employed in
our highest Chief Officer
pay bands are female

21%
are teachers

19%
are school support staff



We are Team NPT

The median pay in our council is
£24,920

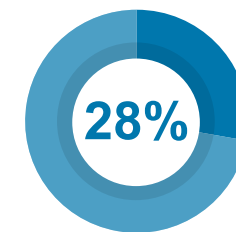
The ratio between the lowest paid employee's earnings and the highest paid employee's earnings (as at 1st April 2018) is

1:7

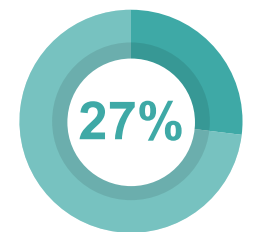


Average sickness absence levels amongst our workforce was 13.28 days in 2021/2022. Covid-19 was the number one reason for sickness absence, followed by mental health and stress related absence

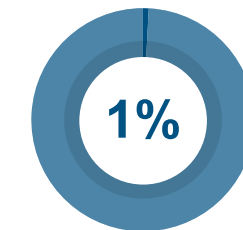
1.5% 
are of Black and Minority Ethnic Origin



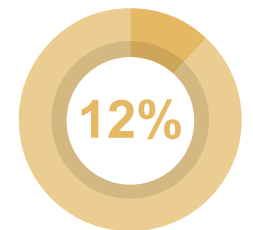
are aged between 51-60 years



are aged 41-50 years



of the workforce is aged 21 or under



are aged 30 or under

3.86%
Our median gender pay gap



622
speak and write fluent Welsh



4,135
have little or no Welsh



What is the Strategic Workforce Plan?

The Strategic Workforce Plan links to and supports the council's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-2027, by identifying what the workforce needs to look like and how it needs to operate to deliver outcomes for the residents of Neath Port Talbot. The Plan helps provide the direction and to ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills and attitudes, in the right place and at the right level. It is a 5 year Plan that aligns with other key strategies but will be reviewed each year to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

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Why do we need one?

A talented and focussed workforce is critical for bringing the strategic priorities to life and ensures the organisation delivers on its well-being objectives. Direct people costs make up 45% of our total expenditure. The cost of getting it wrong can therefore be significant. Getting it right delivers significant improvements:

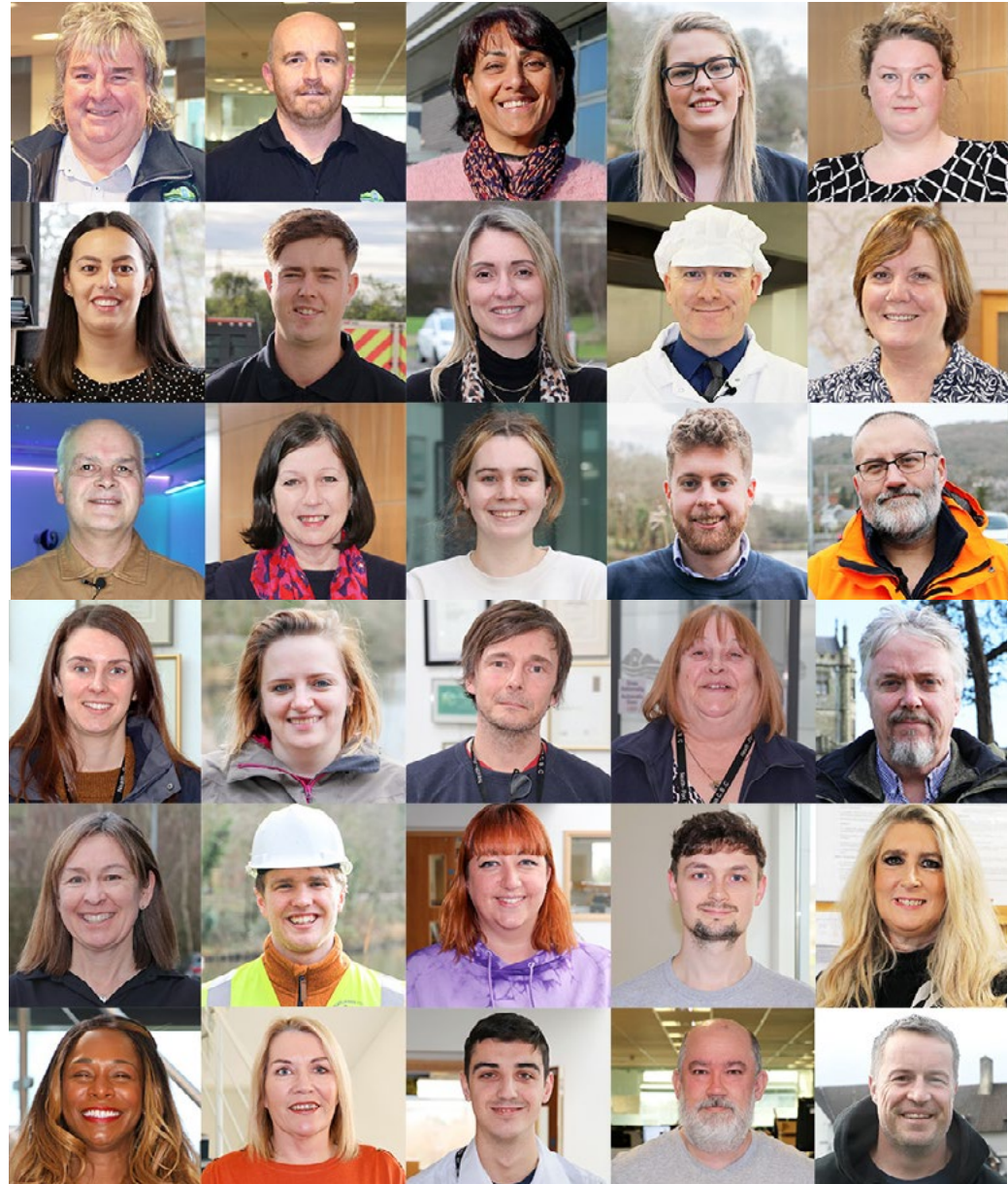
- Identify and respond to changing citizens' needs.
- Enable employees to have a good work-life balance and well-being.
- Reflect the make-up of our population, strengthening our connection to our communities.
- Increase our ability to innovate by being a truly diverse and inclusive organisation.
- Use employee insight to drive highly effective strategies that enable people to fulfil their potential.
- Deliver efficient public services that are good value for money.
- Create an attractive employer brand that enables us to recruit and retain a highly capable workforce.

In short, this Strategic Workforce Plan will help us to ensure our employees are the best they can be.



"Direct people costs make up 45% of our total expenditure. The cost of getting it wrong can therefore be significant.

Getting it right delivers significant improvements."





How did we develop the Strategy?

1 ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

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1. Engagement with Key Stakeholders

We want this Strategic Workforce Plan to be a meaningful document that has a tangible impact on the delivery of council priorities.

In developing this plan, we have listened to what's important to our employees at every level and our trade union partners. We have used surveys, workshops, drop in sessions, as well as rolling out Yammer across our workforce, to help us communicate with and listen to our employees. We have worked with managers to understand what matters to them and their priorities for their teams and the services they deliver. We have used this information to develop key themes for delivery, and to determine our priority actions.

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In 2021 we developed a Framework for Hybrid Working, following the clear feedback from our employees who have worked from home, for all or some of the time during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and from managers, and the detailed steer they provided of how they want to manage and arrange the work of their teams moving forward. We are clear from the feedback that this new way of working must enable our employees to work more flexibly, to maximise their productivity, as well as improve their work-life balance. We are also clear that we need to empower managers to make the decisions about how work is organised and services are delivered. The Framework has taken account of all of this feedback, enabling more flexibility in how people work, and a less prescriptive policy. Managers will work to a set of principles that they will apply fairly and consistently within their own teams, but with the ability to adapt working arrangements to suit the needs of their own service and the council as a whole.

We will further develop the ways in which we communicate and engage with our employees, and most importantly, how our employees can feedback to us. We want to embed the principles of co-production in our approach to developing employment policies, with our employees and trade unions influencing and participating in the design and development.



How did we develop the Strategy?

2 OUR SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH TRADE UNIONS

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2. Our Social Partnership with Trade Unions

We are very proud of our long standing partnership with our recognised trade unions, which, in the past, has helped us to develop innovative and creative solutions to employment challenges.

This is a relationship we mutually work hard at maintaining, taking time to communicate with each other and sharing issues at the earliest stage possible. Our trade union partners are key to the delivery of the Future of Work Strategy and we will work together to ensure fairness and transparency in our approach, shaping the workforce of the future in partnership.

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How did we develop the Strategy?

3 REVIEW OF OUR WORKFORCE PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

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3. Review of our Workforce Planning Arrangements

Since the publication of the last Strategic Workforce Plan covering the period 2018 to 2022, Audit Wales has helped us by undertaking a review of our approach to workforce planning across the council, with the aim of informing the development of this strategic plan.

Positively, this review concluded that we had made significant progress with workforce planning and developed clear processes and tools.

Whilst we knew we needed to do more to embed workforce planning consistently through all levels and all services, intended follow-up action was curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic. During Covid our reactive workforce planning worked well, with strong focuses on maintaining essential services and ensuring employee well-being.

Audit Wales found some real strengths in our workforce planning approaches. As well as having a Strategic Workforce Plan in place with an accompanying action plan, Audit Wales also highlighted the clear process in place for developing operational level workforce plans (The Succession Planning Toolkit). As well as a long-established Workforce Planning Group focusing on redeployment Audit Wales recognised the strong, positive working relationship with Trade Unions and the effective Learning & Development support in place. As a key area for improvement, Audit Wales recommended we focus on supporting operational managers to embed and embrace workforce planning further.

Audit Wales identified themes for the council to consider as part of its future strategic workforce planning: Succession Planning, Recruitment and Retention, The New 'Normal' and Collaborative Workforce Planning – all of these themes chimed with the feedback given to us from our managers and have informed the development of this Strategic Plan.



How did we develop the Strategy?

4 BENCHMARKING

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4. Benchmarking

In 2021 the council began working in partnership with the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) via their People Development Partner (PDP) Scheme which seeks to recognise organisations that are demonstrating a real commitment to better work and working lives.

The CIPD will assess the council for PDP Status in the summer of 2022, and by becoming a People Development Partner this will confirm the council's dedication to raising the capability, credibility and impact of its people functions, including its Human Resources, Training and Organisational Development functions. The council is the first employer in Wales, and one of the first councils across the United Kingdom to be assessed by the CIPD in this way.

As part of the scheme the CIPD carried out a People Impact Survey to determine how the council's current people capability aligns to CIPD standards, set out in the CIPD Profession Map, as well as public sector benchmarking. As can be seen from the table, the council benchmarks higher than the public sector average in areas including 'Business Acumen', 'Ethical Practice', 'Learning and Development', 'Valuing People', 'Employee Relations' and 'Working Inclusively'. There are three areas where we are below public sector benchmarking, 'Employee Experience', 'Talent Management' and 'Reward', and again, this has helped in the development of this Strategic Plan.

Area of CIPD Profession Map	NPT Average Rating	Public Sector Benchmark
Ethical practice	3.1	2.8
People practice	3.1	2.8
Business acumen	3	2.6
Situational decision making	2.8	2.6
Inclusion and diversity	2.8	2.7
Employee relations	2.8	2.7
Learning and development	2.8	2.5
Professional courage & influence	2.7	2.5
Commercial drive	2.7	2.5
Culture & behaviour	2.7	2.5
Evidence-based practice	2.7	2.4
Change	2.7	2.4
Technology and people	2.7	2.3
Valuing people	2.6	2.6
Insights focused	2.6	2.4
Passion for learning	2.6	2.4
Organisation development & design	2.6	2.4
Working inclusively	2.6	2.5
Employee experience	2.6	2.7
People analytics	2.5	2.2
Resourcing	2.5	2.4
Talent management	2.1	2.2
Reward	2	2.1

 Priority area



How did we develop the Strategy?

5 ALIGNMENT TO THE CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2027

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5. Alignment to the Corporate Plan 2022-2027

By aligning the Strategic Workforce Plan to the council's Corporate Plan, we will ensure that the plan focuses on embedding the council's purpose, vision and values across the council's workforce.



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Our Values

Connected

What matters to you matters to us

Caring

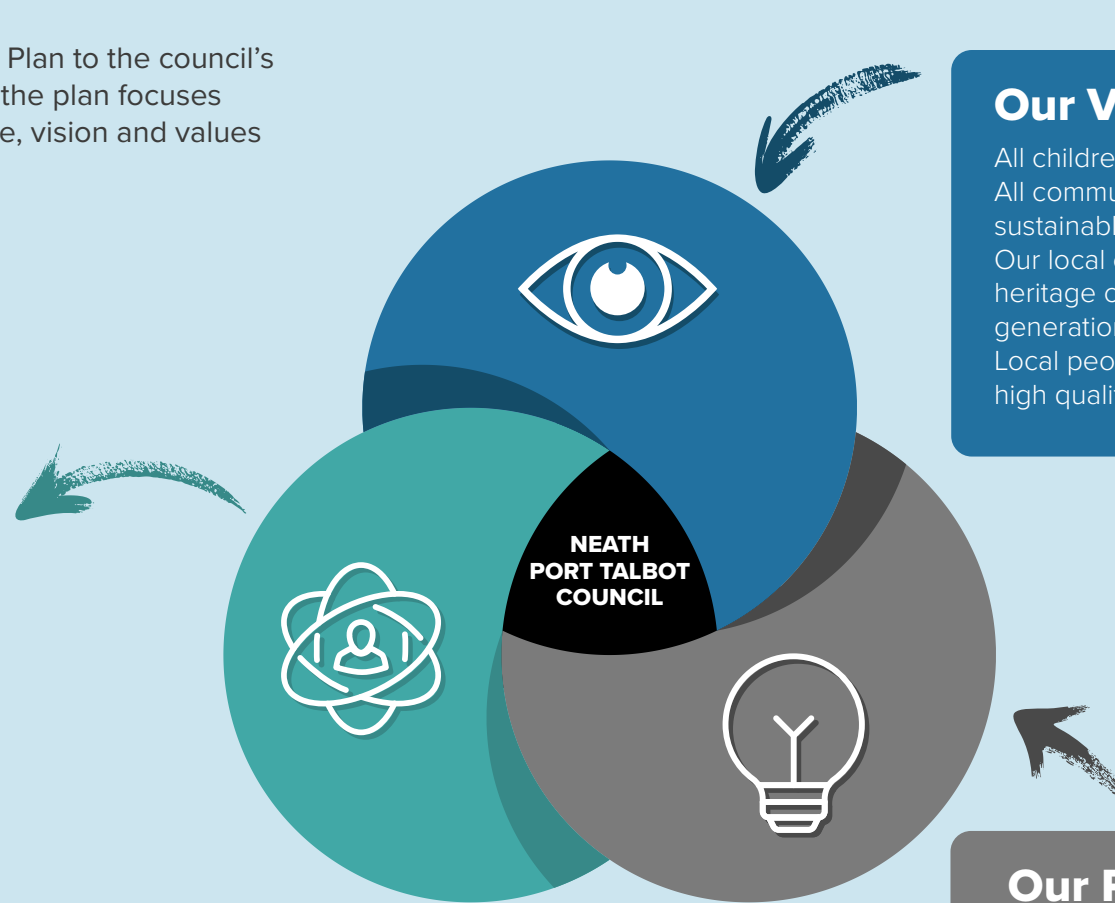
We care about you, your life and the future of our county borough

Collaborative

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

Confident

We are optimistic and confident about the future



Our Vision

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

Our Purpose

To help Neath Port Talbot residents live good lives



How did we develop the Strategy?

6 ALIGNMENT TO THE STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME

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6. Alignment to the Strategic Change Programme

(contained within the Corporate Plan 2022-2027)

The Strategic Change Programme has been initiated to enable the council to achieve its purpose and vision.

The Strategic Change Programme contains the following 4 well-being objectives:

1. **All children get the best start in life**
2. **All communities are thriving and sustainable**
3. **Our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations**
4. **Jobs and skills – local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs**

Each of these well-being objectives will require workforce actions to enable deliverability. These actions will be developed in partnership with the relevant well-being objective lead and described within the annual Future of Work Delivery Plan which is appended to this strategy. The Programme is supported by an Enabling Programme of Organisational Development which will be delivered to develop the capacity and capability of the council over a 3-5 year period. As well as People, the scope of the programme and how it links to the Strategic Workforce Plan is summarised below.

Digital – we will become smart and connected as a council and as a place. We will join up and use the data we hold to improve our understanding of what matters to our citizens.

We will create new digital services designed around the needs of our citizens which are safe, easy and convenient to use. We will develop the skills our workforce needs for a digital world and address skills gaps within our council, recognising that competencies and confidence won't be the same across the workforce; we will develop analytical and data skills within HR and build credibility in this area; and finally we will bring people expertise to digital transformation to add real value; addressing ethical considerations when it comes to data, privacy and implementing new technology.

Governance – we will adjust our risk appetite to encourage responsible innovation and invest in building a strong corporate culture where people are responsible and accountable for what they do, where people challenge behaviours that are unacceptable and where people continuously learn and improve. We will continue to foster a culture of mutual trust and respect between councillors and officers with each clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. We will seek to weave good governance through the entire employee lifecycle, from recruitment to performance and engagement.

Delivering value for money and ensuring financial sustainability

We will take a 'whole system' approach to the way we manage our own financial resources, focusing on 'what matters', systematically removing failure demand, reducing duplication and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service operations. The HR Team will develop a business partnering approach that takes the lead on strategic change and development, rather than reacting to it.



How did we develop the Strategy?

7 OUR DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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7. Our Design Principles

The '5 ways of working' set out in the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the sustainable development principle are embedded in the Strategic Workforce Plan through the following design principles and this mirrors the approach taken in the Corporate Plan:

Our Council

Team NPT working together to achieve our purpose and vision.

Leadership and Teamwork

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

Trust and Empowerment

We trust and believe in our colleagues and through our Strategic Workforce Plan we will make sure they are trained, supported and authorised to do the things that matter.

Accountability

We will create a culture of transparency, making it easy for employees to access information and will explain whether we have done what we said we would do.

Agile and Innovative

We will take a user-centred approach to the way we design our employment policies and services, and we will encourage colleagues to come forward with new ideas and to challenge the status quo.

Fairness and Equality

We will recruit and develop a workforce that is representative of our communities, celebrating diversity and ensuring our workplace is a place everyone can show up as themselves.

Sustainable

We will balance our resources between short term actions to support the current workforce and long term actions to develop the workforce of the future.

Value for Money

We will ensure our resources are prioritised against what matters most and where our resources can add the most value.



Where are we now?

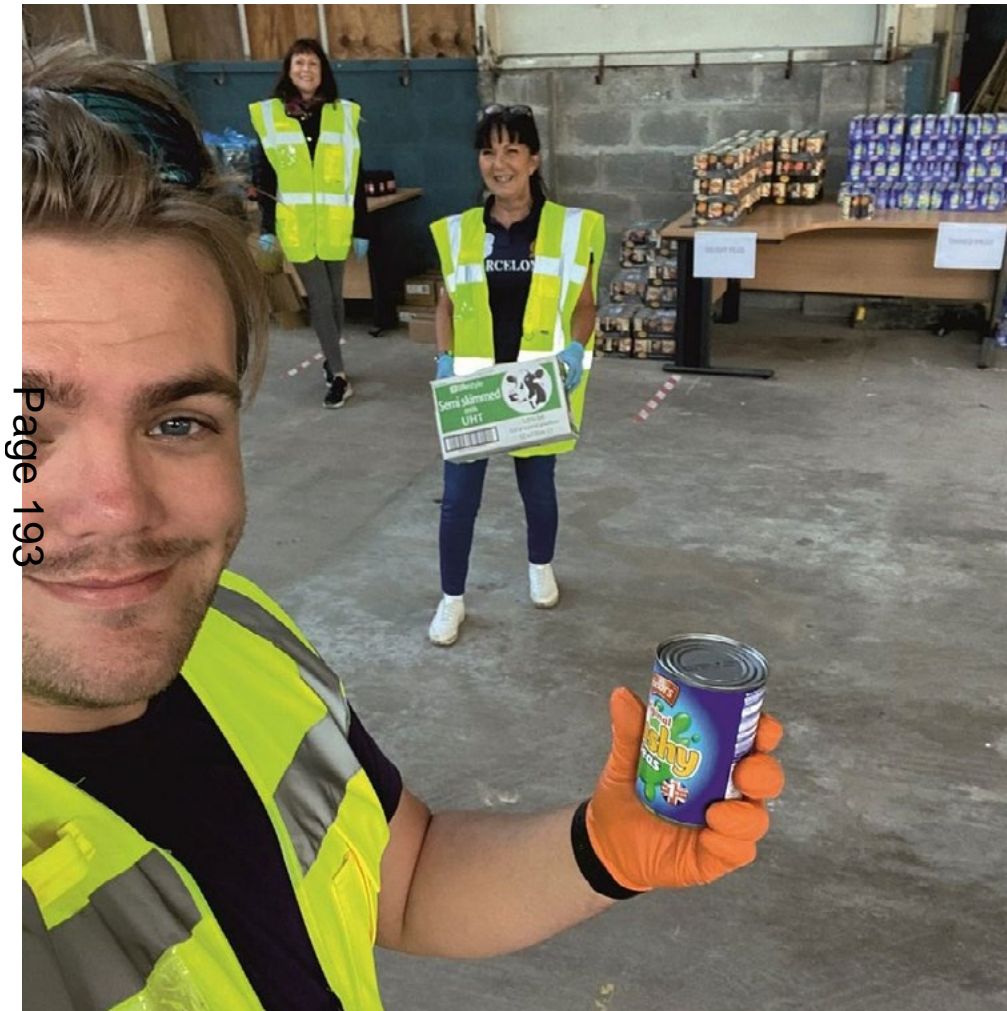
Through developing both the Corporate Plan and this Strategic Workforce Plan, we have been able to identify many strengths in our current workforce arrangements, not least our strong social partnership with our trade unions, and our well developed and effective employee relations practices. We have begun to develop more effective mechanisms to communicate with, and listen to, our employees, but there is the opportunity for us to develop this further and improve how we engage our employees, harnessing digital technology to increase how and when we can reach our employees – our trade unions are working with us on this. This is not an aim in itself – by hearing more from our employees about their experience at work, we want to improve that experience, motivate and empower our employees, and improve retention.

Our developed approach to strategic workforce planning at a corporate level is working well, and we used these approaches effectively during the pandemic and as we emerge from it. Our managers are keen to engage with operational service level workforce planning and we can use this as an opportunity to link service level workforce needs with effective corporate programmes to address them in a targeted way. Like many employers across the UK we are facing a challenging and competitive recruitment market, with skills gaps in some key areas of the council and concerns in relation to succession planning. In some services retention of employees is also a challenge, and particularly where we face competition from other employers. If we cannot recruit and retain the best employees to deliver our services, this will represent a real threat to the future delivery of council services and priorities.

A strong strategic workforce partnership with other employers within the county borough and the Swansea Bay region will enable us to forge links with both the demand and supply side of the labour market, so developing our relationships with schools and colleges, and other key partners will ensure the supply of our future workforce, whilst more effective links with other employers will increase our understanding of labour market competition and the demand on the labour market.

Many of our front line services continued to deliver services throughout the pandemic, making continuous adjustments to working arrangements to protect their own and others health and well-being. The need for PPE and social distancing presented significant challenges in sustaining service delivery and we are very proud of the work colleagues did to ensure continuity of service throughout this period. For other colleagues, their activities were paused for some time in the interest of public health but staff showed tremendous flexibility and commitment as they willingly redeployed to priority activities many of which were new responsibilities given to local government as we worked to protect the NHS and the public health. We couldn't have played our part in supporting those who were shielding without this.

The majority of our civic centre based workforce, as well as many of our employees from front line services, worked wholly or mainly from home, and we learnt that many of our services can operate effectively and efficiently through online delivery. The step change in the adoption of digital technologies has permanently disrupted the way we work and the labour market within which we now need to operate.



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We also learnt that there are some things that cannot be done, or are not so effective at home, needing a more collaborative and personal face-to-face approach. Like other employers across the UK, as we emerge from the pandemic we are developing our approach to the future world of work and using this as a real opportunity to develop a framework for employment that maximises efficiency in our service delivery whilst enhancing work life balance and employee experience.

We want our workforce to be properly representative of our communities, and we have some way to go to make this happen. Our ratio of employees from ethnic minority backgrounds does not reflect our community and the representation of ethnic minority employees at all levels of our workforce is also not proportionate. In partnership with UNISON we have established an Ethnic Minority Employee Network as a starting point and our ambition is that this council will become a proud anti-racist council. This represents an exciting opportunity for the council to develop its approach to anti-racism and improve diversity.

We will use the lessons learnt through this experience to develop other employee network groups for example for employees with disabilities and LGBTQ+ employees, with the aim of creating a truly inclusive workplace. Whilst we have reduced our gender pay gap through our partnership working with Chwarae Teg we want to eradicate the pay gap altogether. Our gender profile at all levels in the council is improving, but the data shows us it is still not proportionate; through our Gender Equality Action Plan we have the opportunity to do something about this.



What does the council need to look like in future?

Quite simply, we want to have the right number of people with the right skills and attitudes in place at the right time to deliver council services and functions.

How will we achieve this?

By delivering the following key objectives:

Delivering the workforce actions needed in the short, medium and long term to implement the Corporate Plan whilst ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our people.

Embedding the Corporate Priorities, Vision and Values.

What are our priorities?

Resourcing Team Neath Port Talbot

Through collaborative Workforce Planning, attracting a diverse future workforce to ensure an ongoing supply of suitable applicants across a broad range of occupations, tackle skill shortage areas and attract the right people with the right skills and competencies at the right time. Like many employers across the UK we are facing a challenging recruitment market, with skill gaps in some key areas and concerns in relation to succession planning – if key personnel resign, we need to have plans in place to replace them. Working with a range of partners such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Swansea University, Neath College, Gower College, the Council for Voluntary Service, HMP Swansea, amongst others, we are putting in place short term actions to help with immediate recruitment difficulties, but importantly we are also developing schemes to deliver and develop our workforce of the future, ensuring a steady flow of future employees with the right skills sets, behaviours and attitudes.

Developing and Retaining Talent

Through a strategic approach to succession planning that takes place at both a corporate level and operational service level, embedding leadership development, promoting movement across the organisation and facilitating career paths. The development of well-resourced corporate programmes providing comprehensive development at every level of leadership will help ensure that the leaders of today and tomorrow are capable, confident, competent and compassionate.



Employer of Choice – Employee Experience and Engagement

To help us recruit and retain the best employees, our ambition is to become an Employer of Choice, with an employment offer that is attractive to current and potential candidates and employees. This employment offer isn't just about pay and terms and conditions of employment, albeit that is important too and we will be looking at how our pay and terms and conditions support both recruitment and retention. Our employment offer is also about our culture, our leadership style, and our employee engagement initiatives.

We will develop and support our leaders, managers and supervisors at all levels so that they can engage and motivate our employees to be the best they can be. We will embed the corporate values from recruitment and through all of our employment activity. We will ensure that employees are involved and engaged through good internal communications, so that they are well placed to represent and champion the council in their local communities. We will develop a Reward & Recognition Strategy, supported by our leaders and managers, who will engage with every team member to ensure that they feel valued. Employee performance management will no longer be a once a year activity, but a continuous cycle that motivates employees and reinforces our values and behaviours.

Developing The Future of Work

During the pandemic many of our employees worked in different ways to continue delivering services in the most difficult of circumstances. The majority of our civic centre based workforce, as well as many of our employees from front line services, worked wholly or mainly from home, and we learnt that many of our services can operate effectively and efficiently through online delivery.

We also learnt that there are some things that cannot be done, or are not so effective at home, needing a more collaborative and personal face to face approach. Like other employers across the UK, as we emerge from the pandemic we are developing our approach to the future world of work. This new way of working must enable our employees to work more flexibly, to both maximise their productivity, as well as improve their work life balance.

We are doing so carefully and taking time to work out what this means for us all in the council. However we are clear that we do need to embrace new hybrid ways of working if we are to be seen as an Employer of Choice. We also want our workplaces to feel inclusive, so we will be looking at how we can introduce more choice and flexibility for all our employees including those whose jobs do not lend themselves to a high level of mobility or agility in terms of location of delivery.

Our managers have asked us to remove unnecessary bureaucracy from internal processes; we are also clear from their feedback that we need to empower managers to make the decisions about how work is organised and services are delivered. They want employment policies and processes that are less prescriptive. Our approach to Hybrid Working is our first step towards this, providing managers with a set of principles, to apply fairly and consistently within their own teams, but with the ability to adapt working arrangements to suit the needs of each service and the council as a whole.



Knowledge and Skills Development

As a result of the pandemic we developed new, innovative and creative ways of delivering training and development to employees, embracing technology to support with this. We developed online courses delivered via a range of platforms, and this enabled thousands of employees to continue with their professional development and essential skill learning. Whilst some training necessarily has to take place face to face and in a physical environment, we have learnt how cost effective, and efficient these new ways of delivering training can be, and we intend to continue to embrace this. Our succession planning activity will enable the Learning, Training and Development team to develop targeted and bespoke training and development support that focuses on the priorities identified by services.

A Safe Workplace – supporting the health and well-being of our employees

Our employees who worked on the frontline during the pandemic, maintaining essential services to some of our most vulnerable people in our communities, supporting the NHS and keeping everyone safe, have told us how important it is for them to feel safe in their workplaces, whether their workplace is a school, a council vehicle, a resident’s home, on the street, in the countryside, or in a council building. We want to develop a Well-Being Strategy that provides assurance and programmes of support accessible to every employee, as well as an embedded Health & Safety culture that ensures our employees feel safe in the workplace, wherever that workplace is.

An Inclusive Workplace where all employees can be themselves

We want our workforce to be properly representative of our communities, and we have some way to go to make this happen. Our ratio of employees from ethnic minority backgrounds does not reflect our community and the representation of ethnic minority employees at all levels of our workforce is also not proportionate. In partnership with UNISON we have established an Ethnic Minority Employee Network as a starting point and our ambition is that this council will become a proud Anti-Racist Council.

Whilst we have reduced our gender pay gap through our partnership working with Chwarae Teg we want to eradicate the pay gap altogether. Our gender profile at all levels in the council is improving, but the data shows us it is still not proportionate. We want to remove any barriers in our workplaces for all employees, regardless of race, religion, sex, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy or sexual orientation, and eliminate bias in our recruitment processes.

Our trade unions are an important partner for us in realising this ambition. The Strategic Workforce Plan supports the delivery of the council’s Strategic Equality Plan and the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy through the development of focussed workforce actions.





How will we deliver these priorities?

Team NPT

Our part:

We will:

- Connect with you and involve you in policy development.
- Ask for your views and build our employment framework around what matters to the people in our workplaces.
- Trust you and empower you to make the decisions that are right for your service.

Provide you with the training and tools to help you do your job with confidence.

Your part:

You will:

- Engage and contribute to help build the future of work.
- Keep yourself up to date with employee news and information.
- If you are a manager you will engage with your team(s) and involve them in your decision making.
- Tell us what matters to you and let us know if we get things wrong.
- Engage with the training and development opportunities that are provided.

The Future of Work Team

The council has established a Future of Work delivery team to supplement the resources of the People & Organisational Development Service. This team includes HR, OD and Engagement professionals, as well as a seconded trade union officer in line with the council's commitment to working in social partnership with recognised trade unions. This additional capacity will help ensure that the ambitions of this strategy will be realised over the course of the next 3-5 years.

The Delivery Plan

This Strategic Workforce Plan sets out a five year ambition for the council's workforce. Appended to this plan is the initial delivery plan for the period up to 31st March 2023 and this will be reviewed annually, along with a review of the priorities set out in this plan to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose, that the delivery actions are appropriate and we are on track to achieving our ambitions.

How will we measure if this is working?

- The Organisational Development (OD) Project Board will oversee delivery of all strands of the Strategic Change Programme, including 'People', monitoring progress and determining whether or not each programme is having the intended impact on the delivery of the Corporate Plan and the council's priorities.
- The Future of Work Project Board will be established to overview the delivery of the strategy.
- The Annual Delivery Plan will set out specific measurable outcomes.
- Regular engagement will take place with our trade unions colleagues.
- Improved employee data analytics will help us to see if key employment indicators are improving.
- A review will take place annually of this strategy to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

"We developed **online courses delivered via a range of platforms**, and this enabled thousands of employees to **continue with their professional development and essential skill learning.**"





The Future of Work Plan

Annex 1



Delivery Plan

This plan sets out what we intend to achieve by 31st March 2023.

The Strategic Workforce Plan will be reviewed annually and the delivery plan will be updated to ensure that actions remain focussed and relevant.

Throughout the year, this delivery plan will be monitored via the Future of Work Project Board and the Corporate OD Project Board to measure progress and determine whether or not each programme is having the intended impact on the delivery of the Corporate Plan and council priorities.

Workforce Priority: Resourcing Team Neath Port Talbot

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Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Establish a Recruitment Taskforce to drive the council's recruitment strategy.	To bring together key stakeholders and partner agencies with the aim of working together to develop recruitment strategies; to fill vacant posts across Neath Port Talbot with suitably qualified and experienced people and to do so at pace; to develop longer term actions to support succession planning activity across the council.	Number of vacant* posts. Number of applicants. Number of successful appointments. Turnover rates. <i>*this will not include jobs held vacant for business reasons with no immediate intention to recruit.</i>

**Workforce Priority: Developing and Retaining Talent**

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Embed operational service level workforce planning, via the Succession Planning Toolkit.	Our Heads of Service and Accountable Managers will have the knowledge and skill set to develop a succession plan for each service, in order to identify and develop the potential future leaders and individuals required to fill other business-critical positions within the council to ensure we continue to provide high quality services to our citizens.	Every service will publish a succession plan setting out the actions needed to develop the future workforce.
Review of the council's organisational design to enable us to do the work necessary to effectively and efficiently achieve our business strategy, (Corporate Plan) while delivering high quality customer and employee experience.	<p>Enable leadership and management capacity and capability (Accountable Managers and above) to deliver the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Ensure clarity of roles at Chief Officer and Accountable Manager levels and more logical Corporate Director portfolios to drive greater synergy and value.</p> <p>Enable Corporate Directors/Heads of Service to drive the future strategic direction of the council and enable decision making on day to day business activities at Accountable Manager level.</p> <p>Facilitate the development of a one council approach and strengthen governance arrangements.</p> <p>This will be a key foundational piece of work for the development of our strategic approaches to leadership development, talent management and performance management.</p>	<p>Consultation outcome document and implementation plan.</p> <p>Revised pay and grading structure for senior/Chief Officers.</p> <p>Key competencies established for Chief Officers and senior leaders.</p>
The development of a strategic approach to how we develop Chief Officers and senior leaders that enables them to demonstrate the key competencies required of them in their role.	A strategy that sets out how the council will develop our senior leaders to be capable, confident, competent and compassionate leaders.	A Senior Leaders Development Strategy, linked to the council's Organisational Development Strategy.



Workforce Priority: Employer of Choice – Employee Experience and Engagement

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Pay review of hard to fill jobs.	An assessment of the market place to ensure that where jobs are hard to fill, pay is not a barrier to the council attracting the best candidates.	Number of vacant posts. Number of applicants. Number of successful appointments. Turnover rates.
Development of an Employee Engagement & Communication Strategy: This year we will focus on rolling out Yammer to every employee as the council's primary communication platform.	Better retention of employees who are healthier, happier, more fulfilled and more motivated. Employees are involved and engaged through good internal communications, so that they are well placed to represent and champion the council in their local communities.	Employee engagement survey. Turnover rates. Yammer metrics.
Employees are involved in the co-production of our employment framework.	Employees surveys, focus groups and other engagement methods to involve employees and key stakeholders in the development of the Future of Work Framework, leading to an employment framework that is fit for purpose and a workforce that is engaged and motivated.	Participation rates. Survey outcome reports with action plans to respond to survey responses. Informed IIAs to support change proposals.
Procurement and implementation of an Employee Assistance Programme offering every employee in the council access to confidential counselling services as well as a range of other benefits which could include holistic health and well-being support, a rewards platform, etc.	Improved employee retention, better employee engagement and motivation, reduced sickness absence, improved employee well-being.	Sickness absence data. Turnover rates/exit questionnaire information.



Workforce Priority: Developing The Future of Work

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Review the Hybrid Working Framework through engagement with all key stakeholders, including employees, managers and trade unions.	A fit for purpose employment framework that enables our employees to work more flexibly, to both maximise their productivity, as well as improve their work life balance, and working arrangements that suit the needs of each service and the council as a whole.	Employee survey. Manager feedback. Agreement with relevant Trade Unions.
Delivery of management training to support the implementation of hybrid working practices.	Confident and capable managers who are able to effectively manage the changes in working practices required, developing their teams in a hybrid world.	Employee survey. Manager feedback.
Establish a working group to consider how we can introduce more choice and flexibility for all our employees including those whose jobs do not lend themselves to a high level of mobility or agility in terms of location of delivery.	A more inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued and motivated.	Employee survey. Manager feedback.
Confirmation of new working arrangements.	Every employee will have a Statement of Particulars that reflects their agreed working pattern.	Agreement with relevant Trade Unions. Contract monitoring data.
Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy in employment policies and processes, which are also less prescriptive.	Managers feel more empowered to make the decisions that are right for their services. Policies are more accessible and processes are more efficient.	Manager feedback.
Review of policies and employment processes to ensure that they remain fit for purpose in a hybrid world of work: this year we will establish a Joint Working Group with our trade unions to review mileage allowances and other issues associated with business travel.	Fit for purpose travel arrangements that reflect new ways of working, and take into account the council's decarbonisation strategy, as well as the cost of living crisis.	A clear set of recommendations from the Working Group, informed by cross section employee focus groups.



Workforce Priority: Knowledge and Skills Development

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
The development of an Organisational Development and Training & Development Strategy that supports the delivery of the corporate plan.	A competent and motivated workforce that can deliver on the commitments set out in the council's corporate plan.	A comprehensive programme of training and development for all employees, supporting the delivery of the corporate plan, focusing on the key priorities set out in the plan and making best use of the training resources available. The success of the programme will be measured via the corporate performance assessment.

Workforce Priority: A Safe Workplace – supporting the health and well-being of our employees

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Embed Health and Safety culture across the council.	Safe workplaces.	Accident and incident statistics. Sickness absence linked to industrial injury. Employee survey.
Delivery of our Mental Health Strategy in partnership with Time to Change Wales.	Development of evidence based actions that support mental health and well-being in the workplace.	Sickness absence data. Employee survey.
Development and delivery of a Menopause Action Plan.	An environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations, or engage in discussions about menopause. Everyone understands what menopause is, and is clear on the council's policy and practices. Managers will understand the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support women at work. Women with menopause symptoms will feel confident to discuss it, and ask for support.	Monitoring of action plan, both quantitative and qualitative data.



Workforce Priority: An Inclusive Workplace where all employees can be themselves

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Establishment of the Ethnic Minority Employee Network to support the development and delivery of an anti-racism strategy.	The network's aim is to provide a safe, confidential environment to network, socialise, question, challenge and receive support and advice in relation to race equality. The network's main goal is to turn discussions into tangible actions to improve the ethnic minority employee experience and to create cultural change, accountability and anti-racism within the council.	Terms of reference. Feedback from the group.
Reduction in the council's gender pay gap through actions set out in the Gender Equality Action Plan and developed in partnership with Chwarae Teg via the Fair Play Employer Scheme.	The ultimate aim is that the council will not have a gender pay gap.	Gender pay gap annual report.
Career Mentoring for low-paid women delivered in partnership with Chwarae Teg.	To support the career progression of low paid women within our workforce.	Recruitment data. Pay data.
Implement the TUC/GMB Disability Passport Scheme.	To support employees with a disability to agree reasonable adjustments and reduce any barriers to our workplace.	Passport monitoring.
Implementation of anonymised application forms in our recruitment process.	To eliminate bias in our recruitment process.	Recruitment data.



Well-being Priority: All children get the best start in life*

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
High quality apprenticeship, traineeship and work experience opportunities within the council's workforce, including opportunities to use the Welsh language in the workplace.	To help young people gain an understanding of the workplace, develop transferable skills, build confidence and entry into the world of work.	Number of placements. Feedback from participants.
Establishment of a Workforce Forum to support the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.	The Forum will work in partnership to develop actions to support the WESP's aim of increasing the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education by at least 27% over a 10 year period; this will include actions to increase the number of employees within education who are able to use the Welsh language in the workplace.	To be determined by the Workforce Forum.
A training plan to develop the Welsh language skills of the education workforce.	To support the delivery of the WESP.	Welsh language monitoring. Training data.

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Well-being Priority: All communities are thriving and sustainable*

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Delivery of training in partnership with the Community Safety Partnership.	Our employees have increased awareness of issues that impact on our communities including domestic violence, anti-social behaviour, cyber-crime, substance misuse and county lines, and can take action that is appropriate to their job.	Training data.
Development of Employee Volunteering Scheme: Special Police Constables.	Employees will be encouraged and supported to volunteer and help people in the community by practicing policing responsibilities, improving skills and helping our community to be safer.	Implementing the Scheme. Monitoring take up of the Scheme. Focus groups with participants to determine if the Scheme is fit for purpose.

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

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Embed Welsh Language Learning Opportunities at all levels.	Increase number of employees who have the confidence to use the Welsh language in the workplace.	Welsh language monitoring data.
Establish a programme of training and development to enable our workforce to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture.	Staff will talk about the local environment, culture, sports and heritage with pride and confidence and more people will be actively involved in the conservation of our environment, culture and heritage.	Number of staff attending training.

Well-being Priority: Jobs and Skills – local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs*

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we demonstrate progress?
Working with a range of partners, including the Neath Port Talbot Community Association, CVS, DWP, Employability Services, HMP Swansea, Business in the Community, Armed Forces and education providers to ensure that all parts of our community can access opportunities to apply for jobs with the council.	A workforce that is representative of our community and everyone in our community has the opportunity to access the good jobs that the council has to offer.	Recruitment monitoring.
Delivery of our Training and Development Programme.	A skilled workforce, the majority of whom live in Neath Port Talbot.	Training data.

