



EDUCATION, SKILLS AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00 PM WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2023

***MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT
& MICROSOFT TEAMS***

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

This meeting will be recorded for broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to being filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for training purposes.

1. Chair's Announcements
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Consultation on 2023/24 Budget Proposals (*Pages 3 - 62*)
4. Post Covid Update (*Pages 63 - 174*)
5. Pre-Decision Scrutiny
To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board agenda for Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports included for Scrutiny Members)
6. Forward Work Programme 2022/23 (*Pages 175 - 176*)
7. Urgent Items
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday, 19 January 2023

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: **Councillor R.Phillips**

Vice Chairperson: **Councillor D.Thomas**

Councillors: W.Carpenter, M.Crowley, N.Goldup-John,
J.Henton, J.Jones, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, P.A.Rees,
S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds and D.Whitelock

***Co-opted** A. Amor, M.Caddick and L.Newman
Voting Members

***Co-opted Non** R.De Benedictis
Voting Members

Notes:

- (1) *If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) *If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) *For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*
- (4) *The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) *Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Cabinet

Report of the Corporate Directors Group

19th January 2023

Matter for decision

Wards affected – All

2023/24 Budget proposals for consultation

Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet approval to consult on the draft budget proposals for 2023/24.

To confirm that due to the timing of the provisional local government settlement, a short consultation will take place to the 10th February 2023. Responses provided will be reviewed prior to presenting a final budget for 2023/24 at Cabinet and Council on 1st and 2nd March respectively.

Introduction

Today's report does not seek final decisions from the Executive. The aim of this report is to seek approval to go out to consultation and listen to the views of stakeholders in relation to the issues set out in this report. Final decisions on setting the Council's 2023/24 Budget will be required to be taken on 1st and 2nd March 2023.

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 £90 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.

When the Council set its budget for 2022/23 it appeared that the immediate future looked more settled. An increase in funding through the Local Government Settlement of 8.8% for 2022/23 followed by indicative allocations of 3.5% for 2023/24 and 2.4% for 2024/25 meant that for the first time in a long time the Council had an idea of the resources available to it for a three year period and could plan with a greater degree of certainty.

As a result of the 8.8% settlement, the Council was able to target investment at the recovery plans that were developed in 2021-22 and did not consider it necessary to increase council tax in 2022-23 to fund Council services. The Council was also able to allocate £2 million into a specific reserve to address the developing concerns at the time around cost of living.

However, within weeks of agreeing the 2022/23 budget, 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. £8.5 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 UK Government has increased the National Living Wage (NLW) by 10% and is set to increase the NLW by a similar degree in 2023-24. The Welsh Government has, additionally, committed to providing funding to enable at least the Real Living Wage to be paid to care workers across Wales.

The combined impact of the pandemic and Brexit has also had a mixed impact across our local economy. Ongoing supply chain disruptions are adding to cost pressures.

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

On a positive note, 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 services.

To complete the general overview, good progress has been made in implementing various policy initiatives set out in the Programme for Government and the associated Plaid Cymru/Labour Co-operation Agreement this year. For example, the roll out of free school meals in primary schools; and the expansion of the free childcare offer. Good progress has also been made in progressing priorities established by the Rainbow Coalition including: the allocation of additional capital funds to improve the public realm; commencing a review of the decision to re-organise education in the Swansea Valley; the submission of four substantial bids to the Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity funds; supporting the progress of major inward investment interests at Afan Valley and Dulais Valley; and submitting a collaborative bid for a Freeport.

It is in the context of the above that the Council is consulting on these draft budget proposals.

2023/24 Estimated budget gap

The table on page 5 shows the estimated amount of funding needed to run council services in 2023/24 and the funding available

The 2022/23 pay award added £12.5m to the Council's paybill which equated to an average increase of 6%. With only 4% included notionally within this year's local government settlement this left a gap of c£4.3m.

During the current financial year managers have been asked to maintain a tight financial discipline to mitigate any overspend arising from the unfunded pay award. Specific measures taken include:

- All vacant posts have been assessed as to when the posts realistically will be filled or if they even need to be filled until the next financial year
- Additional income generation has been built in where considered deliverable
- Identifying posts where the pay award can be offset e.g. against grants/consultancy works
- Identifying hybrid working savings e.g. Car allowances

In addition to the unfunded pay award from 2022/23 the Council is also predicting pay and inflationary costs of £25.905m for 2023/24. Taken collectively the above items will increase the cost of running Council services by £30.205m. These cost increases represent the cost of providing existing Council services i.e. the increase in cost just to stand still.

In addition, there are unavoidable service pressures which will also increase the estimated cost of running council services by £11.984m as detailed in Appendix 2.

In addition there are £10.879m of budget pressures identified which may materialise during 2023/24, these are set out in detail in Appendix 3. If they do materialise they will need to be funded by Council reserves or alternative resources in the first instance and then built into the base budget as unavoidable pressures in subsequent financial years. These are collectively referred to as 'pressures to be monitored'.

The provisional local government settlement received on 14th December 2022 details an increase in funding of £18.323m or 7.1%. This is greater than the indicative 3.5% previously outlined but is still wholly inadequate in relation to funding the increased costs the Council will incur next year.

The settlement also includes details of some specific grants at an all Wales level. There are several grants which have been kept at 2022/23 levels which in real terms is a cut in funding due to the effect of pay awards and inflation. For these grants activity will need to be curtailed to remain within the amount of funding available. A number of grants have also been reduced or are referenced as 'TBC' in the settlement papers, it is important that WG clarify the position regarding these grants before the final settlement so the Council has a full picture in relation to funding for 2023/24.

2023/24 Budget gap summary

	£'000	£'000
2022/23 net budget		338,020
Unavoidable cost increases		
Unfunded pay award from 2022/23	4,300	
Inflation and pay awards (appendix 1)	25,905	
Unavoidable pressures (appendix 2)	11,984	
Total unavoidable cost increases	42,189	
Total estimated cost of Council services 2023/24		380,209
Funding available		
Council tax -2022/23 level		80,334
Welsh Government (WG) funding 2022/23 level		258,072
Increase in WG funding for 2023/24		18,323
Discretionary rate relief		-387
Total Funding Available		356,342
Budget Gap		23,867

The budget gap detailed above is greater than any single year gap faced through the recent period of austerity.

Proposed strategy for closing the budget gap

Since it became apparent that the financial outlook had deteriorated significantly Council officers have been working on proposals to close the budget gap. This work has been multi-faceted and has included early engagement with staff, trade unions, all members of Council, representatives of the school community and other interested stakeholders.

The starting point in relation to the 2023/24 budget strategy has been the work undertaken during the current financial year to drive down the projected overspend as already referenced on pages 3 and 4 of this report. However despite this work there remains a structural pressure requiring a permanent solution which needs to be addressed as part of the budget strategy detailed below.

The budget strategy for 2023-24 is based on the following key objectives:

Maintaining a clear focus on recovery from Covid-19

There are exceptional pressures across the Council as the impact of policies pursued during the Covid-19 response period emerge. In particular, there are much higher volumes of demand/need presenting in social services, housing and education together with an increase in the complexity of need. It is not yet clear when the rise in demand/need will peak. As the Council has many statutory duties to fulfil in relation to the people impacted, it is crucial that we can remain focused on our recovery work to avoid more cases escalating to a point of crisis when much more expensive solutions would need to be found.

In Environment Directorate, there are some backlogs of work and pent up demand that needs attention as part of recovery. Where there are performance pressures, these are almost exclusively a result of the impact of actions taken during Covid-19 response where the Council was asked to re-purpose staff, facilities and other resources to support the governments' objectives to protect the NHS and to save lives. We need to maintain our focus on addressing the consequences of these policies throughout 2023-24.

Supporting our communities through the cost of living crisis

At the beginning of the 2022-23 financial year we were already seeing signs of financial hardship across communities. The energy crisis and huge increase in inflation has seen many more residents and businesses experience financial hardship as the year has unfolded. The Council has played a significant role in making sure that financial support from government reaches those eligible for that support; and the Council has now mobilised a partnership with Warm Wales, unlocking the £2million set aside at budget setting time to assist those experiencing the greatest hardship but who are unable to seek help from other sources. Additional practical support is being provided through the re-purposing of over 30 council buildings to help people access a warm place and support; we are working with partners to promote all other forms of help and support available to those who need it; and putting an increased focus at community level to seek out those most

vulnerable and to connect these to help and support near where they live. The NPT Safe and Well Partnership has been re-purposed to co-ordinate the Council's work with partners and with the wider community action taking place. The immediate outlook in 2023-24 is one of continuing hardship for residents and the Council will need to continue to play its part in supporting residents over this period.

Facilitating and Enabling Economic Growth

There has been a mixed impact across the local economy as the pandemic cost of living crisis have taken their course. The Council has been responsible for administering significant financial support to businesses on behalf of government and providing other practical support where possible.

We are also dealing with a growing portfolio of major economic development initiatives. These include: a £250 million proposed investment in an adventure resort in the Afan Valley; a £200 million proposed investment in a Global Centre for Rail Excellence in the Dulais Valley; a potential Freeport covering the port of Port Talbot and the Port of Milford Haven which would attract seed capital of £25 million and potentially £0.5 billion in retained business rates for investment in hard and soft infrastructure over the programme life cycle; a £28 million investment programme over the remainder of this financial year and the next two financial years through the Shared Prosperity Fund; the ongoing delivery of the City Deal programme; together with the potential to draw down significant capital funds to support innovation and housing developments and the prospect of some success with our three Levelling Up Fund bids. The Council has performed well in supporting these initiatives thus far but will need to increase investment in its economic growth functions to secure the successful delivery of this portfolio and to maximise the benefits to local people and local supply chains.

Delivering local and Welsh Government policy priorities

We are in the second year of the current Senedd term and in the first year of the local government term. The Welsh Government has set out an extensive programme of policy commitments that will impact on councils. The Rainbow Coalition also has its own policy priorities which are being implemented and which will feature in an updated Corporate Plan that will be presented to Council in March 2023.

Ensuring a sustainable Council

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

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

Economy and efficiency measures including budget re-basing

An exercise has been undertaken to systematically 're-base' budgets. This is to reflect the fact that the Council is now working in a very different way post-pandemic and therefore budgets are no longer necessarily aligned to where activity is now being delivered.

A review of all expenditure headings is also underway to identify where more efficient ways of working can deliver a reduction in cost.

Accommodation

This workstream is part of a strategy to reduce the fixed costs of the organisation. The first phase of the strategy is to reduce the number of smaller satellite office buildings occupied by the Council. The second phase of the review will be to look at the wider buildings portfolio, including use of the three civic centres given that most of the Council's office-based staff are now working in a hybrid manner.

Energy

Energy costs are anticipated to rise by 162% in 2023/24. This is not affordable and consequently an increase of 50% has been allowed for in departmental budgets in 2023/24.

Immediate actions to reduce energy consumption in buildings have been taken however, it will be necessary to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy sources to a reduced buildings portfolio to bring about a step change in costs at pace. This work will start in 2022/23 to deliver cost benefits in future financial years.

Alongside buildings, street lighting is a significant consumer of energy. Proposals will be brought forward to reduce consumption, including the targeted dimming and switching off of parts of the infrastructure on a risk-assessed basis.

Transport

In the immediate term, an external review has been commissioned to determine whether there is any scope for reducing the operational costs of

home to school transport, social services transport and other transport activities such as pooled cars.

Additionally, a strategic review to establish an optimal size of the fleet is underway which will additionally consider how quickly the Council can move to electric and hydrogen powered vehicles.

Grant maximisation

The Council receives circa £55m of specific grant funding. Officers are examining the extent to which grant funding is being optimised to reflect the Council's priorities and the opportunity to fully recover the costs of resourcing the related activities. The Council needs to maximise the opportunities to second core funded staff to work on specific grant funded programmes to avoid increasing its headcount at a time of such significant financial challenges, supported by clear exit strategies that do not place the security of employment of any seconded staff at risk.