*Actions to be agreed with relevant Well-being Objective Lead



Part 18

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

futureofwork@npt.gov.uk

Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027: The Future of Work Strategy

Summary of Consultation Feedback

General points:

- The Strategy was well received, with participants stating that the Strategy was “long overdue” and the priorities are accurate.
- The LGS Trade Unions gave their full support for the Strategy.
- The Teaching Associations commended the strategy document itself, but did not necessarily see how the values and priorities relate to school employees.
- A clear message from the feedback is that there needs to be a clear top down approach from Corporate Directors, owning and supporting the strategy and providing leadership to their respective teams in adopting the behaviours and values of the strategy. This is particularly in relation to empowering people – allowing staff autonomy in their roles, to empower them to make day to day decisions in their workplace. Some respondents shared that they feel reluctant to make decisions as they are concerned that in reality, they are not allowed to make decisions for themselves, and / or they will not be supported if things go wrong or they are perceived to have made the wrong decision.
- The majority of the feedback received can be summarised as relating to operational workplace issues, ranging from pay and grading issues, the Payroll and HR system iTrent, and how managers interpret and apply employment policy and procedure across the council (fairness and consistency).
- Some of the feedback suggested actions to support the delivery of the priorities set out in the strategy so for example:
 - Corporate inductions for new staff and newly appointed managers

- Regular appraisals which identify career paths and how the role links into corporate objectives
- Shadowing opportunities, to give staff experience of different remits and roles within the Authority
- The Trade Unions supported the commitment in the strategy to the development of a leadership and management strategy, leading to comprehensive development programmes. They cited concerns raised by some employees in relation to inconsistency or unfairness in approach and decision making, and supported the council's commitment to ensuring our managers have all the necessary tools to help them be effective managers and leaders at whatever level they are.
- A small minority of participants stated that they found the document too corporate and full of jargon.
- Some frontline staff stated that they felt the Strategy was aimed at office staff and they were unsure how they fit within the Strategy and the Corporate Vision.

Specific points:

Communication

- Feedback is that the Chief Executive is proactive in her approach to communicating with the workforce and contactable.
- Employees who currently do not have access to Yammer feel that we are not being inclusive.
- Accountable managers should use Yammer to update and encourage two way communication to improve services going forward.
- Some employees indicated that they find Yammer intrusive and irrelevant, and they do not pay attention to updates.

A Safe Workplace: Supporting the health and well-being of our employees

- The Strategy should make clear that everyone in the council has the responsibility of maintaining employee health, well-being and safe working practices – this is not the sole responsibility of Occupational Health and Safety.
- Feedback from trade unions, employees and the Occupational Health & Safety Team supported the commitment to investing in an Employee Assistance Programme.

Team NPT / One Council Approach

- There was a mixed response to the term “Team NPT” term with some respondents positive about it and some respondents preferring the term “One Council”.
- Respondents fed back that changing the culture within the council will be a big challenge. Often Teams / Directorates are working in silos, with an indication that this happens more in peripheral sites across the council.
- Systems are out of sync – indication of duplication and / or systems not “talking to each other”. An example was giving around car hire, when we have vehicles available within the council.

Delivery Plan

- The feedback can be summarised as - the delivery plan gives an overview, respondents would have liked to see more detail in how the Strategy will be delivered. For example, Jobs and Skills only have two actions points assigned when a lot more happens.

Resourcing and Retaining Talent

- The feedback received confirms this is a key workforce priority. Respondents agreed that we should have clear career pathways

both at entry level and for people in post (e.g. a Grade 9 employee stated “where else is there for me to go”?)

- Feedback suggests there is inconsistency across the council in relation to management supervision and the application of the performance appraisal process.

DRAFT

Impact Assessment - First Stage

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative description and summary: Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027: The Future of Work Strategy
Service Area: All Services
Directorate: All

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?
						The strategy contains the following workforce priority: <p style="text-align: center;">An Inclusive Workplace where all employees can be themselves</p>

						This applies across the protection characteristics. Monitoring of the strategy will determine how successful the strategy is in meeting this priority.
						The Delivery Plan commits the council to the implementation of anonymised application forms in our recruitment process and in order to eliminate bias in our recruitment process across the protected characteristics. Monitoring of the implementation of this action, will determine the impact against each of the protected characteristics and whether or not it has a positive or negative impact.
Age	X				H	A strategic approach to workforce planning supports the development of our workforce in the short, medium and long term. There are actions that will impact on the workforce of today, as well as actions that will grow and develop our future workforce, so the impacts of this strategy have potential impact on all age groups.
Disability	X				H	The Delivery Plan sets out that the council will implement the TUC / GMB Disability Passport Scheme and in order to support employees with a disability to agree reasonable adjustments and reduce any barriers to our workplace.
Gender Reassignment	X				H	The commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves, as well as actions to remove bias in our recruitment processes are intended to impact positively on gender reassignment. Monitoring will determine whether or not the impact is positive.

Marriage/Civil Partnership	X				H	The commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves, as well as actions to remove bias in our recruitment processes are intended to impact positively marriage and civil partnership. Monitoring will determine whether or not the impact is positive.
Pregnancy/Maternity	X				H	The commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves, as well as actions to remove bias in our recruitment processes are intended to impact positively on pregnancy and maternity. Monitoring will determine whether or not the impact is positive.
Race	X				H	The delivery plan refers to the establishment of the Ethnic Minority Employee Network to support the development and delivery of an anti-racism strategy. The network's aim is to provide a safe, confidential environment to network, socialise, question, challenge and receive support and advice in relation to race equality. The network's main goal is to turn discussions into tangible actions to improve the ethnic minority employee experience and to create cultural change, accountability and anti-racism within the council. The commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves, as well as actions to remove bias in our recruitment processes are intended to impact positively on race. Monitoring will determine whether or not the impact is positive.
Religion/Belief	X				H	The commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves, as well as actions to

						remove bias in our recruitment processes are intended to impact positively on religion and belief. Monitoring will determine whether or not the impact is positive.
Sex	X				H	<p>The delivery plan contains the following commitments in relation to women in the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the council's gender pay gap through actions set out in the Gender Equality Action Plan and developed in partnership with Chwarae Teg via the Fair Play Employer Scheme. • Career Mentoring for low-paid women delivered in partnership with Chwarae Teg. • The development and delivery of a Menopause Action Plan, leading to an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations, or engage in discussions about menopause. Everyone understands what menopause is, and are clear on the council's policy and practices. Managers will understand the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support women at work. Women with menopause symptoms will feel confident to discuss it, and ask for support. <p>The commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves, as well as actions to remove bias in our recruitment processes are intended to impact positively on gender. Monitoring will determine whether or not the impact is positive.</p>
Sexual orientation	X				H	The commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees can be themselves, as well as actions to

						remove bias in our recruitment processes are intended to impact positively on sexual orientation. Monitoring will determine whether or not the impact is positive.
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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				H	<p>The Delivery Plan contains the following commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed Welsh Language Learning Opportunities at all levels. Increase number of employees who have the confidence to use the Welsh language in the workplace. • A training plan to develop the Welsh language skills of the education workforce. • Establishment of a Workforce Forum to support the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The Forum will work in partnership to develop actions to support the WESP's aim of increasing the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education by at least 27% over a 10 year period; this will include actions to increase the number of employees within education who are able to use the Welsh language in the workplace.

Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English	x				L	The Strategic Workforce Plan will be published in Welsh and in English.
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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		Workplace initiatives implemented as a result of the Strategic Workforce Plan will seek to maintain / enhance biodiversity and / or to promote the resilience of ecosystems. Monitoring of the implementation of the Plan will determine what impact it has in relation to biodiversity.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				X		

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

	Yes	No	Details

Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	x		
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	x		<p>The Strategic Workforce Plan is aligned to the Strategic Change Programme (contained within the Corporate Plan 2022-2027), initiated to enable the council to achieve its purpose and vision. The Strategic Change Programme contains the following 4 wellbeing objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All children get the best start in life 2. All communities are thriving and sustainable 3. Our local environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations 4. Jobs and Skills – local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs <p>Each of these wellbeing objectives will require workforce actions to enable deliverability. These actions will be developed in partnership with the relevant wellbeing objective lead and described within the annual Future of Work Delivery Plan which is appended to this strategy.</p>
Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	x		<p>In developing this plan, we have listened to what’s important to our employees at every level and our trade union partners. We have used surveys, workshops, drop in sessions, as well as rolling out Yammer across our workforce, to help us communicate with and listen to our employees. Our surveys have included questions in relation to equality impacts and this information is used in relation to specific actions set out in the delivery plan (subject to their own IIA in decision making processes). We have worked with managers to understand what matters to them and their priorities for</p>

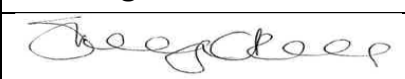
			<p>their teams and the services they deliver. We have used this information to develop key themes for delivery, and to determine our priority actions. Internal consultation in relation to the draft plan itself began in August 2022. The draft plan was widely shared with every employee receiving a link to the plan via Yammer or GovNotify. A summary video was prepared, which is available on the internet, and trade unions have been consulted in face to face meetings. Articles in the Sway and agenda items at Corporate Director Group, Corporate Management Group and the regular Accountable Manager briefing have encouraged participation in the consultation. 10 Focus Groups have been held, attended by employees from across the council and from a range of occupations and levels, to provide feedback in facilitated sessions led by the trade union officer who has been seconded to the Future of Work (FOW) Team. Employees have also been able to provide feedback via a dedicated email address: thefutureofwork@npt.gov.uk. The consultation has not identified any negative impacts across the protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions</p>	x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We worked with our trade union partners to ensure the workforce plan is underpinned by fairness and transparency. • We informed our approach with the outcome of an Audit Wales review of workforce planning across the council, carried out in 2021 / 2022. This highlighted strengths in our established approach and recommended areas for improvement. • We worked with the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) via their People Development Partner (PDP) Scheme which seeks to recognise organisations that are demonstrating a real commitment to better work and working lives. As part of the scheme, the CIPD carried out a People Impact Survey to determine how the council's current people capability aligns to CIPD standards. This

			provided us with feedback on our strengths and key areas for improvement, feeding in to the priorities set out in the draft plan.
Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	x		The Strategic Workforce Plan identified some key workforce risks, for example the challenging and competitive recruitment market we face, with skills gaps in some key areas of the council and concerns in relation to succession planning. In some services retention of employees is also a challenge, and particularly where we face competition from other employers. If we cannot recruit and retain the best employees to deliver our services, this will represent a real threat to the future delivery of council services and priorities. The Plan identified that a strong strategic workforce partnership with other employers within the County Borough and the Swansea Bay region will enable us to forge links with both the demand and supply side of the labour market, so developing our relationships with schools and colleges, and other key partners will ensure the supply of our future workforce, whilst more effective links with other employers will increase our understanding of labour market competition and the demand on the labour market.

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

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	X
Reasons for this conclusion	
<p>A full impact is not required as at this stage there is no identified impact on any protected group; there may of course be equality impacts through the consequential implementation of actions set out in the Delivery Plan. Regular monitoring, including equality monitoring, will help the council to identify if any adverse equality risks do occur in practice and take action to remedy this. This monitoring will also consider if actions are having the positive impacts intended on protected characteristics and review our delivery plan accordingly.</p> <p>It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language.</p>	

A full impact assessment (second stage) is required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Sheenagh Rees	Head of People & OD	Sheenagh Rees	08/10/22
Signed off by	Sheenagh Rees	Head of Human & OD		08/10/22

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

19 October 2022

Report of

Head of People and Organisational Development
S.Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Corporate Plan Annual Report Period: 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Purpose of Report

1. To present the Corporate Plan Annual Report for the period: 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 for consideration and approval.

Executive Summary

2. The Annual Report provides an account of progress made against the three well-being objectives, improvement priorities and steps set out in the Council's previous Corporate Plan 2021/2023 for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.
3. The report is required to meet duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
4. In preparing this Annual Report for 2021/2022, the Council is required to consider whether the well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those objectives should be considered. This consideration began in the summer of 2021 when the Council launched the 'Let's Talk' campaign which provided an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to provide their views, concerns, and ideas to help shape what the Council does in the future. The feedback helped shape the new [2022/2027 Corporate Plan](#) which was approved by Cabinet on 28th February 2022 and adopted by Council on 1st March 2022. Four new well-being objectives were

adopted replacing the three well-being objectives we have been delivering since 2017.

5. The three well-being objectives detailed in this 2021/22 Annual Report have been in place since September 2017. During this time, and up to 31st March 2022, overall, we have remained on track in delivering each of the well-being objectives for each year. This is against the backdrop of significant impacts and disruption caused by the pandemic over the last two years. The only exception being that Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children and young people, was overall, 'just off track' for 2020/2021. The main reason for this was due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national restrictions and subsequent impact on the levels of contact and engagement with children and young people.
6. Overall, we were on track in delivering all the three well-being objectives for 2021/22.

Background

7. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to set well-being objectives which seek to maximise the Council's contribution to the national well-being goals, whilst also embracing the sustainable development principle. The Council is further required to report each year on the extent to which the well-being objectives it has set have been achieved.

Our progress and performance

8. Under each well-being objective there are improvement priorities and steps. The improvement priorities set out the overall improvement we are aiming to achieve and the steps set out the strategic actions we will we take to deliver that improvement.
9. In terms of the corporate plan 'Steps' to deliver the priorities, for 2021/22, 77% (72 of 93) were on track and 21 'just off track'. This is an improvement on 2020/21 whereby 65% (54 of 83) of steps were on track, 24 of the steps were 'just off' track and 5 were 'off track'. For 2019/20 we reported 83% (68 of 83) of steps on track. Overall progress on these steps is showing that services are starting to recover and have improved on 2020/21, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic.

10. Assessment for 2021/22 is that **all three well-being objectives are 'on track'**

11. To assess our Performance in meeting our well-being objectives, alongside progress on our 'Steps', for 2021/22 we used 58 performance indicators (Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators). The summary below shows a higher proportion of corporate plan key performance indicators are achieving targets in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the percentage improving increased by 1% compared to 2020/21.

***Caution should be taken with the comparison as performance for some measures across both 2020/21 and 2021/22 were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.**

- **Comparing against Targets** - During 2021/22, of the performance indicators that had comparable targets, 70% (28 of 40) achieved target, 7.5% (3 of 40) were within 5% of target and 22.5% (9 of 40) were 5% or more below target. This compares favourably to 2020/21 where 61% (23 of 38) achieved target, 18% (7 of 38) were within 5% of target and 21% (8 of 38) were 5% or more below the target set. In 2019/20, 54% achieved target.
- **Comparing against previous year** - In 2021/22, 58% (28 of 48) improved or maintained performance, 17% (8 of 48) marginally declined but within 5% and 25% (12 of 48) declined by 5% or more. In 2020/21, 57% (24 of 42) improved or maintained performance, 24% (10 of 42) marginally declined and 19% (8 of 42) declined by 5% or more. In 2019/20, 63% (32 of 51) improved or maintained performance.
- Examples of improvements include:
 - More year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language which is likely to rise steadily for the next 3 years;
 - Child assessments completed in time (99%);
 - Employability programme outcomes including workways, communities for work age group 16-24 and communities for work plus;
 - Increase in apprenticeships within the council;
 - Quicker processing of benefits;
 - Further improvement in the condition of A, B and C roads;
 - Increases in council tax and NNDR collection rates; and
 - More services available online.

- We also achieved or exceeded our targets for a range of measures which include:
 - Our recycling statutory target of 64% (although the recycling rate reduced slightly);
 - Street cleanliness;
 - Food establishments meeting food hygiene standards (97%);
 - Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless;
 - Our NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figure;
 - Age appropriate healthy relationship lessons to pupils;
 - Air quality breaches;
 - 410 jobs created as a result of financial support by the authority; and
 - Percentage of Local Government Electors verified and registered to vote.

- Some of our performance has declined and/or missed targets during the year, almost all of these continue to be affected in some way by the impacts of the pandemic including:
 - School attendance;
 - Average time taken to complete a Disabled Facilities Grant;
 - Communities for work age 25 + outcomes;
 - domestic abuse high risk repeat referrals;
 - Average time taken to clear fly tipping;
 - Planning applications determined in time;
 - Council sickness rates (which have significantly increased);
 - Contact with young people through the youth service;
 - Visits to theatres, leisure centres and libraries are still lower than pre-pandemic levels; and the average time taken to answer telephone calls from the public.

Financial Appraisal

12. The Council's Net Budget for 2021/22 was £316.246m. The Actual Net Expenditure, or Outturn position for the Council, shows a net under spend of £670k. The Council received Covid-19 Grant funding of over £20m including a further £12m which has been paid out to support businesses and individuals across the county borough.

Integrated Impact Assessment

13. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment for the Corporate Plan Annual Report.

Valleys Communities Impact:

14. The Annual Report provides an update on the progress made in delivering projects to support valley communities.

Workforce Impact

15. The progress described in this report was achieved whilst the workforce continued to respond to the pandemic.

Legal Impact

16. This Annual Report discharges duties in Section 3 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Risk Management

17. The Corporate Plan Annual Report must comply with provisions within Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Failure to produce a compliant report can lead to a Certificate of Non-Compliance by Audit Wales and statutory recommendations the Council would be obliged to address. The risk of non-compliance is considered low as the Report follows the same format as previous years when a Certificate of Compliance has been achieved.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

19. It is recommended that Cabinet considers the following documents set out in the appendices, and if considered appropriate, that Cabinet commends the documents to Council for approval:

- Draft Corporate Plan Annual Report for 2021/22 (full progress report)
- Draft Corporate Plan Annual Report Summary for 2021/22
- Key Performance Indicators for 2021/22

20. It is recommended that the Leader of Council be given delegated authority to make such changes as may be needed to the Annual Report prior to

publication, provided that such changes do not materially alter the content of the document considered by Council.

Reason for Proposed Decision

21. To meet the statutory requirements set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Implementation of Decision

22. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in.

Appendices

23. Appendix 1 – Draft Corporate Plan Annual Report for 2021/22 (full progress report 2021/22)

24. Appendix 2 – Draft Corporate Plan Annual Report for 2021/22 (summary report 2021/22)

25. Appendix 3 – Key Performance Indicators 2021/22

List of Background Papers

26. Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2021–2023

27. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Officer Contact

28. Sheenagh Rees, Head of People and Organisational Development. Tel: 01639 763315 or e-mail: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk

29. Caryn Furlow-Harris, Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support. Tel: 01639 763242 or e-mail: c.furlow@npt.gov.uk

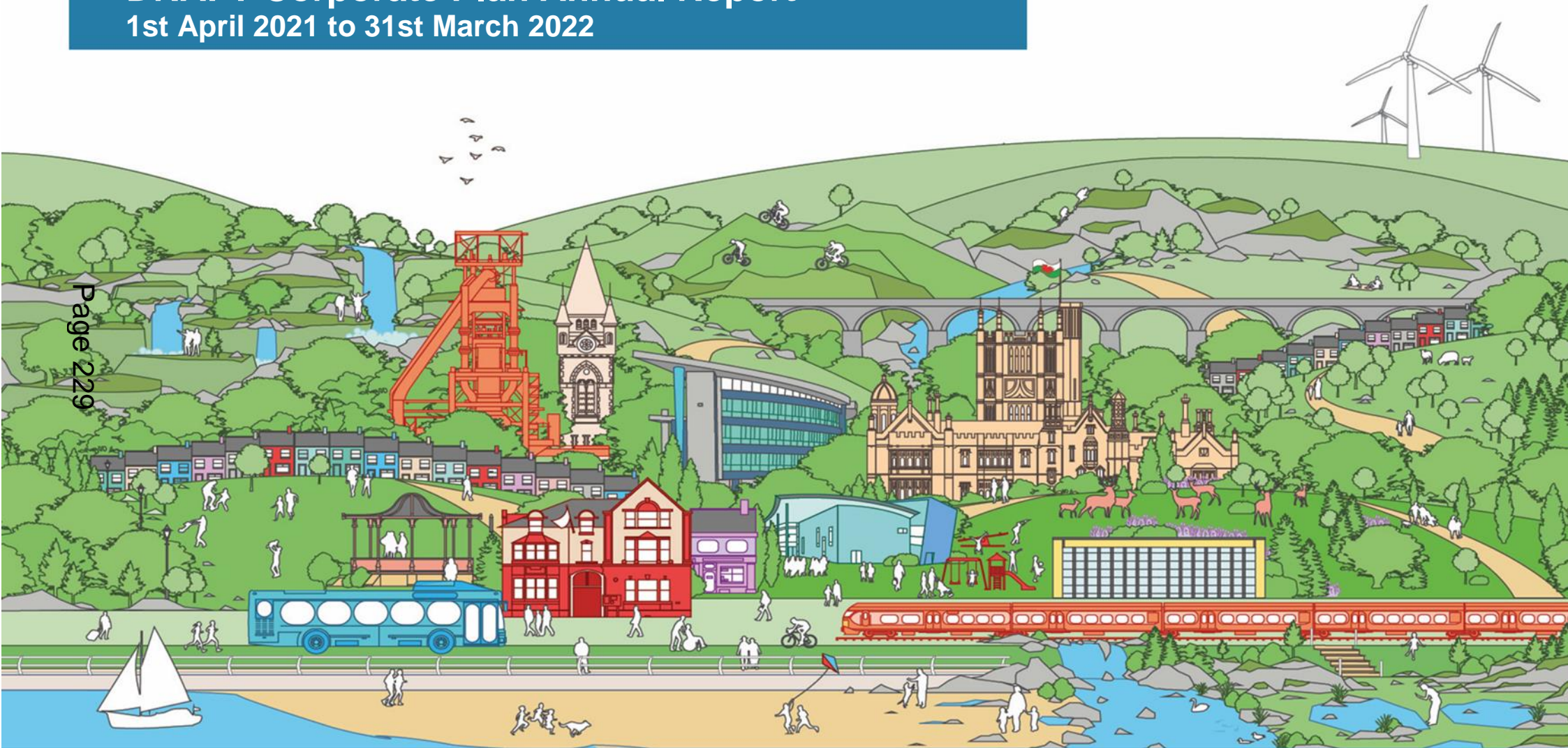
30. Shaun Davies, Corporate Performance Management Officer. Tel: 01639 763612 or e-mail: a.s.davies@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

DRAFT Corporate Plan Annual Report

1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

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FOREWORD

In the middle of March 2020, the Council mobilised an emergency response to the developing COVID-19 national emergency situation. There was an immense effort to ensure the Council responded in step with the policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government.

As we moved into the second year (2021/2022) of the pandemic, our response was greatly assisted by the availability of the Covid-19 vaccines. We were pleased to be able to offer further support to our NHS, converting facilities at Margam Orangery for use as a mass vaccination centre and modifying a mobile library for use as a mobile vaccination centre. The mobile vaccination centre enabled the vaccine programme to be accessed by those hardest to reach. We also made facilities available for the rapid expansion of Covid-19 testing at various locations across the county borough.

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

Alongside our ongoing response to the pandemic, we continued to deliver on the priorities we had set in our Corporate Plan 2021/2023 and in this Annual Report you will find more information on that work and the difference we made.

Going forward, the emphasis is on working together to help the county borough continue to recover and make Neath Port Talbot a place we are all proud of. There are a number of challenges facing us but we learned through the pandemic that when we come together we can achieve remarkable things.

Cllr S Hunt, Leader of Council

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This Report is available in [Welsh](#) and on our website.

1. Introduction

This Annual Report provides an account of progress made against the three well-being objectives, improvement priorities and steps set out in the [Corporate Plan 2021/2023](#) for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

The 2021/22 Annual Report is the final year of reporting on the three well-being objectives that we have had in place since September 2017.

In preparing this Annual Report for 2021/22, the Council is required to consider whether the well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those objectives should be considered. This consideration began in the summer of 2021 when we launched the ‘Let’s Talk’ campaign which provided an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to provide their views, concerns, and ideas to help shape what we do in the future. The feedback helped shape the new [2022/2027 Corporate Plan](#) which was approved by Cabinet on 28th February 2022 and adopted by Council on 1st March 2022. Four new well-being objectives were adopted. Given that the new well-being objectives were agreed on the 28th February 2022, it was not considered necessary to make any changes to the new [2022/2027 Corporate Plan](#) at this time.

This 2021/22 Annual Report reports progress on the final year of the existing set of well-being objectives and provides a brief summary of achievements since 2017.

The new [2022/2027 Corporate Plan – Recover, Reset, Renew](#) sets out our thinking on how we will approach recovery in the short, medium and longer term. It has been informed by a lot of people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners. We have also used a considerable amount of evidence to understand how things have changed as a result of the pandemic and looked at wider influences, like climate change, digital disruption and government policy. The plan is broken down into a number of sections which includes information on our Covid-19 response; a summary of Covid-19 impacts; how we plan to reopen and recover; how we plan to reset and renew and reset and renew our purpose, vision and values; how we plan to achieve our vision; the strategic change programme to deliver the plan and how we will measure success and monitor progress on the new plan.

2. Summary of Progress since 2017/18

The three well-being objectives detailed in this 2021/22 Annual Report have been in place since September 2017. During this time, and up to 31st March 2022, overall, we have remained on track in delivering each of the well-being objectives in each year. This is against the backdrop of significant impacts and disruption caused by the pandemic over the last two years. The only exception being that Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children and young people, was overall, 'just off track' for 2020/21. The main reason for this was due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the national restrictions and subsequent impact on the levels of contact and engagement with children and young people.

Over the period, we have delivered a number of improvements some of which include:

- Completion of the first phase (Band A) of the 21st Century Schools Improvement Programme (e.g. school modernisation and new buildings) and we continued with our Programme which included continuing phase 1 of the new £27 million home for Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School and a new £9m facility at Ystalyfera Campus of Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur;
- We continued supporting early years and childcare provision and provided additional support throughout the pandemic;
- Our NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) year 11 leavers figures have improved from 3.55% in 2016/17 to our lowest ever figure of 2.12 in 2020/21;
- We continued to improve systems and processes to help meet the need of our service users across Social Care;
- Regeneration work continued across the county borough including Neath Town Centre, Plaza Cinema refurbishment, redevelopment of the former police station, Aberafan House and Glanafan School (which were completed as residential units), completion of Harbourside project (former magistrates court), redevelopment work on the former Crown building and conditional planning consent was given in July 2021 for a £150 million Global Centre for Rail Excellence (GCRE) project at the top of the Dulais Valley and South Powys;
- A steady decline in road traffic accidents since 2015, from 216 recorded accidents in 2015 to 94 in 2021;
- Improvements to our parks and greenspaces, active travel improvements including increasing accessible cycle routes and the condition of our roads have improved year on year;

- Since April 2017, 2,153 jobs have been created/safeguarded as a result of financial support from the Council and we continued to deliver employability programmes such as Workways+, Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus to assist economically inactive and unemployed people to obtain and sustain employment; and
- our Recycling rates have increased to 66%

3. Summary of Progress and Performance during 2021/22

Progress:

Well-being objectives – How did we do? – Overall, we were on track in delivering all the three well-being objectives for 2021/22. A summary for each well-being objective is provided below with more detailed information in sections 4 to 6 of this annual report.

Under each well-being objective there are improvement priorities and steps. The improvement priorities set out the overall improvement we are aiming to achieve and the steps set out the strategic actions we will take to deliver that improvement.

In terms of the corporate plan 'Steps' to deliver the priorities, for 2021/22, 77% (72 of 93) were on track and 21 'just off track'. This is an improvement on 2020/21 whereby 65% (54 of 83) of steps were on track, 24 of the steps were 'just off track' and 5 were 'off track'. For 2019/20 we reported 83% (68 of 83) of steps on track. Overall progress on these steps is showing that services are starting to recover and have improved on 2020/21, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic.

Well-being objectives – How did we do?

A summary of progress made on achieving each well-being objective for 2021/22 is set out below:

Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children and young people	GREEN On Track
<p>We set 30 steps to help us deliver the 7 improvement priorities under Well-being Objective 1 for 2021/22.</p> <p>All 7 improvement priorities were overall ‘on track’ for 2021/22. In 2020/21, 2 of 7 improvement priorities were on track with 5 ‘just off’ track, progress on these in 2020/21 were heavily impacted by the pandemic.</p> <p>For 2021/22, 93% (28 of 30) of steps were on track with 2 steps ‘just off’ track. This is a significant improvement on 2020/21, where 56% (15 of 27) steps were on track.</p> <p>Summary information is provided in the 2021/22 Corporate Plan Annual Report Summary LINK</p>	

Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough	GREEN On Track
<p>We set out 31 steps to help us deliver the 8 improvement priorities for Well-being Objective 2 for 2021/22.</p> <p>6 of the 8 improvement priorities were on track and 2 ‘just off’ track for 2021/22. In 2020/21, 4 of 6 improvement priorities were on track with 2 ‘just off’ track.</p>	

For 2021/22, 65% (20 of 31) of steps were on track with 11 steps 'just off' track. In 2020/21, 65% (20 of 31) were on track, 10 'just off' track and one step off track.

Summary information is provided in the 2021/22 Corporate Plan Annual Report Summary [LINK](#)

Well-being Objective 3- To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved

**GREEN
On Track**

We set out 32 steps to help us deliver the 9 improvement priorities for Well-being Objective 3 for 2021/22.

7 of the 9 improvement priorities were on track and 2 'just off track' for 2021/22. In 2020/21, 6 of 8 improvement priorities were on track with 2 'just off' track

For 2021/22, 75% (24 of 32) of steps were on track with 8 steps 'just off' track. In 2020/21, 76% (19 of 25) of steps were on track, 5 'just off' track and one step off track.

Summary information is provided in the 2021/22 Corporate Plan Annual Report Summary [LINK](#)

Key Performance Indicators - How did we do?

To assess our performance in meeting our well-being objectives, alongside progress on our 'Steps', for 2021/22 we used 58 performance indicators (Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators).

The summary below shows a higher proportion of corporate plan key performance indicators achieved targets in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the percentage improving increased by 1% compared to 2020/21.

****Caution should be taken with the comparison as performance for some measures across both 2020/21 and 2021/22 were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.***

- **Comparing against Targets** - During 2021/22, of the performance indicators that had comparable targets, 70% (28 of 40) achieved target, 7.5% (3 of 40) were within 5% of target and 22.5% (9 of 40) were 5% or more below target. This compares favourably to 2020/21 where 61% (23 of 38) achieved target, 18% (7 of 38) were within 5% of target and 21% (8 of 38) were 5% or more below the target set. In 2019/20, 54% achieved target.
- **Comparing against previous year performance** - In 2021/22, 58% (28 of 48) improved or maintained performance, 17% (8 of 48) marginally declined but within 5% and 25% (12 of 48) declined by 5% or more. In 2020/21, 57% (24 of 42) improved or maintained performance, 24% (10 of 42) marginally declined and 19% (8 of 42) declined by 5% or more. In 2019/20, 63% (32 of 51) improved or maintained performance.
- Examples of improvements include more year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language which is likely to rise steadily for the next 3 years, child assessments completed in time (99%), employability programme outcomes including workways, communities for work age group 16-24 and communities for work plus, increase in apprenticeships within the council, quicker processing of benefits, further improvement in the condition of A, B and C roads, increases in council tax and National Non-domestic collection rates (NNDR) and more services available online.

- We also achieved or exceeded our targets for a range of measures which include our recycling rates (although the recycling rate reduced slightly), street cleanliness, food establishments meeting food hygiene standards (97%), percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless, our NEET figure, healthy relationship lessons to pupils, air quality measure, 410 jobs created as a result of financial support by the authority and % local government electors verified and registered to vote.
- Some of our performance has declined and/or missed targets during the year, almost all of these continue to be affected in some way by the impacts of the pandemic including school attendance, the average time taken to complete a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), communities for work age 25 + outcomes, domestic abuse high risk repeat referrals, time taken to clear fly tipping, planning applications determined in time and council sickness rates (which have significantly increased). Contact with young people through the youth service and visits to theatres, leisure centres and libraries are still lower than pre-pandemic levels. The average time taken to answer telephone calls from the public was below target and showed a slight drop in performance for the year, however, performance improved in the second half of the year.
- **Benchmarking Council Performance** - Previously, at council level, we have compared our performance with other local authorities across Wales against the national set of Public Accountability Measures (PAMs). However, these measures ceased being collected and compared nationally in 2021. Although, a number of these measures are still being benchmarked by our service areas. A number of services also share good practice and information via benchmarking groups.
Data Cymru is currently developing a set of measures with support of local authorities including Neath Port Talbot which can be used for benchmarking at council and service level. In the meantime, Neath Port Talbot Council will be reviewing our own benchmarking arrangements to further strengthen and improve them. At an operational level, service areas for 2022/23 have completed a self-assessment of performance when developing their Service Recovery Plans (SRP). Within the SRP guidance, services are encouraged to benchmark their performance (e.g. with

other organisations) where data is available. This process will be reviewed and further strengthened during 2022/23.

The next three sections (sections 4 -6) set out a more detailed assessment of how well we achieved our three well-being objectives by providing an assessment of the progress made against each of the steps (the detailed actions) under each well-being objective and the Key Performance Indicators identified to measure progress against achieving the well-being objectives. More detailed performance comments relating to these Key Performance Indicators is included within the 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators Report. [Link](#)

The RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status of each step is based on the following key:

- **Green:** on the whole we delivered what was planned during 2021/22
- **Amber:** Just off track, we have not delivered some of what was planned during 2021/22 , some of the work was affected by the pandemic or for another reason
- **Red:** Off track in delivering what was planned during 2021/22 or some work or all work was paused or affected due to the pandemic or for another reason

The RAG status of each Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is based on the following key:

- **Green:** achieved target for 2021/22 - performance was maintained or improved on 2020/21
- **Amber:** within 5% of target - within 5% of previous year's performance
- **Red:** 5% or more below target - 5% or more below previous year's performance
- **N/a** – no comparable data or no target set

At the start of each of the well-being objective progress section, information is included on how our well-being objectives contribute to the seven national well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This contribution is made through the way in which we work in accordance with the [sustainable development principle](#) contained within the Act.

4. Well-being Objective 1 – Progress in 2021/22



Well-being Objective 1: To improve the well-being of children and young people:

*“All of our children and young people have the best start in life,
so they can be the best they can be”*

How this well-being objective contributes to the seven national well-being goals:	
Page 240 prosperous Wales	The suite of priorities and steps aim, collectively, to ensure that every child and young person enters employment, education or training at the end of full-time education ready to contribute socially and economically.
A healthier Wales	Every school in Neath Port Talbot is a “Healthy School” and the county borough also has good participation rates in physical activity. The focus here is to place greater emphasis on emotional well-being to equip children and young people with the skills, behaviours and support they need. We have good data to identify where there are differences in attainment and outcomes for children and young people of different backgrounds with programmes in place to address inequality and inequity.
A Wales of cohesive communities	There is a strong emphasis on ensuring equality and celebrating diversity across a range of activities. There is also recognition and work to address inequalities in all of its forms, whether in relation to statutory duties concerned with people of protected characteristics, inequality caused by disparities in income, or by virtue of whether children and young people are cared for by their own families or the council.

How this well-being objective contributes to the seven national well-being goals:	
	Programmes to educate children and young people about personal and community safety are well-established but it is acknowledged that there is a need to continuously review our programmes to ensure that they remain relevant. For example, equipping children and young people to stay safe on-line has become a key area of focus given Child Sexual Exploitation, radicalisation and other on-line criminality.
A resilient Wales	Children and young people are introduced to the importance of the eco systems and our environment through family focused activities in the natural environment. The benefits of taking part in these activities should increase well-being and a greater appreciation for the role the natural environment plays in their lives.
A more equal Wales	Reducing inequality and inequity is a strong theme across the priorities that have been developed to support the achievement of this objective. There is a particular focus on children most at risk of an adverse childhood experience with the intention of strengthening prevention and early intervention work. There is also a commitment to building on our children's rights work to ensure that children and young people have a say in matters that affect them.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	The county borough has good rates of participation in physical activity and there are a wide range of cultural opportunities. There are plans to strengthen Welsh and bi-lingual education in both pre-school and full time education settings. We have a Welsh Language Promotional Strategy which supports our objectives to increase the number of people who can speak Welsh and who do so on a daily basis. We will also be working in partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner to seek support to help us deliver on our standards.
A globally responsible Wales	There are many ways in which the work set out in this well-being objective contributes to the wider world. For example, the technological investment through our 21 st Century Schools programme will transform the way in which children and young people access learning, bringing experiences from across the world into NPT classrooms, whilst also building skills fit for the future labour markets.

Well-being Objective 1 – Progress during 2021/22:

Well-being Objective 1 To improve the well-being of children and young people	
Improvement Priority 1.1 - Children in their early years will benefit from integrated and effective pre-school programmes that maximise their well-being and their readiness for learning	GREEN
Step 1.1.1 - We will implement the actions identified from our Childcare Sufficiency Assessment action plan, including implementation of Welsh Government programmes and making use of relevant funding to increase availability and quality of childcare	GREEN
Step Progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2021/22, we received and processed 774 Childcare Offer applications, more than the 597 we processed in 2020/21. As at April 2022, there were 914 children actively receiving childcare through the Offer. In addition, 184 childcare providers were registered to provide the Childcare Offer to families within Neath Port Talbot with over £2 million paid to childcare providers active in the offer during 2021/22. A further £108,310 had been utilised to support children with additional learning needs to access the Childcare Offer. • A new classroom and childcare setting officially opened in March 2022 at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwmllynfell and a brand new childcare setting has been completed at Waunceirch Primary School. • 2339 full day childcare places were provided at the end of March 2022, just below the target of 2400. • A quality and varied training programme was delivered to meet needs of childcare providers, both online and face to face. The programme was well attended and had positive feedback from participants. We also worked in partnership with national umbrella organisations to ensure that training meets the needs of the sector. • The Childcare Training and Transition Officer and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transition Key Worker have been working together to create a transition protocol for all settings and schools within Neath Port Talbot. The protocol aims to ensure that schools are 	

advised of any children due to start the following term with significant needs, and individual transition meetings are arranged where necessary, particularly in relation to children with an identified additional learning need.

Step 1.1.2 - Families struggling to provide good parenting for their children will be provided with tailored support.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- Through the Welsh Government’s Child Development Fund, we delivered £362,000 of support to children aged 0-5 whose development has been adversely impacted by Covid. This support included delivery of 72 forestry-school outdoor play sessions for 504 children, 18 family wellbeing sessions delivered to 132 families and bespoke packages of support to 64 children with additional learning needs across 10 settings. A full time child nursery nurse worked alongside Swansea Bay Child Disability Team to support 195 children and families’ development and mental health and well-being while awaiting paediatric assessment.
- Families First and Flying Start parenting teams delivered a range of 1:1 and group based parenting support for parents with children of all ages and funding was secured through the Early Years Integration Programme to employ two playworkers to provide play based parenting support, such as language and play, and stay and play sessions with children and their parents/carer.
- Additional funding through the Out of Court Parenting Grant was utilised to increase capacity within the parenting teams to support Section 1 of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) Act 2020, which came into force on 21st March 2022. A pathway has been agreed with South Wales Police and our Social Services Department to respond.

Step 1.1.3 - We will deliver a national programme and targeted intervention through the Bookstart programme to introduce literacy and numeracy for babies and young children, taking into account accessibility, cultural and language requirements.

GREEN

Step Progress:

Following the relaxation of Covid restrictions, from November 2021, the Library Service has re-established a full programme of Bookstart Song and Rhyme sessions. 58 were delivered at all eight of our libraries to 990 children and their families (restrictions on numbers were

in place throughout this period). Included is a regular programme of Welsh language sessions – Sesiwn Ganu – run in partnership with Menter Iaitth.

Step 1.1.4 - Step - We will work with partners to deliver multi-agency, co-ordinated support to those children at risk of adverse childhood experiences.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- During 2021/2022, The Family Information Service received 1,366 enquiries (82% from parents and carers) mostly in relation to the Childcare Offer and other support for children and young people. The service was also used by a range of professionals to enquire about support or services for families they are working with.
- We continued to be the lead agency for the regional Early Years Integration Pathfinder Programme, which aims to develop a co-ordinated and integrated early years system. Approximately £400,000 was utilised across the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region to deliver pilot projects. Project themes include speech and language, early years nutrition, family support and ALN support.
- The multi-agency Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) Panel received referrals for 1,821 children, young people and their families during 2021/22, an increase of 27.5% on 2020/21. Approximately 19% of referrals were made by families themselves.
- The Families First programme provided early intervention services (domestic abuse, emotional and mental wellbeing, support for children with disabilities, parenting, support), with 1,393 referrals being made for support. 70% of participants who engaged with the service and completed their programme of support had positive outcomes including improved emotional/mental wellbeing, improved ability to support their child’s learning and development needs, and improvements to family relationships.
- In addition during 2021/22 the Flying Start Programme delivered:
 - Funded part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds, delivered across 30 high quality childcare settings to approximately 500 children.
 - An intensive health visiting service providing Healthy Child Wales (HCW) programme plus enhanced visits, support and tailored groups to an average of 1,713 children under 4.
 - 330 individual packages of support to parents.
 - 93 individual one to one packages of support for speech, language and communication development.

Improvement Priority 1.2 - Children of school age will be safer, healthier and engaged with their learning	GREEN
Step 1.2.1 - We will ensure communities are empowered to strengthen their own capacity so all children and young people can fully participate in a range of activities that promote their economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We continued to support 11 community based Youth Clubs which provide young people aged 11-18 with access to a range of educational, social and recreational activities. Throughout the pandemic the community based youth clubs were closed and we continued to support the young people by opening up virtual youth clubs using Microsoft Teams. As the Youth Clubs reopened we have seen an increase in numbers. The number of young people who engaged with our Youth Clubs for 2021/22 was 917. Cymmer Youth Club has continued to be successful after opening and Youth Clubs received additional Summer of Fun money to enable them to open for young people over the summer holidays 2021. Approximately £776,000 All Wales Play Opportunities Grant funding (including Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing) was utilised to improve opportunities for children’s play. Community based projects, delivered by the local authority, partners and community groups, provided a range of free play, sport, leisure and cultural activities for children and young people aged 0-25. Of this, £235,000 was capital funding, which has helped improve local playgrounds and play settings across the county. 	
Step 1.2.2 - We will continue with our Strategic School Improvement Programme of school reorganisation to provide 21st Century teaching and learning facilities and meet ‘secure by design’ standards.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <p>We continued with our Strategic School Improvement Programme of school reorganisation which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening of a new £9m facility at Ystalyfera Campus of Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur in December 2021. The new facilities include a concert hall, canteen and kitchen, extra classrooms, a music and drama centre and modern sports pitches. 	

- A £1.14m improvement scheme completed at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tyle'r Ynn.
- A £640,000 renewal project at the Welsh-medium 3-11 primary school Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg (YGG) Cwmllynfell was completed in December 2021. The extra space and modernised facilities provides an extra classroom and a childcare setting, with the aim of increasing the capacity of the school, improving Foundation Phase provision and providing space to develop pre-school Welsh-medium provision.

Step 1.2.3 - We will further develop our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, so that we increase opportunities for more of our children and young people to be educated through the medium of Welsh and for pupils to become more proficient in speaking Welsh.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- Our new 10 year WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan) was approved by Welsh Government on 20th July 2022 and adopted by Council on 28th September 2022.
- A Welsh in Childcare Award for English-medium was developed during 2021/22. The award scheme will be launched in September 2022 and aims to assist settings to become bilingual providers.
- A Welsh speaking Development Officer provides a fortnightly Welsh learning session for employees to improve Welsh speaking ability and works closely with our Family Information Service and Early Years/Flying Start teams to promote the use of Welsh on social media platforms.
- A number of online and face to face sessions have been provided by 'Cymraeg i Blant' and online 'Clwb Cwtsh' sessions offered through Mudiad Meithrin for families to learn simple Welsh phrases to use within the family. Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot also offered face to face events such as craft sessions for children and Bore Coffi for adults to go and practice their Welsh. Also, a new 'Ti a Fi' session has started in YGG Cwmllynfell, located in the new childcare setting.
- The percentage of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language improved to 12.29% (11.33% the year before) and was above our target of 11.7%.

Step 1.2.4 - We will pilot a Children’s Community model in the Sandfields West ward.	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2021/22, 113 engagement sessions were delivered to 462 families. The sessions were delivered virtually and at the Tir Morfa Centre in Sandfields. Participants felt supported by regularly joining the groups and felt the sessions helped greatly with their wellbeing. • Work was also undertaken to develop the outside space at the centre which included developing a nature garden, allotment and play area for the children. Other work included delivering food parcels to the community with the help of the Youth Service. • Regular operational and residents group meetings (with the local councillor) continued throughout 2021/22 as well as meetings with partners and services. The meetings enable the needs of the community to be discussed and actions agreed, with particular support being offered to families with young children. • We worked alongside the Physical Activity and Sport Service (PASS) Team to deliver 4 block sessions at the local school and childcare setting based at Tir Morfa weekly for a set course to support children with their basic motor skills. 65 children took part at each session and the school informed us of a significant positive increase in the children’s wellbeing, behaviour, physical strength and movement as well as learning a new skill set. We have been building a strong partnership with the Early Years Integration Pathfinder project, and maintaining the continued support from the local Members in Sandfields. 	
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Step 1.2.5 - We will ensure that we effectively implement new statutory duties created by Welsh Government to benefit children and young people with additional learning needs.	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools in Neath Port Talbot are following new ALN (Additional Learning Needs) processes and systems. We have developed and implemented new, robust decision making processes in line with new legislation. • Since September 2021, 14 local authority maintained Individual Development Plans (IDPs) have been created for school aged children and 40 IDPs for pre-school children have been agreed and 18 have been issued. 	
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- We also strengthened our working relationship with post 16 providers and NPT College to ensure there are good transition processes in place for young people with ALN transitioning from school into college, and in collaboration with NPT College we have developed a Post 16 offer of support to College.
- We continue to hold bi-annual 'Plan and Review' sessions with every school in NPT which help support and challenge schools in relation to their Inclusive Learning Provision and Additional Learning Provision for pupils with ALN.
- All schools Inclusion service staff adopt Person Centred Practices. Training has also been provided to Early Years settings, to colleagues across post 16, Health and Social Services colleagues and Third Sector providers.
- We continue to work collaboratively with regional partners and sub-regional partners in terms of sharing good practice and co-developing pathways and processes in line with the new ALN legislation.
- We have established a Welsh Medium ALN Steering group to help the local authority fulfil its statutory duties in relation to bilingualism and ALN.

Step 1.2.6 - We will work with schools to ensure all learners develop the four purposes of the curriculum for Wales and that all schools move towards self-improvement.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- All schools are engaging in the process of designing the curriculum for Wales. They are all developing their vision, developing a shared understanding of progress and through increasingly effective professional learning evolving what teaching looks like. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has been a significant obstacle and has hampered the pace of progress as the restrictions meant that schools were unable to meet and plan for a wide range of reasons. Despite the restrictions nearly all primary settings are making better than expected progress considering the challenges they have endured.
- One secondary school has officially opted in for their year 7 pupils to start learning under the curriculum for Wales in September 2022, while the others have chosen to begin in September 2023 for years 7 and 8.
- The capped 9 score per pupil for Neath Port Talbot for the 2020/21 academic year was 378, higher than target and previous year's figure of 369. Data for this measure is based on the teacher assessments method.

- Attendance at both primary and secondary schools continued to be affected by the pandemic and 2020/21 academic year attendance data was 91.2% for primary and 87.9% for secondary, both below previous academic years.

Step 1.2.7 - We will work with schools and partners to ensure we provide excellent support for children’s’ health and wellbeing.

GREEN

Step Progress:

Our Youth Service was able to secure additional funding via the Welsh Government’s initiative, ‘Summer of Fun’ to provide a summer programme that gave young people the opportunity to come together in groups, reduce social isolation, anxiety and improve well-being.

The summer programme offered a mixture of open access youth clubs for anyone aged 11 – 18 years of age and activities for targeted groups of young people identified at being at higher risk of isolation and loneliness. The young people that participated in the summer programme included looked after young people, young carers, LGBTQ+ young people, young people with identified speech, language and communication needs; young people who have experienced or are at risk of youth homelessness, young parents under 25 years of age, those that are not in education, employment or training and any young people attending youth clubs.

The summer programme, working with a range of partners delivered a number of programmes including activity days including Oakwood Park, Heatherington, Bounce, summer youth clubs, family beach days, young mums pamper day, a positive aspirations course, dance sessions, cooking sessions and cinema night events and together with Pontardawe Arts Centre delivered a range of innovative activities to young people and their families.

Step 1.2.8 - We will work with schools and local organisations to ensure teaching of the new curriculum reflects the multi-ethnic nature of Wales.

GREEN

Step Progress:

All schools in Neath Port Talbot have been supported with a programme of training to meet the requirements of the curriculum for Wales. This has included regular updates on the mandatory elements of the curriculum including ‘Statements of What Matters’, and key principles. One of the 27 Statements is that “Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs.” The

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Statement now includes an expectation that learners “can develop an understanding of the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of societies, past and present.” All schools have to consider this in their curriculum design. This process is underway in our schools. These stories are diverse, spanning different communities as well as in particular the stories of black, Asian and minority ethnic people. This information has been shared with the NPT Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association.

Step 1.2.9 - We will continue to work with schools and other relevant settings to ensure that their learning environments are safe and nurturing, where there is respect and due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The Vulnerable Learner Service have provided a range of interventions to support Ethnic Minority groups and learners who speak English as a Second Language, through in class support, one to one support, mentoring/advocacy, promoting wellbeing, support for learners to deal with self-confidence and self-awareness issues, promoting multiculturalism and anti-racism attitudes.
- The Vulnerable Learner Service have delivered a variety of activities and events such as supporting schools and partners to deliver cultural and international days, training workshops, promote and embed annual cultural events such as Black History Month (BHM), Gypsy Traveller Month, Chinese New year, EID festival and others. They have engaged with black Welsh authors to deliver workshops in schools across the authority to promote diversity and inclusion.
- The Vulnerable Learner Service has worked with community groups such as NPT BME Community Association and stakeholder groups such as the Gypsy Traveller Forum to provide advice and to support engagement with minority ethnic communities and traveller children and their families and works closely with other partners to support for refugees and their families from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- The Youth Council have representation from all secondary schools within the local authority and young people are given the opportunity to voice their concerns, raise any issues and ways how to improve their schools.
- The Youth Service run Young Carers Awareness raising sessions in all schools to help identify those children and young people with caring responsibilities and the Youth Service advocates for the young person, making the school informed and additional support is offered if needed. The same is offered to young people who might be at risk of youth homelessness where the Youth Service carry out awareness raising sessions to all secondary schools and support those young people who are in need.

- The Vulnerable Learner Service also support LGBTQ+ groups in schools, provide LGBTQ+ young people with a safe place to meet outside of schools and they also have representation on the Youth Council.
- The education directorate provides advice and support to schools to assist in safeguarding all pupils and schools are encouraged to utilise the audit tool kit 'Keeping Learners Safe' annually and many schools now use it as a dynamic tool that is updated throughout the year. This has been evidenced in recent safeguarding reviews.

Improvement Priority 1.3 - Children and young people in need of protection, care and support will be protected and safeguarded and more of those children will be able to grow up in a stable family setting

GREEN

Step 1.3.1 - We will develop greater integration of working arrangements between Children & Young People and Adult Services.

GREEN

Pass

Step Progress:

- Despite the pandemic continuing to impact service delivery during 2021/22, the Adults and Children's 'Single Point of Contact' (SPOC) continued to respond effectively to people who required information, advice and assistance relating to the health and wellbeing of children, families and adults. In excess of 23,000 contacts were received by the Service during 2021/22. Additional staff were recruited during the year which has further strengthened the service.
- Work has been undertaken on a regional basis to develop a 'Transition Policy'. Locally, Children and Adult's services are working closely to strengthen arrangements in respect of transition, and there is now a monthly multi-agency meeting in place to ensure that the transition between childhood and adulthood is as seamless as possible for young people and their families and to identify where there may be gaps in service delivery and support.
- We have an operational Neuro Developmental Delay / Autism Spectrum Disorder (NDD/ASD) lead across Children and Adult social services. The role includes training staff across Social Services to raise awareness and provide information to make links within the community, and with our key partners to raise awareness and identify support needs and opportunities for development.
- 99.15% of child assessments were completed on time during 2021/22 which has exceeded our target of 94%.

<p>Step 1.3.2 - With our partners, we will continue to develop our Family Support Strategy to ensure the right range and quality of services are in place to meet need.</p>	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Working Together Service' worked with in excess of 50 children and their families and has been key to preventing the need for any of these children who engaged with this service from entering the care system. • The Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) has continued to deliver family focused interventions, which has helped families to focus on their values and beliefs, highlight their strengths and resources, and where relevant, enable those parents with substance use issues to address them and provide support in their parenting. • We strengthened and re-branded our Positive Steps service in line with other Welsh authorities. This is now known as 'Reflect'. This change has enabled us to ensure continuity of service for birth parents who may move to NPT from other local authorities. • In conjunction with the YMCA, several programmes of work have been developed to support children and families who have been negatively impacted by Covid-19. • The Multi Agency Resource Panel, which is hosted and chaired by our Children and Young People Service continued to meet with partners to ensure the best support is provided from the most appropriate resources, at a time that is right for the needs of children and families. 	
<p>Step 1.3.3 - We will undertake focused work with our partners to improve access to the right support for children and young people who have poor emotional/physical wellbeing/mental health.</p>	AMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review meetings with partner agencies are fully embedded and continue to take place fortnightly. This ensures that the children and young people who need help and support are identified at the earliest opportunity and are provided with access to the right support at the right time. • Work continues to be undertaken regionally to develop emotional and well-being support services for children and young people. • Any identified children that have been affected by the pandemic in relation to emotional health and well-being are being supported by education and early intervention and prevention services and are being referred to Adults and Children's 'Single Point of Contact' (SPOC) if longer or more intensive work is needed. 	

<p>Step 1.3.4 - We will further develop our in-house fostering service to ensure the sufficiency and stability of placements, including the development of arrangements for Special Guardianship Carers.</p>	<p>AMBER</p>
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, our ‘business as usual’ approach has enabled us to maintain a concerted effort in managing our Looked After Children population and ensuring that the long term care plans for our children and young people continue to be regularly reviewed and to ensure that only those children who need to be in care, remain in care. • There are currently difficulties in the recruitment of foster carers across Wales. Foster Wales NPT are working closely as a region sharing ideas around recruitment and retention. We are currently working on a draft proposal including a review of our financial policy to retain carers and also to recruit carers for children and young people with more complex needs. • We have been working with other local authorities across Wales with AFA (Association for Adoption & Fostering) Cymru to develop a Wales wide Special Guardian Support Plan. This will ensure that all needs are considered and that there is a consistent approach. • We are also in the process of developing a Placement Commissioning Strategy, which will focus a recruitment campaign to meet the identified need in respect of placements needed for our children and young people who are looked after. 	
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<p>Improvement Priority 1.4 - Young people leaving full-time education will have the opportunity to enter employment, training or further/ higher education</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
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<p>Step 1.4.1 - The Council will provide work placement, apprenticeships and trainee opportunities for young people within its own workforce, in particular providing opportunities for Looked After Children.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We supported 78 Modern Apprentices, of which 39 were modern apprentices and 39 current employees who accessed apprenticeship funding to upskill and develop. Therefore, the number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeships schemes per 1,000 employees is 15.25 (78 apprenticeships) for 2021/22. This exceeded 2020/21 performance and the target of 8 for 2021/22. 	
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- Since September 2020 we have been delivering the Government Kickstart programme. This scheme provides funding to employers to create 6-month job placement(s) for young people aged 16-24 who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. The placements give young people the opportunity to build their skills in the workplace and to gain experience to improve their chances of finding long-term work. The Scheme arrangements were put in place in 2020/21 ready for placements to start in May 2021. During 2021/22, we had 32 Kickstart placements, 19 of which have completed their 6 months placement, and with 5 gaining further employment within the Council. 13 placements are ongoing and progressing through their 6 month placement. The scheme has now come to an end for new enrolments.
- We had no work experience placements in 2021/22 due to continued Covid-19 restrictions impacting on arrangements and risk assessments.

Step 1.4.2 - Youth workers in schools will support young people identified as being most at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) to help them achieve a positive destination.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The Legacy Youth Workers supported 253 year 11 school leavers who have been identified as being most at risk of becoming NEET.
- The percentage of year 11 leavers who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) was 2.4% (39 of 1,618), which was better than our target of 3%.
- The Keeping in Touch (KIT) and Next Steps teams provided support to young people aged 16-25 and have arranged placements into college, work based learning provision and employment. 210 young people received support from The KIT Team with 144 achieving a successful outcome. Examples of successful outcomes include achieving recognised qualifications; entering work based learning, work placement or work experience; securing a job interview; engaging with a specialist service following referral; and entering paid employment.
- The Youth Service was in contact with almost 30% of young people, which was above our target of 28%. Whilst a significant increase on the Covid-19 impacted previous year figure of 9.5%, it is still below pre-pandemic levels.

<p>Step 1.4.3 - We will build on our work as Corporate Parents to ensure that all young people have suitable accommodation and support when they leave the care of the Council.</p>	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Parenting Panel have been keen to hear and support the voices of those children and young people looked after by Neath Port Talbot. The panel are also keen to ensure that our foster carers are supported and that children's needs are met holistically by all partners. Young people are regularly present at the Panel to tell of their journey through the care system, what has worked well and lessons we can learn to ensure all young people are supported when they leave the care of the Council. • Work continued to be undertaken with Commissioning and Housing in respect of appropriate provisions for our care leavers. There is also ongoing work with education/further education colleges and training provisions to ensure that all young people are supported in this area. • We have a designated Consultant Social Worker to support all young people facing homelessness. This worker provides direct support to young people and also provides information, advice and assistance to the wider service. Relevant training has also been provided to the wider teams and we have commissioned a 'Rent Ready' course for practitioners to be able to assist young people with accessing appropriate accommodation. 	
<p>Step 1.4.4 - Youth workers will provide school leavers identified by their schools and partners with transition support to help them achieve a positive destination.</p>	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <p>Progress as per step 1.4.2 above</p>	

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Improvement Priority 1.5 - All children and young people will be helped to have a say in matters that affect them	GREEN
Step 1.5.1 - We will review our approach to Children’s Rights, ensuring that a rights-based approach is embedded across all of its services and functions.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s rights, participation & engagement and the voice of the child continues to be a key priority for the Children and Young People Service. • Children and Young People Services are keen to develop a Children’s Rights’ Charter to establish their commitment to Children’s Rights and drive the Children’s Rights agenda forward. The first part of the Action Plan, consulting with children and young people, professionals and foster carers was completed in 2021/22. It is anticipated the Charter will be finalised October 2022 with the launch on International Children’s Day. 	
Step 1.5.2 - All children and young people in need of protection, or who have been identified as in need of care and support, will have a say in decisions that affect them.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2021/22, the Children and Young People Service continued to support the implementation of co-production (a key element of the Social Services & Well-Being Act) with children and families and in doing so, develop effective methods to ensure the views obtained from service users, help inform and improve service delivery. • The Children and Young People Service has been applying a Strengths Based Model of Practice since 2017 and during 2021/22 partnered with Social Care Wales to produce a document that explains the model in more detail (its vision, its key principles of practice and how the service aims to work collaboratively). The model focuses on building relationships and trust with people, and developing a shared understanding of what a good life can look like by working in an outcome focussed way. Social Care Wales intend promoting the framework and handbook across all Welsh Authorities. In addition, the fourth Consultant Social Worker (CSW) Annual 	

Conference took place in January 2022. This was the first virtual conference which proved very successful, with very positive feedback received from partner agencies. The aim of the conference was to launch Neath Port Talbot's Strengths Based Model of Practice.

- The Practice Improvement Group, was re-established having ceased at the beginning of the pandemic. The Terms of Reference has been updated and a plan is in place to improve practice. The group is made up of social workers and managers from across the service and sits alongside the Consultant Social Worker (CSW) Group to develop plans on improving practice across the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate. Part of the groups remit is to consider views obtained from service users to help drive improvements to service delivery.
- Despite the level of audit activity being scaled back during 2021/22 due to the continuation of the pandemic, obtaining the voice of children and families continues to be a key component of the Quality Practice & Learning Framework. Re-establishing a comprehensive Audit Programme is a key action for the Service moving forward into 2022/23.

Step 1.5.3 - We will work with our Think Family partners to ensure children and young people can shape and develop services.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- Engagement with children & families participating in Families First services resumed during 2021/22. Families First support is being offered as a mix of virtual and in person sessions. The children and families team are running groups and undertaking visits in the community and virtually.
- Each service is being provided in different ways. For example, the Youth Service is running family groups and undertaking one to one sessions in the community, whereas Hafan have been completing home visits.
- In the months of July and August 2021, a series of face to face engagements were carried out with 37 children between the age of 3 – 12 at 6 summer programme events, as part of our 'Let's Talk' initiative - which aimed to get the views of residents to help shape what the council does in the future and help make NPT a better place to live.

Step 1.5.4 - We will encourage young people to exercise their right to vote and participate in local democracy.

GREEN

Step Progress:

On 5 May 2022, following on from the 2021 Senedd elections, 16-17 year olds, along with qualified foreign citizens, were able to register and cast their vote in local elections for the very first time. As part of our work to encourage voter registration and democratic engagement across the County Borough we appointed (via Welsh Government Grant Funding) an engagement and outreach officer whose role was to lead on a programme of activity particularly targeting and encouraging electoral registration for young people and those from underrepresented groups as well as developing a feasible plan of action. This included:

- Extended outreach contact events both online and in person with NPT secondary schools and NPT College.
- Improved liaison contact with internal NPT groups including the Local Area Co-ordination (LAC) support network, Community of Practice network, Travellers Liaison, Youth Council and Youth Mayor as well as the Communication, Marketing and Digital teams.
- Establishing new links and partnerships with external groups and organisations including the Regional Community Cohesion network, Your Voice Advocacy, Democracy Box, Local Muslim community groups, BAME community groups, local media, Welsh Government, Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators.
- Undertaking targeted key messaging via direct correspondence with 16-17 year olds as well utilising the annual canvass process to aid with promotional drives with specially designed insert materials and online briefings for form classes (for example bespoke highly targeted correspondence sent to unregistered 16/17 year olds).
- Planning around key dates to help with promotional drives such as ‘Welcome to your Vote week’ and other awareness days to aid face to face work (where possible) as well as online activity.
- Utilising traditional advertising mediums such as local radio as well as social media platforms to promote and tie in with specially designed resources supported by the Electoral Commission and Welsh Government.

As result of this various planned activity, coupled with direct grant funding support from Welsh Government to bolster officer capacity, enabled the overall 16-17 year old voter registration rate to increase by 12.8% rising to 58.5% prior to the voter registration deadline for the 5 May 2022 local elections.

Improvement Priority 1.6 - Children and young people are safe and feel safe	GREEN
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Step 1.6.1 - We will increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong. (Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy).	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Relationship & Sexuality Education Sub Group continues to meet on a virtual basis, to ensure the roll out of age appropriate healthy relationship lessons to young people. • Youth Practitioners deliver the Healthy Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Lessons to young people within secondary educational settings. Whilst roll out has been significantly hindered by the pandemic, however in the last quarter of 2021/22 we have been able to deliver the lesson to 1,408 secondary school pupils. The age appropriate lesson will be delivered to year 6 primary school pupils in 2022/23. • The Community Safety Annual Crucial Crew event also covers a lesson on Healthy Relationships, which was delivered to approximately 1,800 pupils. During 2021/22 this was delivered virtually, but will be delivered face to face during 2022/23. • Youth Practitioners raise awareness and support young people with healthy relationships within the Relationships Advice Drop in Service (RADS) throughout NPT Youth and college settings. 	
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Step 1.6.2 - We will ensure all children and young people know how to stay safe when on-line.	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools are engaged with the 360 degree Safe Cymru self-evaluation tool through the Hwb platform and have been provided with training with its use. Schools are reminded of the Keeping Learners Safe guidance which contains a specific chapter on online safety and an e-safety policy is recommended within the NPT Safeguarding Policy for schools. Schools are also reminded of the national online safety zone hosted on Hwb online and Estyn thematic reviews. Schools are further supported by their Education Support Officer. 	
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- School Governors are provided with annual training of online safety and provided with resources to help challenge and support their school's online safety procedures and protocols.
- Designated Safeguarding Persons are regularly updated with any information, guidance, resources from Welsh Government and other agencies e.g. NSPCC.
- The annual Community Safety Crucial Crew event delivers a workshop on Cyber Crime which was delivered to approximately 1,800 pupils. During 2021/22 this was delivered virtually, but will be delivered face to face during 2022/23.

Step 1.6.3 - We will ensure all council services follow rigorous and consistent safeguarding practices

GREEN

Step Progress:





- We continue to review and develop our response to safeguarding practice across Children and Young People Services through learning gleaned from the activities undertaken by the Strategic Quality Practice Group.
- Child Protection (CP) numbers, including re-registrations have remained consistently steady over the past year. All re-registrations now result in a manager review to elicit learning.
- Family Group Conferencing is now well embedded across Children's Services from Early Intervention & Prevention, through to Court work. The next step is to consider moving this into Adult Services.
- A Joint Inspection into CP arrangements across NPT was broadly positive and validated our response to harm outside the family home through the triangulation and community risk profile meetings. We are now routinely capturing persons and places of concern and in so doing developing soft intelligence to better target those who seek to abuse children and to make places safer. The partnership response to harm outside the family home is maturing and there is buy-in across the partnership.
- Further work is required across the partnership in response to Criminal Exploitation, which is now the most prevalent risk factor outside of the family home.
- During 2021/22 approximately 1,600 council employees completed mandatory safeguarding awareness e-learning training which included a module relating to children and young people.














Step 1.6.4 - We will work with our partners to implement our Road Safety Strategy.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since restrictions gradually lifted in spring 2021, we have started to see a positive impact on our road safety delivery across all age groups. Education in our school settings returned to face to face and our driver training has returned, offering a full range of courses albeit with some restrictions on numbers per session in car and in training rooms. • During 2021/22 pupils participating in our primary road safety programme increased from 4,186 in 2020/21 to 9,130 pupils. • Our cycle training programme also increased from 81 pupils to 508 pupils this year, whilst our Kerbcraft – Child Pedestrian Training programme for 5 – 7 years olds increased to 1,795 pupils taking part from a lower number of 737 in 2020/21. Secondary School education has been delivered to 1,623 pupils this year as opposed to 100 last year and further on road training to newly qualified young drivers has risen from 11 in 2020/ 21 to 27 in 2021/22. • In March 2022, we received a funding boost of £495,000 from Welsh Government for 2022/2023. • Please also refer to step 2.3.5. below. 	
Improvement Priority 1.7 - Children of all ages will benefit from participation in activities in the natural environment, providing benefits for well-being and a greater appreciation for the role the natural environment plays in their lives.	GREEN
Step 1.7.1 - Working with partners and specialist providers, we will make use of external funding to deliver programmes of family focused activities in the natural environment.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the £776,000 All Wales Play Opportunities Grant funding (including Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing) a number of community based projects were funded to deliver outdoor play and sport activities, including play in parks and Forest School. Capital funding was also utilised to make improvements to local parks and playgrounds to improve quality of an access to outdoor play. 	

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- Through the Child Development Fund, opportunities for outdoor play was provided with 72 forestry-school play sessions being delivered to 504 children aged 0-5 years.
- The Lost Peatlands project has been running outdoor learning sessions enabling local children to learn about and experience their local environment, learn about peatlands and the important wildlife in the area.
- Family outdoor health and well-being sessions have been provided encouraging local families to get out into their environment and to encourage confidence in natural play.
- Projects at Craig Gwladus have also supported the local schools to use the Park for outdoor learning.
- Please also refer to Step 2.8.1 below

More detailed information with comments on performance is included within our **full suite of performance indicators**:

Performance Indicator	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2021/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 21/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 20/21 Actual
1 Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children and young people						
CP/002 - Number of full day childcare places provided	2335	2413	2339	2400	 Amber	 Amber
CP/005 - Percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools	94.02 18/19 AY	93.33 19/20 AY	91.88 20/21 AY	No target set	N/a	 Amber
CP/006 - Percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools	93.46 18/19 AY	92.01 19/20 AY	87.88 20/21 AY	No target set	N/a	 Amber
CP/007 -Percentage of pupils assessed in Welsh at the end of Foundation phase	16.63 18/19 AY	Assessments not undertaken due to Covid		15.8	N/a	N/a

CP/008 - Percentage of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language	11.40 18/19 AY	11.33 19/20 AY	12.29 20/21 AY	11.70	 Green	 Green
CP/009 - Measure 33 - Percentage of children in care who had to move 3 or more times	7.77	4.1	Data available end of 2022	8	N/a	N/a
CP/011 - Measure 24 - Percentage of child assessments completed on time	98.76	97.71	99.15	94.00	 Green	 Green
CP/013 - Percentage of young people who are NEET - Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET)	2.15	2.12	2.41	3.00	 Green	 Red
CP/014 - Percentage of 11 - 19 year olds in contact with the Youth Service	45.75	9.47	29.79	28.00	 Green	 Green
CP/018 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured: Child casualties (0 -15 years) <i>2021/22 data is for 2021 calendar year.</i>	3	0	1	No target set	N/a	N/a
CP/019 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured - Pedal cyclist casualties (All Ages) <i>2021/22 data is for 2021 calendar year</i>	0	1	0	No target set	N/a	N/a
CP/020 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured - Young Drivers (16 -24 years) <i>2021/22 data is for 2021 calendar year.</i>	1	1	0	No target set	N/a	N/a
CP/108- PAM/032 - Capped 9 score	342.09	369.00	378.00	345.00	 Green	 Green
CP/109 -PAM/044 - Number of apprenticeships on formal recognised apprenticeships schemes per 1,000 employees	6.72	8.06	15.25	8.00	 Green	 Green
CP/115 - % of children that have received the Healthy Relationship lesson to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)	New indicator for 2021/22		42.55	35.00	 Green	N/a

Case Study 1: Cam Nesa Project

Background: Cam Nesa aimed to reduce the number of 16–24 year-olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) through a flexible approach that, alongside the prioritisation of employment outcomes, involves an offer of support to individuals to access further learning, gain qualifications and participate in training. This offer helped young people to gain a supported access and progression to sustainable employment. The project was designed to complement and add value to services without duplicating them. The regional project was delivered by Pembrokeshire, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Swansea local authorities.

Through this project, our Youth Service supported 494 young people to help get access to either employment, full-time education or training. The Cam Nesa project, worked specifically with young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who were disengaged from the job market and were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Youth Workers employed by the project provided tailored support for the young people such as helping them with job searching, CV writing, interview techniques and completing job applications. Plus, they would provide advice and guidance when needed, including signposting them to specialist support services. Since the project was launched in 2018, it has supported 243 young people into employment, 58 into education or training and many different qualifications.

Whilst the Cam Nesa project has now come to an end (the project closed in August 2021), the Youth Service continue to provide support for 16 to 18 years old who are NEET through their Keeping in Touch (KIT) Team and the Youth Service was successful in gaining Community Renewal Funding (CRF) to develop their post 16 CRF Next Steps Team. The team also provides employability support to 18 to 25 year olds in partnership with Jobcentre Plus at their centres in Neath and Port Talbot.

How does this work contribute to the [5 ways of working](#) of the sustainable development principle:

- **Long-term** – the project contributed to the long term vision of the corporate plan well-being objective 1 - to improve the well-being of children and young people. The project provided opportunities for young people to develop social and life skills along with occupational skills for future employment. The project was successful in helping 243 young people gain sustained employment which often lead to further opportunities, development and an improved sense of self-worth.
- **Integration** – the project links with the corporate plan wellbeing objective 1 - to improve the well-being of children and young people, and other local delivery plans within the organisation. The Cam Nesa provision was designed to avoid duplication of services, but to enhance opportunities for young people. The project worked in partnership with local employers, work based learning providers and training providers. More information on how Well-Being Objective 1 collectively works towards achieving the 7 National Well-Being Goals is found on pages 13 & 14 above.
- **Involvement** – The Cam Nesa project worked closely with other youth service provisions where good practice was shared and adopted. Monthly performance data was shared between all concerned parties, along with stringent monitoring processes. The young people engaged with were involved in designing their bespoke pack of support and helping the youth worker find the best possible pathway for them.

- **Collaboration** – Cam Nesa was a regional partnership provision involving Careers Wales, Job Centres, Colleges, Work Based Learning Providers, Specialist Referral Agencies and local employers. All working together to help young people break down any barriers, support health, wellbeing and for them to achieve their goal.
- **Prevention** – The Cam Nesa project helped to reduce the overall not in education, employment or training (NEET) young people within our local communities. Many of the sessions and courses on offer helped young people to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Young people who engaged on the program often improved their quality of life, by gaining sustained employment.

Examples of service user positive outcomes:

- One young person who received support through the project said: “I am really grateful for his support and help that the Cam Nesa team gave me. They improved my CV, provided me with training and helped me with interview skills, all of which helped me to get the job.”
- One young persons whose long term career goal was to open her own dog grooming business and is now on the way to fulfilling this career choice. She is more than happy with the support she has received along her journey and states “if it wasn’t for Cam Nesa funding my course, I would not be where I am today. The support I have received has been amazing and I am truly thankful”.
- Another young person stated that – “I have spent 6 years in my bedroom, I never knew that other people suffered the same as me I thought I was alone with my thoughts, I wish that I had realised and took part in groups sooner,as I am really enjoying it. I can’t believe how much people open up about their issues and talk about them, it makes me feel better about myself.”
- “I am absolutely over the moon, I just want to thank you for everything you've done for me from helping me fill out forms to amending my CV, you've truly been very helpful and I'm very grateful for everything that you've done, Thank you :)”
- “Since attending sessions I have gained in confidence, I particularly enjoy the routine of meeting others in our Teams meetings. It keeps my mind in check”.
- “Thank you for all the support during my time on Universal Credit. The apprenticeship is going really well and I am enjoying it. I am now on a pathway to Level 3 Business Admin”.
- “I was unsure of what career path to go down, when I met the worker she helped me look at options and tailor my CV for different roles (which I would not have thought of). We applied for a number of apprenticeships and I feel without the support and encouragement from her I would not have been successful in my new role.”

5. Well-being Objective 2 – Progress in 2021/22

Well-being Objective 2: To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough:

“Everyone participates fully in community life – socially and economically”



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How this well-being objective contributes to the seven national well-being goals:

A prosperous Wales

A key priority is to create/facilitate quality employment opportunities for local people. Whether by leveraging the purchasing power and influence of the council’s direct activities, or through its place shaping role, growing local employment opportunities and supporting people into work is a key aspiration of the Council.

A healthier Wales

Ensuring decent, affordable housing is another key area of focus, together with work to ensure more is done to enable people affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse or at risk of on-line criminality to protect themselves. There are particular plans for supporting people with more significant health and care needs, but refocusing practice to place emphasis on promoting independence.

A Wales of cohesive communities

The importance of “community” is particularly emphasised in relation to the way the Council plans to meet the care and support needs of more vulnerable residents.

How this well-being objective contributes to the seven national well-being goals:

<p>A resilient Wales</p>	<p>There is a strong emphasis on sustainability across a number of the priority areas, both in the way we plan to house our population and in the way we seek to secure the long term viability of our communities through ensuring quality employment opportunities for local people.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales</p>	<p>There is a clear focus on work to address inequality across people of all different types of backgrounds but also a firm commitment to take a rights-based approach not just in the way the Council meets its statutory education and social services responsibilities but across all of the Council’s work.</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</p>	<p>The priorities seek to strengthen and develop the social capital of communities to ensure sustainability and resilience. This work will also ensure that the unique cultures of each community are respected, including work to extend daily use of the Welsh language and the preservation of the county borough’s rich heritage.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales</p>	<p>Procurement and regulatory activity will take proper account of the Council’s duty to act in a sustainable and responsible manner. The Council is signed up to the Ethical Supply Chains Programme. This makes a commitment to ensuring that the Council actively examines where it sources its goods and services from to ensure those arrangements are ethical.</p>

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Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough

Improvement Priority 2.1 - Local people can access sustainable, local, quality employment

GREEN

Step 2.1.1 - Support existing and new businesses to help create and sustain local employment opportunities for local people

GREEN

Step Progress:

- During the first 10 months of 2021/22, various restrictions remained in place with business sectors such as Leisure, Hospitality, Retail and Tourism continuing to be impacted. At this time, to support local businesses, the Economic Development Team processed over 320 emergency grant payments on behalf of Welsh Government to small businesses operating within these sectors. In addition, the team received over 700 requests for advice, information or financial support.
- 244 new business start-up enquires were assisted during 2021/22, marginally below our target of 250. However this was achieved despite the unfavourable economic conditions and the fact that staff resources were still being allocated to administering applications for emergency payments via the various Welsh Government grants schemes.
- The Economic Development Team are gradually returning to face-to-face contact, are continuing to deliver ‘virtual’ support and importantly, are considering new ways of supporting new business start-ups in the future.
- The Team delivered 12 ‘virtual’ enterprise events during 2021/22 providing support to local residents considering starting up their own business.

Step 2.1.2 - Maximise strategic funding available to deliver employability programmes such as Workways+, Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus and 'Kickstart' to assist economically inactive and unemployed to obtain and sustain employment.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- Participants being supported by Workways+ continued to be impacted by the pandemic with the team encouraging engagement via phone, email and text. 705 referrals were received, with 216 enrolling. 112 people were helped to progress back to work, training or volunteering which was higher than our target of 72. Under the circumstances this was a massive achievement for the team. Outcomes were affected by the pandemic specifically as the target audience for Workways are those with Work Limiting Health Conditions or a Disability. Therefore this period was a very difficult time to consider work, due the vulnerability of the individuals.
- The Communities for Work target for the number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience, full time education or sustainable employment for people aged 16-24 was significantly exceeded with 134 supported in 2021/22 against a target of 44. However, referrals were low for the age 25+ group, which was seen across Wales. For this group, 50 people were supported in NPT during the year against a target of 86.
- The Communities for Work plus programme target for the number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience, full time education, sustainable employment or those in 'work poverty' for people aged 16 plus was also significantly exceeded with 325 supported in 2021/22 against a target of 300, with 159 being supported in 2020/21
- Entries to the Kickstart programme ceased 1st March 2022 with these placements continuing into the new financial year. The support for young people to gain employment, and businesses to recruit with a financial incentive of the salary being covered for 6 months has been successful with 108 people placed with local businesses and 32 individuals being supported by the Council.
- Funded by Neath Port Talbot Council, the Workstation is a 'one stop shop' offering practical hands-on help to people who want to get into a job through training, work experience, career advice, volunteering and one-to-one employment support. By accessing Welsh Government funding, we have refurbished two previously derelict buildings to the rear of the Workstation, which now provide high quality accommodation for training and programme delivery in association with Employability.
- In addition, we have developed a bid via the Community Renewal Fund to assist people into paid work experience.

Step 2.1.3 - The Council will seek to avoid compulsory redundancies to the maximum extent possible.	GREEN
Step Progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue our commitment to minimising compulsory redundancies and ensuring employment continuity for our employees by focusing on redeployment activities, utilising the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme, which is now an open-ended scheme since 17 September 2019, and limiting the number of posts which are advertised externally. There were 3 compulsory redundancies during 2021/22 and 2 in 2020/21. 	
Step 2.1.4 - Step - Maximise employment and training opportunities for local people through community benefits and supporting new investments in the county borough	GREEN
Step Progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite onsite restrictions and staff and supply shortages throughout 2021/22, work on Council construction projects progressed well with various employment, training and work experience opportunities offered to local people. During 2021/22, we facilitated 2,844 training weeks from apprenticeship, traineeships and work experience opportunities, an increase on the 2,026 achieved for 2020/21. 	
Improvement Priority 2.2 - Local people can access quality affordable housing	AMBER
Step 2.2.1 - We will work with developers and partners to provide an adequate supply, mix, type and tenure of housing to meet the needs of the local population, including the Gypsy and Traveler community, in the right locations	AMBER

Step Progress:

- The Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) monitors the implementation of the plan's strategy and policies. The LDP makes provision for 8,760 housing units in order to deliver the 7,800 dwellings required to meet the economic-led growth strategy by 2026. The 2021 AMR (2020/21) reported that since the LDP base date of 2011, 2,357 housing units have been completed against a target of 4,956, which equates to just 48% of the cumulative target being delivered to date. Although there is sufficient land allocated in the LDP to meet the identified housing requirement, for a variety of reasons (including those that are independent of the planning system), sites are not coming forward and progressing as anticipated. In terms of affordable housing delivered through the planning system, the 2021 AMR reported that 72 affordable units had been delivered via Section 106 agreements since 2011, which equated to just 10% of the cumulative target of 722 units. The delivery of affordable housing is directly linked to broader housing delivery and the position reflects the fact that LDP allocated sites are not coming forward as originally anticipated.
- The Delivery Agreement for the Replacement LDP was approved by the Welsh Government in January 2022 and sets out a three and a half year timetable to complete the plan, with an anticipated adoption date of July 2025. A 'Call for Candidate Sites' was undertaken between 1st March and 31st May 2022, where landowners, the public and developers were invited to submit their land for inclusion in the plan for development or protection. The revised Welsh Government Development Plan Manual places more emphasis on site promoters demonstrating the viability and deliverability of sites, which should help to ensure only sites that have demonstrated a clear commitment and are viable are included within the Replacement LDP (RLDP). The levels of growth for housing required over the RLDP period (2021-2036) is currently being examined.
- The extension to Cae Garw Gypsy and Traveller Site was completed in 2016 and met the identified need up to 2022. A new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was completed in February 2022, submitted to the Welsh Government and is currently awaiting Ministerial Approval.
- 6 long term problematic properties were brought back into use by direct action by the Council. A further 7 properties have gone through the Enforced Sales Procedure process and changed ownership but have not yet been reoccupied. There were issues with obtaining essential data from other internal sources to be able to report on the percentage of empty private properties brought back into use. This will be rectified in 2022/23.

Step 2.2.2 - We will take the lead in facilitating the local strategic housing partnership to prevent homelessness more often and housing the homeless more quickly.	GREEN
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- Step Progress:**
- A Rapid Rehousing Plan is being developed to help people into permanent accommodation whilst addressing their support needs quicker.
 - We increased the number of emergency interim accommodation for homeless to meet the increasing demand.
 - Additional funding has enabled the Housing Options team to expand, and 13 new posts have been created to provide additional support to service users and also existing staff in line with the increased demand.
 - 60.7% of households were successfully prevented from becoming homeless, just above our 60% target.

Step 2.2.3 - We will target available funding to provide effective housing support for people identified as in need of additional help and support	GREEN
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- Step Progress:**
- Additional to the new posts within Housing Options (mentioned in step 2.2.2 above), a Housing Support Grant was utilised to provide targeted support from external organisations/charities, such as support for ex-offenders, mental health pan disability, substance misuse and for domestic abuse victims.
 - During the financial year 2021/22, 66 new gas central heating systems were installed into homes across the borough through the Warm Homes Fund Scheme. In total, since June 2020, there have been 108 installations of new central heating systems across the borough with a total spend over the whole scheme of £485,000.