Fees and charges including subsidy removal

The Council operate a number of discretionary services which currently run on a subsidised basis. It is very unlikely that there will be sufficient funding to resource these services on the current basis in future years and consequently different funding models will need to evolve if we are to sustain these services over the medium and longer term. This is likely to involve a significant increase in commercialisation to remove the core funding subsidy on a phased basis, recognising that this cannot be achieved within one year. There will be opportunities for capital investment to help deliver reduced cost or generate additional income.

All fees and charges will also be reviewed in line with inflation as the Council is not able to absorb the additional costs of the associated services.

Procurement

The Council currently procures goods and services to the value of circa £205m per annum. An initial review of expenditure suggests that a more forensic review of this spend would enable further value for money actions to be developed. A series of procurement reviews led by heads of service will take place in early 2023/24 to generate additional savings solutions. There will also need to be a focus on ensuring the Council's procurement activity supports the local economy. A procurement policy will be developed which addresses this issue and work will be progressed through the Public Services Board to strengthen the foundational and circular economies.

Service remodelling

Even with the measures identified above, it is likely that the net cost of services and functions will exceed resources available. Consequently, all directors have been asked to bring forward proposals to re-model services during 2023/24 for implementation over the subsequent years.

Should service remodelling be insufficient, the Council would then need to review service priorities and service levels and make targeted cuts to balance the budget.

Indoor Leisure

The Council determined in February 2022 to return indoor leisure services currently operated by Celtic Leisure to the Council's direct management. Since that decision was taken costs have sharply escalated increasing the funding gap beyond that reported at the point of Member decision. A number of options for addressing this position are being developed as part of the budget setting process.

Reserves position

As part of the budget strategy for 2023/24 it is proposed to use £3.5m of the Council's general reserve balance to underpin the budget. The rationale for this is articulated through the objectives set out above. We expect the growth in demand for services to reach a peak in 2023/24, all other things being equal. We hope to also be able to make a clearer assessment as to whether the increased demand and need we are currently responding to will return to pre-pandemic levels and the timescale over which this might occur, or alternatively, whether we will experience a (semi)permanent increase in the activity and cost base.

The Council agreed a general reserves policy which states that the general reserve balance should be kept at c4% of the net revenue budget. The 2022/23 net revenue budget is currently £338m meaning that the general reserve should be held at c£13.5m. The above proposal would see the general reserve balance held at £16.5m which exceeds the 4% target.

In addition it is proposed to utilise £1.4m from specific reserves to help meet the cost of running indoor leisure services whilst the further options referred to above are developed.

Proposals for council tax in 2023/24

Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Council are required to set a balanced budget with regard to the advice of the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151). A budget can be legitimately balanced through the use of reserves however Council must be mindful that once spent reserves are no longer available to balance future years' budgets.

In setting out his Autumn Statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made clear that he has based his spending plans on councils raising council tax by 5%.

Even with all of the measures set out above fully realised and after the use of £4.9m reserves there still remains a budget gap for 2023/24. This includes an increase equivalent to the value of 1.8% council tax to cover the uplift in cost of the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority levy over which the Council has no control; an increase equivalent to the value of 2% council tax required to begin to address the budget gap required to keep indoor leisure facilities open in 2023/24. There is also a requirement to increase council tax as the cost of providing placements for children with additional learning needs increases.

As part of this consultation process it is proposed that the council tax needed to run Council services will therefore need to increase by 4.5% next year.

Funding of budget gap

The following table summarises the proposed funding of the 2023/24 budget gap:

	£'000
Total budget gap	23,867
<u>Funded by:</u>	
Savings solutions identified	15,352
Use of reserves to fund indoor leisure costs	1,400
Use of general reserves re: Covid demands	3,500
Council tax increase @ 4.5%	3,615
Total funding	23,867

Medium term financial outlook

The medium term financial outlook over the next five years is challenging. With inflation currently running at 11.1% (CPI October 2022) and the national living wage rising by 9.7% in 2023/24 there looks to be no let up in the cost increases facing the Council

The current medium term financial plan (MTFP) to 2027/28 includes pay and inflationary pressures over the five year period amounting to £85m; unavoidable service pressures of £17m and local growth pressures arising from changing demographics of £16m.

After taking account of assumed Welsh Government funding of £47m over the period 2023-2028 **there still remains a funding gap of £48m** which represents 20% of the Council's overall net revenue budget (excluding schools).

Work is ongoing in relation to developing a number of strategies to close this gap. These strategies will require existing services to be significantly remodelled.

If the savings required cannot be delivered through re-modelling of services then it is likely that there will need to be a prioritisation of service delivery going forward with a focus on the complying on the Council's legal requirement to deliver statutory services.

Overview of Services

Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning including Schools

This budget supports the Council's ambition to increase the number of welsh speakers through funding the opening of a new welsh medium starter school. The new school is one of 3 which are planned through the life of our Welsh Education Strategic Plan, (WESP) over the next 10 years. Improving access to welsh medium education is a key strategic goal of the Council in delivering against our targets identified within the WESP.

Following the decision of Members to bring indoor leisure services back in house the budget delivers against the Council's ambition to support the health and wellbeing of its citizens and its staff. The new Neath Leisure Centre will open its doors at the end of January 2023 and will deliver state of the art facilities for its members and the wider public.

Additional funding is proposed to support some of our most vulnerable learners to deliver specialist places in purpose built facilities to improve the education and wellbeing outcomes for young people. There is significant additional demand for these specialist places which has grown since Covid.

Social Services, Health and Housing

In 2023-24 the Social Services Health and Housing Directorate will continue to provide services to the most vulnerable children, young people, adults and older people in Neath Port Talbot. Alongside meeting legal duties to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk the Directorate provides statutory support for residents (and their carer's) in the County Borough with a disability and/or mental health issues including mental illness and Dementia.

In relation to Children and Young People Services the Directorate will continue to support the 266 children currently in its care and more than 1000 children that have been assessed as needing services.

The Housing Options Team ensures that the Council meets its legal requirements to accommodate the homeless and in the 2022 calendar year dealt with 2,745 requests for support. Similar numbers are expected in 2023/24. The wider Housing Support Service will be ensuring that there are robust strategies in place regarding Rapid Rehousing and tackling the wider general Housing need across Neath Port Talbot.

Adult Services, amongst many other duties, will continue to support older people who are frail and unable to care for themselves. Currently 545 people are being provided with Residential Care and 680 are receiving the Domiciliary care that allows them to stay in their own homes with the care that they need.

Environment Directorate

This directorate delivers a diverse range of services ranging from the more visible services including the, maintenance of our highways, drainage and street lighting infrastructure, the collection of waste and the management of our parks and green/open spaces to the less visible services including the planning, economic development, and regeneration teams.

The council has recently invested in the enhancement of a number of these services so that we are more able to respond to the increasingly challenging demands we are faced with. Unfortunately climate change is resulting in more frequent heavy bursts of rain which is in turn increasing the number of localised flooding incidents. Investment in our drainage team is enabling us to apply for more grant funding when available, which will in turn enable us to increase the capacity of our drainage network and reduce such incidents in the future.

Despite the current economic climate and cost of living crisis, we are seeing signs of increasing economic interest in Neath Port Talbot with many businesses and investors seeking to explore and deliver further opportunities. In order to assist these ambitions we have invested in boosting the strength of our planning and economic development teams which will ensure that we can guide them through the complicated regulatory frameworks but also support them with advice and financial assistance when necessary. This partnership working will enable us to deliver well paid jobs for our growing green economy.

Chief Executives

The Chief Executives Directorate will continue to provide the support services which underpin the delivery of the Council's frontline services, support the Council's democratic processes and ensure the Council has robust governance arrangements in place.

The Directorate will deliver the Enabling Programme, set out in the Corporate Plan, a programme of organisational development which will develop the capacity and capability of the council over a 3-5 year period, across people, digital, assets, financial stability, governance and engagement.

The budget proposals include additional investment in digital services to ensure that the Council is adequately resourced with the skills and knowledge needed to support a number of major service transformation programmes which will take place over the forthcoming years.

Through our new Digital Services Target Operating Model, we have developed a roadmap to transform our delivery of digital, data and technology services to residents, businesses, and visitors. It's not about more tech, more platforms, more solutions to problems we think exist, it's about real user centred design, placing our residents, businesses and visitors at the heart of our service delivery.

We will join up and use the data we hold to improve our understanding of what matters to our service users, and explore how technology such as Robotics and Automation can transform labour intensive processes.

Crime and Disorder Impact

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

Individual proposals are being assessed as to their impact on crime and disorder and should any specific impact be identified these will be identified against individual proposals and summarised in final proposals.

Integrated Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.”

An integrated impact assessment (IIA) is appended to this report.

Sustainable Development

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (“the 2015 Act”) requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. The 2015 Act imposes a duty on all public bodies in Wales to carry out “sustainable development”, defined as being, “The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the wellbeing goals.” The action that a public body takes in carrying out sustainable development includes

setting and publishing wellbeing objectives, and taking all reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet those objectives.

As part of the sustainable development principle the Council has a duty to set a balanced budget. Stakeholder consultation on these draft proposals will enable the Council to take account of responses and other relevant information to assist it to finalise its allocation of resources in March 2023.

Workforce Impacts

We remain committed to securing the employment of our staff and have well developed policies in relation to supporting people to move to greater priority work which will be utilised as we continuously shape our operating model. The draft proposals within this report have been subject to early and ongoing engagement we have had with trade unions

Consultation

We have previously undertaken an extensive ‘let’s talk’ consultation exercise. As part of the process to develop these draft budget proposals there has also been extensive engagement already undertaken with staff and residents. A schedule of all suggestions received as part of the pre-consultation engagement process is included in Appendix 6 of this report.

The formal consultation is now the opportunity to take further soundings while proposals are at formative stage.

Members will note the consultation will commence immediately following Cabinet today and close on 10th February 2023 prior to final decisions being made in March 2023.

Risks

There are a number of substantial risks contained within these proposals which, if approved at final budget setting stage, will need to be monitored and managed during 2023/24. The following is not an exhaustive list but represents the most significant at this stage:

- Energy costs – there is a risk that by only funding energy inflation at 50% and relying on an energy review which has not commenced yet

that we do not contain energy costs within budget. In order to mitigate against this risk £2.8m has been set aside as a renewable energy transition fund.