Step 2.2.4 - We will continue to provide Disabled Facilities Grants within the limits of the funding available to the Council	AMBER
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Step Progress:
 The delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants continues to be disrupted by the effects of the pandemic. The availability of contractors and in certain cases the supply materials continued to be an issue. There has been an improvement on the time taken to deliver a Disabled

Facilities Grant, reducing from 363 days in 2020/21 to 339 days in 2021/22. However, the average number of days taken is still above the target of 270.	
Step 2.2.5 - We will develop a Housing Support Programme Strategy outlining the Council's strategic direction for housing support services	AMBER
<p>Step Progress:</p> <p>A Housing Support Programme Strategy was developed during 2021/22 and was consulted on in early 2022/23. The strategy will outline the strategic direction of the local authority for housing support services, provide a single strategic view of Neath Port Talbot's approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services, will take into account what we as a local authority will do to support the delivery of Welsh Government's visions and aims in the prevention of homelessness and further the transformational shift required in order to move to the new rapid re-housing approach. The final draft following this consultation will be considered by Cabinet in October 2022. There were delays to this work caused by the impacts of the pandemic.</p>	
Improvement Priority 2.3 - People are safe and feel safe	AMBER
Step 2.3.1 - We will make early intervention and prevention a priority to reduce the number of repeat victims and reduce the number of high risk cases (Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy)	AMBER
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Safety Team and partners have been implementing the various actions within the updated Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities' Strategy throughout 2021/22. • The Community Safety Team co-ordinated the White Ribbon Day campaign which was held on 25 November 2021. This year the campaign involved grass roots rugby clubs helping us to promote key messages about healthy relationships. The campaign was largely social media focused due to some remaining Covid-19 restrictions. 	

- Our Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) Team now work to a hybrid model, and their engagement rates remain at 73%, which is higher than previous years, despite an increase in demand into the service.
- 34.7% of incidents of domestic abuse were repeat victims, whilst still above our target of 32%, the figure has reduced on the previous two years. However, we did see a 19% increase in referrals of high risk victims to the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) service. Work continues to support those victims with more complex needs, who may need additional support, support over a longer term or who may drop out of support and later return.

Step 2.3.2 - We will support and protect people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and extremism.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The NPT Channel Panel has been developed to ensure the authority is able to support those who have been identified as vulnerable to radicalisation. This Panel is co-ordinated and supported by the Community Safety Team, and chaired by the Principal Officer for Safeguarding. The panel is well attended by various partners, with positive outcomes for those referred.
- The Community Safety Partnership works closely with South Wales Police and Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit (WECTU) to ensure referrals are appropriately assessed. Relevant low level cases are discussed at Channel, with higher risk cases being dealt with by Police. Cases discussed at Channel are then offered, where appropriate, support from a Home Office accredited intervention provider, with regular progress updates being shared. Channel Panel is accountable to the Regional CONTEST Board and Community Safety Partnership.

Step 2.3.3 - We will continue to monitor anti-social behaviour across the county borough in collaboration with our community safety partners and ensure an effective response when required

AMBER

Step Progress:

- The Paws on Patrol scheme increased its membership during 2021/22 and now has 1,300 members. Community conscious dog walkers help their local neighbourhood by being the eyes and ears of the community and report issues such as graffiti, dog fouling,

faulty street lighting, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and criminal activity. The Safer NPT Partnership believes that the thousands of dog walkers within the county borough can play an important part in keeping neighbourhoods safer and cleaner.

- Upon lifting of Covid 19 restrictions we saw an increase in ASB related incidents, particularly in our town centre areas. There was a serious concern regarding under reporting, as the picture portrayed on social media was not reflected in police or council statistics. The Community Safety Partnership continues to work hard to encourage reporting of incidents through to the right agencies. Specific sub groups have been set up to deal with particular issues of ASB, including Neath Town Centre, Port Talbot Town Centre and Briton Ferry. These meetings are well attended by relevant partners and supported by relevant Ward Councillors and Cabinet Members. The groups look at targeted action plans to address concerns, including longer term more strategic actions, where relevant.
- Neath Town Centre Partnership Group received a Safeguarding Award for the positive work carried out in Neath Town Centre.
- The Police operations continue, with regular updates fed into the partnership, to ensure the situation is monitored.
- There is ongoing engagement with local businesses and traders, with an increased focus in encouraging reports through to 101.

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Step 2.3.4 - We will work with the Area Planning Board (APB) and wider partners to implement an integrated public health model approach to providing services across the community improving responses for people who have substance use issues prioritising the reduction of drug related deaths and improving services for those who have a co-occurring condition.

AMBER

Step Progress:

- In April 2021 the APB contracted Figure 8 Consultancy to begin to develop an independent advisory panel which is to be called the Western Bay Substance Use Truth Commission (SUTC). Co-chairs have been recruited and it is planned that Commission members will be in place by August 2022. The SUTC will investigate the key causes and consequences of drug use and drug deaths for individuals and their families; and subsequently recommend robust and realistic policy and practical measures to address these.
- Alongside the work of the SUTC the APB Team will be working with commissioning partners to deliver on interim recommendations arising from the Commission as well as developing an Alliance approach to commissioning a brand new Integrated Public Health model for substance use services across the region. A resource has been agreed to take this element of the Transformation project forward.

Step 2.3.5 - We will work with our partners to implement our Road Safety Strategy

GREEN

Step Progress:

- Since restrictions gradually lifted in spring 2021, we have started to see a positive impact on our road safety delivery across all age groups. Progress in terms of delivering our planned work was on track for 2021/22. Whilst there were no targets set for Neath Port Talbot by Welsh Government for 2021, upto and including the calendar year 2020, the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on our roads has been significantly lower year on year when measured against Welsh Government targets.
- Analysis of police recorded accidents in Neath Port Talbot (all severities) show a steady decline since 2015. There were 216 recorded accidents in 2015 and 94 in 2021. Of the 94 accidents in 2021, there were 132 casualties comprising of 4 fatalities, 15 seriously injured and 113 with slight injuries. Police recorded road accident and casualty numbers were affected by the pandemic which saw restrictions on how, where and why people could travel within Wales. Whilst 2021 figures are slightly higher than 2020 due to the ongoing reduced restrictions, they remain lower than pre pandemic levels. Unfortunately we did have 4 road traffic accident fatalities during 2021, which is high for Neath Port Talbot compared to our overall annual figures. As an Authority we aspire to 'zero' deaths and will continue to ensure our delivery is consistently targeted, and relevant in both style and content as we move forward.
- In 2021/22, a full programme of Welsh Government funded motorcycle training resumed. BikeSafe, the Police led motorcycle training resumed after it was unable to be delivered in 2020/21 due to the pandemic. This year 66 motorcyclists were trained in BikeSafe, with Dragon Rider Cymru, our Enhanced Motorcycle Scheme, being delivered to 99 motorcyclists, and an increase from 51 in 2020/21. Our First Bike on Scene (FBoS) course also resumed, delivering training to 90 people this year.
- The Cycle to Work scheme was very successful in 2020 with 249 employees signing up to the scheme. The scheme was reopened in April 2021 for 7 weeks and 99 applications were completed.

<p>Step 2.3.6 - We will work with our partners to ensure those with the most complex needs are safeguarded by strengthening our vulnerable adults safeguarding arrangements.</p>	AMBER
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Services continued to respond to the pandemic and ensured that those with complex needs were prioritised, and our Local Operational Safeguarding Group met quarterly to oversee safeguarding across the council. • Work in relation to managing the Deprivation of Liberty Order (DoLO – or Community DoLs), which means a person being under constant supervision/supported in a community setting began in late 2021. Cases in the Complex Disability team who live in supported living have been identified and are now being prioritised in accordance with Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) priority guidance. This work was extended out across Adult Services more broadly to capture all those who may require a DoLO. Individual cases are being progressed through the Court of Protection to authorise care plans, secure community welfare orders and safeguarding individual’s liberty. We are also mapping out the resources needed to ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the forthcoming implementation of and compliance with the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS). We are currently reviewing the pathway processes we have in place for community DoLs, however consideration will have to be given to the change to LPS and impact on our current service structure. • Support has also been made available (which links with safeguarding) to adults who are displaying harmful behaviour. • There remains work to be done to further develop the response to harm outside the family home across Adult Services. 	
<p>Step 2.3.7 - We will regulate food premises to ensure that the food provided is fit for human consumption and the premises from which it is sold are hygienic.</p>	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of food premises that have been inspected and found to be within the legal definition of ‘broadly compliant’ with food hygiene requirements remains high at 96.6%, and therefore achieving a Food Hygiene Rating of either 3, 4, or 5 (out of 5). Less than 4% of food businesses have Ratings of 0, 1 or 2, and these premises attract additional follow up and enforcement actions. 	

- Whilst the 'broadly compliant' score remains high, the service is following a national recovery plan (devised between the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Local Authorities), to address backlogs of work following the pandemic, particularly for programmed inspections of existing and new businesses. The recovery plan extends through to 2023/24, and prioritises work with new businesses and any existing businesses in higher risk categories. This takes account of the resources which have been diverted into the local Covid-19 response (particularly to support Care Homes and the Test, Trace & Protect (TTP) service).

Step 2.3.8 - We will investigate breaches in the integrity of the food chain, from farm to fork (feed, animal health and food standards)

AMBER

Step Progress:

- All 41 (100 %) of high risk / A Rated inspections for Animal Health, food and feed have been completed. This statistic however disguises the fact that although the service has managed to inspect all high risk businesses within the period (one business is temporarily closed), inspection rates at lower risk premises has been impacted and certain aspects of Trading Standards work has been de-prioritised.
- Intelligence gathered at a local and regional level indicates that resources need to be diverted to lower risk businesses as they have been overlooked and have consequently become higher risk. This is partly due to a change in activity, but also due to the lack of an enforcement presence at the business, following the enforcement difficulties caused by the pandemic and prioritisation of resources. Allergen declaration compliance and miss-description of food are significant problems at lower risk businesses. Following the pandemic, many businesses have moved online which make them more difficult to detect, more work needs to be done in this area, but will require resources in an area that are already stretched.

Step 2.3.9 - Working with partners and protecting the public, we will investigate significant breaches of consumer fraud, product safety and age restricted sales detected proactively or reactively	AMBER
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 415 times businesses were visited, in 335 instances businesses were found to be compliant, or brought back into compliance successfully (80.72%). Despite this figure meeting the target, the statistic belies the number of outstanding breaches and investigations that need to be resolved. The service has also been through a period of significant staffing disruption including staff sickness and other demands. • Trading Standards has approached partners to share information and formulate dissemination of intelligence. This has been successful via the forum of the Community Safety Partnership. However promotion of the service has suffered as enforcement takes precedence and resources are limited. • Trading Standards has improved collaborative links within the council with the Economic Development Team in supporting business and with Waste Enforcement and Licensing in sharing intelligence. • The Trading Standards team has also begun to promote the ‘Buy with Confidence’ Trading Standards Trader Approval scheme. An officer has been appointed to approach local businesses to join the scheme, this officer is working in conjunction with the Economic Development Team and neighbouring Trading Standards Teams to promote the scheme. It is hoped that this will enable a fair-trading environment and give confidence to consumers in the services and products that they purchase from businesses in the region. 	
Step 2.3.10 - We will work with all stakeholders to deliver a safe and sustainable built environment.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ensured that all controlled building work meets the requirements of the Building Regulations to safeguard the health and safety of people in and around buildings. 	

- Due to the nature of the work we continued to deliver the service throughout 2021/22 relating to dangerous structures and building regulation applications continued as normal.
- 100% of building control 'full plan' applications were checked within 15 days.
- 99.2% of 'full plan' applications were approved first time.

Improvement Priority 2.4 - People unable to work can maximise their income

GREEN

Step 2.4.1 - People will be supported to receive the UK Government benefits they are entitled to.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- From April 2021 to the end of January 2022, our Welfare Rights Unit has supported more than 2,000 people with benefit advice, appeal representation and full casework (form completion for example) raising more than £5m in extra income for these clients. That represents an average of £2,500 per person.
- We issued two Winter Fuel payments of £100 each to over 10,000 residents.
- We processed self-isolation payments of either £500 or £750 to over 5,000 residents who suffered a loss of earnings due to the requirement to self-isolate with Covid-19.
- We administered the £750 Social Care Bonus Scheme
- We processed Housing Benefit claims in 2.73 days (average) which is in an improvement of 0.4 days on 2020/21 performance and well within our annual target. Also, accuracy rate of processing benefits was 99.98% for the year.

Step 2.4.2 - We will implement the Welsh Government’s Scheme to relieve the Council Tax burden on those with the lowest income.	GREEN
Step Progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provided c£19m in council tax support to c17,000 households and took a decision to freeze the Council element of the Council Tax bill. • We put plans in place to deliver the Welsh Government Cost of Living Support Scheme payments to c55,000 households. • Set aside £2m into a Hardship Relief Reserve and developed a scheme to assist those affected most from the cost of living crisis. • We exceeded our collection rate targets for council tax (98.01% collected) and non-domestic rates (98.9%) and both collection rates were up slightly on the previous year. 	
Step 2.4.3 - We will continue to work with Chwarae Teg to deliver our Gender Equality Action Plan, including specific actions to reduce the Council’s gender pay gap.	GREEN
Step Progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Pay Gap data is reported a year in arrears. The Council’s median gender pay gap for 2021 is 3.86%, whereas the mean is 6.59%. The median has increased slightly from 2020, when it was 3.44% (it was 3.93% in 2019). The mean has decreased as it was 7.2% in 2020. This means that the difference in women’s average hourly rate has stayed the same in 2021 as it was in 2020. Females earn 93p for every £1 earned by a male. • Whilst the rate has stayed the same, we remained on track with this work and the Council has signed up to Chwarae Teg’s Fair Play Employer Scheme for a third year to assist us with strategies to reduce our gender pay gap. Some of the work undertaken includes introducing the Hybrid Working Framework which has focussed managers on communication with their teams regarding more flexible ways of working. Managing and motivating Hybrid Teams training was rolled out and delivered in 2021/2022 and sessions on reward/recognition and constructive feedback for leaders and managers was developed and delivered in conjunction with Chwarae Teg. 	

Improvement Priority 2.5 - People who need care and support will be helped to develop their resilience, accessing support from within their community. If their needs can only be met by social services they will receive services which are personalised	GREEN
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Step 2.5.1 - We will further develop the “front door” to social services, ensuring that we provide a coherent, information, advice and assistance service	GREEN
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Step Progress:
 In March 2022 the Adult Single Point of Contact (SPOC) went live, completing assessments for social work and occupational therapy after increasing staffing within the team. This has ensured that calls are being answered live by our contact officers, those referrals are processed as a same day response by the multi-disciplinary team and residents of NPT have immediate access to information/advice/assistance. Where assessments are required these are currently being completed within 4 working days on average with the criteria being set at within 7 working days.

Step 2.5.2 - We will develop the home care and residential care provision for older people to ensure that there are enough quality placements available to meet local need	GREEN
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Step Progress:

- Weekly provider meetings took place in 2021/22 to support the care market and daily contact was maintained with providers that experienced a Covid-19 outbreak. Further support was provided to the care sector including distribution of Welsh Government Funding to support additional cost pressures arising from Covid-19 , distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and a volunteer’s register of people within the Social Services and Housing Directorate was established in order to support care providers with acute staff shortages arising from Covid-19.
- Contingency plans for services were developed to ensure continuity of care services throughout the pandemic.
- A regional Infection, Protection and Control (IP&C) nurse was employed to support care homes.

- An 11% uplift to the fees paid for residential and nursing care home placements was implemented from October 2021. This uplift supported care homes to pay staff the Real Living wage and improve other workforce terms and conditions in order to help improve the recruitment and retention of staff.
- A regional internet page was set up so that care homes would have latest Covid-19 information.

Step 2.5.3 - We will implement the Hospital 2 Home scheme to support people over 65 to return home from hospital as soon as they are well enough, allowing them to recover and receive an assessment of their longer term support needs in more familiar surroundings.

AMBER

Step Progress:

- Hospital to Home has been implemented within NPT in alignment with regional priorities. It has been rebranded as Home First. There is an additional resource to support this but recruitment has been an issue with vacancies across support worker, social worker and therapy staff.
- Between April 2021 and March 2022, 568 over 65's were supported home from hospital for assessment in a familiar environment.

Step 2.5.4 - We will further develop our progression-based model of care for people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and physical disabilities

AMBER

Step Progress:

- During 2021/22, we have identified through assessment and mapping exercises the need for a range of models of accommodation and care to meet the needs of the population. Particularly step up and step down accommodation. Mental Health is a key area for development. Models of accommodation and care that promote individual's progression opportunities.
- The successful development of Geraint's House, the first pan disability extra care scheme, where individuals have moved from specialist residential care to living in their own flats with floating support. The positive feedback from the tenants, tenant's family, the provider and professionals has reaffirmed the commitment for the need for different models of accommodation and care – one model does not fit all.

- Monthly progression and accommodation meetings were held and a range of accommodation and care work is at different stages of development or planning which includes supported living for individuals with autism, Core and Cluster Scheme for pan disability, mental health and homelessness, re-purposing of existing learning disability supported living model of accommodation for move on accommodation/progression, discussions with Registered Social Landlord of independent flats with floating support and opportunities being explored to securing land for purpose built models of accommodation.
- We are working in partnership with Children and Young People Services to ensure use of progression model of accommodation and care to include, When I am Ready for care leavers.
- There is focus on Ategi/Shared Lives placement with a need for clear progression and goal planning as part of care planning.
- We are utilising early intervention and preventative services to support care planning, meeting personal progression outcomes i.e. Bspoked, Community Independence Service.

Step 2.5.5 - We will review the services we provide for people with the most complex needs to ensure that they remain fit for purpose

GREEN

Step Progress:

- We continue to work in partnership to pilot new ideas and implement a new model of care in a planned, structure approach that aligns with the new regional funding model to accelerate transformation and embed services in a sustainable way.
- We continue to work in partnership with stakeholders to explore opportunities for trialling different approaches, ideas to achieve positive outcomes for the individuals we support.
- The completion, in 2021, of a supported living model of accommodation and care for mental health.
- The Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme (Regional approach) continues with its agenda to deliver on a shared approach for commissioning, procurement and market arrangements for meeting the needs of individuals with complex needs.
- We continue to measure outcomes for people with the most complex needs on a case by case basis and the focus remains on quality outcome assessments, care planning and reviews.

Improvement Priority 2.6 - People will be able to have their say in matters that affect them and where people need help to voice their opinions, advocacy support will be available	GREEN
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Step 2.6.1 - We will implement the Regional Joint Carers’ Strategy with our health partners and develop a local plan for carers.	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional working groups are taking forward the priorities within the West Glamorgan Regional Carers Strategy. • PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) was provided to unpaid carers via the Carers Service. • We commissioned Carers Service to provide innovative short breaks for carers, including vouchers for spa treatments, days out and gym membership. • The Council has signed up to the principles of the emergency action planning guidelines, to ensure that carers are considered in the development and implementation of emergency measures relating to Covid-19. • Use of alternative respite opportunities for carers were facilitated by the Carers Service. 	
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Step 2.6.2 - We will embed a rights-based approach for older people and disabled people across the Council and ensure that people have access to advocacy support where that is required	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <p>Where it is identified that someone requires an advocate, arrangements are made for one to be appointed. The Council has a contract in place for an advocacy service. We have adopted a rights-based approach across the service.</p>	
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Improvement Priority 2.7 - Develop a range of strategies to improve health and well-being of older people across the county borough	GREEN
Step 2.7.1 - We will produce a 'Market Position Statement' which identifies service supply, demand and gaps to improve commissioning of support to meet people's needs.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local Market Stability Report (MSR) has been developed, which will inform the Regional Market Stability Report. The MSR report was presented to the Regional Partnership Board and approved in June 2022. Section 144b of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to prepare and publish MSRs. MSRs help Local Authorities and Health Boards to be better placed to plan and commission social care services for their local and regional populations, are helpful tools for providers of regulated social care services and for people that use services, their families and unpaid carers who have an interest in the published MSRs, as they demonstrate how services are planned and offers transparency in relation to service provision. From these MSRs, officers will take forward the development of local and regional Market Position Statements (MPSs), which are documents that set out what types of services are required to meet population need now and in the future. Both the MSRs and MPSs will then be used to inform the creation of local and regional commissioning strategies. • A programme of commissioning work has been developed to take forward necessary work as identified through the market stability report. • Regular commissioning meetings with providers have taken place to discuss gaps in service and commissioning intentions. 	
Improvement Priority 2.8 - People will benefit from participation in activities in the natural environment, providing benefits for well-being and a greater appreciation for the role the natural environment plays in their lives	GREEN
Step 2.8.1 - We will make use of external funding to deliver programmes of activities in, or relating to, the natural environment, ranging from well-being focused activities, to awareness raising of the natural environment, and progression (where relevant) to volunteering and community activity.	GREEN








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Step Progress:

- In May 2021 our upgraded Active Travel route opened in Neath.
- A number of projects have secured funding to support community engagement and volunteering in the natural environment: Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project, Connecting Green Infrastructure Project and Craig Gwladus projects. These support and upskill local communities and volunteers whilst delivering positive outcomes for habitat and species. All of these projects also provide health and wellbeing focused outdoor activities as well as a range of events, educational training and schools activities.
- The Local Nature Partnership has developed a State of Nature Report for NPT (to be published in 2022) and the NPT 4 Nature Group has enabled local community groups to engage with the expertise of the wider partnership.
- Ongoing social media presence has continued to increase the awareness of NPT's natural environment.

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More detailed information with performance comments is including within our **full suite of performance indicators**:

Performance Indicator	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2021/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 21/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 20/21 Actual
2 Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the Well-being of all adults who live in the county borough						
CP/021 - Number of new business start-up enquiries assisted	273	199	244	250	 Amber	 Green
CP/025 - Number of compulsory redundancies made by the Council	9	2	3	No target set	N/a	 Red
CP/031 - Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless	51.50	66.67	60.67	60.00	 Green	 Red
CP/032 -Average calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant	196.00	363.20	339.51	270.00	 Amber	 Green

					Red	Green
CP/034 - Percentage of incidents of domestic abuse where people are repeat victims - Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service - highest risk victims	40.05	37.30	34.67	32.00	 Red	 Green
CP/019 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured - Pedal cyclist casualties (All Ages) <i>2021/22 data is for 2021 calendar year.</i>	0	1	0	No target set	N/a	N/a
CP/040 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured: Older Drivers (75 years and over) <i>2021/22 data is for 2021 calendar year.</i>	0	0	1	No target set	N/a	N/a
CP/041 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured: Motorcyclists - all Ages <i>2021/22 data is for 2021 calendar year.</i>	6	1	3	No target set	N/a	N/a
CP/042 - Percentage of food establishments that meet food hygiene standards	95.15	96.00	96.62	95.00	 Green	 Green
CP/110 - Workways + - Number of people helped back to work , training or volunteering	127	58	112	72	 Green	 Green
CP/112- PAM/013 - Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use	No data due to COVID-19			4.30	N/a	N/a
CP/116 - Communities for Work – priority 1 (age 25+): number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience or sustainable employment	N/a New	72	50	86	 Red	 Red
CP/117 - Communities for Work – Priority 3 (age 16-24): number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience, full time education or sustainable employment	N/a New	47	134	44	 Green	 Green
CP/118 - Communities for Work Plus – Programme for age 16+: number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience, sustainable employment or those who are in “in work poverty	N/a New	159	525	300	 Green	 Green
CP/119 - Benefits - Average days taken for new claims and changes of circumstances – application to assessment	2.30	3.10	2.73	6.00	 Green	 Green

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Case Study 2: NPT Warm Homes Fund

Background: The Warm Homes Fund was established by National Grid and is administered by Affordable Warmth Solutions to address some of the issues affecting fuel poor households. The scheme was facilitated by our Housing Renewal Team for the Neath Port Talbot area.

To be eligible, homeowners must:

- Not already have a gas or oil central heating system.
- Own or privately rent a home in Neath Port Talbot (private landlords will be required to pay a 25% contribution towards the cost of the works).
- Be classed as a low income household OR spend more than 10% of your household income on energy bills OR claim certain benefits OR live in a low income area as identified in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Since launching in June 2020, this scheme has provided new gas central heating systems to 108 homes in the borough. During financial year 2021/22, 66 new gas central heating systems were installed into homes across the borough worth more than £280,000, with a total spend over the whole scheme of £485,000. The scheme ended on 31st May 2022.

How does this work contribute to the [5 ways of working](#) of the sustainable development principle:

- Page 289
- **Long-term** – The Warm Homes scheme helps to ensure low income, fuel poor and vulnerable households have a manageable and efficient heating system installed into their homes thereby reducing their energy bills and helping to lift them out of fuel poverty. This is of particular importance at this time as energy costs have dramatically risen across the world and are predicted to rise significantly further by the end of 2022, putting many more households into fuel poverty. In addition, the A rated boiler carries a 7 year warranty and has an expected life span in excess of 10 years. An efficient boiler also helps to reduce CO2 emissions.
 - **Integration** – For 2021/22 this project links and contributes to delivery of the Councils Corporate Plan Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough and our improvement priority of helping people to access quality affordable housing. More information on how Well-being Objective 2 collectively works towards achieving the 7 National Well-Being Goals is found on pages 40 & 41 above.
 - **Involvement** – We work in partnership with Benefits Advice, Care and Repair, Age Connects Neath to offer a sign posting service and promoted the scheme via Food banks, press releases and community buildings across the Borough. By working closely with Warm Wales and Communitas we ensured that eligible clients were in receipt of Fuel Poverty Network Extension scheme Vouchers to assist with the cost of the gas connection to the property, in the majority of cases the voucher covered 100% of the cost of the installation. Working with National Energy Awareness(NEA) 16 Co2 and temperature monitors were installed into properties at least 3 months prior to installation of the new heating system, they remained in situ for at least 3 months post installation. The data recorded is currently being analysed by the NEA along with energy bills. The findings will assist in developing further energy efficiency projects.
 - **Collaboration** - The Housing Renewals and Adaptations Team work with a number of different agencies and funding bodies to deliver home improvements across the borough. NPT work in collaboration with Affordable Warmth Solutions who administer the scheme, and 4 local contractors who

carry out the installations using the local supply chain. We also worked with Warm Wales and Communitas to assess clients for FPNES (Fuel Poverty Network Extension Scheme) vouchers towards the cost of a gas connection to the property. We also work in partnership with Benefits Advice, Care and Repair, Age Connects Neath to offer a sign posting service and promoted the scheme via Food banks.

- **Prevention** – The warm homes scheme helps to ensure low income, fuel poor and vulnerable households have a manageable and efficient heating system installed into their homes thereby reducing their energy bills and helping to lift them out of fuel poverty, will help to improve health and wellbeing as well as reducing CO2 emissions in the environment. The scheme also provides valuable information that can assist in developing further energy efficiency projects.

Examples of Positive Outcomes:

- Households who previously burnt solid fuel will now have a more manageable heating system, and a healthier home environment especially those with respiratory problems. The scheme will help to lift households out of fuel poverty by reducing their energy bills.
- Over the duration of the project there were 108 installations which included 83 new mains gas connections undertaken.
- Assisted 52 households with occupants over the age of 60, 21 Households had children under the age of 16 living in them and 40 households were in receipt of benefits.
- An EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) analysis pre and post installation (from latest available data) shows that 20 properties increased by 3 bands, 39 properties increased by 2 bands and 42 properties increased by 1 band, just 7 properties remained unchanged. 15 Households received loft insulation top ups to the required standard.
- A Glynneath resident, who had a new gas central heating system installed, said: “My initial reaction upon reading about the Warm Home scheme was, as a working family, we would not be eligible. “It took one phone call to be informed that we may in fact be eligible. A simple form to fill in, identified that we were in fuel poverty. The process of applying was straightforward, with a helpful advisor on hand. “The installation of the gas boiler was very efficient, with minimum disruption and completed quickly.”
- A Brynamman resident who successfully applied to the Warm Homes Fund, said: “I am so pleased with the new boiler system. It is much warmer. The new central heating system is more efficient and I have saved money already.”

6. Well-being Objective 3 – Progress in 2021/22

Well-being Objective 3: To develop the local economy and environment

so that the well-being of people can be improved:

“The whole of Neath Port Talbot County Borough will be a vibrant, healthy and safe place to live, work and enjoy recreational time”



How this well-being objective contributes to the seven national well-being goals:	
prosperous Wales	The wellbeing objective sets out a range of proposed steps to create sustainable, quality employment by working both locally and regionally. A number of the proposed City Deal projects focus on low carbon technologies and creating capability to exploit the potential of digital technologies.
A healthier Wales	The priorities demonstrate a sound understanding of the determinants of well-being and the powers available to the Council to impact upon those determinants.
A Wales of cohesive communities	The priorities set out in this section, underpin the objectives for children and young people and adults in a range of ways – through ensuring connectivity, the availability of local employment, recreation opportunities, the protection of the environment and ensuring the county borough is attractive to investors.

How this well-being objective contributes to the seven national well-being goals:

<p>A resilient Wales</p>	<p>The priorities reference the important sections of our Local Development Plan which has been subject to full sustainability appraisals and shows how those policies will underpin the Council’s objectives to improve the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of its residents.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales</p>	<p>The priorities have been developed to create greater opportunity for all people to get on in life. This includes: the opportunity to obtain quality employment, safe and clean places where people can live and bring up their families and a wide range of choices to take part in cultural events</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</p>	<p>The importance of local heritage sites and the part these have to play in sustaining culture feature amongst the priorities as does the regeneration of valley communities. Working with communities features prominently as a theme in this section as in the preceding sections.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales</p>	<p>Priorities include reducing waste generated and increasing recycling, as well as taking a range of steps to protect and develop the county borough’s natural assets. The growing importance of digital and new energy technologies (e.g. “Active Buildings” solar power concept) are also incorporated into the work proposed.</p>

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**Well-being Objective 3 - To develop the local economy and environment
so that the well-being of people can be improved**

Improvement Priority 3.1 - We will provide an environment where new businesses can establish themselves and existing businesses can grow

GREEN

Step 3.1.1 - We will deliver strategic regeneration programmes

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The remediation of Harbourside is ongoing in preparation for future development.
- The refurbishment of 8 Wind Street Neath has been completed.
- We have assisted with the delivery of the Coastal development at the rear of Boots in Neath as well as the ongoing refurbishment of the former Liberal Club on Orchard Street.
- Work is nearing completion on the new leisure and retail development in Neath and the Plaza Cinema in Port Talbot was completed in Summer 2022.
- The new Technology Centre on Baglan Energy Park was completed in early 2022.
- We have completed the refurbishment of the offices at the former Crown site in Neath. The offices are now full, having been occupied by three local companies. Approximately half of the former factory is also occupied by a local company.

Step 3.1.2 - Step - We will maximise strategic funding opportunities to deliver council priorities including strategic regeneration programmes.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- We have accessed Welsh Government funding via the Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) programme, including Property Enhancement Development Grants, Sustainable Living Grants, Valleys Taskforce Grants and support for TRI Strategic Projects.

- We have also accessed Placemaking Grants via the Transforming Towns initiative, as well via the Visit Wales funding.
- We had submitted two package bids for Neath and Aberavon constituencies in application for UK Levelling Up Fund in June 2021. In October 2021 the Council was informed that both bids were unsuccessful.

Step 3.1.3 - We will deliver the Neath Port Talbot Council led Swansea Bay City Deal programmes/projects.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The regional Homes as Power Stations (HAPS) project we lead was approved by Welsh and UK Governments in July 2021 following an external Gateway Assurance review. The HAPS Project Manager took up post in November 2021 and the project has entered delivery phase.
- The Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth (SILCG) programme that we lead was approved by Welsh and UK Governments in August 2021 following an external Gateway Assurance review. The SILCG Programme Manager took up post in March 2022. The programme of projects is at various stages of delivery, the construction of the Bay Technology Centre on Baglan Energy Park (part funded by European Regional Development Funding) is complete. The Council is working with Swansea University as its delivery partner to prepare the brief for a specialist facility to decarbonise the steel and metals industry – South Wales Industrial Transition from Carbon Hub (SWITCH)
- On 30th June 2021, Cabinet approved the business case for a new regional Skills and Talent Programme led by Carmarthenshire Council aimed at delivering the skills and training requirements for all Swansea Bay City Deal projects. The Skills and Talent call for applications was launched in March 2022.

Step 3.1.4 - We will support existing and new businesses to grow the local economy and attract new investment.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- Construction continued through 2021/22 on the state of the art, self-powering technology centre building at Baglan Energy Park. The flagship, green facility, was completed in early 2022, will provide flexible office space for start-up companies and growing local businesses with a focus on (but not exclusively) the Research and Development and Innovation sectors.
- In spite of Covid-19 challenges, the Economic Development Team supported 36 growth, investment and diversification projects from existing local manufacturing companies. Examples include businesses expanding manufacturing space from 25,000 to 90,000 sq. ft., 10,000 to 25,000 sq. ft. and from 25,000 to 150,000 sq. ft. These expansions have helped create and/or safeguard more than 200 jobs. In addition, further projects are being supported with the potential of creating/safeguarding a further 400 to 500 jobs.
- Throughout 2021/22, the Economic Development Team worked on 39 potential inward investment enquiries to attract further investment into the area. These enquiries were mainly from manufacturing companies based outside of Neath Port Talbot looking to set up in the area and innovation spin outs linked to academia. Enquiries were for office and lab set up ranging from 20,000 to 90,000 sq. ft. In particular, enquiries were received from a range of sectors including medical and life sciences, innovative R&D businesses, manufacturing companies linked to low carbon and others linked to wider developments such as the Global Rail Centre of Excellence.
- To support growth and diversification opportunities, a Community Renewal Bid is being developed to support Innovation within our Manufacturing/Engineering sector through the provision of 1-1 diagnostic reviews and the setting up of a Business Forum to encourage collaboration; networking; the exchange of ideas; inform businesses of relevant support and link businesses with trade/professional bodies and industry related organisations.
- Work has been ongoing around the new "Front and Centre" NPT place brand to develop a new "Invest in NPT" website to help attract new investment and support local businesses looking to invest in grow within key sectors, i.e. manufacturing; renewable energy; tech; medical/pharmaceutical.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021/22, 410 jobs had been created or safeguarded as a result of direct financial support by the Economic Development Team, well above the set target of 280. This was achieved despite ongoing economic uncertainties and the difficulties that many of our local businesses have faced over the past two years. • Work commenced on developing a bid for Community Renewal Funding to help improve digital competency across all business sectors. • Work is progressed on the development of an Economic Recovery Plan for NPT to help focus on protecting jobs, businesses and incomes as we emerge from the pandemic and to help plan for growth over the longer term. 	
<p>Step 3.1.5 - We will identify supply chain opportunities for local companies within major developments in the county borough</p>	AMBER
<p>Step Progress: Despite onsite restrictions and staff and supply shortages throughout 2021/22, construction projects have started to gain momentum. However, with many companies' still experiencing recruitment and supply chain issues and material shortages; the Economic Development Team were still able to identify supply chain opportunities for local businesses with 36% of contracts awarded to local companies, which is a satisfactory output for 2021/22.</p>	
<p>Improvement Priority 3.2 - We will work with communities to increase reuse, recycling and composting</p>	AMBER
<p>Step 3.2.1 - We will review and refine our waste management strategy in the context of delivering against statutory targets.</p>	AMBER
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021/22 we continued to implement actions agreed as part of the last Waste Strategy review. The one item outstanding for implementation, is the piloting of 'nappy' collections due to commence in 2022/23. 	

- We experienced a slight drop in ‘recycling’ performance in 2021/22, along with 12 other Councils, however at 66% we still exceeded the current statutory target of 64%.
- The next review of our Waste Strategy is due to take place in the autumn of 2022 to put in place any required actions needed to deliver the 70% target by 2024/25 and avoid any financial penalties for falling short.
- In addition, we saw a reduction (improvement) in the amount of waste generated per person from 209.7 tonnes in 2020/21 to 204.37 tonnes in 2021/22 and a slight improvement in cleanliness of our streets from 90.98% in 2020/21 to 92.85% in 2021/22.
- The average days to clear fly tipping increased from 2.84 in 2020/21 to 4.52 days in 2021/22. This was mainly due to redeployment of some staff into Waste Services to support with impacts of the pandemic along with general staff resource issues also due to the pandemic.

Improvement Priority 3.3 - Local people and visitors can access good quality leisure and community facilities, country parks and countryside	AMBER
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Step 3.3.1 - We will identify tourism investment opportunities for both the private and public sector	AMBER
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Step Progress:

- 10 existing tourism providers have been assisted with queries ranging from compliance with Covid-19 guidance, to proposals to expand current accommodation provision (including serviced accommodation and camping provision). A further 2 new and 5 proposed tourism providers (including accommodation and activities/ attractions) have been supported during 2021/2022.
- The Tourism Team secured £120,000 funding through Visit Wales’ Brilliant Basics Scheme to create a fully accessible changing place at the Aberavon Seafront Aquasplash, refurbish the existing public toilet provision and improve access pathways. The new changing place facility will widen access to Aberavon Seafront for visitor groups with access needs.
- Overall there has been a reduction in tourism sector businesses seeking assistance during 2021/2022 as the sector was subject to ongoing restrictions during 2021/2022 and continues to work towards recovery from the pandemic.

Step 3.3.2 - We will work with partners to refurbish, repair and maintain locally important buildings and structures.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Wind Street in Neath has been refurbished and the Plaza Cinema in Port Talbot redevelopment work was completed in the summer of 2022, both of which are Listed Buildings. • Renovation works to the Turbine House in Margam Park have been completed, and renovation works to the Castle are ongoing. • We have secured £250,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to prepare a Heritage Strategy for the Borough to ensure the protection and sustainability of our built and natural heritage. 	
Step 3.3.3 - We will develop and promote the local tourism sector	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tourism Team launched a new destination marketing campaign and website in September 2021. The Dramatic Heart of Wales campaign is aimed at attracting visitors to the area for overnight stays. More than 20 tourism businesses in Neath Port Talbot are involved in the campaign and have brought together experiences which provide inspiration to travellers considering a break in the area. The operators range from hotels and holiday cottages through to adventure sport providers and historical properties. The campaign has met all targets set to date. • 10 existing tourism providers and 2 new and 5 proposed tourism providers were supported during 2021/22. • A new Splash Pad in Aberavon has replaced the old paddling pool and there are new water fountains, jets and waterfalls, spread over a central play area. In addition, the Tourism Team secured £120,000 funding through Visit Wales' Brilliant Basics Scheme to create a fully accessible changing place at the Aberavon Seafront Aquasplash, refurbish the existing public toilet provision and improve access pathways. 	

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Step 3.3.4 - We will develop the service models that support our leisure services, theatres and parks so that new income streams support their operation and they are less dependent on subsidy from the Council.	AMBER
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On February 1st, 2022, Cabinet Members agreed to bring leisure services back under the council’s management (in-house). Following the Cabinet decision, council officers will now work with Celtic Leisure to facilitate an in-house leisure service and undertake the necessary consultation work. • Margam Park visitor figures continue to grow, showing an increase of over 50,000 visitors from 244,491 (2016) to 298,008 in 2021, on the back of COVID restrictions and public confidence. Despite two commercial facilities being closed due to the pandemic (the Orangery which was used as a mass vaccination centre for the Covid-19 vaccination programme along with the gift shop closed due to Covid- 19 guidelines and essential building maintenance), the park managed to operate under budget in 2021/22. The Orangery has now fully reopened and has over 90 weddings booked for 2022/23 up from 62 in 2020/21 (prior to the pandemic).The gift shop repairs are now complete and it reopened in July 2022. In addition recent investments in the Orangery, Charlottes Pantry and the children’s play facility has allowed the park to maximise income opportunities which will continue in future years. • The delivery of a new electric vehicle will mean the invaluable Home Library Service can be delivered to more people than ever before. The new electric vehicle will be more reliable, require less maintenance and provide more flexibility. The Home Library Service delivers books and information to residents who have difficulty, or who are unable to visit their local library. • The number of visits to libraries, theatres and leisure centres continues to be impacted by the pandemic. Whilst numbers have increased on 2020/21, they are still below pre pandemic levels. Library closures during the pandemic resulted in enhancing all aspects of the digital offer. As a result digital downloads of eBooks and eAudio books have increased by 100%. 	
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Step 3.3.5 - We will develop the offer of our theatres to attract a wide range of acts and performances.	AMBER
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <p>Whilst the pandemic closed the theatres for 2020/21 and half of 2021/22 the development of the offer at our theatres, continues to be revised and monitored to attract a wide range of acts and performances.</p>	
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Improvement Priority 3.4 - To identify and develop opportunities for sustainable economic growth in our valley communities across the county borough improving the health and well-being of our communities	GREEN
Step 3.4.1 - We will work with developers and partners to deliver key strategic development sites along the coastal corridor (including Coed Darcy, Port Talbot Harbourside, Baglan Energy Park and Swansea University Innovation Campus) and to deliver sustainable growth in the valley areas.	AMBER
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coed Darcy Urban Village – St Modwen Developments Ltd has submitted an application for outline planning for a mixed use development with all matters reserved except for strategic access. This application is currently under consideration. The Council and the developer will therefore continue to work together on discussions about development phasing, the overarching masterplan and the Section 106 Legal Agreement for the provision of necessary infrastructure and amenities. • Redevelopment of Baglan Bay is a long term aspiration that is likely to take several years to deliver, with areas within the allocation potentially suitable to facilitate the growth in the knowledge based economy. The increase in research and development facilities in smaller units at the Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus and at Harbourside will potentially need larger units, as these sites continue to develop, and therefore Baglan Bay provides adequate space and infrastructure to allow for their expansion. The site benefits from enterprise zone status helping to encourage investment to the area. • Within the Harbourside Strategic Redevelopment Area work is progressing to address flooding issues and prepare sites for development to facilitate realisation of the proposals for mixed use redevelopment of the area. Parallel work in respect of the Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone will feed into realising aspirations for this area. • Outline planning application for the Wildfox Resort (Afan Valley) – Outline planning permission was granted (subject to a Section 106 legal agreement) on 18th January 2022. The Authority is currently engaging in pre-application discussions as a precursor to the submission of reserved matters applications, and discharge of conditions for determination by October 2022. Site investigations and preparatory works are currently taking place on site to inform these applications. • Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) received outline planning permission on 21st July 2021. Ongoing pre-application discussions are taking place with the Authority for the discharge of conditions, and submission of Phase 1 of the development this year. This 	

<p>development, on a former opencast site has the potential to provide regeneration and employment opportunities, together with spin off benefits to the wider region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) ‘Call for Candidate Sites’ (1st March 2022 to 31st May 2022), meetings were held with landowners of all the above sites to discuss the aspirations for the sites and the information they would be required to provide in order for the sites to be considered for allocation in the RLDP. • We are further developing the Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth programme business case. • 712 of 819 (87%) of all planning applications were determined within time for 2021/22. Target for 2021/22 was 95%. 	
<p>Step 3.4.2 - We will promote and protect a diverse portfolio of employment land and employment opportunities in the right places.</p>	GREEN
<p>Step Progress: Working with Swansea Council we have jointly appointed consultants (Turley) to undertake a Housing and Economic Growth Assessment to inform the emerging Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This is a key piece of evidence which will set out the scale, location and amount of growth that will take place in the County Borough over the plan period (15 years, from 2021-2036) and will inform the Employment Allocations and Policies within the RLDP.</p>	
<p>Step 3.4.3 - Develop a prioritised programme of initiatives to deliver economic growth in our valley communities</p>	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2021/22 we supported 50 valley businesses. • The ‘Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE)’ at the head of the Dulais and Tawe Valleys received outline planning permission on 21st July 2021. 	