- Vacancy factor – if there are insufficient vacancy savings achieved in year and Corporate Directors are not able to identify other savings to make up any shortfall then there is a risk of an in-year overspend
- Fees and charges – there is a risk that by increasing fees and charges in line with inflation that demand drops and subsequently income targets are not met
- Removal of subsidies – the removal of subsidies over the course of the MTFP period represents a risk that if not achieved there will be a budget pressure

The tables included in Appendix 4 of this report provide additional information regarding the risk/impact of each savings proposal.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- Authorise the Chief Executive to consult with the public on the draft budget proposals contained in this report.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To fulfil the statutory requirement to consult on the 2023/24 draft budget proposals.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation immediately after consultation with the chair of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Inflation assumptions
- Appendix 2 – Unavoidable service pressures
- Appendix 3 – Pressures to be monitored
- Appendix 4 – Budget solutions workstreams

Appendix 5 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 6 – Schedule of pre-consultation suggestions

Background Papers

Budget working files

Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact:

Mrs Karen Jones - Chief Executive
chief.executive@npt.gov.uk

Mr Andrew Jarret - Director of Social Services, Health and Housing
a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk

Mr Andrew Thomas - Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
a.d.thomas@npt.gov.uk

Ms Nicola Pearce – Director of Environment and Regeneration
n.pearce@npt.gov.uk

Mr Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer
h.jones@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Expenditure Category	Base Budget 2022/23	Inflation assumption					Estimated cost				
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
<u>Selected headings</u>											
Pay	231,000	4.00%	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	9,240	9,610	7,495	7,720	7,952
Additional pay contingency	231,000	2.00%					4,620				
Employee other	5,000	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0
Energy - gas and electricity	5,562	50.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	2,781	417	438	460	483
MNR	3,855	0.00%	1.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	0	39	78	79	81
Other premises	8,023	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	160	164	167	170	174
Home to school transport	7,650	9.00%	5.00%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	689	417	263	225	231
Other transport	3,380	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	101	70	71	72	74
Concessionary Fares	3,600	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0
Materials	9,111	10.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	911	301	310	319	329

Appendix 1

Expenditure Category	Base Budget 2022/23	Inflation assumption					Estimated cost				
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
External waste contracts	6,512	5.00%	5.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	326	342	215	222	229
Childrens services	11,500	10.00%	5.00%	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	1,150	633	531	414	427
Adult services	61,000	12.28%	5.00%	5.00%	3.00%	3.00%	7,492	3,425	3,596	2,265	2,333
Other payments to thrid parties	16,000	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	320	326	333	340	346
Fire Service Levy	8,503	13.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	1,105	480	504	530	556
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (linked to Ctax)	19,621	4.60%					903	0	0	0	0
Capital Financing	20,496	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	410	418	426	435	444

Appendix 1

Income Category	Base Budget 2022/23	Inflation assumption					Estimated income				
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Grant Income	-55,500	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	-1,665	-1,715	-1,766	-1,819	-1,874
Sales, fees and chagres	-22,000	10.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	-2,068	-481	-491	-501	-511
Rent	-4,000	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	-80	-82	-83	-85	-87
Contributions towards service costs	-15,000	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	-150	-152	-153	-155	-156
Other income	-16,000	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	-320	-326	-333	-340	-346
Total Pay & Inflation							25,905	13,884	11,601	10,354	10,684

Appendix 2

Funded unavoidable service pressures							
Directorate	Service Area	Detail	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
			2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Schools		Welsh Medium Starter School Neath Abbey	300	300	350		
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Leisure	Increased cost of operating indoor leisure	2,870	1,400			
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Home to school transport	Increase in contract price due to number of factors including cost of fuel, shortage of drivers	1,276				
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Additional learning needs	Increase in planned places for children with additional learning needs	350	250			
Environment		Core fund posts funded from service resilience reserve		500	500		
Environment	Civic Buildings	Quays and BBIC increase cost of electricity due to change in supplier	188				
Environment	Transport	Increased cost of current bus subsidies on valley routes	368				
Chief Executives	Digital Services	Increase in digital services budget to agreed target operating model (agreed during 21/22)	100				
Social Services, Health and Housing	Adult Services	Actual growth in placements	1,532	1,500			
Social Services, Health and Housing	Childrens services	Actual growth in residential care placements	1,200				
All services including schools		Renewable energy transition fund	2,800				
All services including schools		Specific grant equalisation	1,000				
Total funded unavoidable service pressures			11,984	3,950	850	0	0

Appendix 3

Directorate	Service Area	Pressure	To be monitored		Risk if not supported	Additional comment
			High Risk £'000	Med / Low Risk £'000		
Social Services And Housing	Adult Services	Market Pay supplement for Social workers	£ 1,100		Social workers leaving NPT to work for other LA's who are currently paying more-meaning more work for those remaining, less time to do more detailed assessments of clients and clients potentially being placed into high cost placements as a first resort	
Social Services And Housing	Adult Services	2022/23 base budget funded from reserves - anticipation that late notification of grants will offset		£ 1,827	Reserves will run out leaving base budget gap	
Social Services And Housing	Adult Services	Homelessness	£ 600		Failure of statutory duty, people will be forced to live back on the streets	
Social Services And Housing	Childrens services	Residential Care increase in placements	£ 900		Failure of statutory duty	Actual growth of 7 places funded - potential 4 others to monitor
Social Services And Housing	Childrens services	Permanent funding of 23 temporary staff	£ 420		Increased workload for remaining social workers, potentially staff leave to work in other LA's, ill health of existing staff	
Chief Executives	Legal Services	Cost of additional Welsh language translation of Council minutes and attendance by the Translator at Council meetings. I		£ 10	Non compliance with Welsh language standards	
Chief Executives	Legal Services	Social Services Directorate indicated to the Safeguarding Team that they wished that they wished an experienced lawyer dedicated primarily to adult legal work, following the intended retirement of the current service Manager at some point in 2023/2024.		£ 30	Expertise required	

Appendix 3

			To be monitored			
			High Risk	Med / Low Risk	Risk if not supported	Additional comment
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Schools delegated budget	Correct funding for teaching assistant hours		£ 4,500	Pressure on schools budget	
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Vulnerable learners	Cease of home office grant-funding needed to support reugee and asylum children		£ 180	Should be funded from central government	
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Cynnydd	End of grant		£ 600	Seeking alternative grant funding	
Environment	Waste	Increase to contract price over rate of inflation	£ 140		Potential in year pressure	
Environment	Waste	Fuel increase over rate of inflation	£ 200		Will not be able to operate the fleet to current level-service delivery may have to change	Part of waste strategy
Environment	Assets	National underground asset register		£ 180	Not a legal requirement	Paper copies of all utilities below ground in LA, need to digitise them in order with national policy changes-non compliance
Environment	Environmental Health and Trading standards	Increase budget to reflect true costs of barrister/QC costs		£ 75	Possible reputational damage	
Environment	Environmental Health and Trading standards	Reduction to crime act income budget-unachievable		£ 43	Overspend on budget in year	
Environment	Travel	Increase hours and grade of vacant bus support officer-currently 3 days and grade 3, upgrade to grade 5 and full time		£ 24	More admin onto officers and prevents them from carrying out their statutory duties	
Environment	Retaining walls	Additional funding for retaining wall inspections	£ 50		Retaining wall deficiencies not identified	
TOTAL			£ 3,410	£ 7,469		
			TOTAL	£ 10,879		

Neath Port Talbot Council							
Budget solution work streams 2023/24 to 2027/28							
Workstream	Estimated Saving	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Efficiency/Economy	£ 1,060,888	£ 810,888	£ 250,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Accommodation	£ 575,702	£ 158,000	£ 95,702	£ 322,000	£ -	£ -	
Grants	£ 961,190	£ 611,190	£ 350,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Fees and Charges	£ 2,308,316	£ 574,157	£ 923,391	£ 625,261	£ 185,507	£ -	
Service remodelling	£ 162,188	£ 150,000	£ 12,188	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Other	£ 13,898,000	£ 13,048,000	£ 250,000	£ 250,000	£ 350,000	£ -	
	£ 18,966,284	£ 15,352,235	£ 1,881,281	£ 1,197,261	£ 535,507	£ -	

Appendix 4

Workstream	Budget	Saving	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Risk/Impact	Lead officer	Relevant Cabinet Board
Efficiency/Economy measures identified										
Car Allowances	£ 1,028,960	£ 400,000	£ 400,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
CRB Checks	£ 78,000	£ 10,000	£ 10,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Eye tests	£ 11,348	£ 7,000	£ 7,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Water	£ 272,049	£ 52,000	£ 52,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
General office expenses, books and subscriptions	£ 300,000	£ 125,000	£ 125,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Pat testing	£ 31,000	£ 10,000	£ 10,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Periodicals, municipal journals etc.	£ 3,535	£ 2,500	£ 2,500					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Window cleaning	£ 21,000	£ 10,000	£ 10,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Carpassing	£ 49,206	£ 10,000	£ 10,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Stationery	£ 85,135	£ 75,000	£ 75,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Conference fees - overnight travel etc.	£ 12,000	£ 5,000	£ 5,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Furniture purchasing	£ 10,500	£ 10,500	£ 10,500					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Postages	£ 167,000	£ 3,000	£ 3,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Medical Fees	£ 155,000	£ 40,000	£ 40,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
External printing	£ 133,888	£ 33,888	£ 33,888					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	C Owen	Cabinet
Grants to external agencies	£ 565,580	£ 200,000		£ 200,000				Possible risk to sustainability	H Jones	Cabinet
Hire of room	£ 187,000	£ 17,000	£ 17,000					Low risk. Based on post covid working practices	S Brennan	Cabinet
		£ 1,010,888	£ 810,888	£ 200,000	£ -	£ -	£ -			

Appendix 4

Neath Port Talbot Council										
Budget solution work streams 2023/24 to 2027/28										
Workstream	Budget	Saving	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Risk/Impact	Lead officer	Relevant Cabinet Board
Accommodation										
Buildings to be vacated	£ 450,000	£ 293,000	£ 158,000		£ 135,000			Low risk - sufficient capacity in other buildings	S Brennan	Cabinet
Phase 1 Buildings to be retained	£ 2,045,126	£ 100,000			£ 100,000			Low risk - sufficient capacity in other buildings	S Brennan	Cabinet
Lonlas archive close it 24/25	£ 35,702	£ 35,702		£ 35,702				Potential insufficient storage facility	S Brennan	Cabinet
Buildings for further consideration	£ 1,371,106	£ 87,000			£ 87,000			Low risk - sufficient capacity in other buildings	S Brennan	Cabinet
Depots		£ 60,000		£ 60,000				Low risk - alternatives available	S Brennan	Cabinet
	£ 3,901,934	£ 575,702	£ 158,000	£ 95,702	£ 322,000	£ -	£ -			

Page 29

Appendix 4

<u>Neath Port Talbot Council</u>									
<u>Budget solution work streams 2023/24 to 2027/28</u>									
Workstream	Saving	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Risk/Impact	Lead officer	Relevant Cabinet Board
<u>Grants</u>									
Maximisation of external grant funding	£ 850,000	£ 500,000	£ 350,000				Compliance with grant terms and conditions	S Brennan	Cabinet
Offset ALN post against existing grant	£ 63,190	£ 63,190					Grant ceases and no base budget	A D Thomas	Cabinet
Caring business administrative post against grant	£ 48,000	£ 48,000					Grant ceases and no base budget	A D Thomas	Cabinet
	£ 961,190	£ 611,190	£ 350,000	£ -	£ -	£ -			

Appendix 4

Neath Port Talbot Council															
Budget solution work streams 2023/24 to 2027/28															
Workstream	Budget		Saving		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Risk/Impact	Lead officer	Relevant Cabinet Board			
Cost recovery of services															
Margam Park	£	556,526	£	556,526	£	100,000	£	200,000	£	256,526		Risk that subsidy cannot be removed	A D Thomas	ES&W	
Increased income at skills and training unit	£	-	£	25,000	£	25,000						Low risk - should be deliverable	A D Thomas	ES&W	
Full cost recovery of school cleaning service	£	167,275	£	167,275	£	167,275						Low risk. Schools to fund	A D Thomas	ES&W	
Great County Park	£	85,344	£	85,344	£	30,000	£	30,000	£	25,344		Risk that subsidy cannot be removed	M Roberts	ES&W	
Princess Royal theatre	£	117,879	£	117,880			£	58,940	£	58,940		Risk that subsidy cannot be removed	A D Thomas	ES&W	
Afan forest park	£	1,882	£	1,882	£	1,882						Risk that subsidy cannot be removed	S Brennan	ES&W	
Metal box	£	556,520	£	556,521			£	185,507	£	185,507	£	185,507	Risk that subsidy cannot be removed	S Brennan	ER&S
Pontardawe Arts Centre	£	197,888	£	197,888			£	98,944	£	98,944		Risk that subsidy cannot be removed	A D Thomas	ES&W	
Leisure Services	£	4,000,000	£	600,000	£	250,000	£	350,000				Risk that subsidy cannot be removed	A D Thomas	ES&W	
			£	2,308,316	£	574,157	£	923,391	£	625,261	£	185,507	£	-	

Appendix 4

<u>Neath Port Talbot Council</u>									
<u>Budget solution work streams 2023/24 to 2027/28</u>									
Workstream	Budget	Saving	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Lead officer	Relevant Cabinet Board
<u>Service Remodelling and integration</u>									
Digital Savings (Mobile and Photocopier contracts)	£ 568,000	£ 150,000	£ 150,000					C Owen	Cabinet
Resource Centre (ELRS)	£ 12,188	£ 12,188		£ 12,188				A D Thomas	ES&W
		£ 162,188	£ 150,000	£ 12,188	£ -	£ -	£ -		

Page 32

Appendix 4

<u>Neath Port Talbot Council</u>										
<u>Budget solution work streams 2023/24 to 2027/28</u>										
Workstream	Budget	Saving	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Risk/Impact	Lead officer	Relevant Cabinet Board
Other										
Pension Recharges	£ 1,639,916	£ 67,000	£ 67,000					None. Annual recharges from Swansea pension which reduces annually	H Jones	Cabinet
Treasury Management	£ 20,513,500	£ 500,000	£ 500,000					Low risk-Potential interest rates drop	H Jones	Cabinet
Management of change recharge	£ 200,000	£ 200,000	£ 200,000					No risk. Schools based ER/VR costs will be met from corporate reserves as one off costs	H Jones	Cabinet
Fund pupil numbers as per settlement	£ 96,174,000	£ 733,000	£ 733,000					Low risk - funding follows pupils	H Jones	Cabinet
Pension revaluation		£ 5,109,000	£ 5,109,000					Low risk - based on actuarial valuation	H Jones	Cabinet
Reversal of Social Care Levy	£ 1,364,000	£ 1,364,000	£ 1,364,000					Low risk - government policy	H Jones	Cabinet
Vacancy management target 5% (exc schools)	£ 58,300,000	£ 2,915,000	£ 2,915,000					Risk that there are insufficient vacant posts - will lead to in year overspend	H Jones	Cabinet
Council tax reduction scheme	£ 19,621,000	£ 750,000	£ 750,000					Low risk - based on number of claimants	H Jones	Cabinet
Council tax collection rate	£ 80,334,000	£ 1,000,000	£ 1,000,000					Risk that historical collection rates not achieved	H Jones	Cabinet
Offset costs against capital programme	£ 260,000	£ 260,000	£ 260,000					Low risk - costs eligible to be capitalised	H Jones	Cabinet
Corporate savings-Cex Budget	£ 20,403,000	£ 1,000,000	£ 150,000	£ 250,000	£ 250,000	£ 350,000		Risk that proposals are not delivered within requisite timescales - will lead to in year overspend	H Jones	Cabinet
		£ 13,898,000	£ 13,048,000	£ 250,000	£ 250,000	£ 350,000	£ -			

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

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

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Draft budget proposals 2023/24
1a	Service Area: Services as identified across the directorates
1b	Directorate: All
1c	<p>Summary of the initiative:</p> <p>This Integrated Impact Assessment relates to the Council’s budget proposals for 2023/24.</p> <p>The Draft Budget proposals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investment of £11.9m in additional service pressures over and above cost increases arising as a result of inflationary pressures. ➤ Savings of £15.352m none of which relate to cuts to services ➤ Use of reserves of £4.9m (£1.4m specific & £3.5m general) to assist in balancing the budget ➤ An increase in Council tax of 4.5%

	<p>The Council is legally required to produce a balance budget. In setting its budget the Council utilises funding received via the financial settlement from the Welsh Government including share of Non Domestic Rates, additional grants for specific service areas along with income from council tax.</p>
1d	<p>Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Residents of Neath Port Talbot.</p>
1e	<p>When and how were people consulted?</p> <p>As part of drawing up the draft proposals an all Member seminar has already taken place; briefings have been held virtually and face to face with staff; primary and secondary headteacher representatives have been briefed as well as Schools Forum; Members of the Cabinet have also held twelve engagement sessions across the County Borough to explain the financial position the Council is facing to residents</p> <p>The formal consultation period will commence on 19th January and conclude on 10th February.</p> <p>Separate briefings will be held with Trade Unions, Town and Community Councils and the Voluntary Sector liaison forum.</p> <p>There will be an on-line consultation form as well as physical paper questionnaires which be available at multiple locations across the County Borough. The already established 'Community of Practice' will also be utilised in order to extend the reach of the consultation as far as possible.</p>

	<p>The short timescale for the consultation has arisen due to the fact that the Welsh Government provisional local government settlement was not received until 14th December 2022.</p> <p>.</p>
1f	<p>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</p> <p>This report is seeking approval from the Executive to start the formal consultation process.</p> <p><u>Changes to original proposals</u></p> <p>None at present.</p>

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

Service areas collect and more importantly utilise data on service users as part of the ongoing development and delivery of individual services. In addition to the number of people using the service other relevant information such as age, sex, disability, etc., is also collected which in turn informs policy development and service provision.

Information is collected through a variety of methods ranging from application forms and reviews, to satisfaction surveys and consultations.

Page 37

3. Equalities

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

Protected Characteristic	Why will it have this impact?
Age Disability Gender reassignment Marriage & civil partnership	The Council is committed to prioritising investment in schools and educating children by increasing its investment in schools as demonstrated by a 6% increase in the Delegated Budgets for Schools. An increase in funding for other Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services will help to protect services to vulnerable families and children through the provision of

<p>Pregnancy and maternity Race Religion or belief Sex Sexual orientation</p>	<p>additional support for learners as well as funding increased capacity following the roll out of the Additional Learning Needs Legislation.</p> <p>Investment in children’s and adult social services will continue to support people with learning disabilities and general provision towards care package costs. This investment will improve service provision to children and the elderly. Any specific changes to services will be the subject of separate impact assessments.</p> <p><u>Post Consultation</u></p>
---	--

<p>What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?</p>
<p>Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.</p>

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

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	Why will it have this impact?
<p>To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p> <p>To advance equality of opportunity between different groups</p> <p>To foster good relations between different groups</p>	<p>The Council continues to be aware of its position as employer, provider and commissioner of services and to this end strives to ensure its ability to meet its legal obligations.</p>

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
<p>Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.</p>

4. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	Whilst it is unlikely that the proposals will in themselves have significant impact on community cohesion in the short term there is a likelihood that long term impacts could be possible.
Social Exclusion	Whilst it is unlikely that the proposals will in themselves have significant impact on social exclusion in the short term there is a likelihood that long term impacts could be possible.
Poverty	<p>Research studies previously conducted by Sheffield Hallam University demonstrate that areas within the county borough are disproportionately and negatively affected by the UK Government’s welfare benefits changes and this continues to be the case.</p> <p>The Council continues to work in partnership to mitigate the impact of the welfare benefit changes and ongoing budgetary uncertainty.</p> <p>The Council continues to work on an anti-poverty agenda including:</p> <p>Anti-poverty strategy -development of a multi-agency strategy to outline what needs to be done to improve the lives of those living on a low income in Neath Port Talbot.</p>

	Free School Meals payments to families – Throughout school closures during the Coronavirus pandemic the Council has -paid £19.50 per week directly into the bank accounts of parents with children eligible for free school meals.
What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?	
Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.	

5. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language		✓		The Council currently has relatively small numbers of staff with Welsh language skills. Opportunities for staff to use their language skills will continue to be promoted and training will continue to be made available.
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally	✓			The Council is committed to the principles as embodied in the Welsh Language Measure (2015) and the standards in particular will

				continue so that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language
--	--	--	--	---

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

Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.

Page 42

6. Biodiversity

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

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

such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				
--	--	--	--	--

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

7. Wellbeing of Future Generations

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

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	Work has commenced on developing a medium term financial plan to cover the period 2023-2028. This plan highlights that there is a significant financial gap between the estimated funding available and the cost of running Council services over that period. Work will continue during 2023/24 financial year in relation to closing this budget gap.

<p>ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Proposals have been developed to help prevent intensifying current financial issues in the future. By preparing a medium term budget outlook the Council is mindful of the need to deliver statutory functions as well as considering its wider service provision which contribute to the wellbeing of its citizens.</p> <p>Proposals include protection for some services that enable early intervention and prevention activities that reduce demand on public services whilst promoting wellbeing, for example in social services.</p>
<p>iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>Preparation of a new Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial plan will include collaboration with partners. During the Coronavirus pandemic the Council has effectively partnered with a wide variety of organisations and future plans will build on these relationships.</p>
<p>iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The consultation will be communicated as widely as possible and a significant amount of pre-consultation engagement has taken place.</p>
<p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p> <p>Council’s wellbeing objectives</p>	<p>The financial settlement and the specific grants that underpin Council services are key to the delivery of the Council’s wellbeing objectives thereby having a positive impact.</p> <p>The proposals will help ensure the business of the Council is managed to maximise the long term benefit for the citizens of Neath Port Talbot (the crosscutting objective relating to governance and resources).</p>

<p>Other public bodies objectives</p>	<p>It is possible to demonstrate the alignment between the Council’s Corporate Plan, the Public Services Board Plan and other key planning arrangements which will ensure a more holistic approach to improving outcomes over the lifetime of all plans.</p>
--	--

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

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

<p>Officers will monitor the response to the proposals.</p>

10. Assessment Conclusions

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

	Conclusion
<p>Equalities</p>	<p>There are positive impacts in relation to the early intervention and prevention work in social services predominantly for older and disabled people. There are also positive impacts arising from an increase to the schools delegated budget of 6%</p>

Welsh	The budget proposals do not include any reductions in staff numbers so there should be limited impact on the Welsh language. Opportunities remain for staff to use their language skills will and further training will be made available and promoted.
Bio	There is no clear route to demonstrate either positive or negative impact on biodiversity or the resilience of ecosystems.
WBFG	<p>The Council has worked hard to strike the right balance in its budget proposals for 2023/24 including the use of £4.9m from reserves to mitigate the impact of council tax rises as much as possible.</p> <p>This has included increases in funding for some services that enable early intervention and prevention activities that reduce demand on public services whilst promoting wellbeing; protection for integrated services that have been established to deliver more joined up services for citizens; protection for services that have a long term impact on sustainability; and protection for key collaborative arrangements. The areas that have received additional funding are reflected in the four Well-being objectives that the Council has set.</p>

Overall Conclusion

An overall conclusion will be drawn once consultation responses have been received and considered.

11. Actions

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

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Undertake public consultation on draft budget proposals	Chief Finance Officer	Between 19th January 2023 and 10 th February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation responses received
Consider consultation responses and amend proposals where appropriate	Senior Management Teams	During and at the conclusion of the consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised budget report, including any proposed amendments, for consideration at Cabinet, Cabinet Scrutiny and Council

Public Engagement Sessions Meetings – Summary of Suggestions

- Can we get a campaign together and instead of going to Welsh Government with 10k signatures go with 10k voices? Hard times are coming. Compared to other parts in Wales our jobs are lower paid
- We have specialist occupations in NPT council. We could draw the plans up ourselves and sell the buildings on to generate much more money by taking this approach. Let's try to lift the land value
- Review of assets – make use of building such as the Quays, for example setting up office space for private rental.
- When people retire their posts to be assessed in respect of value for money.
- If you sell the buildings long term that might not be the best approach, but if you develop them you would have an income
- A number of offices are empty, has the Council considered closing certain buildings and bringing everyone into one building?
- In respect of cost of energy has the Council considered installing solar panels and provision of wind turbines?
- Data centres that we hold – could the council hand the cost off to other organisations?
- Talked about the number of processes people had to deal with (5,000 forms). An automated bot could do this overnight. 6,500 Free School Meals forms - why are we not using more efficient systems?
- YDT (registered as a warm space) - with regard land at the back of the building, we asked if we can buy the land – it would be an opportunity for the council to raise money. Also, have you thought about solar panels on buildings?
- What about solar PV panels and private financing arrangements? I work for that company and would welcome contacts to put forward some ideas. I can you give some help on looking at your estate to see where you can save money.
- Reference was made to a review of hybrid working having been undertaken and reduced levels of staff working in the Quays. Should decision be taken to close the Quays this could be turned into a positive with investment and this being part of a bigger project

Appendix 6 – Pre-consultation suggestions

- I am sure there are some services that people would be prepared to pay more for. Is there anything the council provides for free where a small charge might maintain it? I appreciate that some communities are deprived, but there are some people who could easily afford more.
- Are there any plans to increase the council tax on second homes in the county borough – not just holiday homes, but for people who are buying up properties and pushing local people out of the property market?
- Can we go and speak to the bigger companies to see if they will be more forthcoming? / Could we look at some sort of corporate fund from these big companies?
- Regarding the Third Sector we should mention to Rebecca Evans if a sector is struggling so that it is flagged up and so that the Welsh Government can fight for these services with Westminster.
- Advised of links with local renewable energy association and had contacted the previous administration regarding solar panel initiative but had been turned down. Authorities, such as Newport, had made huge savings and asked whether the new administration would work with the organisation on installation at certain sites.
- We have a lot of heritage and culture in NPT, surely organisations can work together to promote these facilities to get people into the town centres.
- I know we can't come out of the tendering system, but we need to look at the tendering system. It's not just the Ukraine that has caused the energy crisis. It's our greedy energy companies. If we were just allowed to get on the phone and get the best prices we could save money.
- The tendering list needs to be looked at it is causing problems
- Can offer free services to NPT There must be a system within NPT where you have the golden thread, where each individual has touched NPT
- We work for CIRCA Resolution – a community system that would create electricity for 60 homes – Could be something to do with data centres – cut and paste projects. Any organic matter – dog poo – started 8 years ago – dog poo powering lights – Cube – do a lot of testing. Why do we send waste elsewhere?