- Our Economic Recovery Plan has been adopted, which will provide focus on our valleys' communities, i.e. the Economic Development team started work on identifying key business support partners to develop a collaborative approach to supporting businesses within the foundational economy to help bring greater economic benefits to our valley communities.
- A study has been commissioned to develop Regeneration Strategies for our secondary and tertiary town centres which are predominantly located in the Valleys.
- We are developing a Levelling Up Fund bid as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda for the Neath Valley centred around culture, heritage and tourism attractions.

Step 3.4.4 - Identify and secure funding to deliver the prioritised programme of initiatives in our valley communities

GREEN

Step Progress:

- We are developing a Levelling Up Fund bid as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda for the Neath Valley centred around culture, heritage and tourism attractions.
- We continue to access Welsh Government funding via the Targeted Regeneration Investment and Transforming Towns Programmes, as well as utilising our Commercial Property Grants to deliver regeneration projects in our Valleys' communities.
- The Economic Development Team are developing specific Action Plans to deliver targeted business support interventions and assist in the delivery of the Neath Port Talbot Economic Development Recovery Plan. The team are also considering various funding opportunities such as the Shared Prosperity Fund and contacting key partners to work collaboratively within each community on the delivery of interventions.

Improvement Priority 3.5 - To protect, conserve and enhance our natural environment (including green and blue infrastructure, important landscapes and countryside, habitats and species and wider ecosystem resilience) increasing awareness of its value and encouraging wider participation	GREEN
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Step 3.5.1 - All council services will work together to deliver the Biodiversity Duty Plan.	AMBER
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Step Progress:

- The Biodiversity Duty Plan (BDP) was reviewed and an updated version produced and approved in November 2021. The BDP was prepared in consultation with departments across the Council and identifies actions already being undertaken and further actions that will be undertaken. The variety of actions ensure a more joined-up approach between services so that the Council delivers what is required.
- The audit of council owned land (one of the actions) is currently progressing well, and the audit of services is progressing but is behind schedule partly due to Covid-19 and partly due to staff capacity issues. The Council’s Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process also includes an element on biodiversity, thereby ensuring the impact of strategies, projects and policies are all suitably assessed.
- A new ‘bee friendly’ approach to managing our verges and grasslands was adopted by the council’s Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board in July 2021. It will see a big increase in wildflower species and the insects such as bees which pollinate them in support of our Biodiversity Duty Plan and the NPT Nature Recovery Action Plan.
- There are 51 biodiversity rich areas protected and/or enhanced. The list of nature conservation sites, which includes Local Nature Reserves, areas that are currently being worked on under grant funded projects and sites under the NPT Bee Friendly scheme.
- The extent of land under council ownership or control that is protected and/or under appropriate management for biodiversity has reduced in hectares from 179.4 to 161.1. The Working with Nature sites were removed due to the Welsh Government grant coming to an end and a delay to a new grant starting. Additional sites were added as part of the NPT Bee Friendly scheme. The extent of land managed length (Km) which primarily consists of verges has increased slightly from 22.79 Km to 23.12 Km.

Step 3.5.2 - We will use our statutory powers to challenge unacceptable levels of pollution	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the summer of 2021, we began a pioneering air quality monitoring project aimed at providing accurate “real time” measurement of pollution so solutions for greener, healthier communities can be found. The project, the first of its kind in Wales, is a pilot study testing the concept of localised air pollution monitoring and is part of the Swansea Bay City Deal programme and is delivered as part of our Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy (DARE) Strategy. • Air quality monitoring continues to be carried out throughout NPT. The Port Talbot/Taibach area continues to be declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). One of our Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators measures the number of PM₁₀ breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot / Taibach). Our annual target for the number of days that we exceed the PM₁₀ pollution limit has been set at 35 days. There were 27 exceedances during 2021/22. • No risk assessments were undertaken on private water supplies during 2021/22 due to work pressures and due to Covid-19 restrictions, however, alternative means of intervention is undertaken in accordance with instruction from the Drinking Water Inspectorate. 	
Step 3.5.3 - We will work and engage with local communities and wider partners to deliver a programme of activities that supports the involvement of local people in looking after their natural environment.	GREEN
<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of projects have secured funding (please see step 3.5.4 below) to support community engagement and volunteering in the local environment: Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project, Connecting Green Infrastructure Project and Craig Gwladus projects. These support and upskill local communities to look after their local biodiversity and environment. There are currently 48 environmental volunteers working with these projects. • A new group called ‘NPT 4 Nature’ has been set up by the Local Nature Partnership and facilitated by the Countryside and Wildlife Team. This group aims to facilitate, engage and support community groups. It provides a route for such groups to access support, 	

expertise and advice ensuring volunteer action is focussed in the most productive and suitable way whilst supporting the local natural environment.

Step 3.5.4 - We will make best use of external funding opportunities to add value to existing services, increasing our capacity to deliver long-term, landscape scale projects for the benefit of the natural environment and residents.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The Lost Peatlands of South Wales Partnership Project was awarded £1.56 million by National Lottery Heritage Fund and works have started to restore peatlands and other upland habitats alongside engaging communities, in the upper Afan Valley and into Rhondda Cynon Taf. Please see the Lost Peatlands case study on pages 90 – 92 below.
- Welsh Government funding under the Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing funding scheme was finally confirmed for the Connecting Green Infrastructure (SW Wales) Project and work has started. Site management and volunteering has restarted on many sites, including Local Nature Reserves, and new innovative GI proposals have begun to be developed. This fund also provided a small grants scheme for local community groups.
- Projects to improve Craig Gwladus Country Park and engage communities and volunteers with their environment and heritage have continued and further funding has been secured from National Lottery Heritage Fund to undertake further project work.
- Through green recovery funding a number of wildlife towers have been constructed, at the Gnoll Country Park and at Bryn Tip Local nature reserve, with owl and bat use already evident within a couple of months, these have been a huge success.
- Through the Welsh Government ‘Local Places for Nature’ Funding, a number of projects to improve the biodiversity value of sites have been delivered. Projects include the creation of new ‘stepping stone’ nature reserves at Vivian Park and Wood Street.
- Local Nature Partnership Cymru funding also enabled the facilitation and support of the NPT Nature Partnership, including the development of the NPT State of Nature Report (to be published in 2022) and provided a small grants scheme for local community groups.
- Welsh Government Access Improvement Grants have also supported access improvements to our Public rights of Way such as :
 - New Footpath - Glynneath (Earlsfield Close) – Installed new public right of way with structures;
 - New Footpath - Godre’r Graig (Hodgsons Road) – Installed new public right of way with concrete steps w/handrails;

- Footpath 16 Cilybebyll – Project to replace a number of stiles with Kissing gates;
- Footpath 223 Llanguicke – Project to improve the existing surface of the path;
- A number of bridges were also replaced together with other smaller improvement projects carried out.

Step 3.5.5 - We will work to improve the natural environment, including enhancing green infrastructure for the benefits of rural and urban communities.

GREEN

Step Progress:

As per detail in Step 3.5.4 above

Improvement Priority 3.6 - To deliver a positive contribution to the regional planning agenda

GREEN

Step 3.6.1 - We will work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to scope and deliver a Strategic Development Plan which aligns with the requirements of Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The Local Government and Elections Act provides the legal framework for regional collaboration through the creation of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) and requires the preparation of Strategic Development Plans (SDPs). Discussions between the constituent local planning authorities across the region have continued to determine how the preparation of a SDP should progress, including consideration of the governance arrangements, the resources available (staff/finance), and the timing of plan preparation.
- Work has continued in respect of supporting and contributing to the regional agenda. Discussions between Heads of Service and Policy Officers have taken place on a regular basis to establish the future role of authorities, the scope of work required in any future SDP and the potential for future collaboration initiatives and studies.
- We have recently commissioned a number of studies with our neighbouring authorities. These studies include – a Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA) Stage 1 with the South West Wales (SWW) region; a Housing and Economic Growth Study, a joint Local Housing Market Assessment and a refinement of the SWW National Growth Area (NGA) will provide the evidence base for the

<p>RLDP and will provide potential methodologies and evidence for future SDPs. We continue to build upon good working relationships with neighbouring authorities and share best practice.</p>	
<p>Step 3.6.2 - We will work with our partners to develop a well-being assessment to analyse the strengths, assets, challenges and opportunities in our communities to inform the next Well-being Plan.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>Step Progress: The Public Services Board (PSB) has completed its second local assessment of well-being. Public consultation has taken place and the final assessment was agreed by the PSB on 19th July 2022 : nptwellbeing.wales – Well-Being-Assessment. The next steps will be to agree well-objectives and develop the detail of the well-being plan which is due to be published May 2023.</p>	
<p>Improvement Priority 3.7 - To promote and deliver sustainable accessibility and improve connectivity and communication links</p>	
<p>Step 3.7.1 - We will work with developers and partners to improve accessibility to public transport and active travel; along with enhanced public transport services and connectivity of different modes across the county borough and wider City Region through the delivery of key transport infrastructure</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>Step Progress: In 2021/22 Neath Port Talbot was awarded £721,000 core funding in addition to £195,000 for active travel design work, minor improvement works, land negotiations and promotion of schemes. Works during 2021/22 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewal of our Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) in compliance with the Active Travel Act. The revised map was approved by Welsh Government in August 2022. • Following the closure of Newbridge Road bridge an alternative route has been investigated to link the community of Sandfields with the National Cycle Network. To construct the route it would be necessary to purchase land in private ownership. Despite continued attempts, unfortunately we have been unable to secure the land required. We have, however, been successful in securing funding in 	

2022/23 to undertake a feasibility study into the reopening of the existing Newbridge road bridge for active travel and are proposing to submit an application for Levelling up Funding to UK Government.

- The speed limit on the B4432 near the improved active travel route between Neath and Tonna was reduced to 20mph; with physical measures installed to slow traffic making crossing safer for users of the active travel route.
- Barriers on active travel routes can cause considerable inconvenience to users and in some cases can cause cyclists to dismount or even exclude some users. The majority of the complaints received by NPT relating to active travel routes are due to access control measures either preventing access or causing users to dismount. In 2021/2022, 16 barriers were removed/replaced
- 11 active travel junctions were improved in 2021/2022.
- Cycle and seating - 8 seats and storage for 20 bikes were installed.
- An extensive exercise of monitoring was undertaken in 2021/22 to capture base data on the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists and the speed and volume of traffic adjacent to active travel routes. In addition, data has been captured to demonstrate an increase in usage on recently completed active travel routes.
- An exercise has been undertaken to create a brand for Active Travel in NPT along with updating NPT's active travel webpage. The new webpage will be launched with the new ATNM once approved by Welsh Government.
- Unfortunately due to a lack of resources, a planned scheme at Afan Argoed was unable to be delivered.
- Design has been completed on 3 active travel routes and feasibility studies have been undertaken on 14 routes identified on NPT's ATNM.
- A feasibility study has been undertaken into improving active travel links to Baglan railway station.

See also step 3.7.2 below

<p>Step 3.7.2 - We will endeavour to maintain and expand the current work with partner organisations to improve the transport network and explore and develop alternative transport solutions where conventional transport bus services are no longer sustainable.</p>	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is still ongoing with Welsh Government (WG) and Transport for Wales (TfW) on the strategic bus network review. Moving forward Corporate Joint Committees will be working with the region on developing the local bus network. City and County of Swansea has been identified as the lead authority for the region on transport. The following projects are currently being explored with WG and TfW: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ TfW have consultants looking at the feasibility and impact of a through bus service from Ystradgynlais to Mumbles. ➢ Hydrogen Bus Project - WG are looking at the feasibility of introducing Hydrogen Buses on some of the strategic bus network. • WG are consulting on legislative reform: One network, one timetable, one ticket: planning buses as a public service for Wales. Some of the proposal include requiring the franchising of bus services across Wales, allowing local authorities to create new municipal bus companies and relaxing restrictions on existing municipal bus companies to put them on the same footing as new ones. • We further improved the condition of A roads, B roads and C roads and achieved targets for all three road categories. 	
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<p>Improvement Priority 3.8 - We will work with partners to improve connectivity and infrastructure across the county borough</p>	GREEN
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<p>Step 3.8.1 - We will work with partners to improve digital infrastructure and connectivity throughout the county borough.</p>	GREEN
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<p>Step Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We secured funding from Welsh Government for the development of fibre infrastructure for Mardon Park on Baglan Energy Park, to help address a clear need and demand in relation to connectivity, from local businesses within this key strategic business location. This would now provide full digital connectivity into the business location which services approximately 36 businesses linked to approximately 200 jobs and provides connectivity to future planned units of approx. 40,000 sq. ft., although there has been some external factors that have impacted this work and delayed some progress. 	
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- We worked to support the Swansea Bay City Region on the wider digital connectivity issues and opportunities to benefit the area and bring forward further connectivity.
- We worked with other external infrastructure providers to facilitate the development and roll out of infrastructure provision with the NPT area such as the full fibre to the premises (FFTP) provision e.g. Open Reach and BT.
- We will continue to engage with Welsh Government to ensure connectivity comes forward in the NPT area.
- We liaised with The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) to highlight the issues in relation to digital connectivity in the NPT area.

Step 3.8.2 - We will help promote the Welsh Government's Superfast Broadband Cymru Programme.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- The Economic Development Team actively supports the delivery of the Welsh Government's Superfast Broadband Cymru Programme by continually working in collaboration to promote the scheme to local businesses. Throughout 2021/22, 253 local businesses received support via the Superfast programme.
- Deliverers of Superfast worked closely with NPT to develop a Community Renewal Fund (CRF) bid to provide additional digital support to local businesses. The aim of this project was to work alongside the Superfast programme to complement and not duplicate its delivery. The CRF bid was approved by Welsh Government in December 2021, and following a procurement exercise, delivery of the project commenced in March 2022. Superfast continue to work in partnership with us to deliver this project which aims to provide support to ensure local businesses have the right skills and technologies to capitalise on growth opportunities post-Covid and take advantage of an increasingly green, digital and flexible economy.

Step 3.8.3 - We will support the third sector to enable more people to access on-line services.	GREEN
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Step Progress:
Prior to the pandemic a number of community organisations had set up practical digital inclusion sessions, where volunteers were identified and trained to become Digital Champions. Weekly sessions were then set up in communities to support residents to access the internet and gain the digital skills needed to access digital services. As communities begin to open up we continue to work in partnership with Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) and Digital Communities Wales (DCW) to identify suitable volunteers and provide them with the training to restart this initiative. Also expand this initiative to more community groups, offering help and support and community based learning based on individual’s needs. During 2021/22 we:

- Continued to keep in touch with community organisations throughout Neath Port Talbot keeping them up to date on any training opportunities and offering support where needed.
- Continued to be an active member of the community safety panel with members from other organisation including South Wales Police, Trading Standards, DCW, CVS.
- Attended meetings with the Safe and Well Partnership offering support.
- Continued to share good practice and exchange information with 3rd sector organisations and delivered digital inclusion sessions to community groups on how to access digital services and how to keep safe online.

Step 3.8.4 - We will promote the importance of having effective digital strategies, including measures to address digital exclusion, to Public Services Board (PSB) partners	AMBER
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Step Progress:
Through the work of the Digital Inclusion Steering Group, all Public Services Board (PSB) partners made a formal commitment to working towards the digital inclusion charter principles so that the need to cater for digitally excluded people is reflected in agency digital strategies and agency equality plans. The legacy of this group provided a network for partners to continue to support and learn from each other whilst also embedding digital inclusion into the terms of reference of all other work initiated by the PSB.

There have been changes to service delivery as result of the pandemic that have proved more efficient and cost effective and these lessons learned will inform future provision. The next phase of work in this area will look at infrastructure and the availability and affordability of high speed broadband.

Improvement Priority 3.9 - We will introduce a series of interventions and improvement measures across the county borough to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits and opportunities provided by the decarbonisation agenda

GREEN

Step 3.9.1 - We will take a coordinated approach across the Council to introduce a variety of measures to reduce the Council's own carbon footprint whilst carrying out its functions.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- In September 2021, Members approved development of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points and Photovoltaic Solar Panels at the Quays to support our EV fleet transition plan and development of an EV charging policy for staff to utilise this service.
- Street lighting column replacement work in Neath Town Centre associated with the ongoing low energy lamp replacement work was carried out in March 2022.
- In the summer of 2021, we began a pioneering air quality monitoring project aimed at providing accurate “real time” measurement of pollution so solutions for greener, healthier communities can be found. The project, the first of its kind in Wales, is a pilot study testing the concept of localised air pollution monitoring and is part of the Swansea Bay City Deal programme and is delivered as part of our Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy (DARE) Strategy.
- The Economic Development team were successful in securing funding from Welsh Government to undertake a feasibility study on developing a Clean Growth Hub in Neath Port Talbot and to undertake work to map out key academic innovation assets and low carbon activity, e.g. Gas Turbine Research Centre, Hydrogen Research Centre, South Wales Industrial Cluster, Solar Heat Energy Demonstrator (SHED), Project Flexis, Reducing Industrial Carbon Emissions (RICE), etc. This work will be used to evidence future funding bids and to inform the development of Action Plans to support the delivery of the Economic Development Recovery Plan.
- Through the progression of Green Infrastructure (GI) approaches, connecting green infrastructure project as well as the Biodiversity Duty Plan (BDP) a move towards more green and therefore carbon reducing approaches is currently progressing. The BDP audit has

started and will encourage greener ways of working and the GI project has already started to look at potential options to improve public buildings and infrastructure through introduction of GI. Workshops have also already been arranged to provide assistance to internal staff and Public Services Board organisations.

Step 3.9.2 - To raise awareness and promote and facilitate a decarbonised economy, we will work with the public, our partners and local businesses to share good practice and encourage actions.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- We secured funding from the Community Renewal Fund in February 2022 to deliver an eight month pilot project to support innovative local businesses within the Manufacturing, Engineering, ICT, Med Tech, Renewables and other growing business sectors by providing a platform for them to discuss future challenges, opportunities and shared examples of good practice in relation to the decarbonisation agenda.
- On March 2022, we established a Business Forum, delivered two events and developed a delivery programme for the duration of the project. 25 businesses attended the first two events at which they received information and links to professional bodies and presentations from experts involved in research and innovation within the renewable energy sector. The events also focused on new developments in the region that utilise emerging technology and renewables that provide growth opportunities, i.e. Associated British Ports “Future Vision for Port Talbot Docks”.
- A workshop on Green Infrastructure (GI) for Public Services Board partners has been arranged to help to share ideas and good practice on GI.

Step 3.9.3 - We will work to facilitate and deliver natural carbon sequestration through the sustainable management of our natural resources such as peat and specific projects and initiatives.

GREEN

Step Progress:

- Work to restore peatlands has started within the Upper Afan and Rhondda Valleys as part of the 4 year National Lottery Heritage Funded Lost Peatlands Project. Overall the peatlands in the project area will store around 350,000 Tonnes of Carbon which is equivalent of 5,291,268 trees being planted and grown for 10 years.

- Through the Connecting Green Infrastructure Project investigations are ongoing in relation to planting trees in areas of high demand (i.e. low tree canopy cover) especially in Sandfields and Aberavon.

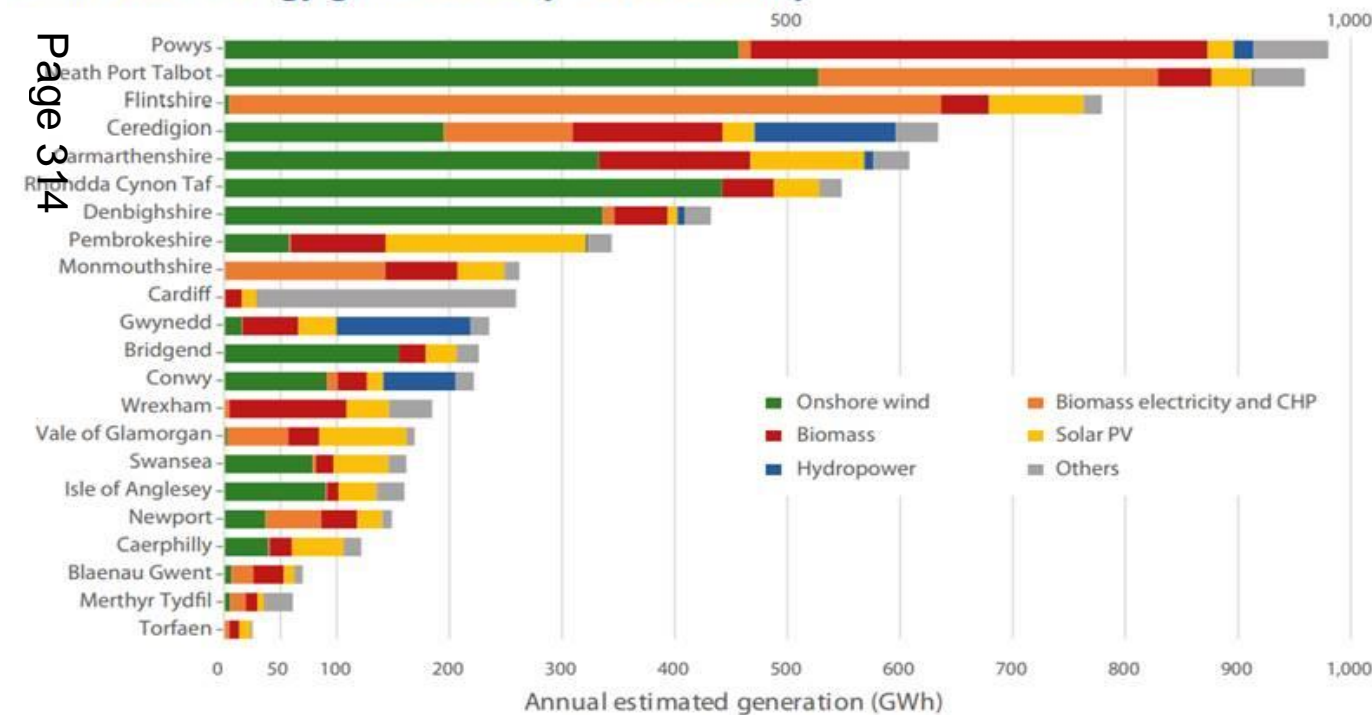
Step 3.9.4 - We will work to address any barriers to the development of renewable energy across the county borough and promote the sustainable and appropriate use of renewable resources.

GREEN

Step Progress:

Welsh Government (2019) data (latest available) below shows NPT Council leading the way in conjunction with Powys Council.

Renewable energy generation by local authority










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There has been clear demonstration of the effective promotion of sustainable and the appropriate use of renewable resource and technologies via our [DARE Strategy](#) and supportive programmes such as the City Deal Homes as Power Stations, supporting Innovation and low Carbon Growth and the 21st Century Schools Programme etc. This is an iterative process and it will evolve continually. We will continue to work to address barriers so that we can build on the progress already made.

In addition, there is the need for relevant officers within Property and Regeneration and Planning Departments to meet and review and identify further actions and activity for further increasing renewable energy generation across the county borough and stimulating promotion of renewable resources.

Well-being Objective 3 Key Performance Indicators:

More detailed information with performance comments is including within our **full suite of performance indicators**:

Performance Indicator	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2021/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 21/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 20/201 Actual
3 Well-being Objective 3 - To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved						
CP/063 - The number of jobs created/safeguarded as a result of financial support by the local authority	610	470	410	280	 Green	 Red
CP/067- Percentage of waste, reused, recycled or composted	61.74	67.56	66.00 Provisional data	64.00	 Green	 Amber
CP/068 -Kilograms of residual waste generated per person	182.02	209.7	204.37	No target set	N/a	 Green
CP/069 -Percentage of streets that are clean	93.86	90.98	92.85	91.00	 Green	 Green

CP/070 -Average number of days to clear fly-tipping	2.97	2.84	4.52	2.84	 Red	 Red
CP/072 - Number of visits to our theatres	217,161 9 months data due to COVID- 19	No data due to COVID-19	105,647	No target set due to Covid-19	N/a	N/a
CP/073 -Percentage of quality Indicators achieved by the Library Service	72.2%	Data not published due to Covid			N/a	N/a
CP/074 - Number of visits to leisure centres per 1,000 population	7,758 9 months data	No data due to COVID-19	4,810		N/a	N/a
CP/078 - Number of PM10 breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot / Talbach)	7	16	27	35	 Green	 Red
CP/083 - Percentage of A roads in poor condition	4.99	3.38	2.55	5.00	 Green	 Green
CP/084 - Percentage of B roads in poor condition	2.84	2.40	1.87	5.00	 Green	 Green
CP/085 - Percentage of C roads in poor condition	5.68	4.78	4.17	10.00	 Green	 Green
CP/113- Percentage of all planning applications determined in time	97.44	95.4	86.94	95.00	 Red	 Red
CP/120 - Extent of land under Council ownership or control that is protected and/or under appropriate management for biodiversity: Part A: Area (hectares)	179.39	179.39	160.65	179.40	 Red	 Red
CP/121 - Extent of land under Council ownership or control that is protected and/or under appropriate management for biodiversity: Part B: Length (km)	22.79	22.79	23.12	22.80	 Green	 Green

Case Study 3 : Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project

Background: Peat is invaluable in terms of carbon storage and wildlife habitat and is critical to climate change mitigation and reversing biodiversity decline. The 'Lost Peatlands of South Wales' project started in July 2021 and is being delivered by the Lost Peatlands Partnership comprising Neath Port Talbot Council (Lead), Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Natural Resources Wales, Swansea University and Coed Lleol (Small Woods). The project focuses on the uplands of South Wales. It is restoring this historic peatland landscape and helping people enjoy their local outdoor space. The project has secured £1.56m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and with additional match funding from partners and Vattenfall's Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Habitat Management Fund, the overall project value is more than £2.8m. The project is providing a wide-ranging programme of environmental improvements and community activities that will run through until early 2025.

The vision for the project: Through habitat restoration and better management of the lost peatland resource, we aim to recover the amazing landscape, make a positive impact on climate change and increase the area's biodiversity. Through better access, interpretation, signage and promotion we will attract and encourage the exploration of the Lost Peatlands area. This will provide opportunities for people to enjoy and benefit from the landscape. We will connect both local people and visitors to the area's wealth of heritage. Through the offer of education, training, activities and events for all, we will empower the project's communities to engender a greater sense of stewardship and to ultimately rediscover and revitalize the Lost Peatlands.

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How does this work contribute to the [5 ways of working](#) of the sustainable development principle:

- **Long-term** – The project will deliver long-term environmental improvements through the restoration of habitats including peatlands. The restoration of peatlands will contribute towards the response to climate change. Locking carbon into the peat for the long-term. Through upskilling, educating and supporting local volunteers and community members we will be providing individuals with skills and knowledge that will aid them in their future employment aspirations. We are supporting local communities to set up ‘friends of’ groups to ensure the management of sites can continue post project.
- **Integration** – The project positively impacts on a number of the national wellbeing goals. At Council level, this project for 2021/22 contributes to Wellbeing Objective 3: Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations. Going forward it contributes to a number of key objectives as set out in the [2022/2027 Corporate Plan](#). Peatlands restoration is included in our [DARE Strategy](#) and there are a number of actions with in our [Biodiversity Duty Plan](#) where this project contributes to. More information on how Well-being Objective 3 collectively works towards achieving the 7 National Well-Being Goals is found on pages 65 & 66 above.
- **Involvement** – Local communities, volunteers and schools are all involved in the project. Local volunteers are key to the project including helping manage and monitor sites. Schools are growing their Sphagnum (Peat Moss) that will be planted out in our peatlands to help the restoration. Local experts and residents are providing input into interpretation information and helping with events. Plus, our stakeholder group is helping to steer and inform the project.
- **Collaboration** – The project is being delivered in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Natural Resources Wales, Swansea University and Coed Lleol, an allows us to benefit from the range of expertise available across these partners. The project also has a stakeholder group and a number of working groups that inputs and helps steer the project, these consist of a wide range of organisations and interested parties across the project area. The collaboration of partners and key parties has seen a huge amount of added benefit and will expand research opportunities ensuring the project area can become a national hub for peatland research.
- **Prevention** – Particularly through the educational elements of the project we are increasing the appreciation for the local area and landscape. With sites becoming actively managed with volunteers a greater stewardship of the area is being embedded within the communities. It is hoped that this in turn will reduce anti-social behaviour e.g. arson. Our Health and wellbeing programmes provide a route for people with physical and mental health problems to access help and activities reducing the burden upon the NHS. Through peatland restoration we are also reducing carbon emissions, helping to respond to climate change.

Key highlights of the project:

- The project area will store around 350,000 Tonnes of Carbon which is equivalent of 5,291,268 trees being planted and grown for 10 years.
- Restoration and Management Programme: The project will restore and manage more than 490 hectares of habitats. Of particular focus is the direct restoration of 256 hectares of previously afforested peat bogs and pools. Work has already started and around 25 hectares of peat bog has already undergone restoration at Castell Nos Habitat Restoration Area (pictured above left).
- Learning and Establishing Best Practice Programme: The project is engaged with 7 local schools in an outdoor learning programme, with children experiencing and learning about their local environment and particularly the peatlands. The project is also improving school grounds to aid outdoor learning. A variety of opportunities for adult learning and upskilling is also a key part of the project. Aged training has also started with a number of people working towards qualifications. Swansea University, as a key partner, ensures the peat restoration works are closely monitored, informing important ongoing research to guide best practice restoration techniques in Wales.
- Access Programme: Access to the landscape is also being made easier through improved, guided footpaths and interpretation. A number of short circular routes have been identified close to community wild spaces along with a long distance walking route – the Peatland Way. All are due to be waymarked (route signs) this year. The project has engaged with Ramblers Cymru who will be training volunteers to monitor these new routes.
- Health and Wellbeing and Communities Programme: The project offers opportunities for local people to get involved with the heritage on their doorstep through a variety of free activities, events, and volunteering opportunities. Families and adults are also able to join or be referred to the project's health and wellbeing activity programmes. Activities have included guided walks, arts and crafts activities, wind farm tours, spoon carving etc.
- Awareness Raising and Promotion: The project is raising awareness of the local environment and its interesting heritage and wildlife. A mobile App is being developed to encourage exploration of the area as well as educating people about peatlands. We are also using social media, YouTube, our website and television to promote the project.

The project has completed its first year with some of the **key outcomes** for local communities include:

- 25 volunteers have been inducted to contribute to the project so far and 125 participants have undertaken training
- 30 teachers have been trained in outdoor learning and 192 school children have taken part in our outdoor/environmental learning programme
- 240 participants have joined activities/events
- 109 people have benefited from our Health and Wellbeing programmes of activities
- Of those people attending health and wellbeing programmes 95% agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were enjoyable and over 50% are intending to frequently visit sites/greenspaces in the project area, an increase from 13% before attending our sessions
- All activities have been well received, with particularly nice feedback from the schools.

7. Governance and Resources















In previous annual reports this section would include detail on our arrangements and progress on key strategic themes such as corporate planning and performance management, risk management, governance arrangements, workforce planning, financial planning, procurement, asset management, engagement, equalities and Welsh language, collaboration and information on what our regulators have said. This information will be included in the Council's Corporate Self-assessment for 2021/22 which will be published at a later date. The Council has a new duty from April 2021, under the Local Government & Elections Act (2021), to produce an annual corporate level self-assessment for the Council.









In addition, we included in our 2021/2023 Corporate Plan a number of performance measures that provide an assessment of some of our cross cutting and governance arrangements. Progress for 2021/22 on these measures is summarised below with the detail of the measures and their performance also provided below:

Governance and Resources - Key Performance Indicators summary:

- Sickness rates significantly increased
- Average times to answer telephone calls increased for both Welsh and English calls, however improvements were seen in the second half of the year
- National Non-domestic collection rates (NNDR) and council tax recovery rates both above targets with collection rates exceeding 98%
- We received no statutory recommendations relating to our planning and performance arrangements
- 97.25% of Local Government Electors were verified and registered to vote in the May elections, this exceeded the target of 96.5%.
- Hits to our website increased and 16 new online services were created during 2021/22.

More detailed information with performance comments is including within our full suite of **performance indicators**:

Performance Indicator	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2021/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 21/22 Target	Perf. RAG against 20/21 Actual
Governance and Resources (cross cutting) - To ensure the business of the Council is managed to maximise the long term benefit for the citizens of Neath Port Talbot						
CP/086 - Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee - Sickness FTE days lost	12.13	8.13	13.28	8.40	 Red	 Red
CP/088 - Number of statutory recommendations made by the Council's external auditors on strategic and operational planning arrangements	0	0	0	0	 Green	 Green
CP/097 - CS/001 - Customer Services - Average customer waiting times (face to face)	8.00	No data due to COVID-19	No data due to COVID-19	10.00	N/a	N/a
CP/098 - CS/004 - Customer Services - Percentage of customers leaving before being seen	0.34	No data due to COVID-19	No data due to COVID-19	0.50	N/a	N/a
CP/101 - CS/002a - Customer Services - Average time (seconds) to answer telephone calls in Welsh	45	51	57	40	 Red	 Red
CP/102 - CS/002b - Average time (seconds) to answer telephone calls in English	52	43	44	40	 Red	 Amber
CP/105 - CFH/008 - Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the local authority	98.71	98.06	98.90	98.00	 Green	 Green
CP/106 - PAY/001 - Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	94.25	93.35	94.15	95.00	 Amber	 Green
CP/107 - CFH/007 - Percentage of council tax due for the financial year which was received by the authority	98.07	97.54	98.01	97.00	 Green	 Green

					Green	Green
CP/114 - Percentage of people aged 3 and over who can speak Welsh	20.62	22.47	21.98	No target for this year	N/a	 Amber
CP/122 - Number of new services available on line	22	11	16	12	 Green	 Green
CP/123 - Number of hits to the Corporate Website - a) Welsh pages	34045	23423	29177	25000	 Green	 Green
CP/124 - Number of hits to the Corporate Website - a) English pages	3,42,253	3,980,097	4,890,770	4,000,000	 Green	 Green
CP/125 - % Local Government Electors (via all routes) verified and registered to vote: Route 1: DWP and local data matching Route 2: Unmatched properties Route 3: Properties of multiple occupation e.g. residential care homes and student accommodation		N/a new	97.25	96.5	 Green	N/a

8. Financial Expenditure

For 2021/22, our original budget savings target for the year was £0.135m million, in addition to the cumulative spending reductions to c£95 million since 2010. However, 2021/22 has been an extraordinary year in terms of managing the impacts of Covid-19, supporting the health service and residents through providing a Test Trace and Protect and vaccination support, protecting vulnerable people, maintaining critical services, providing additional payments to businesses, families, and individuals and for many staff by working digitally from home. The Council's Net Budget for 2021/22 was £316.246m. The Actual Net Expenditure, or Outturn position for the Council, shows a net under spend of £670k. The Council received Covid-19 Grant funding of over £20m including a further £12m which has been paid out to support businesses and individuals across the county borough.

Our Capital Programme also delivered c£75m of capital investment during the pandemic to improve facilities across the county borough. This includes:

- Progression of the Council's Band B 21st Century Schools programme;
- Progress to the regeneration programme including Harbourside, Neath Town Centre Redevelopment, Plaza, and the Technology Centre.
- Further investment of £3.17m into Disabled Facility Grants to assist people to live at home and investment of over £3m in Schools Capital Maintenance and Highways and Engineering Maintenance improvements.
- Redevelopment works at Hillside Secure Unit.
- Remodelling of the Council's Waste Facility at Crymlyn Burrows as a Transfer Station with enhanced recycling capacity and facilities to accommodate the Council's expanding recycling operation.

On 1st March 2022, Council approved the 2022/2023 budget following stakeholder consultation. The budget did not require services to make any savings due to the fact that the Council received an 8.8% increase in funding from the Welsh Government. This increase also meant that there was no requirement to increase the Neath Port Talbot Council element of Council Tax bills.

9. Have your say on what matters to you

We welcome feedback on the information contained in this Annual Report via:

Email: policy@npt.gov.uk or post: Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

The Citizens Panel enables residents to take part in research relating to the Council. This means you will be able to tell us what you think about council policies, priorities and/or services. The feedback helps us to understand the residents' perspective and is used to help make decisions. You do not need any knowledge of council services to become a member of the panel. We are looking for a variety of views from a range of different people. Panel members may be asked to take part in online questionnaires, informal discussions, workshops, telephone interviews and other forms of consultation. If you would like to join up please complete the recruitment questionnaire which can be found [here](#).

We also have a number of consultation/engagement events about various services which we promote in the press and on the website which you can access via the following link: <http://www.npt.gov.uk/haveyoursay>



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

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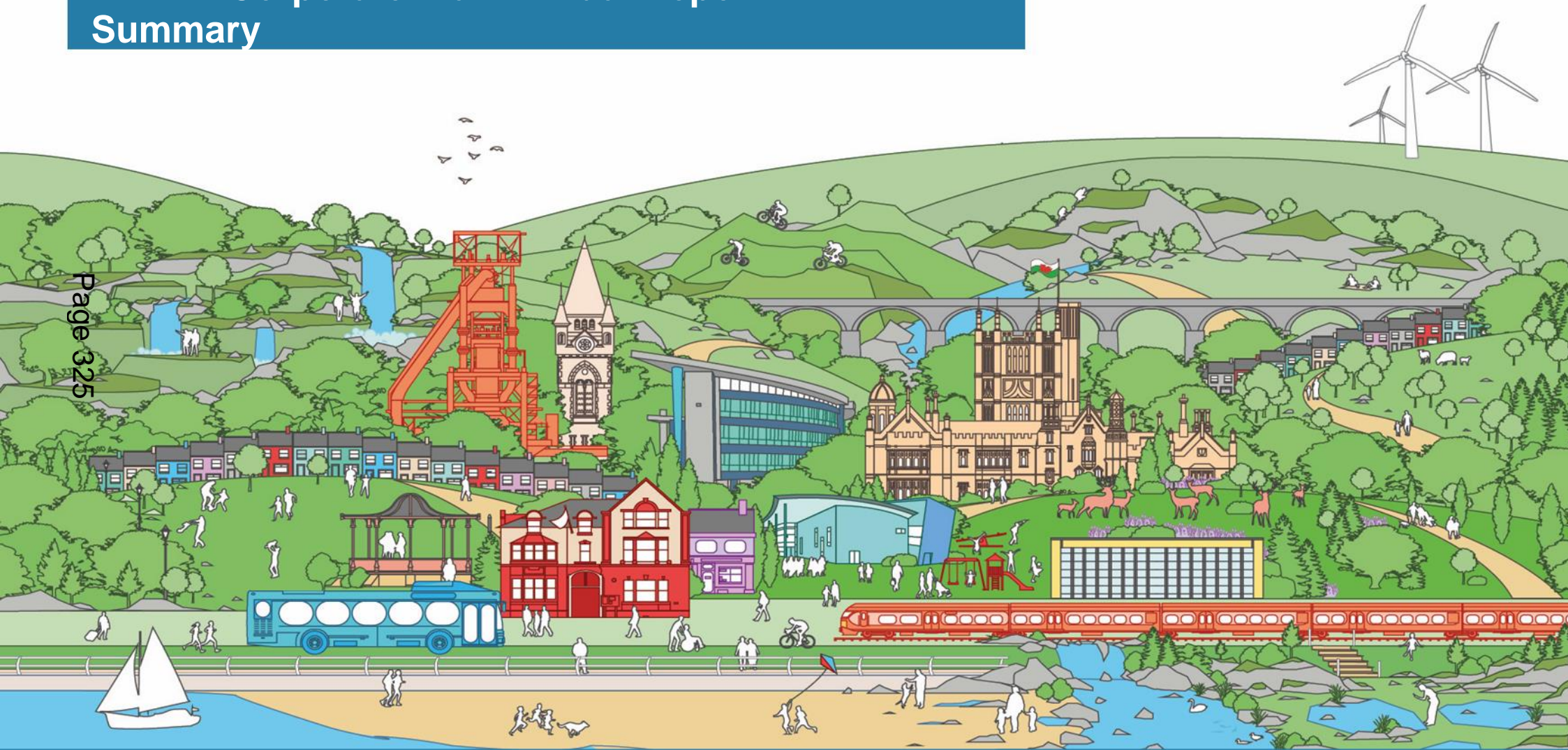
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Appendix 2 DRAFT Corporate Plan Annual Report Summary

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Period: 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022



FOREWORD

In the middle of March 2020, the Council mobilised an emergency response to the developing COVID-19 national emergency situation. There was an immense effort to ensure the Council responded in step with the policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government.

As we moved into the second year (2021/2022) of the pandemic, our response was greatly assisted by the availability of the Covid-19 vaccines. We were pleased to be able to offer further support to our NHS, converting facilities at Margam Orangery for use as a mass vaccination centre and modifying a mobile library for use as a mobile vaccination centre. The mobile vaccination centre enabled the vaccine programme to be accessed by those hardest to reach. We also made facilities available for the rapid expansion of Covid-19 testing at various locations across the county borough.