Appendix 6 – Pre-consultation suggestions

- There are countless homes empty. Why can't you put CPO's on them – do them up – help communities. Wheels are turning too slowly. Not received displacement payment.
- It is not statutory to provide free car parking when most people could pay a nominal fee. Is there anything we are offering it for free that we could charge for? It comes down to choices that politicians make – I would rather pay £1 to park at Christmas.
- Given the Welsh Government's view on environmental and climate matters then that might be an option to get some more money
- In order to bring costs down, is it possible to hold dialogue with Town Councils to ask them to reduce their budgets?
- Council employees take a pay cut to bring wages in-line with private wages, reference was made to a recent advertisement for a barrister.
- The number of councillors could be reduced from 60 to 50
- In my current role the Welsh Government are talking about underspends from local authorities in the millions. Are there things that you would like to do that could utilise this underspend

Appendix 6 – Pre-consultation suggestions

Pre Consultation – staff suggestions

Number	Suggestion
1	Further promote Hybrid working , less staff in buildings means less power consumed at the building, and also saves staff expenditure on car journeys
2	Current older council buildings should be reviewed and possibly sold and staff moved to newer buildings. i.e. Ffrwydwyllt House
3	Promote reduced hours for staff, if someone is getting closer to retirement age , might be a saving if activities could be shared with junior staff
4	Review of ER / VR- but not sure this is viable as most services are now stretched
5	Possible review of higher tier management and enhance / empower staff to take on more responsibilities
6	Let the staff choose hybrid, rather than management telling them to come in. If there is no need to be in a building especially if they can function / operate perfectly fine from home
7	Reduce the use of building floor plates in current civic building, move staff to lower floors and shut /reduce power on other floors. Inform staff only to attend and populate rooms if necessary , from ground floor up
8	Use of new Innovation centre in Baglan, as a drop in centre for staff, currently the buildings are modern and have reduced energy consumption. Possibly Quays staff could work there, other buildings could also be adapted for use like the Milland road building
9	Reduce out of borough traveling for meetings and training , when Video conferencing is perfect
10	Potential for PTCC building to be removed,, and a first stop shop solution for the area with a hall for theatre use / Council Chamber. The building is the oldest and probably the worst for energy

Appendix 6 – Pre-consultation suggestions

11	Offer the use of floors / rooms to Welsh assembly staff or other government bodies at a contracted amount. I believe staff from WAG will be moving from Penllergaer and there was talk they might share with Swansea council
12	Enhancement of current buildings with energy efficient technologies, Solar panelling to reduce energy costs, spend to save
13	Further enhancement to the work car pools and move to electrical charging. Maybe use of solar panelling and car ports to help reduce electrical costs
14	Filming – While we currently offer a number of locations for filming, including Margam Park, there doesn't appear to be a consistent approach to speaking to successful production firms and monetising this opportunity. We regularly receive emails to film in NPT without any requirement for a permit or additional charge and often just respond with an "Ok yes this is ok with us". This would be an easy opportunity to raise additional revenue and could be better managed by an additional employed role, or brought within a department. London for example has made £300k alone from filming in the past 2 years
15	Lighting – A number of residents have suggested many of the lights at our closed car parks at night (Neath Multi story) have lights on when not in use and closed to the public. Similarly, the Christmas lights in some parts including the tree outside the civic centre in Port Talbot are on throughout the day. Can there be a review of evening lighting and the implementation of timers for when these lights are not required. This could include public buildings at the weekend for example.
16	Coffee/Vending Machine – While there is no Canteen facility in many of our buildings following the pandemic, there is also a missed opportunity to capture income from staff wanting tea/coffee and snacks. An individual vending machine can make more than £300 per week and similarly better coffee machines than those currently on offer could provide a regular source of income from staff who simply wish to pop downstairs during a busy day rather than have to go in to town to get something to eat or drink. Likewise, a well-placed Costa Coffee machine can deliver over 500 barista-quality hot & iced drinks a day with scope for the authority to earn commission from such a vending machine which can generate around £100 a day

Appendix 6 – Pre-consultation suggestions

17	Dog Fouling – As an authority we have issues with dog fouling in the county borough in locations such as Aberavon Sea Front. A huge number of local residents often take to social media to complain that we rarely take action. This is backed up with the statistics which suggest just two people have received fines in the last 12 months for not picking up after their pets at just £200. Therefore, while Dog fouling is a nuisance it is also an opportunity to better manage the cleanliness of the area, improve feedback and raise revenue at the same time.
18	Fast Track opportunities – A number of organisations and businesses offer a fast track opportunity. While an obvious example might be skipping the line in a theme park, even the UK Government charge £500 for a chance to get a faster decision on a visa or settlement application. The same could be applied to our building control requests, planning applications, or even having a bulky item collected the same day
19	Further reduction in buildings – An obvious one and no doubt under discussion but there are many buildings owned by the Council that simply aren't used to their full capacity. For example much of the civic building remains empty, while having recently had meetings in the Baglan energy centre, the site is almost empty. To reduce costs why not simply move everyone in to one building or look at the leasing costs to business to make these more attractive. We could also consider the sale of property.
20	Generate savings and income – This might include additional opportunity's not just confined to roundabouts but sponsored council vehicles or from the commercial estate such as providing a business lease to run specific activity within Margam castle. For example, Hasbro recently brought the family favourite board game, Cluedo to life just in time for Halloween – but with a modern, escape room twist. With Brits gearing up to celebrate the spooky season, the classic murder mystery game has been brought up to date for a new generation of players as Cluedo Escape: Treachery at Tudor Mansion. This featured the familiar characters and story of the original by adding the fun to a real life building in other parts of the UK. This is something that could easily be replicated at Margam. There should also be greater involvement in decision making across the authority, especially when the now annual and lucrative 'In It Together Festival' was turned away

Appendix 6 – Pre-consultation suggestions

	from Margam when this was such a missed revenue opportunity. We might also which to seek a large sponsor for a bonfire night display or Christmas light switch-on event or boost funds through a major roadside advertising contract.
21	On request' paid collection – During winter months and late autumn when fewer people are doing gardening, we could make additional green bin collections, or during specific events such as Christmas. For example, As the count borough winds down from the festive period, thousands of households and businesses will be looking to take down and dispose of their real trees. However, while real Christmas trees are recyclable and can be easily shredded into chippings, many do not want the hassle of putting these in their cars and having to take them to the recycling centre. Instead, many private firms offer to do this collection disposal for £10, this is a service which could easily be adopted by our authority
22	Plant Sale – Other LA's such as Swansea generate income from plant nursery sales. This includes hanging baskets during the summer months which are planted up, delivered to a residents/business door and fixed in place for £44. I am not aware we offer such as service would many residents would gladly welcome. I believe we already have a relationship with a nursery for some of our parks meaning this could be outsourced for a fee with an easy income generation opportunity
23	Reduce external translation – Currently we spend a great deal of money outsourcing translation. It would be far more cost effective and efficient to employ a full time staff member to translate these words across the authority
24	Review Lord Mayor's events and streamline resources – We currently see our Lord Mayor attend events to simply celebrate someone specific birthday and we chauffer drive that person to an event. Why is there a need for this person to be driven when they could simply drive themselves. We have recently also seen 3 members of the communications and marketing team assist with charitable events such as the Margam Park 10K, Canal Run and Afternoon tea event when really this responsibly would be better managed by the Mayors secretary or within a specific events team

Appendix 6 – Pre-consultation suggestions

25	Shared Media services – A number of council directorates and teams often create and outsource expensive websites, video production, or even create new logos without any input from the marketing and communications team. There is an opportunity to save money by sharing resources and manpower to deliver these services or even by creating a relationship with one overall firm at an agreed fee. In some cases, this content can also be delivered in-house by an already capable team and with additional resources would avoid having to use costly PR and marketing agencies. Likewise, we should include a cost associated with marketing in a client contract such as 'Kier Group' on the Neath Leisure centre or The Plaza to pay for final and post marketing purposes which include video creation on social media and their logo/brand
26	Freedom to purchase stock elsewhere to place ourselves in a stronger position

This page is intentionally left blank

Reserve Schedule as per 19th October 2022 report to Cabinet

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

This page is intentionally left blank



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board
Wednesday 25th January 2023

Report of Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning
Andrew Thomas

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title. The impact of Covid on our schools and their recovery

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with information and data in relation to Neath Port Talbot's schools and the impact of Covid and the plan for recovery

Executive Summary:

This report will provide Members with details of the impact of Covid on our schools and the support offered by ELLL Directorate, including reference to published documentation attached within appendices

Background:

All through the pandemic, the Senior Management Team of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning's strategic vision was based on providing strong wellbeing support and ensuring continuity in learning wherever possible for all partners.

A team of senior officers provided support and guidance that was beneficial to headteachers and staff in schools. This resulted in a coherent and unified approach across the local authority's service areas and helped officers to make timely decisions to support their learning communities.

Schools were supported by Local authority officers that had set up five work streams, namely;

- transport, cleaning and hygiene
- managing movement
- operational matters
- communication with parents and community,
- and emotional health and wellbeing.

Headteachers, governors, staff and officers collaborated with partners to plan the eight childcare hubs to meet the needs of pupils, families and staff.

During the pandemic the schools were supported by local authority cleaning staff who undertook additional cleaning, enhanced cleaning when an outbreak occurred and supported schools with training. Despite suffering acute staff shortages every school was cleaned daily throughout the pandemic, and every pupil who was entitled to a free school meal received one when the schools reopened.

Transport services were also affected during the height of the pandemic and staff worked hard to adjust routes to enable pupils to attend school despite driver and passenger assistant sickness. Unfortunately difficulties continued as a significant number of operators ceased to trade and the service continues to suffer from driver and passenger assistant shortages in some areas

The local authority and the schools adopted a range of innovative methods to communicate with pupils' families and communities, ranging from radio shows to a variety of social media platforms, in addition to the more usual website bulletins and letters. Officers surveyed school staff weekly with all headteachers being involved in planning through 12 working groups, alongside other key partners. These groups met regularly to ensure consistency in strong communication. The local authority's Education Support Officers and Inclusion Officers also kept in touch with individual headteachers on a weekly basis.