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

Alongside our ongoing response to the pandemic, we continued to deliver on the priorities we had set in our Corporate Plan 2021/2023 and in this Annual Report Summary you will find more information on that work and the difference we made.

Going forward, the emphasis is on working together to help the county borough continue to recover and make Neath Port Talbot a place we are all proud of. There are a number of challenges facing us but we learned through the pandemic that when we come together we can achieve remarkable things.

Cllr S Hunt, Leader of Council

This Report is available [in Welsh](#) and on our website. More detailed progress is reported within our [2021/22 Annual Report](#).

Summary of Progress and Performance for 2021/22:

Well-being objectives – How did we do? – Overall, we were on track in delivering all the three well-being objectives for 2021/22, which is the final year of these particular objectives.

Under each well-being objective there are improvement priorities and steps. The improvement priorities set out the overall improvement we are aiming to achieve and the steps set out the strategic actions we will take to deliver that improvement.

In terms of the corporate plan ‘Steps’ to deliver the priorities, for 2021/22, 77% (72 of 93) were on track and 21 ‘just off track’. This is an improvement on 2020/21 whereby 65% (54 of 83) of steps were on track, 24 of the steps were ‘just off’ track and 5 were ‘off track’. For 2019/20 we reported 83% (68 of 83) of steps on track. Overall progress on these steps is showing that services are starting to recover and have improved on 2020/21, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic.

Summary progress of each well-being objective and our improvement priorities is detailed from page 5 below with more detail within our full 2021/22 Corporate Plan Annual Report [\(link\)](#).

Key Performance Indicators - How did we do?

To assess our performance in meeting our well-being objectives, alongside progress on our ‘Steps’, for 2021/22 we used 58 performance indicators (Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators).

The summary below shows a higher proportion of corporate plan key performance indicators achieved targets in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the percentage improving increased by 1% compared to 2020/21.

****Caution should be taken with the comparison as performance for some measures across both 2020/21 and 2021/22 were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.***

- **Comparing against Targets** - During 2021/22, of the performance indicators that had comparable targets, 70% (28 of 40) achieved target, 7.5% (3 of 40) were within 5% of target and 22.5% (9 of 40) were 5% or more below target. This compares favourably to 2020/21 where 61% (23 of 38) achieved target, 18% (7 of 38) were within 5% of target and 21% (8 of 38) were 5% or more below the target set. In 2019/20, 54% achieved target.
- **Comparing against previous year performance** - In 2021/22, 58% (28 of 48) improved or maintained performance, 17% (8 of 48) marginally declined but within 5% and 25% (12 of 48) declined by 5% or more. In 2020/21, 57% (24 of 42) improved or maintained performance, 24% (10 of 42) marginally declined and 19% (8 of 42) declined by 5% or more. In 2019/20, 63% (32 of 51) improved or maintained performance.

More detail performance comments relating to the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators is included within the 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators Report. [link](#)

Well-being Objective 1: To improve the well-being of children and young people: *“All of our children and young people have the best start in life, so they can be the best they can be”*



Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children and young people	GREEN ‘On Track’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We set 30 steps to help us deliver the 7 improvement priorities under Well-being Objective 1 for 2021/22. • All 7 of the improvement priorities were on track for 2021/22. In 2020/21, 2 of 7 improvement priorities were on track with 5 ‘just off’ track. Progress on these in 2020/21 was heavily impacted by the pandemic. • 93% (28 of 30) of steps were on track with 3 steps ‘just off’ track. This is a significant improvement on 2020/21 where 56% (15 of 27) steps were on track. 	
Improvement Priority 1.1 - Children in their early years will benefit from integrated and effective pre-school programmes that maximise their well-being and their readiness for learning	GREEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We received and processed 774 Childcare Offer applications during 2021/22 and 914 children receiving childcare through the Offer as at April 2022. • 184 childcare providers registered to provide the Childcare Offer to families within NPT and over £2 million was paid to childcare providers active in the offer in 2021/22. There were 2,339 full day childcare places being provided at the end of March 2022. • We delivered 72 forestry-school play sessions for 504 children and 18 Family Wellbeing Sessions to 132 families with children 0-4 years. • We supported 195 children and families’ while they awaited paediatric assessment. • We supported 64 children with additional learning needs (ALN) across 10 settings. • 58 Bookstart sessions were delivered at all eight of our libraries to 990 children and their families. • 1,393 referrals to Families First and 70% of participants who engaged with the programme had improved positive outcomes. • Flying Start delivered part-time childcare to approximately 500 2-3 year olds, provided a health care visiting service for over 1,700 children under 4, 330 packages of parenting support and 93 speech, language and communication development support packages. 	

Improvement Priority 1.2 - Children of school age will be safer, healthier and engaged with their learning**GREEN**

- £776,000 All Wales Play Opportunities Grant funding was utilised to improve opportunities for children’s play.
- Our Strategic School Improvement Programme remains on track which includes a new £9m facility at Ystalyfera Campus of Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur, £1.14m Improvement scheme at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tyle’r Ynn and £640,000 renewal project at the Welsh-medium 3-11 primary school Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg (YGG) Cwmllynfell.
- Our new 10 year WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan) was approved by Welsh Government on 20th July 2022 and was adopted by Council on 28th September 2022.
- A range of Welsh language learning sessions delivered with partners.
- Percentage of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language improved to 12.29% (11.33% the year before) and was above target of 11.7%.
- Sandfields West Children’s Community (SWCC) delivered 113 engagement sessions to 462 families.
- We worked alongside the Physical Activity and Sport Service (PASS) to deliver 4 basic motor skills sessions to 65 children at each session.
- All schools in NPT are following new ALN (Additional Learning Needs) processes and systems in line with new legislation.
- Attendance at both primary and secondary schools for the 2020/21 academic continued to be affected by the pandemic.
- We supported a number of Ethnic Minority groups and worked with community groups such as NPT Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association and stakeholder groups such as the Gypsy Traveller Forum, supported LGBTQ+ groups in schools and worked closely with other partners to provide support for refugees and their families from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Improvement Priority 1.3 - Children and young people in need of protection, care and support will be protected and safeguarded and more of those children will be able to grow up in a stable family setting**GREEN**

- Adults and Children’s ‘Single Point of Contact’ (SPOC) provided information, advice and assistance to over 23,000 contacts.
- 99.15% of child assessments were completed on time.
- The ‘Working Together Service’ worked with in excess of 50 children and their families and has been key to preventing the need for any of these children who engaged with this service from entering the care system.
- Work continues to be undertaken regionally to develop emotional and well-being support services for children and young people.
- We continue to develop our in-house fostering service to ensure the sufficiency and stability of placements.

Improvement Priority 1.4 - Young people leaving full- time education will have the opportunity to enter employment, training or further/higher education

GREEN

- We supported 78 apprenticeships and 32 Kickstart placements, with 5 gaining further employment within NPT Council.
- The Legacy Youth Workers Service supported 253 year 11 school leavers who were identified as being most at risk of becoming NEET.
- 2.4% (39 of 1,618) of year 11 leavers were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)), better than our target of 3%.
- 210 young people received support from The Youth Service Keeping in touch (KIT) Team with 144 achieving a successful outcome. Examples of positive outcomes include achieving recognised qualifications, entering work based learning, work placement or work experience, securing a job interview, engaging with a specialist service following referral and entering paid employment.
- 30% of young people were in contact with the Youth Service, which is an improvement but still lower than pre-pandemic levels.
- We continued with our work as Corporate Parents to ensure young people have suitable accommodation and support when they leave the care of the Council.

Improvement Priority 1.5 - All children and young people will be helped to have a say in matters that affect them

GREEN

- The first part of the Children’s Rights’ Charter Action Plan was completed. It is anticipated the Charter will be finalised October 2022 with the launch on International Children’s Day.
- We continued to obtain views from service users to help drive improvements to service delivery.
- Our Children and Young People Service partnered with Social Care Wales to produce a document that explains our Strengths Based Model of Practice which is an outcome focused model that we have been applying since 2017. Social Care Wales intend promoting the framework and handbook to all Welsh Authorities.
- Face to face engagements were carried out with 37 children between the ages of 3 – 12 at 6 summer programme events, as part of our ‘Let’s Talk’ initiative.
- Our 16-17 year olds electoral voter registration rate increased by 12.8% to 58.5%

Improvement Priority 1.6 - Children and young people are safe and feel safe

GREEN

- Age appropriate healthy relationship lessons and a workshop on Cyber Crime was delivered virtually to approximately 1,800 pupils.
- Healthy relationship lessons delivered in schools to 1,408 secondary school pupils.
- All schools are engaged with 360 degree Safe Cymru Self-Evaluation tool to help keep learners safe online.
- We continue to review and develop our response to safeguarding practice across Children's Services and a Joint Inspection into Child Protection arrangements across NPT was broadly positive. However further work is required across the partnership in response to Criminal Exploitation, which is now the most prevalent risk factor outside of the family home.
- Approximately 1,600 council employees completed mandatory safeguarding awareness e-learning training.
- Road Safety programmes were delivered to over 13,000 pupils.

Improvement Priority 1.7 - Children of all ages will benefit from participation in activities in the natural environment, providing benefits for well-being and a greater appreciation for the role the natural environment plays in their lives

GREEN

- £776,000 All Wales Play Opportunities Grant funding delivered outdoor play and sport activities, including play in parks and Forest School.
- Improvements were made to local parks and playgrounds to improve quality of access to outdoor play.
- 72 forestry-school play sessions delivered for 504 children.
- Projects at Craig Gwladus have also supported local schools to use the Park for outdoor learning.
- The Lost Peatlands project has been running outdoor learning sessions enabling local children to learn about and experience their local environment, learn about peatlands and the important wildlife in the area.



Well-being Objective 2: To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough: *“Everyone participates fully in community life – socially and economically”*

Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough	GREEN ‘On Track’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We set out 31 steps to help us deliver the 8 improvement priorities for Well-being Objective 2 for 2021/22. • 6 of the 8 improvement priorities were on track and 2 ‘just off track’ for 2021/22. In 2020/21, 4 of 6 improvement priorities were on track with 2 ‘just off’ track. • For 2021/22, 65% (20 of 31) of steps were on track with 11 steps ‘just off’ track. In 2020/21, 65% (20 of 31) were on track, 10 ‘just off’ track and one step off track. 	
Improvement Priority 2.1 - Local people can access sustainable, local, quality employment	GREEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We responded to 700 business requests for advice, information or financial support; Processed 300 emergency grant payments to small businesses and provided assistance to 244 new business start-ups. • 112 people were helped to progress back to work, training or volunteering via the Workways+ programme. • 134 people aged 16-24 and 50 people aged 25+ were helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience, full time education or sustainable employment through the Communities for Work Programme and 525 people through the Communities for Work plus programme. • Through the Kickstart Programme, 108 people were placed with local businesses and we supported 32 people, of which 5 people gained employment with us. • We facilitated 2,844 training weeks from apprenticeship, traineeships and work experience opportunities. 	

Improvement Priority 2.2 - Local people can access quality affordable housing

AMBER

- No affordable homes were provided through the planning system (via section 106 agreements) during 2021/22. The rate of affordable housing delivery has been influenced by the low levels of market housing delivered in recent years and due to issues with viability. These issues will be addressed through the LDP (Local Development Plan) review which has commenced.
- 66 new gas central heating systems were installed into homes across the county borough through the Warm Homes Fund Scheme.
- 61% of households were successfully prevented from becoming homeless, just above our 60% target.
- Housing Support Grant was utilised to provide targeted support from external organisations/charities, such as support for ex-offenders, substance misuse and domestic abuse victims.
- Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants continues to be disrupted by the effects of the Covid pandemic. Average days to complete a disabled facilities grant reduced to 339 days however is still higher than target of 270 days.
- A Housing Support Programme Strategy was developed during 2021/22 , consulted on in early 2022/23 and will be considered by Cabinet in October 2022. The strategy will outline the strategic direction of the local authority for housing support services and approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services.

Improvement Priority 2.3 - People are safe and feel safe

AMBER

- 34.7% of incidents of domestic abuse were repeat victims which has reduced over the last two years, however high risk referrals have increased by 19%.
- Upon lifting of Covid 19 restrictions we saw an increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) related incidents, particularly in our town centre areas. Specific sub groups have been setup to deal with particular issues of ASB, including Neath Town Centre, Port Talbot Town Centre and Briton Ferry.
- More planned work to investigate the key causes and consequences of drug use and drug deaths for individuals and their families.
- Since 2015 there has been a steady decline in accidents, there were 216 recorded accidents in 2015 and 94 in 2021. Unfortunately we did have 4 road traffic accident fatalities during the calendar year 2021.
- 100% of building control 'full plan' applications checked within 15 days and 99.2% of 'full plan' applications were approved first time.

- Vulnerable adults with complex needs were prioritised as part of the response to the pandemic.
- 96.6% of food businesses achieved a Food Hygiene Rating of either 3, 4, or 5 (out of 5).

Improvement Priority 2.4 - People unable to work can maximise their income

GREEN

- We processed Winter Fuel payments of £100 each to over 10,000 residents.
- £750 Social Care Bonus Scheme and self-isolation payments of either £500 or £750 made to over 5,000 residents.
- The Welfare Rights Unit has supported more than 2,000 people raising on average £2,500 in extra income for each client.
- Provided c£19m in council tax support to c17, 000 households and took a decision to freeze the Council element of the Council Tax bill.
- Exceeded our collection rate target for Council Tax (98.01% collected).
- Put plans in place to deliver the Welsh Government Cost of Living Support Scheme payments to c55,000 households.
- Set aside £2m into a Hardship Relief Reserve and developed a scheme to assist those affected most from the cost of living crisis.
- We processed Housing Benefit claims in 2.73 days (average) and the accuracy rate of processing benefits was 99.98%.
- We have signed up to Chwarae Teg's Fair Play Employer Scheme for a third year to assist us with strategies to reduce our gender pay gap.

Improvement Priority 2.5 - People who need care and support will be helped to develop their resilience, accessing support from within their community. If their needs can only be met by social services they will receive services which are personalised

GREEN

- Adults and Children's Single Point of Contact' (SPOC) provided information, advice and assistance to over 23,000 contacts
- A volunteer's register of people was established in order to support care providers with acute staff shortages arising from Covid-19 and a regional Infection, Protection and Control (IP&C) nurse was employed to support care homes.
- Hospital to Home has been implemented and rebranded as Home First and 568 over 65's were supported home from hospital.
- An 11% uplift to the fees paid for residential and nursing care home placements was implemented from October 2021. This uplift supported care homes to pay staff the Real Living Wage and improve other workforce terms and conditions in order to help improve the recruitment and retention of staff.
- We continued to review the services we provide for people with the most complex needs to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.
- We continued to develop our progression-based model of care for people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and physical disabilities

Improvement Priority 2.6 - People will be able to have their say in matters that affect them and where people need help to voice their opinions, advocacy support will be available	GREEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continued with our work to implement the Regional Joint Carers’ Strategy with our partners. • Support was provided for carers such as respite opportunities and short breaks. • Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was provided to unpaid carers via the Carers Service. • We continue to embed a rights-based approach to ensure that people have access to advocacy support where that is required. 	
Improvement Priority 2.7 - Develop a range of strategies to improve health and well-being of older people across the county borough	GREEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local Market Stability Report (MSR) has been developed which will inform the Regional Market Stability Report and will help Local Authorities and Health Boards to be better placed to plan and commission social care services for their local and regional populations and the report provides useful information for providers of social care, people who use the service and unpaid carers. The Market Stability Report will be used to develop local and regional Market Position Statements that set out what types of services are required to meet population need now and in the future and will then be used to inform the creation of local and regional commissioning strategies. • A programme of commissioning work has been developed to take forward necessary work as identified through the above market stability report. 	
Improvement Priority 2.8 - People will benefit from participation in activities in the natural environment, providing benefits for well-being and a greater appreciation for the role the natural environment plays in their lives	GREEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In May 2021 our upgraded Active Travel route opened in Neath. • A number of projects have secured funding to support community engagement and volunteering in the natural environment including Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project, Connecting Green Infrastructure Project and Craig Gwladus projects. All of these projects provide health and wellbeing focused outdoor activities as well as a range of events, educational training and schools activities. 	



Well-being Objective 3: To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved: *“The whole of Neath Port Talbot county borough will be a vibrant, healthy and safe place to live, work and enjoy recreational time”*

Well-being Objective 3- To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved

GREEN
‘On Track’

- We set out 32 steps to help us deliver the 9 improvement priorities for Well-being Objective 3 for 2021/22.
- 7 of the 9 improvement priorities were on track and 2 ‘just off track’ for 2021/22. In 2020/21, 6 of 8 improvement priorities were on track with 2 ‘just off’ track.
- For 2021/22, 75% (24 of 32) of steps were on track with 8 steps ‘just off’ track. In 2020/21, 76% (19 of 25) of steps were on track, 5 ‘just off’ track and one step off track.

Improvement Priority 3.1 - We will provide an environment where new businesses can establish themselves and existing businesses can grow

GREEN

- Regeneration work continued, including the new leisure and retail development in Neath and the Plaza Cinema in Port Talbot. We have completed the refurbishment of offices at the former Crown site in Neath which is now occupied by three local companies. Work is ongoing in the remediation of Harbourside. The new Technology Centre on Baglan Energy Park was completed in early 2022 and we assisted with delivery of the Coastal development at the rear of Boots in Neath as well as the ongoing refurbishment of the former Liberal Club on Orchard Street.
- The Swansea Bay City Deal programmes/projects progressed. We led regional projects for Homes as Power Stations (HAPS) and Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth (SILCG). Both projects have been approved by Welsh and UK Governments in 2021.
- 410 jobs were created or safeguarded as a result of financial support we provided.
- We supported 36 growth projects from existing local manufacturing companies which created/safeguarded over 200 jobs with the potential to create/safeguard up to 500 jobs.

Improvement Priority 3.2 - We will work with communities to increase reuse, recycling and composting

AMBER

- We experienced a slight drop in 'recycling' performance in 2021/22, along with 12 other Councils. However at 66%, we still exceeded the current statutory target of 64%. The next review of our Waste Strategy is due to take place in the autumn of 2022 to put in place any required actions needed to deliver the 70% target by 2024/25.
- We saw a reduction in the amount of waste generated per person from 209.7 tonnes in 2020/21 to 204.37 tonnes in 2021/22 and a slight improvement in cleanliness of our streets from 90.98% in 2020/21 to 92.85% in 2021/22.
- The average days to clear fly tipping increased from 2.84 in 2020/21 to 4.52 days in 2021/22.

Improvement Priority 3.3 - Local people and visitors can access good quality leisure and community facilities, country parks and countryside

AMBER

- Overall there has been a reduction in tourism sector businesses seeking assistance due to impacts of the pandemic.
- 10 existing tourism providers and 2 new and 5 proposed tourism providers were supported during 2021/22.
- A new Splash Pad in Aberavon has replaced the old paddling pool and there are new water fountains, jets and waterfalls, spread over a central play area. In addition, the Tourism Team secured £120,000 funding through Visit Wales' Brilliant Basics Scheme to create a fully accessible changing place at the Aberavon Seafront Aquasplash, refurbish the existing public toilet provision and improve access pathways.
- Plaza cinema has been redeveloped and renovation works to the Turbine House in Margam Park has been completed.
- We secured £250,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help protect and sustain our built and natural heritage.
- Cabinet Members agreed to bring leisure services back under the council's management (in-house). Following the Cabinet decision, council officers will now work with Celtic Leisure to facilitate an in-house leisure service and undertake the necessary consultation work.
- Visits to Margam Park have increased despite impacts of the pandemic and improvements have been made to the Orangery, Charlottes Pantry and the children's play facility.
- The number of visits to libraries, theatres and leisure centres continued to be impacted by the pandemic.

Improvement Priority 3.4 - To identify and develop opportunities for sustainable economic growth in our valley communities across the county borough improving the health and well-being of our communities	GREEN
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- We continued to work with developers and partners to deliver key strategic development sites along the coastal corridor including Coed Darcy, Baglan Bay including Port Talbot Harbourside and Baglan Energy Park.
- 87% of all planning applications were determined within time, target for the year was 95%.
- £150 million Global Centre for Rail Excellence (GCRE) project at the top of the Dulais Valley and in South Powys received outline planning permission on 21st July 2021.
- Outline planning application for the Wildfox Resort in the Afan Valley was granted in January 2022, subject to a Section 106 legal agreement.
- During 2021/22 we supported 50 valley businesses.
- Our Economic Recovery Plan has been adopted, which will provide focus on our valleys’ communities.
- Working with Swansea Council we have jointly appointed consultants to undertake a Housing and Economic Growth Assessment to inform the emerging Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).
- We are developing a Levelling Up Fund bid for the Neath Valley centred around culture, heritage and tourism attractions.
- We continue to access Welsh Government funding to deliver regeneration projects in our Valleys’ communities.

Improvement Priority 3.5 - To protect, conserve and enhance our natural environment (including green and blue infrastructure, important landscapes and countryside, habitats and species and wider ecosystem resilience) increasing awareness of its value and encouraging wider participation	GREEN
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- The Biodiversity Duty Plan (BDP) was reviewed, updated and approved in November 2021.
- 51 biodiversity rich areas are protected and/or enhanced and a new ‘bee friendly’ approach to managing our verges and grasslands was adopted.
- We began a pioneering air quality monitoring project aimed at providing accurate “real time” measurement of pollution so solutions for greener, healthier communities can be found. This project is the first of its kind in Wales.
- Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) breaches in the Port Talbot/Taibach area for 2021/22 was 27, within the target of 35.
- 48 environmental volunteers from our communities are working with a number of grant funded local environment projects.

- Wildlife towers constructed at the Gnoll Country Park and at Bryn Tip Local Nature Reserve, with owl and bat use already evident.
- The Lost Peatlands of South Wales Partnership Project was awarded £1.56 million by National Lottery Heritage Fund and works have started to restore peatlands and other upland habitats in the upper Afan Valley and into Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- A number of public rights of way footpaths have been improved.

Improvement Priority 3.6 - To deliver a positive contribution to the regional planning agenda

GREEN

- We continued to work with neighbouring authorities to scope and deliver a Strategic Development Plan and we have commissioned a number of studies with our neighbouring authorities.
- The Public Services Board (PSB) has completed its second local assessment of well-being. The next step will be to agree well-objectives and develop the detail of the well-being plan which is due to be published May 2023.

Improvement Priority 3.7 - To promote and deliver sustainable accessibility and improve connectivity and communication links

GREEN

- We were awarded £721,000 core funding in addition to £195,000 for active travel design work, minor improvement works, land negotiations and promotion of schemes.
- A number of improvements to active travel routes were made including improving 11 active travel junctions, removing or replacing 16 barriers and 8 seats and storage for 20 bikes were installed.
- Work is still ongoing with Welsh Government (WG) and Transport for Wales (TfW) on the strategic bus network review.
- We further improved the condition of A roads, B roads and C roads and achieved targets for all three road categories.

Improvement Priority 3.8 - We will work with partners to improve connectivity and infrastructure across the county borough

GREEN

- We worked to support the Swansea Bay City Region on the wider digital connectivity issues and opportunities to benefit the area and bring forward further connectivity.
- We continued to work with partners to improve digital infrastructure and connectivity.

- We secured funding from Welsh Government for the development of fibre infrastructure for Mardon Park on Baglan Energy Park.
- With our help, 253 local businesses received support via Welsh Government’s Superfast Broadband Cymru Programme and a successful Community Renewal Fund (CRF) bid during 2021/22 means continued support for businesses.
- We continued to support the third sector to enable more people to access on-line services.
- Public Services Board partners have made a formal commitment to working towards the digital inclusion charter principles so that the need to cater for digitally excluded people is reflected in agency digital strategies and agency equality plans. The next phase of work will look at infrastructure and the availability and affordability of high speed broadband.

Improvement Priority 3.9 - We will introduce a series of interventions and improvement measures across the county borough to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits and opportunities provided by the decarbonisation agenda

GREEN

- Some improvement progress during 2021/22 include low energy street light lamp replacements, electric vehicle charging points and solar panels at the Quays in Baglan and a first of its kind in Wales air quality monitoring project.
- We secured funding from the Community Renewal Fund in February 2022 to deliver an eight month pilot project to support innovative local businesses and will provide a platform for businesses to discuss future challenges, opportunities and shared examples of good practice in relation to the decarbonisation agenda. Two events were held in March 2022 and 25 businesses attended.
- Work to restore peatlands has started within the Upper Afan and Rhondda Valleys, the project area will store around 350,000 tonnes of Carbon which is equivalent of 5,291,268 trees being planted and grown for 10 years.
- We will continue to work to address any barriers to the development of renewable energy across the county borough and promote the sustainable and appropriate use of renewable resources and build on progress already made.

Have your say on what matters to you

We welcome feedback on the information contained within this report via:

Email: policy@npt.gov.uk or post: Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

The Citizens Panel enables residents to take part in research relating to the council. This means you will be able to tell us what you think about council policies, priorities and/or services. The feedback helps us to understand the residents' perspective and is used to help make decisions. You do not need any knowledge of council services to become a member of the panel. We are looking for a variety of views from a range of different people. Panel members may be asked to take part in online questionnaires, informal discussions, workshops, telephone interviews and other forms of consultation. If you would like to join up, please complete the recruitment questionnaire which can be found [here](#).

We also have a number of consultation/engagement events about various services which we promote in the press and on the website which you can access via the following link: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/haveyoursay?lang=en-gb>

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

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Neath Port Talbot Council

Neath Port Talbot Council

Appendix 3 - Full suite of Key Performance Indicators - Full Year (1 April – 31 March) - 2021/22





Performance Indicators key:

- **CP reference** - Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators
- **PI reference** – Service Performance Indicators









RAG (Red, Amber Green) key:













- **Green:** achieved target 2021/22/ maintained or improved on 2021/22
- **Amber:** Within 5% of target/within 5% of previous year's performance
- **Red:** 5% or more below target/ 5% or more below previous year's performance
- **N/a** – no comparable data or no target set

How will we know we are making a difference (01/04/2021 to 31/03/2022)?











Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
1 Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children and young people						
Chief Executives Directorate						
CP/109 - Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes per 1,000 employees	6.72	8.06	15.25	8.00	 Green	 Green
<p>There are 78 employees on schemes during 2021/22.</p> <p>39 Modern Apprentices (17 additional modern apprentices in 2021/22).</p> <p>39 Employed staff upskilling using apprentice funding (21 additional employed staff upskilling using apprenticeship funding during 2021/22):</p> <p>Breakdown of 21 staff for 2021/22 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 employees studying Level 7 Management - 6 employees studying Level 5 Management - 4 employees studying Level 4 Management - 3 employees studying Level 3 Management - 1 employee studying Level 2 Advocacy - 5 employees studying Level 3 Digital Learning Design <p>Number of employees as at 31st March 2022 is 5,115.</p>						
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning Directorate						
CP/002 - Number of full day childcare places provided	2335.00	2413.00	2339.00	2400.00	 Amber	 Amber
<p>Number of places has increased since end of quarter 3 (2,333). Registered numbers fluctuate through the year as settings change or vary their registered numbers. The sector is still reacting and responding to the impacts of Covid which continues to affect how they operate. Even when there are new developments opening, there are others who deregister at the same time therefore affecting total registered places.</p>						

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Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/005 - Percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools	94.02	93.83	91.18		 Amber	 NA
<p>2021/22 data is for the 2020/21 academic year.</p> <p>Pupil attendance continues to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the number of pupils returning to school have been excellent, continued attendance has been intermittent for some who have either been required to self-isolate at home; isolate whilst waiting for the results of a PCR test or for those pupils who have contracted Covid themselves. Welsh Government have removed the need for schools and local authorities to set attendance targets for the second year running.</p> <p>No target set in the 2021/23 Corporate Plan due to Covid-19.</p>						
CP/006 - Percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools	93.46	92.51	87.88		 Red	 NA
<p>2021/22 data is for the 2020/21 academic year.</p> <p>Pupil attendance continues to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the number of pupils returning to school have been excellent, continued attendance has been intermittent for some who have either been required to self-isolate at home; isolate whilst waiting for the results of a PCR test or for those pupils who have contracted Covid themselves. Welsh Government have removed the need for schools and local authorities to set attendance targets for the second year running.</p> <p>No target set in the 2021/23 Corporate Plan due to Covid-19.</p>						
CP/007 - Percentage of pupils assessed in Welsh at the end of Foundation phase	16.63			15.80	 NA	 NA
<p>Foundation Phase assessments were not undertaken for 2021/22 (2020/21 academic year) or 2020/21 (2019/20 academic year) due to Covid -19.</p> <p>Data for 2019/20 (16.63%) relates to 2018/19 academic year.</p>						
CP/008 - Percentage of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language	11.40	11.33	12.29	11.70	 Green	 Green
<p>For the Academic Year 2020/21, there were 199 pupils studying Welsh first language from a cohort of 1,619 pupils compared to 171 from a cohort of 1,509 for 2019/20. The number of pupils studying Welsh as a first language and related percentage has increased slightly compared to Academic Year 2019/20. The figure is likely to rise steadily for the next 3 years.</p>						











Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/013 - Percentage of young people who are NEET - Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET)	2.15	2.12	2.41	3.00	 Red	 Green
2021 year 11 leavers data shows that 2.4% (39 of 1,618 pupils) of young people left school to become NEET.						
CP/014 - Percentage of 11 - 19 year olds in contact with the Youth Service (measured cumulatively over the financial year - quarterly)	45.75	9.47	29.79	28.00	 Green	 Green
During 2021/22, the Youth Service reach with 11-19 year olds was 4,472 which equates to 29.79% of the 11-19 population. The numbers have increased due to the easing of Covid restrictions and the Youth Service being able to return to previous engagement methods. There has still been disruption during this year and numbers are lower than pre pandemic levels.						
CP/108 - Capped 9 score	342.09	369.00	378.00	345.00	 Green	 Green
Data reported for 2021/22 relates to the 2020/21 academic year. This is not comparable to previous years as the method is based on teacher assessments (due to Covid-19).						
ELLL - PI/444 - Percentage of Year 11 pupils achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C, or equivalent, including English or Welsh first language and Maths	45.81	57.83	62.75	50.00	 Green	 Green
Data reported for 2021/22 relates to the 2020/21 academic year. 1,061 pupils achieved this indicator from a cohort of 1,619 pupils - This is not comparable to previous years as the method is based on teacher assessments (due to Covid-19).						
ELLL - EDU/015a - The percentage of final statements of special education needs issued within 26 weeks including exceptions - measured over the calendar year	48.94	34.38	19.64	35.00	 Red	 Red
11 statements were issued within the 26 week timescale (including exceptions) out of a total of 56 possible statements. The delay in medical advice continues to impact adversely on the local authority's ability to issue a Statements of Special Education Needs (SEN) within the prescribed 26 weeks.						
ELLL - EDU/015b - The percentage of final statements of special education needs issued within 26 weeks excluding exceptions. (measured over the calendar year)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	 Green	 Green
11 statements issued within the 26 week timescale (excluding exceptions) out of a total of 11 possible statements. This figure exemplifies that when there is not a delay in advice being submitted, the Additional Learning Needs Support Service (ALNSS) is able to successfully issue Statements of Special Education Needs (SEN) within the 26 weeks.						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/115 - % of children that have received the Healthy Relationship lesson to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)			42.55	35.00	NA	Green
<p>Roll out of Healthy Relationship lessons in schools is aimed at year 6 pupils in primary schools and year 8 pupils in secondary schools.</p> <p>1,408 of 3,309 (cohort of year 6 and 8 pupils): 42.55%</p> <p>This work has been significantly hindered by the pandemic during 2020/21 and at the start of 2021/22. However in the last quarter of 2021/22 we have been able to deliver the lesson to 1,408 (86%) of year 8 secondary school pupils, now that all Covid restrictions have lifted. This will be delivered in schools to year 6 pupils during 2022/23.</p> <p>In addition, a number of year 6 pupils did receive a 'condensed version' of the school lesson pack, which was delivered virtually via the Community Safety Annual Crucial Crew event during 2021/22 (approximately 1,500 of the 1,800 attendees were year 6 pupils).</p> <p>New performance indicator for 2021/22.</p>						
PI/466 - Percentage of children and young people who have participated in a suitable programme that addresses VAWDASV (violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence)					NA	NA
<p>The Community Safety Annual Crucial Crew event also covers a lesson on Healthy Relationships, was delivered to approximately 1,800 pupils. During 2021/22 this was delivered virtually due to the pandemic, but will be delivered face to face during 2022/23.</p> <p>Please also refer to CP/115 above.</p>						
ELLL - PI/480 - Progress made from the start of Reception to the end of Foundation Phase					NA	NA
<p>Schools were not required to undertake Foundation Phase assessments in 2021/22 (2020/21 academic year) or 2020/21 (2019/20 academic year) due to Covid-19.</p>						
PI/467 - Percentage of year 6 children and young people who have participated in a suitable programme to address cyber-crime					NA	NA
<p>The annual Community Safety Crucial Crew event delivers a workshop on Cyber Crime which was delivered to approximately 1,800 pupils. During 2021/22 this was delivered virtually, but will be delivered face to face during 2022/23.</p>						











Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
Social Services, Health & Housing Directorate						
PI/239 - % of children supported to live with their family.	67.00	67.81	69.72	64.70	 Green	 Green
608 out of 872 in 2021/22 compared to 615 out of 907 in 2020/21. Performance has increased slightly and this is due to the focus on Early Intervention and Prevention work.						
PI/240 - % of looked after children returned home from care during the year		35.00		9.60	 NA	 NA
This information is populated by Welsh Government and this data is yet to be released.						
PI/241 - % of re-registrations of children on the local authority child protection register	13.93	7.38	11.58	9.40	 Red	 Red
11 out of 95 in 2021/22 compared to 11 out of 149 in 2020/21. This figure high or low helps inform decision-making. All re-registration cases are reviewed by the Team Manager and are monitored by the Principal Officers. The number of re-registrations remains the same this year as it was this time last year, albeit the percentage is higher owing to there being fewer children on the register this year compared to last. It should be noted that Children whose names are entered onto the Child Protection Register are regularly reviewed at a Multi-Agency Child Protection Conference and the decision to remove a child's name is only agreed when there is a consensus amongst that Multi-Agency group that the risk is no longer present and are no longer at risk of significant harm.						
PI/247 - % of looked after children who have experienced one or more changes of school during a period or periods of being looked after which were not due to transitional arrangements in the 12 months to 31 March.	3.06	3.91	5.26	10.00	 Red	 Green
9 out of 171 in 2021/22 compared to 7 out of 179 in 2020/21. We continue to strive to minimise the number of placement changes and subsequent school changes for our children, and working closely with the regional Multi Agency Placement Support Service (MAPSS), a therapeutic service that works holistically with children who are looked after to avoid school and placement breakdowns. Any decision to move a child to a different school would be carefully considered.						
PI/250 - % of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year.	1.87	1.97	3.52	9.40	 Red	 Green
9 out of 256 in 2021/22 compared to 5 out of 254 in 2020/21. There is a continued work programme across Children's and Adult's Services which looks at Youth Homelessness and we are currently reviewing the processes we have in place to ensure young people are in suitable accommodation.						








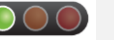
Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/527 - Percentage of Child Protection Visits undertaken within 2 weeks			89.92	87.70	NA	Green
2,292 out of 2,549 in 2021/22. This is a new performance indicator, therefore we have no comparative data. This figure has remained steady over the last half of 2021/22. Reasons for visits falling out of compliance are recorded and those children subject to child protection visits are ordinarily seen by a number of professionals every two weeks i.e. Health Visitors, Schools etc.						
PI/528 - Percentage of Statutory Visits to Looked After Children that took place in accordance with regulations			92.48	87.70	NA	Green
2,461 out of 2,661 2021/22. This is a new performance indicator therefore we have no comparative data. This continues to be a priority for Children's Services and Principal officers are working closely with team managers and staff members to ensure that visits are completed in timescale and are entered onto the system in a timely manner.						
PI/529 - Percentage of 'New' Comprehensive Assessments completed during the year where there is evidence that the child has been seen			91.49	68.30	NA	Green
1,072 out of 1,281 in 2021/22. This is a new performance indicator therefore we have no comparative data. This measure is a priority to Children's Services and going forward we endeavour to see all children as part of a new assessment. Children's Services understand the importance of child participation within the assessment and the voice of the child.						
PI/530 - CH/001 – Number of 'new' contacts received by statutory social services during the year			12807.00		NA	NA
12,807 new contacts received in 2021/22. This is a new performance indicator therefore we have no comparative data. This figure is a reflection of the increase in pressures we are seeing in our Single Point of Contact Team.						
PI/531 - CH/003 – Number of 'new' contacts received where a decision was made by the end of the next working day			12807.00		NA	NA
12,807 in 2021/22. This is a new performance indicator therefore we have no comparative data. As a working model, we ensure that all contacts are sighted and acted upon within 24 hours and this is reflected in the data.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/532 - CH/021 – The number of Strategy Meetings held during the year that progressed to Section 47 Enquiries			271.00		NA	NA
This is a new performance indicator, therefore we have no comparative data. To give some context to this measure, 887 strategy meetings were held across the service during 2021/22, of which, only 271 progressed to Section 47 enquiries. There are many reasons for this: children and families are re-diverted to other services following a strategy meeting or to care and support. What is important to note that each of these meetings brings together professionals from across the partnership to share information and determine next steps to mitigate risk(s).						
PI/533 - CH/022 – The number of Section 47 Enquiries that progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference			92.00		NA	NA
92 in 2021/22. This is a new performance metric therefore we have no comparative data. 271 Section 47 enquiries were completed in 2021/22, with 81% of those enquiries finding risk (220). Just 19% found no risk and concluded by way of support. This conversion rate is the number of Section 47 enquiries triggered and finding risk has remained steady and gives a confidence in decision-making.						
PI/534 - CH/025 – The number of Child Protection Conferences held within timescale			78.00		NA	NA
78 in 2021/22. This is a new performance metric therefore we have no comparative data. Conferences that fell out of timescales were all for valid reasons: chair-person sick, key professional unavailable. Prior to a Conference falling out of timescales efforts are made to keep within the timescales and if this is not possible then a Principal Officer must authorise the Conference to go out of timescales.						
PI/535 - CH/033 – The number of children reported during the year where Child Exploitation was factor (includes, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Trafficking)			56.00		NA	NA
56 in 2021/22. This is a new performance metric therefore we have no comparative data. This number continues to increase as the Local Authority continues to develop its response to harm outside the family home. The Local Authority and Partner agencies are seeking to identify, early on, those children vulnerable to exploitation.						
PI/536 - CH/054a – The number of care experienced young people who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 12 months since leaving care		8.00	7.00		NA	NA
7 out of 11 in 2021/22 compared to 8 out of 18 in 2020/21. There has been a concentrated effort by the service to support care leavers to engage in employment, education or training.						













Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/537 - CH/054b – The number of care experienced young people who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 24 months since leaving care		13.00	6.00		 NA	 NA
6 out of 18 in 2021/22 compared to 13 out of 33 in 2020/21. The majority of young people who have not completed at least 3 months of employment, education or training in the past 24 months since leaving care have mitigating factors which prevent them to do so.						
PI/538 - CA/012 – The number of contacts by Young Carers received by statutory social services during the year where advice or assistance was provided			16.00		 NA	 NA
16 contacts for Young Carers received 2021/22. This is a new performance indicator therefore we have no comparative data. This performance metric is subject to fluctuation as contact can also be made direct to the Youth Service, who deliver the Young Carer's Service. Children's Services work closely with the Young Carer's Service to ensure that children are identified.						
PI/539 - CA/014 – The total number of young carers needs assessments undertaken during the year			63.00		 NA	 NA
17 Young Carer assessments undertaken in 2021/22. This is a new performance indicator therefore we have no comparative data. As a service, we expected this number to increase after the Covid -19 lockdown restrictions were eased. We would have identified the needs of young carers through our day to day work and assessed them accordingly, along with those who referred in for a Young Carer's Assessment.						
CP/009 - Percentage of children in care who had to move 3 or more times	7.77	4.08		8.00	 NA	 NA
This information is populated by Welsh Government from the Looked After Children Census later in the year. No data is available until that process is complete.						
CP/011 - Measure 24 - Percentage of child assessments completed on time	98.76	97.71	99.15	94.00	 Green	 Green
2,454 out of 2,475 in 2021/22 compared to 2,608 out of 2,669 in 2020/21. This continues to be a priority for Children's Services. There is an expectation that assessments are completed in timescale and only those with exceptional circumstances should be agreed with Principal officers to go beyond timescale.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
Environment Directorate						
CP/018 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured: Child casualties (0 -15 years)	3.00	0.00	1.00	No target set	 NA	 NA
Unfortunately we have to report that there was one seriously injured child within the borough during the 2021 calendar year. Our full programme of interventions continues at pace.						
CP/019 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured - Pedal cyclist casualties (All Ages)	0.00	1.00	0.00	No target set	 NA	 NA
A positive outcome for 2021 as there were no pedal cyclist killed or seriously injured within the borough during the calendar year, despite increased numbers of cyclists on our highway.						
CP/020 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured - Young Drivers (16 -24 years)	1.00	1.00	0.00	No target set	 NA	 NA
A positive outcome for 2021 as there were no young drivers killed or seriously injured within the borough during the calendar year. Our Pass Plus Cymru intervention continues together with our education in our sixth forms and colleges.						
2 Well-being Objective 2 - To improve the Well-being of all adults who live in the county borough						
Chief Executives Directorate						
CP/025 - Number of compulsory redundancies made by the Council	9.00	2.00	3.00	No target set	 NA	 NA
There were 3 compulsory redundancies during 2021/22. We continue to work to minimise the number of compulsory redundancies, by providing redeployment opportunities for employees. Thereby maximising continuity of employment for at risk employees.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/119 - Benefits - Average days taken for new claims and changes of circumstances – application to assessment	2.30	3.10	2.73	6.00	 Green	 Green
Performance continues to be high and well within target levels.						
PI/413 - Percentage of correctly granted benefit against total granted	99.96	99.97	99.98	99.95	 Green	 Green
A high accuracy rate continues to be maintained in processing claims.						
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning Directorate						
CP/034 - Percentage of incidents of domestic abuse where people are repeat victims - Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service - highest risk victims	40.05	37.30	34.67	32.00	 Green	 Red
<p>94.7% (181 of 522) of incidents of domestic abuse were repeat victims, whilst still above our target of 32%, the figure has reduced on the previous two years. Work continues to support those victims with more complex needs, who may need additional support, support over a longer term or who may drop out of support and later return. Repeat cases can indicate a greater confidence and reassurance in victims to report domestic abuse and seek support and assistance, but can highlight any areas of the local multi-agency responses that may be less effective. We continue to review repeat cases routinely in order to identify any trends or specific areas of learning.</p>						
PI/153 - Number of referrals of high risk victims to the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) service	432.00	437.00	522.00	450.00	 Red	 Red
Q4 referrals appear higher than previous quarters with a peak in demand in February, it is unclear at this point the reason for this peak however we continue to monitor and analyse the data to identify any trends or points to note. A more accurate reflection of demand on the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) Service needs to be considered over a longer period. Total referrals for the year show as 19% increase in demand on the Service compared to 2020/21.						
PI/154 - Number of new members to Paws on Patrol	81.00	96.00	289.00	100.00	 Green	 Green
<p>A number of promotional engagement events have taken place during the year at locations including Aberavon Beach Front, International Women’s Day – Castle Hotel, Neath, Seven Sisters Community Hall and Ysbryd Y Mor, Aberavon Beachfront.</p> <p>There is also a steady flow of new members signing up online and a number of requests have been received for PAWS events in different areas across the authority. There has been excellent progress during this financial year, despite the challenges of Covid-19 and changing restrictions.</p>						











Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/469 - Number of people referred to the Channel Panel who were no longer deemed vulnerable following intervention by the Panel	7.00	7.00	6.00	7.00	 NA	 NA
A total of 6 new referrals were received into Channel Panel. All were monitored and/or received an appropriate support intervention to ensure they are no longer deemed vulnerable. When cases are closed to Channel, they are all brought back for a 6 month review.						
CP/116 - Communities for Work – priority 1 (age 25+): number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience or sustainable employment		72.00	50.00	86.00	 Red	 Red
A difficult year for our P1 (25+) age category – engagements have been hard to meet our target group and referrals have been quiet. However this is being seen across Wales. Towards the end of the year, staff were able to re-engage in our outreach settings, and we are starting to organise specific events to see customers face to face. It is hoped that 3 community venues or Hubs will be operating in the new financial year which will encourage sector specific events to target this group. New indicator for 2021/22.						
CP/117 - Communities for Work – Priority 3 (age 16-24): number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience, full time education or sustainable employment		47.00	134.00	44.00	 Green	 Green
Priority 3, 16-24 year olds have continued to exceed targets. Our young people have actively searched for jobs, engaged with our mentors to upskill, train and job search. New indicator for 2021/22.						
CP/118 - Communities for Work Plus – Programme for age 16+: number of people helped to gain training, volunteering, work experience, sustainable employment or those who are in “in work poverty”		159.00	525.00	300.00	 Green	 Green
At the start of 2021/22, we were starting to see those who are most vulnerable face to face at Tir Morfa Centre. Referrals continued to come into the programme throughout the year and targets have been met at every quarter during the year. Quarter 3 allowed for staff to attend outreach venues and organise events for targeted work. We are also working alongside our Human Resources department to develop systems and processes to encourage people to apply for jobs in NPTC. Our Digital Chrome Books Loan Scheme continues to be well utilised by those applying and searching for jobs. It was encouraging to see at the tail end of the year, engagement increasing further. As the increasing referrals started to come in a steady flow, staff were able to organise and attend events to re-engage in their communities. 2 Jobs Fairs were organised during March, and it was nice to see people coming back wanting the help and support to apply and search for jobs.						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/415 - Percentage of National Exercise Referral Scheme clients who completed the exercise programme	79.18		57.08		NA	NA
The service had 1,242 referrals (2019/20) compared to 629 (2021/22) a reduction of 50%. This was expected as this service did not fully resume until July 2021, this combined with our client base being primarily vulnerable adults, the appetite to go out and exercise was reduced. The service still offer virtual sessions but thrives on social interactions. The service is still seeing a reduction in referrals not helped by the new triage system being used currently in most GP practices. The service has a robust plan in place to address this.						
PI/416 - Percentage of clients participating in the National Exercise Referral Scheme whose health had improved on completion of the exercise programme	63.82		63.73		NA	NA
The service had 1,242 referrals (2019/20) compared to 629 (2021/22) a reduction of 50%. This was expected as this service did not fully resume until July 2021, this combined with our client base being primarily vulnerable adults, the appetite to go out and exercise was reduced. The service still offer virtual sessions but thrives on social interactions. The service is still seeing a reduction in referrals not helped by the new triage system being used currently in most GP practices. The service has a robust plan in place to address this.						
Social Services , Health and Housing Directorate						
CP/031 - Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless	51.50	66.67	60.67	60.00	Red	Green
236 of 389 for 2021/22. Prevention work has continued to be a priority but had its challenges during the pandemic due to limitations on the work that could be carried out. The capacity of the prevention team has now been increased and the work will continue to be as focused as possible with early intervention being the key.						
CP/032 - Average calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant	196.00	363.20	339.51	270.00	Green	Red
202 DFG's completed/68,581 calendar days taken in 2021/22. The disruption caused by the Pandemic is reflected in the time being taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants. Delays from the initial lockdowns and disruption to both material supplies and labour shortages continued during this period.						
PI/517 - Measure 19 - Rate of people kept in hospital while waiting for social care per 1,000 population aged 75+	10.05			3.50		NA
Unable to calculate this Performance Indicator as no data has been provided by Welsh Government since March 2020 due to Covid-19. However, we continue to closely monitor and endeavour to support the number of people in hospital that are awaiting social care whenever possible.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/521 - AD/004 The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year			1052.00		 NA	 NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. The teams are continuing to undertake assessments for adults in need of care and support.						
PI/521a - AD/005a The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year where needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan			846.00		 NA	 NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. The majority of adults who received an assessment, were eligible for care and support from the Local Authority.						
PI/521b - AD/005b The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year where needs were able to be met by any other means			180.00		 NA	 NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. Alternative ways of meeting some people's needs were identified. Numbers increased in the last quarter for this measure from 85 in the first nine months of 2021/22 to 180 for the full year.						
PI/521c - AD/005c The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year where there were no eligible needs to be met			26.00		 NA	 NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. Only a small number of people who had an assessment were identified as having no eligible needs.						
PI/522 - AD/010 The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year			185.00		 NA	 NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. Flow out of the service remains low with the ongoing difficulties within the Domiciliary care market.						
PI/522a - AD/011a The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year which reduced the need for support			36.00		 NA	 NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. There were 36 clients who have successfully completed the reablement service needing a reduced level of care and support.						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/522b - AD/011b The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year which maintained the need for the same level of support			23.00		NA	NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. We have seen an increase in complex cases which is reflected in the number of clients requiring ongoing care.						
PI/522c - AD/011c The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year which mitigated the need for support			118.00		NA	NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. Due to carrying a large number of delays in ongoing transfers of care we have had reduced capacity to take on new clients.						
PI/523 - AD/020 The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during the year			1368.00		NA	NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. Reports have increased over the year. We are now moving out of the Pandemic but it is too early at this stage make any inferences on the data. The Local Authority will always welcome reports and more pleasingly AD/023 (below) shows the conversion rate from Report to Enquiry at 18%.						
PI/524 - AD/023 The total number of reports of an adult suspect of being at risk where it was necessary for enquiries to be made			246.00		NA	NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. The conversion rate from Report to enquiries has remained steady across the 4 Quarters of 2021/22. The conversion rate from 'Report to Enquiry' is 18%.						
PI/525 - AD/024 The total number of AAR (Adult at Risk) enquiries completed within 7 days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse			150.00		NA	NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. Only 61% of enquiries were completed within 7 days. However, these cases remain under review and as for the previous quarters, the issue of complexity is the most sighted reason for these cases moving beyond 7 days, which is permitted.						
PI/526 - CA/004 The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year			167.00		NA	NA
New performance indicator from 1/4/2021. Local Authority Officers continue to work with the Carer's Service concerning carer's assessments.						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
Environment Directorate						
CP/019 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured - Pedal cyclist casualties (All Ages)	0.00	1.00	0.00	No target set	NA	NA
A positive outcome for 2021 as there were no pedal cyclist killed or seriously injured within the borough during the calendar year, despite increased numbers of cyclists on our highway.						
CP/040 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured: Older Drivers (75 years and over)	0.00	0.00	1.00	No target set	NA	NA
Unfortunately we have to report one fatality during the 2021 calendar year. There were no highway implications to report.						
CP/041 - Road Safety - Killed or seriously injured: Motorcyclists - all Ages	6.00	1.00	3.00	No target set	NA	NA
Unfortunately we have to report one fatality within this category with a further two riders seriously injured during the 2021 calendar year. Our Bike Safe, Dragon Rider Cymru and FBOS (First Bike on Scene - a motorcycle intervention First aid for Bikers) interventions continue apace.						
CP/021 - Number of new business start-up enquiries assisted	273.00	199.00	244.00	250.00	Green	Amber
For a significant period during 2021/22, officers were involved in administering Welsh Government Emergency grant payments to businesses affected by Covid restrictions. Consequently, enquiries for information and advice to support new business start-ups, was slow at the beginning of 2021/22, gathered momentum during quarter 2 and quarter 3 but then slowed down again in quarter 4. We anticipate activity rates will rise significantly in the next financial year as service delivery starts to return to normal.						
CP/042 - Percentage of food establishments that meet food hygiene standards	95.15	96.00	96.62	95.00	Green	Green
Performance remains high, and represents premises which have been awarded Food Hygiene Ratings of 3 or 4 or 5 (out of 5).						













Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/110 - Workways + - Number of people helped back to work , training or volunteering	127.00	58.00	112.00	72.00	 Green	 Green
Workways+ continues to exceed its target in supported unemployed individuals into employment, training, volunteering and/or work experience. Referral numbers are steadily increasing following the pandemic and support has increased for those with poor mental health and confidence issues.						
CP/112 - Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use		0.00		4.30	 NA	 NA
No data reported for 2021/22. There are issues with obtaining data from other internal sources for this performance indicator. Steps are being taken to rectify this during 2022/23.						
PI/367 - PPN/001ii - Percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for Food Hygiene		13.90	9.98	100.00	 Red	 Red
Performance is low, as the thrust of inspections was changed to relate to the Recovery Plan (as agreed between Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities). Inspections have been concentrated primarily on new food businesses, rather than existing businesses, unless a complaint was received. Under the Recovery Plan, any overdue inspections are to be addressed in 2022/23.						
PI/412 - Number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use			5.00		 NA	 NA
The availability of the empty homes grant has created a number of new homes, which has brought a wasted resources in Neath Port Talbot back into use. No target set for 2021/22. No data available for 2019/20 or 2020/21 due to the pandemic.						
PI/423 - Percentage of long term problematic empty private properties being brought back into use by direct action		3.28	10.00		 Green	 NA
The service is targeting the problematic empty property, a further 7 properties have gone through the Enforced Sales Procedure process and changed ownership but have not yet been reoccupied. No target set for 2021/22.						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/424 - Number of new homes delivered which are affordable - LDP Target	18.00		0.00	111.00	 NA	 Red
<p>No affordable homes or commuted sum payments were provided through the planning system (via section 106 agreements) during 2021/22. Whilst delivery through this method is disappointing, Coastal Housing Association, through Social Housing Grant (SHG), delivered 12 affordable housing units.</p> <p>The rate of affordable housing delivery has been influenced by the low levels of market housing delivered in recent years and due to issues with viability. These issues will be addressed through the LDP (Local Development Plan) review.</p>						
PI/429 - Level of unmet need for gypsy and traveller pitches within the county borough	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	 Green	 Green
<p>The extension to Cae Garw (11 new residential pitches) was completed in 2016 and based on the findings of the 2016 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was sufficient to meet the needs of the community in Neath Port Talbot up to 2021.</p> <p>Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 a new GTAA was due to be completed by February 2021. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the deadline to submit a new GTAA was extended until February 2022.</p> <p>The GTAA survey work was undertaken in summer/autumn 2021 and a draft GTAA was prepared and approved by Cabinet for submission the 9th February 2022. The Draft GTAA 2022 concludes a need for 10 pitches during the plan period and was submitted to Welsh Government on the 22nd February 2022. The Draft GTAA 2022 has been acknowledged and we are currently awaiting feedback from the Welsh Government.</p>						
PI/456 - Number of enterprise events held	11.00	9.00	12.00	12.00	 Green	 Green
<p>Enterprise Clubs provide essential advice and support to local residents considering starting up their own businesses. Throughout 2021/22, the service has been delivered virtually but they will resume face to face in the next financial year.</p>						
PI/457- Number of completed training weeks for apprenticeship, traineeships and work experience	771.00	2026.00	2844.00		 Green	 NA
<p>Despite onsite restrictions and staff and supply shortages throughout 2021/22, work on Council construction projects progressed well with projects offering various training and work experience opportunities to local people. This occurred despite one of the main contractors going into administration early in the year. Outputs achieved have been more than satisfactory due to ongoing disruptions that have affected the construction sector over the past 2 years as a result of the Covid restrictions.</p> <p>No target set for 2021/22.</p>						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/462 - Number of business enquires assisted resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies through Business Services	728.00	2242.00	711.00		NA	NA
<p>Throughout 2021/22, the team have processed an unprecedented amount of enquiries from local businesses relating to issues such as Covid emergency payments, requests for Council funding to support expansion and investment projects, property enquiries, etc. It is anticipated that demand for services, support and advice will continue to increase into the next financial year.</p> <p>No target set for 2021/22.</p>						
PI/518 - Trading Standards - Percentage of businesses that were either compliant when visited or brought into compliance during the period			80.72	75.00	NA	Green
<p>New performance indicator for 2021/22. Despite this figure meeting the target, the statistic belies the number of outstanding breaches and investigations that need to be resolved. The service has been begun a period of significant staffing disruption due to sickness and other demands. It is hoped that cover for staff will be provided, but we anticipate that we may not be able to meet this target next year, particularly as a number of large scale fraud, food and product safety investigations loom over the service.</p>						
PI/519 - Trading Standards - Percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for Trading Standards & Animal Health			100.00	100.00	NA	Green
<p>New performance indicator for 2021/22. This statistic disguises the fact that although the service has managed to inspect all businesses within the period, inspection rates at lower risk premises have suffered and certain aspects of Trading Standards work are being de-prioritised. We expect this trend to continue in the new year with the forthcoming staff disruption unless cover and resources are provided.</p>						
PI/520 - Trading Standards- Redress obtained for consumers or victims of crime by service actions			184559.00		NA	NA
<p>New performance indicator for 2021/22.</p> <p>This is a particularly productive year, but this figure is anomalous due to 2 high profile cases that "paid out" in 2021/22 and is unlikely to be repeated for 2022/23.</p>						











Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
3 Well-being Objective 3 - To develop the local economy and environment so that the well-being of people can be improved						
Chief Executives Directorate						
PI/325 - Legal Services - Successful Prosecutions for unauthorised waste disposal		7.00	0.00		 NA	 NA
Covid has impacted the number of instructions during 2021/22. Client officers were not interviewing due to further Covid restrictions. There were 7 successful prosecutions recorded in 2020/21. There is no target set for this measure.						
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate						
PE/072 - Number of visits to our theatres	217161.00		105647.00		 NA	 NA
There has been a fall in visitor numbers to theatres compared to 2019/20 due to Covid -19. The Princess Royal Theatre was also leased to the NHS during January and February 2022. No data available for 2020/21 and no target set in the 2021/23 Corporate Plan due to Covid -19.						
CP/073 - Percentage of quality Indicators achieved by the Library Service	72.22				 NA	 NA
As a result of the disruption to library services across Wales caused by the pandemic, Welsh Government have advised that no data relating to measurable quality indicators will be published for 2020/21 or 2021/22. It is expected that for 2022/23 a full set of data will be available in the second half of 2023. The most recent available set of data for 2019/20 stated that the Service achieved 72% of the measurable quality indicators. No target set due to Covid-19.						
CP/074 - Number of visits to leisure centres per 1,000 population	7758.12		4810.49		 NA	 NA
There has been a fall in visitor numbers to leisure centres per 1,000 population compared to 2019/20 figure due to Covid -19. The figure is increasing steadily from quarter 3 2021/22. No data available for 2020/21 and no target set in the 2021/23 Corporate Plan due to Covid -19.						











Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
ELLL - LCL001 - The number of visits to public libraries during the year, per 1,000 population	4877.51	585.03	1918.73	4800.00	 Green	 Red
<p>Throughout 2021/22 libraries have been severely restricted in the range of services that they can provide as a result of Covid safety measures. This has had a negative effect on visitor figures.</p> <p>Library closures during the pandemic resulted in moving the service online and working to enhance all aspects of the digital offer, and digital downloads of eBooks and eAudio books increased by 100% in 2020/21 and this continued into 2021/22. This enhanced digital offer will result in reduced Library Service website figures as we increase the number of ways that our members can interact with the Service digitally.</p>						
Environment Directorate						
CP/067- Percentage of waste, reused, recycled or composted	61.74	67.56	66.00	64.00	 Amber	 Green
<p>62,870.15 tonnes of 64,951.26 tonnes.</p> <p>The overall recycling performance for 2021/22 is 66.00%, so the Council has successfully exceeded the current statutory target of 64%.</p> <p>Whilst the council has exceeded the current nationally set target, performance is down by 1.56% compared to last year. While it is good news that overall waste was down, by some 2,400 tonnes, it can also be seen that between Kerbside Collections & Recycling Centres, the level of dry recyclables collected was also down some 630 tonnes. In addition, the recycling of Incinerator Bottom Ash was down by some 1,260 tonnes due to issues with the availability of outlets in 2021/22 that make good use of the bottom ash.</p> <p>It is noted that figures from other councils in Wales provided on WasteDataFlow at the time of writing indicates that 12 out of the 22 local authorities have experienced a decrease in recycling performance in 2021/22 when compared to the previous year. This may reflect changes in purchasing and dining habits, or continued working from home changes, as Covid restrictions have changed and been removed.</p> <p>There is a planned review of the Council's waste strategy later in the year, including all-member seminars, when members will need to consider decisions and actions to ensure that the Council meets or exceeds the next statutory target of 70% in 2024/25.</p> <p>All figures presented are subject to validation by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).</p>						
PI/346 - WMT/010i - The percentage of local authority municipal waste prepared for re-use	0.24	0.04	0.18		 Green	 NA
PI/347 - WMT/010ii - The percentage of local authority municipal waste: incinerator bottom Ash/Residual waste recycling rate.	2.30	10.18	8.61		 Red	 NA









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/348 - WMT/010ii - The percentage of local authority municipal waste: Kerbside dry recycling rate	22.02	23.43	22.12		 Red	 NA
PI/349 - WMT/010ii - The percentage of local authority municipal waste: Household Waste Recycling Centres dry recycling rate	19.84	16.80	18.62		 Green	 NA
PI/350 - WMT/010iii - The percentage of local authority municipal waste collected as source segregated Bio-wastes and composted or treated biologically in another way	17.22	17.11	16.48		 Amber	 NA
CP/068 - Kilograms of residual waste generated per person	182.02	209.70	204.37		 Green	 NA
<p>Page 36 of 36</p> <p>The overall level of collected waste in 2021/22 reduced by some 2,400 tonnes resulting in an improvement in this performance indicator from 209.7kgs/person to 204.37kgs/person).</p>						
CP/069 - Percentage of streets that are clean	93.86	90.98	92.85	91.00	 Green	 Green
<p>The figure of 92.85% for streets that are clean is representative of the year's performance. However, it should be noted that whilst full year data has been recorded and is available for 75% of the study area, there is only data from April to December available for the remaining 25%.</p>						
CP/070 - Average number of days to clear fly-tipping	2.97	2.84	4.52	2.84	 Red	 Red
<p>Full year 2021/22 data is 5,042 days/1,115 incidents: 4.52 days. Although the number of reported fly-tipping incidents has reduced (1,566 incidents in 2020/21), the time it takes to remove the waste has increased. This was mainly due to redeployment of some staff into Waste Services to support with impacts of the pandemic along with general staff resource issues also due to the pandemic.</p>						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/063 - The number of jobs created/safeguarded as a result of financial support by the local authority	610.00	470.00	410.00	280.00	 Red	 Green
The team dealt with a high number of quality funding applications from local businesses and new investors looking to grow, diversify and/or invest in their operations throughout 2021/22. While some projects have been delayed due to supply chain issues caused by the pandemic and Brexit, many are continuing to deliver substantial investment projects that are supporting employment and the recovery of the local economy.						
CP/078 - Number of PM10 breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot / Taibach)	7.00	16.00	27.00	35.00	 Red	 Green
Breaches are measured from Port Talbot Fire Station, which is the official monitoring station for reporting on the air quality objective. Ratified data shows 27 breaches from April 2021 to March 2022.						
CP/083 - Percentage of A roads in poor condition	4.99	3.38	2.55	5.00	 Green	 Green
55% of A roads are in poor overall condition. This is better than our target of 5% for 2021/22 and is an improvement on the 2020/21 figure of 3.4%. The Authority is responsible for the maintenance of a road network approximately 855 kilometres in length. The network is subject to a comprehensive range of technical surveys and inspections each year and the resultant information is evaluated to produce a prioritised list of schemes in line with the resources available. This process helps to ensure that limited finances are spent to best effect. Consequently, some sections of road identified by the performance indicators as being 'in poor overall condition' (based on SCANNeR data) have been included in recent works programmes. In addition, investment has also been directed towards other sections of the A class network that display different defect characteristics to those reported by SCANNeR. It is anticipated that improvements on the authority's A class roads will be reflected in the KPI figures over the next year as the SCANNeR survey recognises the benefits of the recent surfacing works undertaken along the A class road network.						
CP/084 - Percentage of B roads in poor condition	2.84	2.09	1.87	5.00	 Green	 Green
1.9% of B roads are in poor overall condition. This is better than our target of 5% for 2021/22 and is an improvement on the 2021/22 figure of 2.4%. The Authority is responsible for the maintenance of a road network approximately 855 kilometres in length. The network is subject to a comprehensive range of technical surveys and inspections each year and the resultant information is evaluated to produce a prioritised list of schemes in line with the resources available. This process helps to ensure that limited finances are spent to best effect. Consequently, some sections of road identified by the performance indicators as being 'in poor overall condition' (based on SCANNeR data) have been included in recent works programmes. In addition, investment has also been directed towards other sections of the B class network that display different defect characteristics to those reported by SCANNeR. It is anticipated that improvements on the authority's B class roads will be reflected in the KPI figures over the next year as the SCANNeR survey recognises the benefits of the recent surfacing works undertaken along the B class road network.						









Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/085 - Percentage of C roads in poor condition	5.68	4.78	4.17	10.00	 Green	 Green
<p>4.17% of C roads are in poor overall condition. This is better than our target of 10% for 2021/22 and is an improvement on the 2020/21 figure of 4.78%.</p> <p>The Authority is responsible for the maintenance of a road network approximately 855 kilometres in length. The network is subject to a comprehensive range of technical surveys and inspections each year and the resultant information is evaluated to produce a prioritised list of schemes in line with the resources available. This process helps to ensure that limited finances are spent to best effect. Consequently, some sections of road identified by the performance indicators as being 'in poor overall condition' (based on SCANNeR data) have been included in recent works programmes. In addition, investment has also been directed towards other sections of the C class network that display different defect characteristics to those reported by SCANNeR. It is anticipated that improvements on the authority's C class roads will be reflected in the KPI figures over the next 3 years as the SCANNeR survey recognises the benefits of the recent surfacing works undertaken along the C class road network.</p>						
CP/120 - Extent of land under Council ownership or control that is protected and/or under appropriate management for biodiversity: Part A: Area (hectares)	179.39	179.39	160.65	179.40	 Red	 Red
<p>The figure is based on the current list of nature conservation sites, which includes Local Nature Reserves, areas that are currently being worked on under grant funded projects and sites under the NPT Bee Friendly scheme.</p> <p>The Working with Nature sites were removed due to the Welsh Government grant coming to an end and a delay to a new grant starting. Additional sites were added as part of the NPT Bee Friendly scheme.</p>						
CP/121 - Extent of land under Council ownership or control that is protected and/or under appropriate management for biodiversity: Part B: Length (km)	22.79	22.79	23.12	22.80	 Green	 Green
<p>The figure is based on the current list of nature conservation sites, which includes Local Nature Reserves, areas that are currently being worked on under grant funded projects and sites under the NPT Bee Friendly scheme.</p>						
CP/113 - Percentage of all planning applications determined in time	97.44	95.40	86.94	95.00	 Red	 Red
<p>712 of 819 for 2021/22 compared to 663 of 695 for 2020/21 financial year.</p> <p>The planning department is experiencing a significant rise in application numbers and other related workloads during 2021/22, at a time when experienced staff including the development manager have also been lost and existing staff are under pressure, with a larger number of complex applications extending beyond anticipated timescales. This has led to a period where we have been unable to consistently gain agreement from agents for 'extensions of time', leading to a reduction in performance. However, it is anticipated that this is a short-term blip which can be addressed through greater engagement with applicants and agents throughout the applications process. Plus recruitment of replacement staff.</p>						





Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/280 - Percentage of planning appeals dismissed	50.00	76.92	43.75	66.00	 Red	 Red
While performance is currently below expectations (3.5 out of 8 appeals dismissed) given the small number of appeals determined it is considered that the basis for the determination remains robust and no further action is necessary at this time.						
PI/366 - PLA/M002 - Planning - Average time taken from receipt of application to date decision is issued - days	69.91	76.79	97.62	90.00	 Red	 Red
79,949 days for 819 applications. The planning department is experiencing a significant rise in application numbers and other related workloads during 2021/22, at a time when experienced staff have also been lost including the development manager and existing staff are under pressure, with a larger number of applications extending beyond anticipated timescales. This has led to a period where applications are on average taking longer to determine, leading to a reduction in performance. However efforts continue to maintain performance despite the undoubted pressures being experienced by the team, notably from 'large scale major development' pressure. Recent recruitment should provide an improvement over the next year.						
PI/370 - BCT/007 – The percentage of ‘full plan’ applications approved first time.	94.84	94.94	99.23	95.00	 Green	 Green
Near maximum performance in an indicator that measures how well we interact with our customers and assist them in obtaining approval for controlled building work.						
PI/371 - BCT/004 – Percentage of Building Control ‘full plan’ applications checked within 15 working days during the year.	97.42	98.73	100.00	96.00	 Green	 Green
Maximum performance which demonstrates we are checking all Full Plan applications promptly to facilitate a quick decision for our customers.						
PI/372 - PLA/004d - The percentage of all other planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks	79.72	75.45	65.85	81.00	 Red	 Red
162 of 246. The planning department is experiencing a significant rise in application numbers and other related workloads during 2021/22, at a time when experienced staff have also been lost and existing staff are under pressure, with a larger number of applications extending beyond anticipated timescales. This has led to a period where applications are on average taking longer to determine, leading to a reduction in performance. However efforts continue to maintain performance despite the undoubted pressures being experienced by the team, notably from 'large scale major development' pressure.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/373 - PLA/M004 - The percentage of major planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks	31.58	25.00	7.14	40.00	 Red	 Red
1 out of 14. The planning department is experiencing a significant rise in application numbers and other related workloads during 2021/22, at a time when experienced staff have also been lost including the Development Manager and existing staff are under pressure, with a larger number of applications extending beyond anticipated timescales. Major development are almost always, in such an environment, going to take longer than 8 weeks to determine. The significant upsurge in large scale major developments will, in future, inevitably mean that this target will be difficult to achieve. However it is most important to ensure that we work collaboratively with developers to meet their own timescales wherever practicable, including negotiating Planning Performance Agreements to assist in resourcing the planning and related services.						
PI/374 - PLA/004c - The percentage of householder planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks	91.21	76.87	71.16	97.00	 Red	 Red
659 out of 378. The planning department is experiencing a significant rise in application numbers and other related workloads during 2021/22, at a time when experienced staff have also been lost and existing staff are under pressure, with a larger number of applications extending beyond anticipated timescales. However the performance on householder development has suffered more than expected, due to the workload having to be shared over less officers due to workload pressures. Efforts, are being made to ensure that we are closer to achieving the previously very high performance levels.						
PI/375 - PLA/004b - The percentage of minor planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks	78.11	57.58	44.20	80.00	 Red	 Red
80 out of 181. The planning department is experiencing a significant rise in application numbers and other related workloads during 2021/22, at a time when experienced staff have also been lost and existing staff are under pressure, with a larger number of applications extending beyond anticipated timescales. However the performance on minor applications has suffered more than expected, and efforts are continuing to be made to ensure that we are closer to achieving the previously very high performance levels.						
PI/376 - PLA/002 - The percentage of applications for development determined during the year that were approved	97.84	96.55	94.51	95.00	 Amber	 Amber
774 out of 819. Performance remains in accordance with historical levels.						
PI/380 - PLA/M001 – Planning - Average time taken from receipt of application to validation of application – days.	11.92	12.76	16.92	15.00	 Red	 Red
Seeing a slight improvement over the last quarter of 2021/2022 but generally a small increase over the year. The planning department is experiencing a significant rise in application numbers and other related workloads during 2021/22, at a time when experienced staff have also been lost and existing staff are under pressure. Regrettably this has had a knock on impact on the validation of applications, although efforts are being made to address matters, including returning invalid applications if shortcomings are not addressed inside 14 days. And providing design and scheme improvement prior to registration.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/430 - Percentage of private water supplies where a risk assessment has been carried out in accordance with drinking water standards		100.00	0.00	100.00	 Red	 Red
No risk assessments were undertaken on private water supplies during 2021/22 due due to work pressures and due to Covid-19 restrictions, however, alternative means of intervention is undertaken in accordance with instruction from the Drinking Water Inspectorate.						
PI/432 - Number of accessible routes increases (by Kilometres) in accordance with the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) - Pedestrian routes	0.00	0.00	-14.34	2.00	 Red	 Red
Due to the Welsh Government amending the Active Travel auditing criteria, the amount of accessible pedestrian routes that meet active travel standards have reduced by 14.34km (from 47.143 km to 32.803 km). Additionally, a new criterion: Number of accessible route increases (by KM) in accordance with the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) – Shared Use , will be added as an additional performance indicator (PI) to the 2022/23 report next year. As of 31st March 22', we currently have 28.284 km of shared use routes, which meet active travel standards in NPT.						
PI/433 - Number of accessible routes increases (by Kilometres) in accordance with the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) - Cycle routes	2.88	3.75	-24.19	2.00	 Red	 Red
Due to the Welsh Government amending the Active Travel auditing criteria, the amount of accessible cycling routes that meet active travel standards have reduced by 24.191 km (from 36.402 km to 12.211 km). Additionally, a new criterion: Number of accessible route increases (by KM) in accordance with the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) – Shared Use , will be added as an additional Performance indicator (PI) to the 2022/23 report next year. As of 31st March 22', we currently have 28.284 km of shared use routes, which meet active travel standards in NPT.						
PI/458 - Number of visitors to Neath Town Centre					 NA	 NA
Footfall counters have been installed, but no meaningful data available as yet.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/459- Bring forward high quality office and light industrial space for inward investment expansion		38000.00	498.00		 NA	 NA
<p>The refurbishment of the offices at the former Metal Box factory has now been completed, and tenants are already taking occupation, with high demand for the remaining floor area. Further funding is being sought to bring forward additional office and light industrial space at the site.</p> <p>The refurbishment of the listed building 8 Wind Street in Neath is also now complete with high quality town centre business space now available. Works are nearing completion on the new Bay Technology Centre on Baglan Energy Park and the former Plaza Cinema in Port Talbot, both of which will provide much needed business incubation space and further developments on Harbourside will progress throughout the next financial year.</p> <p>No target set for this performance indicator.</p>						
PI/463 - % of contracts awarded to local companies as a result of delivering community benefit clauses in Council tenders	30.00	36.00	36.00		 Green	 NA
<p>Despite onsite restrictions and staff and supply shortages, work on Council construction projects has continued throughout the year with projects offering various training and work experience opportunities to local people. Despite one of the main contractors going into administration last year, outputs are more than satisfactory especially as the construction sector has been significantly affected by Covid restrictions over the past 2 years.</p> <p>No targets were set for this performance indicator because of the impact Covid had on the construction sector.</p>						
PI/464 - Number of tourism operators Supported by the Council	62.00	53.00	17.00		 Red	 NA
<p>2 new and 5 proposed tourism providers (including accommodation and activities/ attractions) have been supported during 2021/22, new or proposed accommodation mainly consisted of self-catering or campsite based accommodation within the county.</p> <p>10 existing tourism providers have also been assisted with queries ranging from compliance with current covid-19 guidance to proposals to expand current accommodation provision (including serviced accommodation and camping provision). Overall there has been a reduction in tourism sector businesses seeking assistance during 2021/22 as the sector attempts to recover from the pandemic.</p>						
PI/465 - Number of Destination Management Plan actions delivered	29.00	14.00	26.00		 Green	 NA
<p>Actions include compiling a visitor management plan, implementing strategies to manage visitor pressures at key sites and securing funding to deliver an accessible 'Changing Place' at Aberavon Seafont.</p> <p>Actions also include delivery of the Waterfall Country Park and Ride Pilot Project, installation of new interpretation at Resolven Canal Car Park and the launch of the new 'Dramatic Heart of Wales' destination website and destination marketing campaign which deliver on marketing actions within Destination Management Plan.</p> <p>Tourism Stakeholder groups for Aberavon Seafont and Afan Forest Park also recommenced and met periodically.</p>						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
4 Governance and Resources (cross cutting) - To ensure the business of the Council is managed to maximise the long term benefit for the citizens of Neath Port Talbot						
Chief Executives Directorate						
CP/086 - Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee - Sickness FTE days lost	12.13	8.13	13.28	8.40	 Red	 Red
Sickness has increased across all service areas (except for property and regeneration where it has reduced slightly.) Covid -19 confirmed is the highest cause of sickness absence, and the number of FTE days lost is more than 3 times higher for this absence reason compared to 2020/21.						
CP/088 - Number of statutory recommendations made by the Council's external auditors on strategic and operational planning arrangements	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	 Green	 Green
The Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary Report for 2021 was received in early March and was reported to Council on 16th March 2022. There were no statutory recommendations relating to the Council's external auditors on strategic and operational planning arrangements.						
CP/097 - CS/001 - Customer Services - Average customer waiting times (face to face)	8.00			10.00	 NA	 NA
No data is available for 2020/21 or 2021/22 due to Covid -19 restrictions. Customer Services has not been dealing with face-to-face callers since start of the pandemic. Since the reopening of the civic centres in a limited capacity in September 2020, only callers with appointments have been allowed entry to the Civic buildings to attend meetings with designated officers. Customer Service has not monitored these callers as they are dealt with directly with their responsible officer/Service.						
CP/098 - CS/004 - Customer Services - Percentage of customers leaving before being seen	0.34			0.50	 NA	 NA
No data is available for 2020/21 or 2021/22 due to Covid -19 restrictions. Customer Services has not been dealing with face-to-face callers since start of the pandemic. Since the reopening of the civic centres in a limited capacity in September 2020, only callers with appointments have been allowed entry to the Civic buildings to attend meetings with designated officers. Customer Service has not monitored these callers as they are dealt with directly with their responsible officer/Service.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/101 - CS/002a - Customer Services - Average time (seconds) to answer telephone calls in Welsh	45.00	51.00	57.00	40.00	 Red	 Red
<p>Full year 2021/22 performance is 57 seconds. A breakdown of performance across each of the 4 individual quarters is detailed below which shows significant improvement in the second half of 2021/2022:</p> <p>Quarter 1 (April 21 to June 21): Actual 66 Seconds We continued to maintain the Welsh language contact centre option. However, this will always reflect on the overall demand from all other incoming call demands. The number of Welsh speakers determines the average waiting time to answer. In this case as we have less Welsh speakers as a proportion of overall available staff there is likely to be an increase in wait time compared to the average on the fully staffed English speaking option.</p> <p>Quarter 2 (July 21 to September 21): Actual 76 Seconds We experienced a number of Sickness issues that effectively saw reduced staffing availability for the entire quarter. This reduced the total number of available staff by 25% throughout the quarter. This was exacerbated by the high demand placed on the staff resource during this quarter in all active queues.</p> <p>Quarter 3 (October 21 to December 21): Actual 44 Seconds As the service was back to full operational levels in Quarter 3, we saw the reduction in tri monthly performance drop from 76 seconds average answer time in quarter 2 to 44 Seconds in Quarter 3. This was enabled by having full staffing resource available and by bringing staff back into the contact centre environment. This enabled Welsh speaking staff to ensure a Welsh speaker was available by managing breaks and absences as part of the day-to-day routine.</p> <p>Quarter 4 (January 22 to March 22): Actual 49 Seconds Increased call levels to 1,215 in 2022 compared to the previous year of 1,043 in 2021 at a growth of 14% along with the limited number of Welsh speakers within the section continues to limit our ability to deal with Welsh enquiries within the target set. We continue to find that switchboard enquiries are taking considerably longer to deal with compared to pre-pandemic as services have changed their operating models to adapt. Effects on the English speaking option are amplified on the Welsh speaking service. We are continuing to attempt to counter these issues but this issue has affected the time taken to deal with generally quick enquiries with a resulting knock on effect across all services. We are countering the lack of availability in Welsh language staffing availability this by increasing Welsh speaking staffing during upcoming recruitment processes in 2022.</p>						
CP/102 - CS/002b - Customer Services - Average time (seconds) to answer telephone calls in English	52.00	43.00	44.00	40.00	 Amber	 Red
<p>Full year 2021/22 performance is 44 seconds. A breakdown of performance across each of the 4 individual quarters is detailed below which shows significant improvement in the second half of 2021/22:</p> <p>Quarter 1 (April 21 to June 21): Actual 49 Seconds</p>						

Experienced an increase change in sessional demand during quarter 1. Continued issues with failure demand in getting switchboard calls through to other areas in the council due to unavailability of staff and lack of proper voicemails to manage caller expectations. One occurrence long-term sickness and one member of staff unavailable. Customer services continued to receive additional contacts because of the Skewen flooding issues at the beginning of 2021. Considerable rise in digital contacts such as email and online forms coming into customer services including the significant increase in online Blue Badge enquiries. As a result there was an increased demand on processing resulting in less available resource to deal with telephone enquiries.

Quarter 2 (July 21 to September 21): Actual 63 Seconds

This is historically our busiest quarter. A higher number of seasonal calls affected performance. Ongoing long-term sickness with staff and staff annual leave taking place over this time resulted in a mix of higher demand and fewer resources, this affected answer times considerably. We continued to have issues with failure demand in getting switchboard calls through to other areas in the council.







Quarter 3 (October 21 to December 21): Actual 37 Seconds

Although we continued to experience long-term sickness issues with staffing measures put in place to attempt to combat call wait times, changes have started to take effect and the change in seasonal demand reduced the impact on wait to answer times. We continued working with service areas to reduce failure demand.





Quarter 4 (January 22 to March 22): Actual 24 Seconds






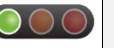


There were a number of severe storms in quarter 4, which drove demand on specific occasions. However, we no longer had long-term staff sickness in relation to contact centre staffing and we started to bring call handlers back into the Quays, which has improved team performance and resilience. We continued working with service areas to reduce failure demand.









Customer contact methods have changed throughout the year and since the beginning of 2020, we are seeing a considerable rise in digital contacts such as email and online forms coming into customer services including the significant increase in online Blue Badge enquiries.







CP/105 - CFH/008 - Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the local authority	98.71	98.06	98.90	98.00	 Green	 Green
Exceeded collection rate target for 2021/22						
CP/106 - PAY/001 - Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	94.25	93.35	94.15	95.00	 Green	 Amber
<p>The total number of invoices paid up to the end of the 4th quarter 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 was 103,865. The total paid within 30 days was 97,790. This is below the target but is within the expected level of performance. Working from home has had an impact on performance, but not significantly and we have continued to pay our suppliers despite the outbreak of the pandemic.</p> <p>During 2021/2022 the amount of interest paid to suppliers was nil. The amount of interest the council was liable to pay was £123,415.66</p>						
CP/107 - CFH/007 - Percentage of council tax due for the financial year which was received by the authority	98.07	97.54	98.01	97.00	 Green	 Green
Exceeded collection rate target for 2021/22.						











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Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/114 - Percentage of people aged 3 and over who can speak Welsh	20.62	22.47	21.98		 Amber	 NA
<p>2021/22: latest data is for the year ending December 2021. 30,200 Welsh speakers and population of people aged 3 and over in the borough was 137,400</p> <p>This data is taken from the ANNUAL datasets from the Annual Population Survey (APS) which is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The data for Wales is based on an enhanced sample (around 350 per cent larger) compared to earlier years. APS data is collected throughout the year and are published for calendar years. The data does NOT exactly match annual averages derived from the 4 quarterly datasets in each year due to differences in the sampling structure.</p> <p>With the lifting of restrictions throughout 2021/22 it has been possible for the council and its partner organisations to increase face to face activity/learning sessions to further encourage and support children and young people/parents/public to use Welsh at home and in other social settings. The year saw an increase in the number of Welsh medium childcare and primary school places, the opening of a new Welsh medium childcare setting as well as social events/activities to help the wider public learn and improve their language skills.</p> <p>More detailed progress will be available in the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Annual Report 2021/22 which will be reported in October 2022.</p>						
CP/122 - Number of new services available on line	22.00	11.00	16.00	12.00	 Green	 Green
<p>The 16 new services available on line are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New online recycling and waste guide - NPT Mayors Award online form - NPT Jobs Website - Cost of living payments - Domestic Garages online service - Mobile library service - Road Safety Online service - Redesign of the corporate web interface in line with GDS (Government Digital Service) standards - Social care workforce payment scheme - Communities for work - School based counselling - Winter fuel payment - Business rates grant - Paws on patrol registration - New online service for Safer NPT - New online service for Lost Peatlands 						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
CP/123 - Number of hits to the Corporate Website - a) Welsh pages	34045.00	23423.00	29177.00	25000.00	 Green	 Green
<p>Predicting website hits in the current climate can be extremely challenging. Officers are working to improve the navigation of the corporate website to reduce the number of page views and allow customers to access the information they need in as few clicks as possible. This will have the net impact of reducing this metric. Going forward we will be exploring 'customer satisfaction' rather than simple hit counts.</p> <p>2021-23 Corporate Plan target was to increase hits.</p>						
CP/124 - Number of hits to the Corporate Website - a) English pages	3542253.00	3980097.00	4890770.00	3990000.00	 Green	 Green
<p>Predicting website hits in the current climate can be extremely challenging. Officers are working to improve the navigation of the corporate website to reduce the number of page views and allow customers to access the information they need in as few clicks as possible. This will have the net impact of reducing this metric. Going forward we will be exploring 'customer satisfaction' rather than simple hit counts.</p> <p>2021-23 Corporate Plan target was to increase hits.</p>						
CP/125 - % Local Government Electors (via all routes) verified and registered to vote: Route 1: DWP and local data matching Route 2: Unmatched properties Route 3: Properties of multiple occupation e.g. residential care homes and student accommodation			97.25	96.50	 NA	 Green
<p>In terms of the overall voter registration rate, we have exceeded our target for 2021/22. This has been achieved due to national and local data source matching introduced last year. The new 'data step' enables 'matched' electors to be automatically re-registered and has significantly helped to improve and maintain registration rates across Neath Port Talbot, particularly as our electorate remains relatively static with minimal population churn.</p> <p>Furthermore, the work undertaken around improving registration rates for 16/17 year olds and Qualified Foreign Nationals has also aided in mitigating impacts to widening the franchise and increasing the size of the electorate to ensure the overall rate of voter registration across the County Borough remains robust and stable.</p> <p>New performance indicator for 2021/22.</p>						
PI/163 - Communications - On-line newsroom: Number of hits to newsroom page	37789.00	25213.00	15818.00		 Red	 NA
<p>The number of hits to the Newsroom page during 2021/22 has decreased compared to previous reporting years. This is primarily due to an increased emphasis on posting more news content directly onto social channels or linking directly to relevant landing pages rather than directing traffic to the newsroom page.</p> <p>All communications performance measures are being reviewed for 2022/23.</p> <p>No target set for 2021/22.</p>						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/164 - Communications - On-line newsroom: Number of hits to press releases	165605.00	176282.00	78104.00		 Red	 NA
As with PI/163 above, there is a marked difference between the 2021/22 figures and previous reporting years. This again due to the increased tactical emphasis on posting key news content directly onto social channels rather than generating hits on the press release database.						
PI/166 - Communications - Ezine: Number of subscribers (broken down into English, Welsh and Bilingual)	1256.00	1972.00	2251.00		 Green	 NA
2021/22 data broken down: English: 2,186, Welsh: 17, Bilingual: 48 The number of 'NPT News' subscribers has continued to grow steadily, despite limited sign-up campaign activity due to continuing Covid -19 and recovery communications. There has also been more proactive management of the mailing lists to remove inactive email addresses, for example staff members who had signed up with their @npt.gov.uk email addresses, but have since left the authority. No target set for 2021/22						
PI/172 - Communications - Employee communications: Number of hits on intranet/staff portal 'Employee News' stories	47372.00	27411.00			 NA	 NA
Work to review and develop new internal communications channels to ensure these best meet the requirements of home working and non-office based staff has continued. As the intranet is only available to employees who have access to council devices, increased emphasis on other channels has meant that the 'Employee News' stories is no longer the main source of information for staff. Accordingly the number of hits to these pages is less than in previous years reporting. These include the production of weekly 'Sway' staff email newsletters and, following a pilot study, the roll-out of the 'Yammer' enterprise social network. Going forward, performance monitoring will be focused on the newer channels. Final year-end figures for this indicator have not yet been collated, due to an issue within Google Analytics						
PI/217- Communications - Number of hits to our consultation webpage	5710.00	2065.00	2238.00		 Green	 NA
Much of the council's consultation activity during 21/22 reporting year was part of the #LetsTalkNPT campaign which, rather than encouraging hits on the main consultation webpage, had its own landing page https://www.npt.gov.uk/letstalk						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/314 - Legal Services -Number of tenders awarded to SME (Small Medium Enterprise) and Local Operators	33.00	14.00	131.00		 Green	 NA
<p>Total number of tenders (i.e. contracts or agreements) awarded to SME's and Local Suppliers is 131, of which:</p> <p>Total number of contracts/agreements awarded to local suppliers is 54</p> <p>Total number of contracts/agreements awarded to SME's is 130.</p> <p>The increased volume for 2021/22 relates to the number of individual suppliers appointed to the new Transport Framework Agreement (50-51 suppliers for the one agreement).</p>						
PI/320 - Number of Births, Deaths, Marriages & Civil Partnerships	1425.00	1495.00	1472.00		 NA	 NA
<p>The figures for 2021/22 of 1,472 is broken down below, as opposed to the last financial year which was 1,495 for 2020/21, the figures (marked*) is due to the increase in services offered by the Register Office.</p> <p>Breakdown of the 1472 is detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaths: 965 (241 deaths were registered between January and March 2022). 1,095 deaths were registered during 2020/21 financial year. • Births: 205 (only 7 births were registered between January and March 2022, which again is significantly lower than expected due to the birthing centre at Neath Port Talbot hospital being temporarily closed due to staffing shortages at Singleton). 268 births were registered during 2020/21 financial year. • Still Births: 0 for 2021/22 and 2020/21 • Marriages/Civil Partnerships: 264 for 2021/22. 132 Marriages/Civil Partnerships took place during 2020/21 financial year • Citizenship Ceremonies: 38* (18 took place between January and March 2002, as highlighted above, this is due to an increase in services offered by the Register Office). <p>In addition to the above, which is not included in the yearly figures, for 2021/22, the number of Notices of Marriage increased significantly this financial year, 1154* notices were taken in 2021/22, 415 of those notices were taken during January to March 2022. As mentioned above this was due to an increase in services officered by the Register Office. No target set for this measure.</p>						
PI/321 - Legal Services -Number of cremations undertaken	1517.00	1813.00	1451.00		 NA	 NA
<p>1,451 Cremations took place at Margam Crematorium for 2021/22 as opposed to 1,813 in 2020/21. There is no way to explain the reduction in number but potentially changes in Covid-19 rates may have contributed. There is no target set for this measure.</p>						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/329 - Digital Services - System availability	99.90	99.90	99.90	99.90	 Green	 Green
Service maintained 99.9% minimum availability.						
PI/417 - Legal Services - 7.7(L) - Percentage of standard searches carried out within 10 working days	99.35	99.33	98.87	96.00	 Amber	 Green
Percentage of Official searches completed for the full year 2021/222 was 98.9% (1,576 of 1,594) , a slight reduction of less than 0.5% compared to the previous financial year 2020/21, which was 99.3% (1.342 of 1,351), however we have received a significant number of more complex searches this financial year, which take longer to complete. Overall we still maintain an almost 100% response time within the published 10 working day target.						
PI/540 - Digital Services - NPT corporate Website User Satisfaction score			89.83	70.00	 NA	 Green
We continue to implement gov.uk styles, components and patterns to improve the customer experience on NPT.gov.uk. We continue to monitor user feedback to ensure continuous improvement. New performance indicator for 2021/22.						
PI/541 - Digital Services - WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) accessibility compliance score against 'AA' standard	99.35	99.33	98.87	96.00	 Amber	 Green
New public sector accessibility regulations mean that all public sector websites must meet the 'AA standard'. Our website meets this AA standard. The AA standard is part of the internationally recognised Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG 2.1) which sets recommendations for improving web accessibility. New performance indicator for 2021/22.						
Environment Directorate						
PI/393 - The Percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition category A - good	22.98	23.04	24.79		 Green	 NA
The GIA (Gross Internal Area) of condition category A buildings has increased from the previous year. The main reason for the change is that Cefn Saeson School has been replaced with a new school. No target is set for this measure.						

Performance Indicator	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Target 21/22	RAG Against 20/21 Actual	RAG Against 21/22 target
PI/394 - The Percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition category B - satisfactory	25.21	25.27	26.32		 Green	 NA
The GIA (Gross Internal Area) of condition category B buildings is broadly the same as the previous year, albeit a slight improvement. No target is set for this measure.						
PI/395 - The Percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition category C - poor	43.86	43.78	43.31		 Green	 NA
The GIA (Gross Internal Area) of condition category C buildings is broadly the same as the previous year, albeit a slight improvement. No target is set for this measure.						
PI/396 - The Percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition category D - bad	7.95	7.91	5.58		 Green	 NA
The GIA (Gross Internal Area) of condition category D buildings is an improvement on last year. The main reason for the change is that Cefn Saeson School has been replaced with a new school. No target is set for this measure.						
PI/397 - The Percentage of the total value of required maintenance for the local authority's buildings assigned to works of priority level 1 - Urgent	17.68	17.40	9.88		 Green	 NA
The cost of urgent maintenance work has increased due to significant inflation cost adjustments, however, the value has reduced due to several D category buildings having been removed, including the renewal of Cefn Saeson School. This has reduced the overall backlog maintenance cost significantly. No target is set for this measure.						
PI/398 - The Percentage of the total value of required maintenance for the local authority's buildings assigned to works of priority level 2 - Essential	64.05	64.22	76.28		 Red	 NA
The cost of maintenance work has increased due to significant inflation cost adjustments. Overall, backlog maintenance costs have been reduced. No target is set for this measure.						
PI/399 - The Percentage of the total value of required maintenance for the local authority's buildings assigned to works of priority level 3 - Desirable	18.27	18.38	13.04		 Red	 NA
The cost of maintenance work has increased due to significant inflation cost adjustments. Overall, backlog maintenance costs have been reduced. No target is set for this measure.						

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

19 October 2022

Report of the Head of People & Organisational Development – S Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Review

Purpose of Report

To obtain Members approval for proposed arrangements to review the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

Background

1. During 2018 members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee formed a cross party Task and Finish Group, to develop a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for the county borough. The resulting Strategy, and action plan, were adopted by Council on 26 September 2018.
2. Progress against the action plan has been reported annually to Cabinet, with the annual report for 2021-2022 reported to Policy and Resources Sub Committee on 4 October 2022.
3. In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh language standard 146 (Promotion) the strategy has to be reviewed and a revised strategy published 'within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).'

Review of Welsh Language Promotion Strategy

4. There has been cross party support for the implementation of the Welsh language standards generally as well as more specifically the development of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.
5. This member involvement has ensured a strong and balanced approach and in order to continue in this vein it is proposed to establish a Member Task and Finish Group to review the Strategy. It is suggested that the membership of the Task and

Finish Group comprises of Welsh and non-Welsh speaking members of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and/or Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub Committee along with nominated members from across the political spectrum.

6. Advice and assistance to be provided from relevant officers and external organisations where appropriate.
7. It is also suggested that the Welsh Language Champion is included in the membership of the Group.

Financial Appraisal

8. There are no financial impacts in relation to the development of the Language Promotion Strategy.

Integrated Impact Assessment

9. There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment with this report. However, an assessment will be undertaken as part of the development of the Strategy.

Valleys Communities Impact:

10. While there are no Valleys Communities impact associated with this report impacts will be identified as part of the development of the Strategy.

Workforce Impact

11. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impact

12. This report deals with the Council's duty to comply with Welsh Language Standard 146 (Promotion).

Risk Management

13. Failure to comply with the standards could lead to a £5,000 fine per standard. There is also a risk of damage to the Council's reputation.

Consultation

14. There is no requirement for external consultation on this report.

Recommendations

15. Members support the establishment of a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to review the current Welsh Language Promotion Strategy.

16. The Head of Democratic Services is given delegated authority to arrange and facilitate the establishment of a Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Task and Finish Group as detailed in the circulated report.

Reason for Proposed Decision

17. To ensure the Council meets the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

Implementation of Decision

18. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in.

Appendices

19. There are none.

List of Background Papers

20. Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and action plan

Officer Contact

21. Sheenagh Rees, Head of People & Organisational Development Tel: 01639 763315 or e-mail: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk
22. Rhian Headon, Corporate Policy Officer Equalities and Welsh Language Tel: 01639 763010 or e-mail: r.headon@npt.gov.uk

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet
19th October 2022

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Mr Craig Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

Swansea Bay University Health Board – Independent Member (Local Authority)

Purpose of the Report

To nominate two elected members from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to be considered as an Independent Member of Swansea Bay University Health Board.

Background

On the 5th October 2022, a request was received from Swansea Bay University Health Board (“SBUHB”) for nominees to be appointed as an independent member to SBUHB.

The composition of health boards are governed by the Local Health Boards (Constitution, Membership and Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2009 which states that local authorities within the respective health boards area are entitled to nominate a representative to sit on the health board. There is to be one local authority member appointed to the health board covering all local authorities within that area.

The 2009 regulations stipulate that each local authority within the health board's area may nominate up to two persons and the Welsh Ministers may choose a person from those persons nominated to be the local authority member.

The City and County of Swansea will also nominate two elected members.

The four members so nominated (two from Swansea Council and two from this Council) will then be subject to a selection process and interview with final determination of the one member to be appointed being made by the Minister for Health and Social Services.

It is proposed that Cllr Jo Hale and Cllr Nia Jenkins be identified as the Council's nominees to SBUHB. The previous custom has been to nominate members of the Cabinet to this process.

The names must be provided to SBUHB by the 21st October 2022.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to the Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment for this report.

Legal Impacts

The composition of health boards are governed by the Local Health Boards (Constitution, Membership and Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2009 which states that local authorities within the respective health boards area are entitled to nominate a representative to sit on the health board.

Risk Management

Failure to provide a nominee would mean the Council would lose the opportunity for an elected member to be considered for appointment to the SBUHB.

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this report.

Recommendation

It is recommended, that Cllr Jo Hale and Cllr Nia Jenkins be identified as the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's nominees to the Swansea Bay University Health Board

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council is able to identify nominees to sit on the SBUHB

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation with the consent of the Chair of Cabinet Scrutiny.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Letter from SBUHB

List of Background Papers

None

Officer Contact

Mr Craig Griffiths

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg ac yn y Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Our Ref: IM-LA

Date: 5th October 2022

Swansea Bay University Health Board
Headquarters
One Talbot Gateway, Seaway Parade,
Port Talbot
SA12 7BR

01639 683316

Dear Leader

Swansea Bay University Health Board – Independent Member (Local Authority)

I am writing to invite you to submit your nomination(s) for an Independent Member (Local Authority) onto Swansea Bay University Health Board's Board, in line with Swansea Bay University Health Board's Standing Orders (para 1.1.4), which makes the following provision:

1.1 Membership of the Local Health Board

1.1.1 The membership of the LHB shall be no more than 24 members comprising the Chair, Vice Chair, non-officer members (appointed by the Minister for Health and Social Services), the Chief Executive (appointed by the Board with the involvement of the Chief Executive, NHS Wales) and officer members (appointed by the Board).

Non Officer Members [to be known as Independent Members]

1.1.4 A total of 9, appointed by the Minister for Health and Social Services, including: an elected member of a local authority whose area falls within the LHB area; a current member or employee of a Third Sector organisation within the LHB area; a trade union official; a person who holds a post in a University that is related to health; and five other Independent Members who together have experience and expertise in legal; finance; estates; Information Technology; and community knowledge and understanding.

Attached is general information regarding the role description and person specification for Independent Members of the Health Board; however, the essential specific criteria for the Independent Member (Local Authority) role are as follows:

- You must be an elected member of a local authority whose area is within the University Health Board's area and will have to demonstrate:



Pencadlys BIP Bae Abertawe, Un Porthfa Talbot, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR / Swansea Bay UHB Headquarters, One Talbot Gateway, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe yw enw gweithredu Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Prifysgol Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University Health Board is the operational name of Swansea Bay University Local Health Board

- A knowledge and understanding of local authority matters in the area served by the LHB you are applying for; and
- Ability to apply your knowledge and understanding of local authority matters in a strategic board environment.

Given that these Independent Member appointments are Ministerial appointments, the nomination process we will adopt will be to invite **two nominations** from each Local Authority that meet the criteria; these nominations will then be subject to a selection process and interview with final appointment made by the Minister for Health and Social Services.

I would be grateful if you could submit your two Independent Member (Local Authority) nominations onto the Board to Hazel Lloyd, Acting Director of Corporate Governance (hazel.lloyd@wales.nhs.uk) **by 24th October 2022**.

Yours sincerely



Emma Woollett
Chair



Pencadlys BIP Bae Abertawe, Un Porthfa Talbot, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR / Swansea Bay UHB Headquarters, One Talbot Gateway, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe yw enw gweithredu Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Prifysgol Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University Health Board is the operational name of Swansea Bay University Local Health Board



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

19 October 2022

**Report of
Head of People and Organisational Development
S.Rees**

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title:

1. Quarter 1 (1st April 2022 – 30th June 2022) Corporate Indicators and Chief Executive's Directorate Service Level Key Performance Indicators 2022/23

Purpose of the Report:

2. For Cabinet to receive quarter 1 service performance information for KPIs and compliments and complaints data within Cabinet's purview (Appendix 2 & 3). In addition to receive quarter 1 2022/23 information in relation to a new set of Corporate Indicators (Appendix 1).

Executive Summary:

3. Summary performance information is drawn out for Members below relating to information within Appendix 1, 2 & 3 with more detailed information available within each Appendix.
4. The Corporate Indicators are a new set of cross cutting indicators providing Council level detail.

Appendix 1 – Corporate Indicators - Quarter 1 - 2022/2023

5. 16 indicators are reported in the period and 15 have quarter 1 data. Data is not available for one indicator until early 2023.
6. Three indicators are reporting data against targets of which 2 have exceeded targets, relating to invoices paid within 30 days and number of council apprenticeships.
7. The one indicator that is 5% or more below target is average days lost due to sickness absence per employee. Covid-19 sickness absence has had a significant impact on sickness levels.
8. Information is also provided on the number of Welsh speakers across the council and data relating to employee turnover.

Appendix 2 – Chief Executive’s Directorate Key Performance Indicators - Quarter 1 - 2022/2023

9. 15 indicators are reported in the period and all 15 report quarter 1 data, of which 14 have a target.
10. Of the 14 that report data against a target, 11 have achieved or exceeded the quarter 1 target, one is within 5% of target and 2 indicators are ‘off track’ (5% or more below target).
11. The 11 indicators achieving or exceeding target include a number of digital services indicators relating to system availability and our website, human resources training indicators, average time to process benefits claims and council tax and business rates recovery rates.
12. The two indicators ‘off track’ against target are the two customer services average times to answer telephone calls indicators in Welsh and in English.

Appendix 3 – Chief Executive’s Directorate - Compliments and Complaints Quarter 1 - 2022/23

13. **Stage 1 complaints** - Four stage 1 complaints were closed in quarter 1 2022/23 of which two were upheld. The two upheld complaints in this period are council tax and elections related. Last year (2021/22) there were three stage 1 complaints closed in quarter 1, of which one was upheld.

Four stage 1 complaints were received in quarter 1 2022/23 compared to 3 received in quarter 1 2021/22.

14. **Stage 2 complaints** - One stage 2 complaint was closed in quarter 1 2022/23 which was not upheld. This closed complaint was received and carried forward from quarter 4 2021/22.

Zero stage 2 complaints were received in quarter 1 2022/23 and in quarter 1 2021/22.

15. No ombudsman complaints have been received following the stage 1 and stage 2 process for quarter 1 for the previous 3 years.

16. The 19 compliments received in this quarter 1 period are lower than the 31 received in the same period last year. Compliments are for a number of services including council tax, corporate policy and engagement, business support, human resources health and safety team and customer services. Most of the compliments are for help and support provided and relating to organising events.

Background:

17. The key performance indicators (KPIs) in Appendix 2 are all selected from service recovery plans (SRPs).

18. Where possible, each KPI will show a link how it contributes to at least one of the council’s well-being objectives. Some KPIs will link directly to the Governance and Resource theme.

19. Where available, Appendix 1, 2 & 3 provides performance data for quarter 1 performance for 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and a quarter 1 target for 2022/23.

20. KPIs that are collected on an annual basis are not included in Appendix 1 & 2. Those KPIs will be included in the full year performance report after the end of the quarter 4 period.

Financial Impacts:

21. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

23. No implications.

Workforce Impacts:

24. The progress described in this report was achieved whilst the workforce continued to respond to and continue to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

Legal Impacts:

25. This Report is prepared under:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- The Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Constitution requires each Cabinet Committee to monitor quarterly budgets and performance

in securing continuous improvement of all the functions within its purview.

Risk Management Impacts:

26. Failure to provide a suitable monitoring report within the timescales could lead to non-compliance with our Constitution. Also, failure to have robust performance monitoring arrangements in place could result in poor performance going undetected.

Consultation:

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

Recommendations:

28. For Members to monitor performance contained within this report.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

29. Matter for monitoring. No decision required.

Implementation of Decision:

30. Matter for monitoring. No decision required.

Appendices:

31. Appendix 1 – Quarter 1 - Corporate Indicators - 2022/2023, period: 1st April 2022 – 30th June 2022.

32. Appendix 2 – Quarter 1 – Chief Executive’s Directorate Service Level Key Performance Indicators - 2022/2023, period: 1st April 2022 – 30th June 2022.

33. Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 – Chief Executive’s Directorate Compliments and Complaints information 2022/2023, period: 1st April 2022 – 30th June 2022

List of Background Papers:

34. [Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#)

Officer Contact:

35. Sheenagh Rees, Head of People and Organisational Development. Tel: 01639 763315 or e-mail: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk

36. Caryn Furlow-Harris, Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support. Tel: 01639 763242 or e-mail: c.furlow@npt.gov.uk

37. Shaun Davies, Corporate Performance Management Officer. Telephone: 01639 763172. E-Mail: a.s.davies@npt.gov.uk



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Performance Indicators

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Neath Port Talbot Council

Appendix 1 - Cabinet - Corporate Indicators - Quarter 1 (1st April - 30th June) - 2022/23


Performance RAG (Red, Amber Green) key:

- **Green:** achieved quarter 1 target for 2022/23
- **Amber:** Within 5% of target
- **Red:** 5% or more below target
- **N/a or blank column** – no comparable data or no target set


How will we know we are making a difference (01/04/2022 to 30/06/2022)?

PI Title	Qtr. 1 Actual 20/21	Qtr. 1 Actual 21/22	Qtr. 1 Actual 22/23	Qtr. 1 Target 22/23	Perf. RAG
1.2.3 SRP - Wellbeing Objective 3 – Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations					
CHEX - HR - PI/954 - Welsh Language: Number of employees who report as fluent or fairly fluent, speaker/writer			614.00		
<p>The Welsh Language Officers' Group continues to support the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards, review compliance of the Standards and promote and raise the profile of the Welsh language. As part of the Welsh Language Officers' Group action plan, the group continues to work to enhance the number of Welsh speaking employees through a number of initiatives.</p> <p>Examples include the creation of two Yammer groups - one to enable Welsh speakers to chat and provide peer support and another for all employees to access information, help and support as well as promotional material; publicising Welsh Language Rights Day; availability of language courses along with help and support for learners and those looking to increase confidence in using their language skills.</p> <p>This performance comment covers PI/954 to PI/958. This data is reported quarterly from 2022/23.</p>					
CHEX - HR - PI/955 - Welsh Language: Number of employees who report as fluent or fairly fluent, speaker			216.00		
CHEX - HR - PI/956 - Welsh Language: Number of employees who report as a learner			872.00		
CHEX - HR - PI/957 - Welsh Language: Number of employees who report as little/no knowledge			4084.00		
CHEX - HR - PI/958 - Welsh Language: Number of employees who report as prefer not to say or unknown			572.00		


How will we know we are making a difference (01/04/2022 to 30/06/2022)?

PI Title	Qtr. 1 Actual 20/21	Qtr. 1 Actual 21/22	Qtr. 1 Actual 22/23	Qtr. 1 Target 22/23	Perf. RAG
1.2.4 SRP - Wellbeing Objective 4 – Jobs and Skills					
CHEX - Learning Training & Development - PI/576 - Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes per 1,000 employees		10.93	15.41	15.00	 Green
<p>79 employees on schemes in quarter 1 2022/23. Breakdown of figures during April 2022 - June 22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39 Modern Apprentices. No new Apprentices in quarter 1. 40 Employed staff upskilling using apprentice funding. 1 new Management Level 4 – SSHH <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 achievers during the 1st quarter. Breakdown of achievers: Apprentices – 3 employees achieved Business Administration Level 2 – Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate Apprentices – 1 employees achieved Business Administration Level 2 - Chief Executives Directorate Apprentices – 1 employees achieved Business Administration Level 3 - Chief Executives Directorate <p>No data reported for quarter 1 2020/21 due to the pandemic.</p>					


How will we know we are making a difference (01/04/2022 to 30/06/2022)?

PI Title	Qtr. 1 Actual 20/21	Qtr. 1 Actual 21/22	Qtr. 1 Actual 22/23	Qtr. 1 Target 22/23	Perf. RAG
1.2.5 SRP - Governance and Resource (cross-cutting) - including Planning & Performance, Workforce Management, Financial Resources, Democracy, Community Relations, Asset Management and Commissioning & Procurement.					
CHEX - Corporate Policy - PI/567 - Number of statutory recommendations made by the Council's external auditors on strategic and operational planning arrangements	0.00	0.00		0.00	 NA
<p>Data for 2022/23 will not be available until early 2023. The Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary Report for 2021 was received in early March 2022 (2021/22 reported data). There were no statutory recommendations relating to the Council's external auditors on strategic and operational planning arrangements.</p>					
CHEX - Corporate Policy - PI/812 - Number of Welsh Language Complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner	0.00	1.00	1.00		
<p>There has been no increase in the amount of complaints received compared to the same time period for the previous year. A complaint was received in quarter 1 2022/23 relating to the treatment of the Welsh language by Neath Port Talbot Council Elections Department. The complainant alleged that</p>					

instructions on how to vote in the local elections contained errors and was difficult to understand. Neath Port Talbot Council is not responsible for the paperwork included in the postal vote package for local elections. The paperwork (which includes prescribed text) is issued by the Returning Officer who is independent of the Council and consequently not subject to the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

CHEX - Financial Planning - PI/573 - Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	91.10	95.48	97.08	95.00	 Green
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The total number of invoices paid up to the end of the 1st quarter 1st April 2022 to 30th June 2022 was 21,558. The total paid within 30 days was 20,929. This has exceeded our target of 95%.

CHEX - HR - PI/566 - Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee - Sickness FTE days lost across the Council	1.85	2.62	3.18	3.00	 Red
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Covid-19 related sickness absence has had a significant impact on absence rates in quarter 1, and perhaps not surprisingly, front-line services have been the most badly affected – this includes employees in schools, streetcare services and adult social care.

CHEX - HR - PI/948 - Percentage of staff who leave the employment of the local authority, whether on a voluntary or involuntary basis, during the year (including teachers)			2.06		
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Breakdown of 2.06%: 131 (headcount) of 6,356 employees. Data is for information only. Reported quarterly from 2022/2023.

Breakdown of the 133 leavers by service area (NB actual headcount of leavers is 131 as two employees had two posts in two service area when they left):

Chief Executives	Digital Services	2
Chief Executives	Financial Services	1
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Early Years Inclusion & Partnerships	2
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Education Development	5
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Schools	57
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Support Services & Transformation	14
Environment & Regeneration	Engineering & Transport	2
Environment & Regeneration	Planning & Public Protection	3
Environment & Regeneration	Property & Regeneration	2
Environment & Regeneration	South Wales Trunk Road Agency	4
Environment & Regeneration	Streetcare Services	13
Social Services Health & Housing	Adult Services	12
Social Services Health & Housing	Business Services	5
Social Services Health & Housing	Children & Young People Services	10
Social Services Health & Housing	Western Bay	1
		133

In addition to the 131 council leavers during the quarter 1 2022/23 period, there were 108 leavers who worked for the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) Service, which closed on 30th June 2022. Approximately 17 staff continue to be funded in a temporary (Welsh Government funded) Health Protection team until 31st March 2023.

CHEX - HR - PI/949 - % of permanent staff exiting the organisation during the year: initiated by the employer			0.17		
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Breakdown of 0.17%: 11 of 6,356 employees.
 Data does not include leavers who worked for the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) Service.
 Data is for information only. Reported quarterly from 2022/23.

CHEX - HR - PI/950 - % of temporary staff exiting the organisation during the year: initiated by the employer			0.30		
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Breakdown of 1.6%: 19 of 6,356 employees
 Data does not include leavers who worked for the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) Service.
 Data is for information only. Reported quarterly from 2022/23.

CHEX - HR - PI/951 - % of permanent staff exiting the organisation during the year: initiated by the employee			1.26		
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Breakdown of 1.26%: 80 of 6,356 employees
 Data is for information only. Reported quarterly from 2022/23.

CHEX - HR - PI/952 - % of temporary staff exiting the organisation during the year: initiated by the employee			0.76		
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Breakdown of 0.76%: 23 of 6,356 employees
 Data does not include leavers who worked for the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) Service.
 Data is for information only. Reported quarterly from 2022/23.

CHEX - HR - PI/953 - Number of new starters joining the local authority (including teachers)			146.00		
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Breakdown of 146 new starters (headcount) by Service Area:

Chief Executives	Financial Services	3
Chief Executives	Legal & Democratic Services	5
Chief Executives	People & Organisational Development	6
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Early Years Inclusion & Partnerships	6
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Education Development	6
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Schools	37
Education Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Support Services & Transformation	18
Environment & Regeneration	Engineering & Transport	6
Environment & Regeneration	Planning & Public Protection	4
Environment & Regeneration	Property & Regeneration	3

Environment & Regeneration	South Wales Trunk Road Agency	4
Environment & Regeneration	Streetcare Services	8
Social Services Health & Housing	Adult Services	25
Social Services Health & Housing	Business Services	4
Social Services Health & Housing	Children & Young People Services	11
		146



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Appendix 2 - Cabinet – Chief Executive’s Directorate Service Level Key Performance Indicators - Quarter 1 (1st April - 30th June) - 2022/23

Performance RAG (Red, Amber Green) key:




- **Green:** achieved quarter 1 target for 2022/23
- **Amber:** Within 5% of target
- **Red:** 5% or more below target
- **N/a or blank column** – no comparable data or no target set





How will we know we are making a difference (01/04/2022 to 30/06/2022)?

PI Title	Qtr. 1 Actual 20/21	Qtr. 1 Actual 21/22	Qtr. 1 Actual 22/23	Qtr. 1 Target 22/23	Perf. RAG
1.2.2 SRP - Wellbeing Objective 2 - All communities are thriving and sustainable					
CHEX - CCTV - PI/682 - Police disk request to be completed within 24 hours.			100.00	100.00	 Green
<p>During Quarter 1 there were a number of major investigations which required the CCTV service to provide urgent footage requests to assist Police in the investigation of serious incidents. These occurred during the normal closed daytime period of the CCTV service.</p> <p>During quarter 1 2022/23, 12 recordings were completed. This performance indicator is reported quarterly from 2022/23.</p>					
CHEX - Customer Services - PI/570 - Average time (seconds) to answer telephone calls in Welsh	38.00	66.00	57.00	40.00	 Red
<p>The average of 57 Seconds answer time is an improvement on the 66 seconds from quarter 1 last year. Further Welsh speaker capacity is being actively recruited into the team.</p> <p>The percentage of all calls answered in 40 Seconds in quarter one is 75%.</p>					
CHEX - Customer Services - PI/571 - Average time (seconds) to answer telephone calls in English	27.00	49.00	64.00	40.00	 Red
<p>The contact centre has been particularly affected by several external factors in quarter 1. The main factor being the introduction of over 30,000 cost of living letters being sent to residents in May 2022. This caused unprecedented demand coming through the main switchboard over a 2 week period, particularly with difficulties in getting through to dedicated service numbers and ongoing issues with the increased volume of calls detrimentally affecting the authorities' telephony system. This resulted in a further demand for calls that would not have normally been received by the Contact Centre coming through. This unprecedented demand over a short term resulted in wait times that have had an impact on average wait times for the remainder of the quarter.</p> <p>In addition, further planned large scale activities have resulted in demand increases that impact on the contact centre as well as the use of 686868 by areas of the authority as a contact without any prior discussion to determine suitability of the approach and potential impact on the small team of Contact Centre staff. We are re-engaging with service areas to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.</p> <p>Percentage of all calls answered in 40 Seconds in quarter one is 74%.</p>					
CHEX - Housing Benefit & Financial Assessments - PI/413 - Percentage of correctly granted benefit against total granted		99.98	99.95	99.98	 Amber
<p>The figure has fallen very slightly below target in quarter 1 2022/23. All previous targets have continuously been met. We will monitor at conclusion of quarter 2 and address any issues in performance. Accuracy rates remain at almost 100%.</p>					

CHEX - Housing Benefit & Financial Assessments - PI/584 - Benefits - Average days taken for action new benefit clients and changes of circumstances – application to assessment	6.15	3.03	5.61	6.00	 Green
<p>Higher than recent average times and above previous years quarter 1 performance due to additional requirements to process Welsh Government Self Isolation and Unpaid Carer Grants. During this quarter 1 period 8,977 Self Isolation applications (5,567 paid and 3,410 unsuccessful) and 3,571 Unpaid Carer applications (2,927 paid and 644 unsuccessful) were processed.</p> <p><u>Breakdown of the 5.61 days as follows:</u> 7,915 total changes in 44,372 days = 5.61 days. Of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,563 New Claims in 7,721 days = average of 4.94 days; • 6,352 Change of circumstances in 36,651 days = average of 5.77 days 					
CHEX - HR, Learning & Training - PI/798 - Percentage of employees completing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy training group 1 by 31st March 2023			23.35	20.00	 Green
<p>Since April 2020 and to the end of quarter 1 2022/23, 23.35% (1,484 of 6,356) of employees have completed the training. This figure includes 103 employees who completed the training in quarter 1 2022/23.</p> <p>Target by the end of quarter 1 is 20%. Target by the 31st March 2023 is 35%.</p> <p>Reported quarterly from 2022/23.</p>					
CHEX - HR, Learning & Training - PI/799 - Completion of mandatory Group A safeguarding training module for all staff (%)			28.24	25.00	 Green
<p>28.24% (1,795 of 6,356) of employees have completed Group A training up to the end of quarter 1 2022/23. This figure includes 209 employees who completed the training in quarter 1 2022/23.</p> <p>Target by the end of quarter 1 is 25%. Target by the 31st March 2023 is 75%.</p> <p>Reported quarterly from 2022/23.</p>					

How will we know we are making a difference (01/04/2022 to 30/06/2022)?

PI Title	Qtr. 1 Actual 20/21	Qtr. 1 Actual 21/22	Qtr. 1 Actual 22/23	Qtr. 1 Target 22/23	Perf. RAG
1.2.5 SRP - Governance and Resource (cross-cutting) - including Planning & Performance, Workforce Management, Financial Resources, Democracy, Community Relations, Asset Management and Commissioning & Procurement.					
CHEX - Communications and Marketing - PI/665- Combined reach for the council's corporate social media channels			1810170.00		
<p>This is a new performance indicator which gives a total number of views of posts from our social media channels, using the following metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of Tweet impressions from the English and Welsh corporate Twitter accounts - The 'Reach' of posts from the English and Welsh corporate Facebook pages - The 'Reach' of posts from the corporate Instagram page - The 'Reach' of posts from the corporate LinkedIn page - The number of video views on the corporate Youtube account <p>The aim is to increase the number of people seeing our content by ensuring it is engaging and relevant.</p> <p>No target set for this performance indicator.</p>					
CHEX - Business Support - PI/417 - Legal Services - 7.7(L) - Percentage of standard searches carried out within 10 working days	99.38	98.93	97.90	96.00	 Green
Percentage of official searches completed within 10 working days for quarter 1 2022/23 is 97.90% (373 of 381), compared to 98.90% (463 of 468) for the same reporting period last year. Application numbers were higher than normal last year following the national lockdowns. Whilst down a percentage point we are still keeping above and maintaining our excellent performance, in an extremely busy market post Covid-19.					
CHEX - Council Tax/Business Rates - PI/572 - Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the local authority	26.72	35.38	35.19	34.00	 Green
Currently on track to meet 2022/23 collection rate target of 98%.					
CHEX - Council Tax/Business Rates - PI/574 - Percentage of council tax due for the financial year which was received by the authority	27.76	29.45	29.04	29.00	 Green
Currently on track to achieve targeted 2022/23 collection rate of 97.5%, however, we will monitor this closely due to the ongoing cost of living crisis which may impact the council tax collection.					

CHEX - Digital Services - PI/329 - System availability	99.90	99.90	99.90	99.90	 Green
<p>The digital infrastructure has operated within tolerance. The email service has experienced some delays in sending and receiving email which has now been resolved by transitioning to the Microsoft cloud.</p>					
CHEX - Digital Services - PI/540 - Digital Services - NPT corporate Website User Satisfaction score		87.15	90.60	75.00	 Green
<p>We continue to engage with users and monitor user feedback to ensure continuous improvement across our website. We will continue to follow and adopt best practice set by UK Government an example of which is the recent addition of the GOV Design System principles – website style, components and patterns which was introduced across NPT.gov.uk.</p>					
CHEX - Digital Services - PI/541 - WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) accessibility compliance score against 'AA' standard		88.00	96.50	80.00	 Green
<p>New public sector accessibility regulations mean that all public sector websites must meet the 'AA standard'. We have continually improved our website to ensure it meets this AA standard. The AA standard is part of the internationally recognised Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG 2.1) which sets recommendations for improving web accessibility. We use best practice accessibility tools to monitor our website for accessibility issues and continue to iterate our website to ensure it meets this standard.</p>					
CHEX - Legal and Regulatory Services - PI/820 - Percentage of Licensing Act 2003 applications completed within statutory timescales.			100.00	100.00	 Green
<p>All Licensing Act applications (25) during this period were dealt with within the statutory timescales.</p>					

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Appendix 3 - Chief Executive's Directorate - Compliments and Complaints - Quarter 1 (1st April - 30th June) - 2022/23

How will we know we are making a difference (01/04/2022 to 30/06/2022)?

PI Title	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Actual 22/23	Target 22/23	Perf. RAG
Chief Executive's Directorate					
PI/252 - Chief Executive's Directorate - % of closed stage 1 complaints upheld/partially upheld in the financial year	16.67	33.33	50.00		
<p>Four stage 1 complaints were closed in quarter 1 2022/23 of which two were upheld. Three stage 1 complaints were closed in quarter 1 2021/22 of which one was upheld.</p> <p>Four stage 1 complaints were received in quarter 1 2022/23 compared to 3 received in quarter 1 2021/22.</p> <p>The two complaints upheld in this period are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council Tax – a resident had contacted the office at the end of March to pay his first instalment of council tax for April 2022. He then contacted the office at the end of April to set up a direct debit to be taken on 28th of each month (from May) and so on. During this phone call the officer took another payment by card, which was taken in error as the direct debit was due to be taken at the end of May, this resulted in him paying twice. The officer during that call, should have amended the direct debit to commence on 28th June. This error also corrupted the payment profile and no further payments were taken. An offer of apology and options were given which included refunding the overpaid amounts or paying less going forward. 2. Elections – A resident attended to vote to find she was not on the register and unable to vote at the election. On further investigation it appears that correspondence had been received in relation to her being removed, however the Registration Officer had made an error by not performing secondary checks before removing her off the register, therefore an apology was given and additional training for staff put in place. 					
PI/253 -Chief Executive's Directorate - % of closed complaints at stage 2 that were upheld/partially upheld in the financial year	0.00	0.00	0.00		
<p>One stage 2 complaint was closed in quarter 1 2022/23 which was not upheld. This closed complaint was received and carried forward from quarter 4 2021/22. One stage 2 complaint was closed in quarter 1 2021/22 which was not upheld.</p> <p>Zero stage 2 complaints were received in quarter 1 2022/23 and zero received in quarter 1 2021/22.</p>					
PI/254 - Chief Executive's Directorate - % of closed complaints dealt with by the Public Services Ombudsman (following Stage 1 and Stage 2 process) that were upheld/partially upheld					
No ombudsman complaints have been received following the stage 1 and stage 2 process for quarter 1 for the previous 3 years.					
PI/255 - Chief Executive's Directorate - Number of compliments received from the public	34.00	31.00	19.00		
<p>19 Compliments received for quarter 1 2022/23 as opposed to 31 received in quarter 1 2021/22.</p> <p>The 19 compliments are:</p> <p>Business Support - 1 compliment received thanking the Land Charges Team for help with a local search.</p>					

Council Tax - 4 compliments received:

- Thanks given for arranging disabled reduction fee (via the disabled reduction grant scheme), greatly appreciated.
- Thanks given for providing a copy of a council tax bill which was very helpful, and solved the customer's problem immediately.
- Thanks and appreciation were given for assistance in relation to refund of an overpayment of council tax by the customer.
- A huge thank you was given to the Cost of Living Team for the £150 being provided to eligible residents. Customer is really grateful for this assistance, and appreciates the help and commented that Team are doing a great job during very difficult times.

Customer/Digital Services - 3 compliments received –

- Two compliments to say thank you for assistance in respect of blue badge applications, one comment that it is a 1st class service.
- One compliment given for the speed in which customer services officer reported needles left at a children's bus stop, which was cleared by the Council within 15 minutes.

Human Resources - 7 compliments received for the Health & Safety Team from outdoor event organisers during the April to June period, giving thanks for the huge success of the Safety Advisory Group for supporting various event registrations and/or applications to use council land.

Corporate Policy and Engagement - 4 compliments received all relating to Armed Forces Day event which was overseen by the Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer. Three compliments said that it was a great event.

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