To see a diagrammatic overview of the key events please see page 7-12 of the attached document Covid-19 Post-incident Report March to July 2020 prepared by the Emergency Planning Team in November 2020. Further background information is also included in the Swansea Bay COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plan which has been added in the below appendices for reference and information

Current position

On the return to school in September 2022, with all restrictions lifted and the appearance that the worst was behind our schools, schools tried to move to a recovery stage from a reactionary stage. However, along with significant increases in the cost of petrol, energy, food and the outbreak of war in Ukraine, rise in flu cases, Scarlet fever, streptococcal disease and the threat of industrial action across different sectors, the recovery from Covid with other factors mentioned continues to have a significant impact on all our schools. The road of recovery will be long and will be felt for years to come. Not just at the academic front, but through the strain on mental health, increased anxiety and a lack of confidence in ability. Our schools have included a dedicated section on recovery within their School Development Plans (SDP).

Attendance

Members will be aware that since the Covid pandemic Welsh Government withdrew the statutory requirement for schools to set attendance targets and publicly report on attendance progress. Therefore, currently no national data is available to make any comparisons against. What is known though from discussions with colleagues in other local authorities is that attendance within both the primary and secondary sectors are currently several percentage points lower than pre-Covid periods in nearly all, if not all, local authorities across Wales. Some pupils have struggled to re-connect with school and return full-time since the pandemic, whilst others have detached from education altogether and are presenting as school refusers. (Please refer back to the Attendance Report Item ID- 50400 dated 8th December)

Primary

Year	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Total	To 31/12	Diff
2018/19	95.29%	94.81%	94.25%	92.91%	94.64%	94.18%	94.61%	94.08%	93.82%	92.59%	92.25%	94.00%	94.39%	-0.39%
2019/20	95.00%	94.62%	93.39%	90.14%	94.84%	94.41%	93.31%					93.80%	93.47%	0.33%
2020/21	89.01%	90.22%	92.62%	79.64%	99.56%	95.06%	92.89%	93.95%	91.96%	92.19%	90.19%	91.12%	89.20%	1.93%
2021/22	90.29%	89.05%	89.87%	87.29%	88.00%	90.30%	90.34%	89.76%	89.62%	89.59%	85.67%	89.17%	89.32%	-0.15%
2022/23	92.14%	90.38%	90.23%	81.81%								88.82%	88.82%	0.00%

Secondary

Year	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Total	To May	To 31/12	Diff
2018/19	94.44%	94.11%	93.26%	90.33%	93.48%	92.82%	93.65%	92.51%	93.40%	92.48%	86.74%	92.70%	93.29%	93.19%	0.11%
2019/20	94.19%	93.65%	92.73%	86.24%	92.90%	92.19%	91.68%					92.17%	92.17%	92.03%	0.13%
2020/21	85.51%	87.74%	89.45%	69.23%	98.12%	98.77%	90.33%	90.55%	88.39%	89.83%	78.94%	87.17%	87.56%	85.81%	1.75%
2021/22	84.08%	84.72%	87.66%	80.30%	85.82%	86.63%	87.13%	85.87%	83.68%	79.58%	73.57%	83.99%	85.31%	84.67%	0.64%
2022/23	89.59%	88.59%	87.25%	75.20%								85.43%	85.43%	85.43%	0.00%

There is no single reason for an increase in pupil absence rather a range of reasons including complex and multiple causes, anxiety, mental health and wellbeing issues and allegations of bullying. Some learners established a pattern of not attending school during the pandemic that they and their families have found difficult to revert from. Many of these challenges existed before the pandemic, but some have deepened since, and as a result some families have become harder to reach and engage. A number of pupils were school refusers' pre-Covid and have continued with their poor attendance.

Exclusions

Sector	NPT Total					
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No of Fixed Exclusions	1002	1189	1049	679	1169	662
No of Pupils given Fixed Exclusions	518	545	518	405	524	376
No of Days	2358.5	2499.5	1965.5	1385.5	2533.5	1472.5
No Permanent Exclusions	11	17	12	8	20	18

Please note the increase in fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions for this academic year. The main reason/s are physical violence of pupils towards adults and other pupils. These problems are being experienced across wales and there is an ADEW Problem Solving Forum focussing on Pupil attendance / Permanent and fixed-term exclusions and will meet again on the 23rd January 2023 to discuss solutions and share best practice.

Discussions with Senior Leaders in Schools

Officers have been discussing the impact with school leaders through visits and training events.

- School leaders have discussed with us that the children have all being through different learning experiences. Some were well supported within the family unit, whilst others experienced great tensions due to family illness, money worries, job losses etc. This has led to an increase of pupils with anxiety issues. Currently schools are only seeing the “tip of the ice berg” and will be battling with this for the next few years.
- School leaders have identified that Covid has impacted negatively on nearly all pupil progress and the standards achieved due to the disruption in learning, most pupils did not sustain expected progress with their literacy or numeracy skills. In particular, leaders have identified significant gaps in pupils’ social communication skills. At secondary level, the uncertainty of examinations or centrally assessed grades put an enormous strain on pupils and staff, as absenteeism and a loss of learning has had a significant impact on readiness for any form of assessment.
- Priorities during lockdown and returning to school have focused on supporting pupils’ well-being, managing their anxieties and getting them back to school to ensure continuity in learning. Normal self-evaluation practices e.g. listening to learners, work scrutiny etc. have had to be reduced.
- Managing anxieties and staff expectations has been a challenge. Schools have worked hard to support staff well-being. Staff that schools assumed would be able to cope didn’t and displayed anxieties, whilst those we thought may struggle didn’t. Some staff who struggled during the first lockdown were fine during the second lockdown. The constant change and uncertainty has been draining on staff. Staff lost family members, staff’s partners circumstances changed, for example job loss and financial uncertainty.
- Professional development has moved from mainly focussing on equipping staff to deliver online learning, support pupils’ well-being, focus on managing trauma and challenging behaviour, with now a continued focus on supporting children’s well-being and the reform agenda of the new curriculum and ALN reform.

The reform agenda continues to move at a pace with the ALN reform and the Curriculum for Wales adding additional pressure to the education sector, both inside and outside of schools. Schools recognise the support they are getting from LA staff. School leaders tell us that Youth work and Cynnydd work has been invaluable as has the support offered to the schools by the School Based Counselling Service, Inclusion Service, Catering, Cleaning, Education Support Officers, Education Welfare Officers, Safeguarding Officers and many more departments.

The constant changes that have happened over the last two and a half years to policy, grants, restrictions, parental pressure, guidance and media coverage has made managing risk a tightrope of issues.

Additional Information

Support for schools from the Inclusion Service.

Support for schools from Covid recovery has been delivered across four discrete areas:

- Implementation of the ALNET Act and Code
- Support for Emotional Psychological Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Training for school based staff
- Support for transition

Please see attached report '**Inclusion Service Covid Recovery Support for Schools**' and also the '**School Based Counselling Service Update Report**' which was shared in Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Scrutiny Board on the 8th December 2022.

During school lockdowns and partial re-openings we have seen some benefits and areas where there has been significant development, one of which is the use of technology in "Remote Learning".

These are in two parts;

- A. Live lessons/sessions is a **synchronous** approach. Teachers and learners attend a session/lesson at the same time. Live learning can be carried out through Hwb using Google Meet or Microsoft Teams. Live lessons should be supported by the provision of purposeful tasks or challenges for the pupils to complete and feedback provided on the work completed.
- B. Recorded lessons/sessions is an **asynchronous** approach involving teachers providing learning materials (may include online videos, audio clips and presentations) which can be accessed by the learner in their own time. Recordings can be produced using a number of Hwb tools such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Flipgrid and screencastify. Various other Hwb tools can also be used to share recordings. Recorded lessons should be supported by the provision of purposeful tasks or challenges for the pupils to complete and feedback on the work completed.

Other positive consequences of managing a school during restrictions have been that in some schools they have maintained staggered lunchtimes, this has reduced the amount of pupils in dinner halls and canteens. Also the directional travel around school has been maintained, reducing pinch points and the staggered break times have resulted in pupils having more space and less year groups accessing the same space.

Some schools have noted better relationships with families, especially those of more vulnerable pupils where staff and officers built relationships through support during the

pandemic. There has been a renewed focus on what important, useful resources is and better internal and external communication with families. There is an increase in online professional development and meetings that can be cost effective and efficient and in some schools parental or governing body meetings are still as productive online.

As at 31st March 2022 School reserves totalled circa £12m across all sectors. Projected reserve balances as at 31st March 2023 are circa £4m, meaning schools are utilising approximately £8M of reserves to balance their budgets. Added to this school budgets were given a 4% uplift for 2022/23 financial year to reflect the increase in teacher and support staff pay, which is in line with the uplift in the settlement received from Welsh Government. Subsequently pay awards have been in excess of this assumption so schools are having to fund the shortfall from their reserves resulting in projected school reserves at the end of March 2024 being closer to £2M. The position described above is set against a backdrop of £4.5M of unfunded costs in school delegated budgets in respect of teacher assistant posts attached to pupils with additional learning needs.

In Summary

Most learners have welcomed the return to face-to-face provision and generally engage better than they did online, though many schools are retaining elements of remote learning where appropriate (e.g. revision sessions and homework class). Many of the 'issues' affected by the pandemic, such as the decline in learners' skills, have gradually improved since the return to more 'normal' education. Schools within NPT have placed a strong emphasis on supporting well-being, which has resulted in increased and more wide-ranging provision. Senior Leaders across all our schools have demonstrated agility and creative thinking in responding to the pandemic and have worked purposefully to re-establish experiences affected by restrictions, such as extra-curricular activities. Due to improved and more extensive communication over the pandemic, our schools in general have a better understanding of the families and communities they serve.

Many of our schools have gradually returned to self-evaluation and quality assurance activities as the year progresses, resulting in a better understanding of the impact of their work.

Despite all the efforts schools and LA officers make to aid recovery there are still some significant factors to consider. Cases of COVID-19 among learners and staff can still cause a disruption to teaching and learning. Overall, learners' skills have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. This is especially the case for numeracy and literacy skills, particularly oracy skills. The social and personal skills of learners have also been affected, especially the youngest children and those who have struggled to settle back in to more 'normal' educational routines.

Schools are still experiencing a variety of challenging behaviours from the children and young people which has resulted in more pupils disengaging in education and an increase in exclusions this academic year.

Restrictions have had a negative impact on learning involving practical elements, including work placements, practical assessments for vocational qualifications and subjects such as music, design and technology and physical education.

Officers within Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning continue to support schools and other partners as we recover together.

Financial Impacts:

No implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

All schools are included

Workforce Impacts:

No implications

Legal Impacts:

No implications

Consultation:

'There is no requirement for external consultation on this item'

Recommendations:

Matter for monitoring – no recommendations required.

Implementation of Decision:

Matter for monitoring – no recommendations required.

Appendices / Links for Information:

1. <https://www.wcpp.org.uk/publication/education-recovery-responding-to-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>
2. [Ten Principles for Effective and Equitable Educational Recovery from COVID
oecd.org](https://www.oecd.org/education/2020/11/ten-principles-for-effective-and-equitable-educational-recovery-from-covid-19/)
3. [Covid-19 Post-incident Report March to July 2020](#)
4. [Swansea Bay COVID -19 Prevention and Response Plan – Presentation.](#)
5. Support for schools 2022/23 (Inclusion)
6. Support for schools 2022/23 (Education Development)

Officer Contact:

Hayley Lervy – Head of Early Years, Inclusion and Partnerships
h.lervy@npt.gov.uk

Rhiannon Crowhurst - Head of Support Services and Transformation
r.crowhurst@npt.gov.uk

Chris Millis – Head of Education Development
c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Covid-19 Post-incident Report

March to July 2020

PREPARED BY: The Emergency Planning Team
REFERENCE: EP/DR/02
VERSION: 3.0
DATE: November 2020

www.npt.gov.uk
www.jointresilience.co.uk

Report authors and review record

This document has been prepared for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. This document is intended for post-incident learning purposes.

Report author:	Emma John BSc (Hons) Geog, MSc DisMgt	Emergency Planning Officer
Reviewer(s):	Neil Thomas Dip EP Shaun Burgess Dip, MSc, CMIOSH	Emergency Planning Officer Occupational Health, Safety & Emergency Planning Manager
Date of report:	September 2020	



For further information, contact:

Emergency Planning Team

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council | Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot
ept@npt.gov.uk

Contents Page

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Purpose.....	1
1.2. Aim of Report.....	1
1.3. Incident Debrief.....	1
2. Incident and Response Overview	2
2.1. World Overview.....	2
2.1. UK Overview	3
2.2. Wales Overview	5
2.3. Neath Port Talbot Overview	5
3. Incident Debrief.....	13
3.1. Operational Level Incident Debrief.....	13
3.1.1. Operational response staff view on what went well during the Covid-19 incident	15
3.1.2. Operational response staff view on what did not go well during the Covid- 19 incident	18
3.1.3. Operational response staff recommendations on how to improve NPTCBCs future response to emergencies.....	26
3.2. Tactical Level Incident Debrief	32
3.2.1 What went well during the Covid-19 incident?	32
3.2.2 What did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?	35
3.2.3 How can the local authority's response to emergency, such as the Covid- 19 incident, be improved in the future?.....	37
3.3. Strategic Level Incident Debrief	39
3.3.1 From an NPTCBC perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?	40
3.3.2 From an NPTCBC perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?	40
3.3.3 How can the local authority's response to emergency, such as the Covid- 19 incident, be improved in the future?.....	41
3.3.4 From a multi-agency perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?	41
3.3.5 From a multi-agency perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?	41

3.3.6 How can the multi-agency response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?	42
4. Conclusion	42
5. NPTCBC Covid-19 Incident Forward Action Plan	43

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

This report deals with the operational, tactical and strategic response to Covid-19 within the Neath Port Talbot area. Whilst this report is for the local authority, and covers the internal debrief, elements of the multi-agency response will also be reviewed and shared where necessary with other responding agencies to share lessons learnt.

This report does not attempt to exhaustively detail or comprehensively summarise the incident. The report does not include or comment upon matters identified in other debriefs or post-incident reports.

Recommendations made within this post incident report will be shared across the local authority, and will be added to a Forward Action Plan for recommendations to be considered and actioned where necessary.

1.2. Aim of Report

To review the response to Covid-19 to identify good practice and make recommendations for improvements.

1.3. Incident Debrief

Due to the restrictions in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the number of Council Officers involved throughout the response to Covid-19, the decision was made to hold an incident debrief through the use of surveys.

The Emergency Planning Team hosted three separate debrief surveys for those involved at the different levels of incident command; operational, tactical and strategic. For the purposes of this debrief, Council Officers were split into the three levels of command based on their role during the response to Covid-19:

- **Operational level:** Council Officers who were involved in the Council's response sub-groups e.g. involvement in NPT Safe and Well, field hospital, care of the dead.
- **Tactical level:** Council Officers who led / chaired the Council's response sub-groups, and/or attended multi-agency tactical level coordination groups e.g. local health board groups / exercises.
- **Strategic level:** Council Officers who participated in the Incident Management Team, and/or attended multi-agency strategic level coordination groups e.g. South Wales Local Resilience Forum (SWLRF) strategic groups / exercises.

Additionally, a debrief session for Emergency Planning Duty Officers involved in the response to Covid-19 was held on Friday 24th July 2020.

Ideally, debrief sessions will be held with Council Officers to share the findings of this post incident report. However, given the current circumstances this will be dependent on the progression of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent incident responses. It

should be noted that incident debriefs and post incident reports are not a mandatory requirement, but for the purpose of sharing lessons learned after an incident has occurred.

2. Incident and Response Overview

2.1. World Overview

In Late December 2019 to early January 2020, reports were emerging from the People's Republic of China (ROC) of clusters of atypical pneumonia cases in Wuhan. On 1st January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) activated its Incident Management Support Team as part of its emergency response framework. By 9th January 2020, WHO reported that Chinese authorities had determined the cases were caused by a novel coronavirus. Between 13th and 16th January 2020, cases began to emerge in Thailand and Japan, linked to persons who had travelled to Wuhan. By the 21st January 2020, it became clear that there was some human-to-human transmission of the novel coronavirus. On 23rd January 2020, the Chinese Government imposed a lockdown on Wuhan and other cities within the Hubei province in an effort to quarantine the centre of the outbreak. On 24th January 2020, France declared it now found cases of the novel coronavirus, with each of the cases being linked to travel to Wuhan. On 30th January 2020, WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern following 98 cases and no deaths in 18 countries outside of China.

On 3rd February 2020, WHO finalised its 'Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan'. WHO began holding daily media briefings on the novel coronavirus on 5th February 2020. On 11th February 2020, WHO announced the novel coronavirus would be named Covid-19 (to avoid inaccuracies and stigma by not referring to a geographical location, animal, an individual or a group of people). On 12th February 2020, WHO published the 'Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response' document, and further guidance was issued on 14th February 2020 for organisers of mass gatherings based on the lessons learnt from the H1N1 and Ebola outbreaks. On 24th February 2020, WHO stated in a press conference that much of the global community was not ready to implement a lockdown of the scale seen in China.

By the 7th March 2020, confirmed cases of Covid-19 surpass 100,000 globally, as a result WHO issued a consolidated package of existing guidance cover preparedness, readiness and response actions for four different transmission scenarios (no cases, sporadic cases, cluster of cases and community transmission). On 11th March 2020, WHO assessed that Covid-19 was now characterised as a pandemic, as the virus had spread worldwide. On the 11th March 2020, the number of confirmed cases globally was 124,195 and the number of deaths was 4,641.

As of 7th August 2020, figures from [WHO](#) suggest there are 18,908,001 (0.33% of the global population) confirmed cases globally, along with 703,942 deaths globally (0.01% of the global population).¹

2.1. UK Overview

The UK Government has implemented a range of extensive measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. An overview of the UK Governments response to Covid-19 between January to April 2020 can be found via the [National Audit Office](#), the timeline provided within the [National Audit Office](#) report can be found on page 4 of this report (figures 3 and 4).

An overview of the UK's response to Covid-19 can be found in figures 3 and 4, which depicts a timeline of key events in the response. As of 7th August 2020, figures from [WHO](#) suggest there have been 308,138 (0.46% of the UK population) confirmed cases in the UK, along with 41,258 deaths in the UK (0.06% of the UK population). Death figures increased from 29th April 2020 as care home deaths began to be included within the official figures.² The case fatality rate as of 7th August 2020 for the UK was 13.4%. The R number and growth rate in the UK was estimated to be at 3 during March 2020.

During the peak of the outbreak (peaks for the four UK nations varied across April 2020), up to 60% of England's critical care beds were occupied with Covid-19 patients, around 50% of Northern Ireland's critical care beds were occupied with Covid-19 patients, and around 40% of Scotland's and Wales' critical care beds were occupied with Covid-19 patients (see figure 1 for more information).

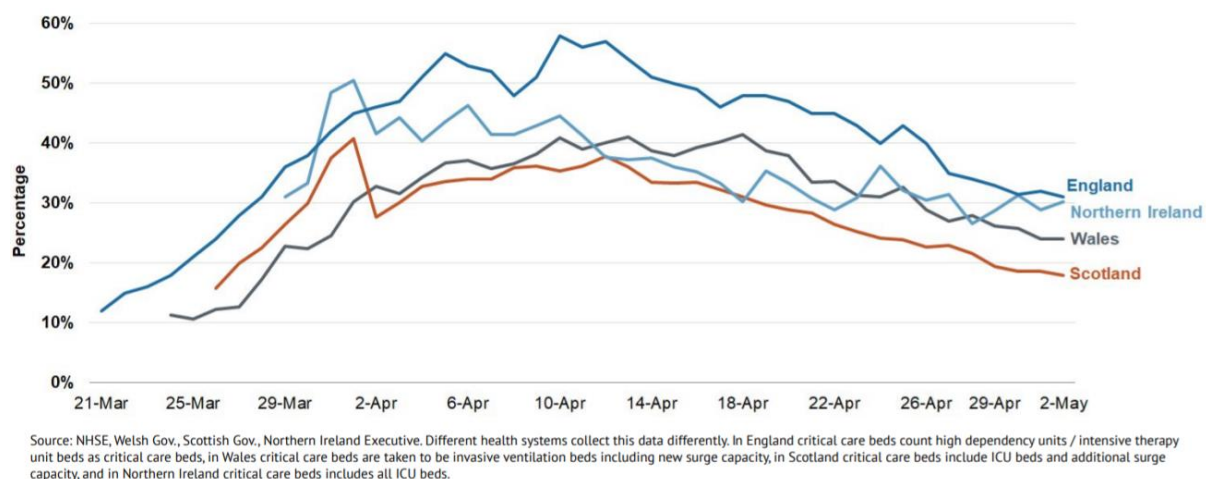


Figure 1: Critical care beds with Covid-19 patients, UK ([UK Government, May 2020](#)).

As the number of Covid-19 cases began to rise in the UK, on 12th March 2020 the UK Government stopped widespread community testing and Contact Tracing, and

¹ Percentages based on global population figure of 7,794,798,739 on 1st July 2020 ([Worldometer](#), September 2020)

² Percentages based on UK population figure of 66,796,807 on June 2019 ([Office for National Statistics](#), September 2020)

began concentrating on hospital patients as the UK Government deemed unreliable and counterproductive to test people who did not display symptoms of Covid-19, and that it was considered no longer necessary to identify every case. As of 12th March 2020, 29,746 Covid-19 tests were carried out in the UK. On March 27th 2020, the UK Government announces that testing will be extended to cover all frontline NHS staff – by 1st April 2020 the UK Government announces that only 0.4% of frontline NHS workers in England have been tested so far. On 31st March 2020, the UK Government announces that Covid-19 testing is being hampered by the availability of certain chemicals used within the testing process, which limited the ability to rapidly increase the UK’s testing capacity. As of 31st March 2020, 143,186 tests were carried out in the UK. On 3rd April 2020, the UK Government announces the ambitious goal of reaching a testing capacity of 100,000 per day by the end of April. On 1st May 2020, the UK Government announces it had achieved this target as 122,347 tests were carried out between 09:00 on 30th April and 09:00 on 1st May 2020. On 15th April 2020, the UK Government announces that testing will be extended to cover all care home residents with symptoms and all new care home residents who are discharged from hospital. On 17th April 2020, testing is expanded to more frontline workers, including to police and prison staff, fire and rescue workers, and local authority staff working with vulnerable people or rough sleepers. On 23rd April 2020, testing is expanded to cover essential workers and their households. The graph in figure 2 shows the UK’s testing capacity and the number of tests carried out across the UK.

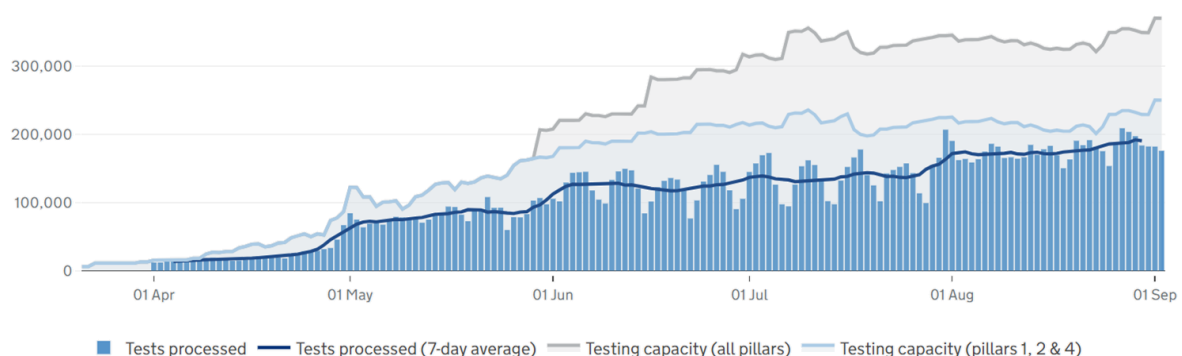


Figure 2: Number of lab-confirmed positive or negative COVID-19 test results, by date reported ([UK Government, September 2020](#)).³

The UK Government began lifting lockdown measures in England on 13th May 2020, enabling the public to return to work if they couldn’t work from home. As health is a devolved matter, Northern Ireland remained in lockdown until 18th May 2020,

³ The government’s mass testing programme includes four types of tests known as pillars:

- Pillar 1: NHS and PHE Testing – antigen swab testing in Public Health England (PHE) labs and NHS hospitals for those with a clinical need, and health and care workers
- Pillar 2: Commercial partner testing – antigen swab testing for the wider population, as set out in government guidance - pillar 2 testing reported in this dashboard only includes tests that were processed by a lab
- Pillar 3: Antibody testing – antibody serology testing to show if people have antibodies from having had COVID-19, reported from 1st June onwards
- Pillar 4: Surveillance testing – antibody serology and antigen swab testing for national surveillance supported by PHE, ONS, Biobank, universities and other partners to learn more about the prevalence and spread of the virus and for other testing research purposes, for example on the accuracy and ease of use of home testing

Scotland remained in lockdown until the 28th May 2020, and Wales remained in lockdown until 1st June 2020.

2.2. Wales Overview

The Welsh Government implemented a range of extensive measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. An overview of the Welsh Governments response to Covid-19 between January to July 2020 can be found via [Senedd Research](#) (2020), a summary of the timeline provided by [Senedd Research](#) (2020) can be found on in figure 5, which depicts a timeline of key events in the response. Within Wales, many of these measures were supported via the four Local Resilience Forums, which helped to coordinate the response of public organisations and ensured collaborative working.

As of 7th August 2020, figures from [Public Health Wales](#) (2020) suggest there have been 17,474 (0.55% of the Welsh population) confirmed cases in Wales, along with 1,584 deaths in Wales (0.002% of the Welsh population). The case fatality rate as of 7th August 2020 for Wales was 9%.

On 5th April 2020, 63% of Wales' critical care beds were occupied with confirmed Covid-19 patients ([Public Health Wales](#), 2020). During March to early May, estimates of adherence to lockdown measures in Wales was estimated to be between 60% and 70% ([Welsh Government Technical Advisory Cell](#), 2020).

By 15th August 2020, 99% of food parcels ordered for extremely vulnerable persons / shielded persons across Wales were either handed to the resident or left on the doorstep.

2.3. Neath Port Talbot Overview

As a result of The Welsh Government measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) responded by establishing a single-agency Incident Management Team and subsequent response sub-groups, whilst also participating within the Multi-agency Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups of South Wales Local Resilience Forum (SWLRF), and the relevant localised multi-agency Swansea Bay response cells (health related). An overview of NPTCBCs response to Covid-19 between January to July 2020 can be found in the timeline in figure 6, which depicts a timeline of key events in the NPTCBC response. As part of NPTCBC's to Covid-19, the Council has been involved with many key aspects of the response, such as:

- Construction of a temporary field hospital at Llandarcy,
- Supporting shielded persons via the new NPT Safe and Well service,
- Providing continued care to vulnerable children and children of critical workers via school hubs,
- Providing support to children on the Free School Meal scheme

- Providing support to the care sector and persons requiring the support for the Council (e.g. homeless persons, high risk individuals needing social services support, PPE, discharging of hospital patients to care homes),
- Providing financial support to local businesses,
- Provision of enforcement in relation to the Health Protection Regulations,
- Provision of staff for Test, Trace and Protect services, and
- Coordinating efforts to manage mass fatalities and care of the dead issues.

An incident log for this incident is available on the [DRAGON 2 System](#) or is available upon request from the [Emergency Planning Team](#).

As of 3rd August 2020, figures from [Public Health Wales](#) (2020) suggest there have been 2,003 confirmed cases in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area, along with 306 deaths in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area. The case fatality rate as of 3rd August 2020 for the Swansea Bay University Health Board area was 15%.

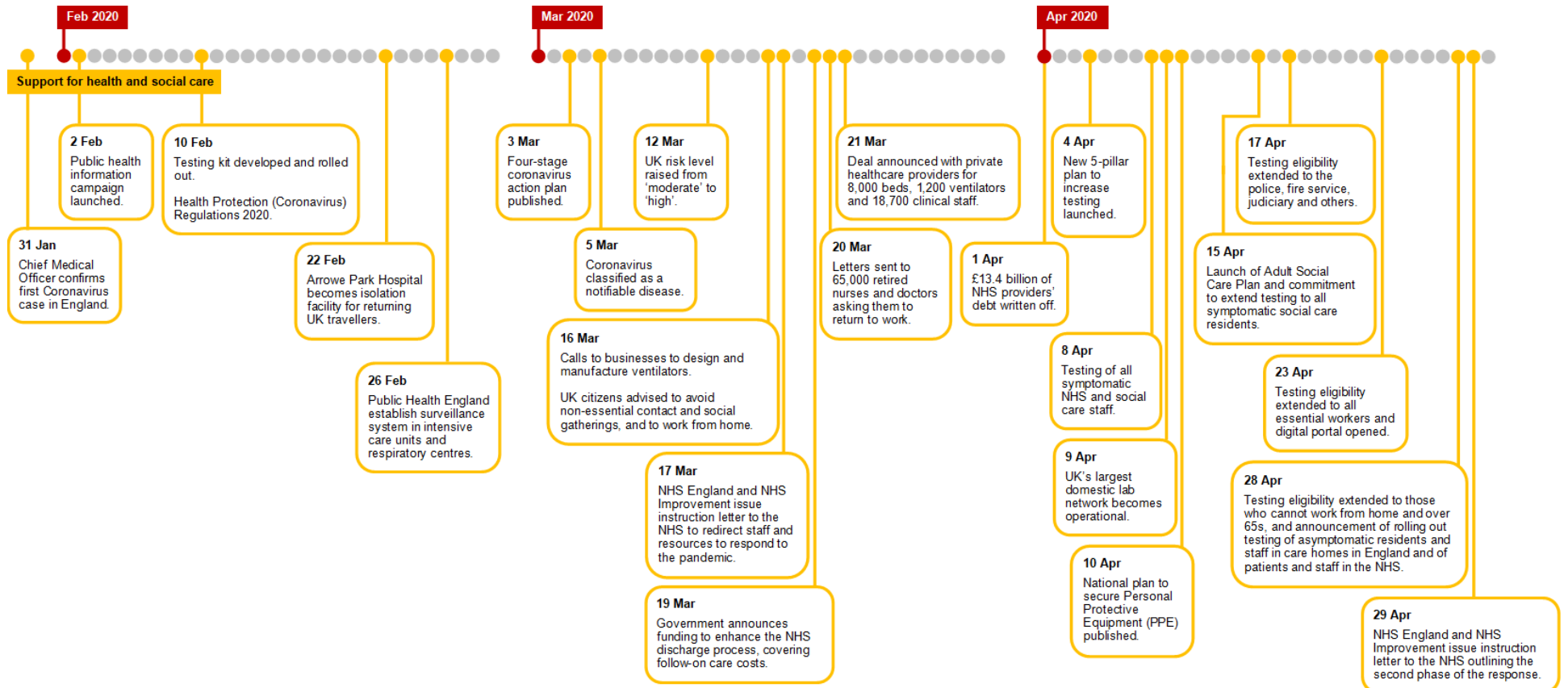


Figure 3: Timeline of key events in the UK government's response to COVID-19, 31st January to 29th April 2020, support for health and social care (National Audit Office, 2020)

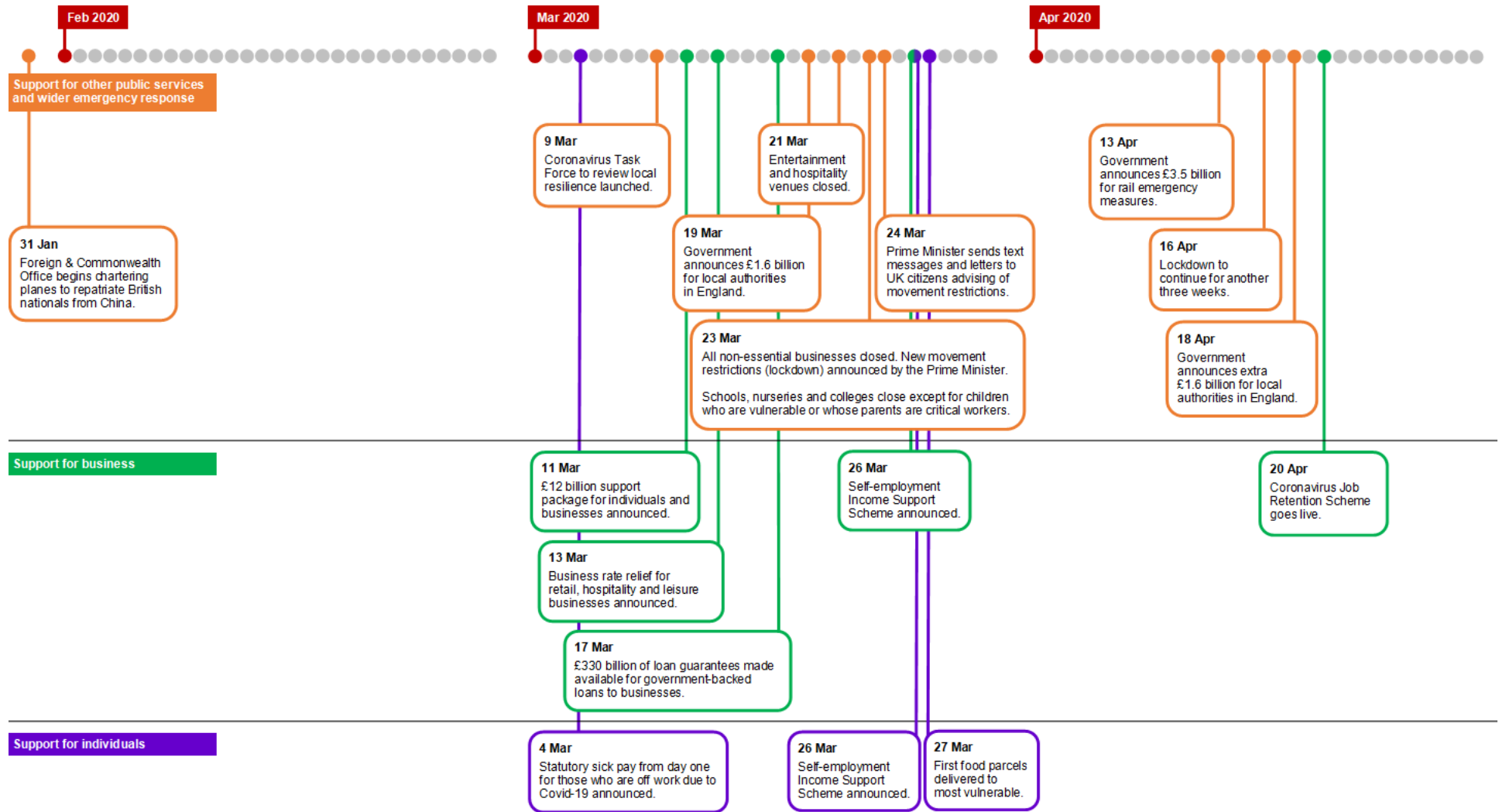


Figure 4: Timeline of key events in the UK government’s response to COVID-19, 31st January to 29th April 2020, support business, individuals and other public services / wider emergency response (National Audit Office, 2020)

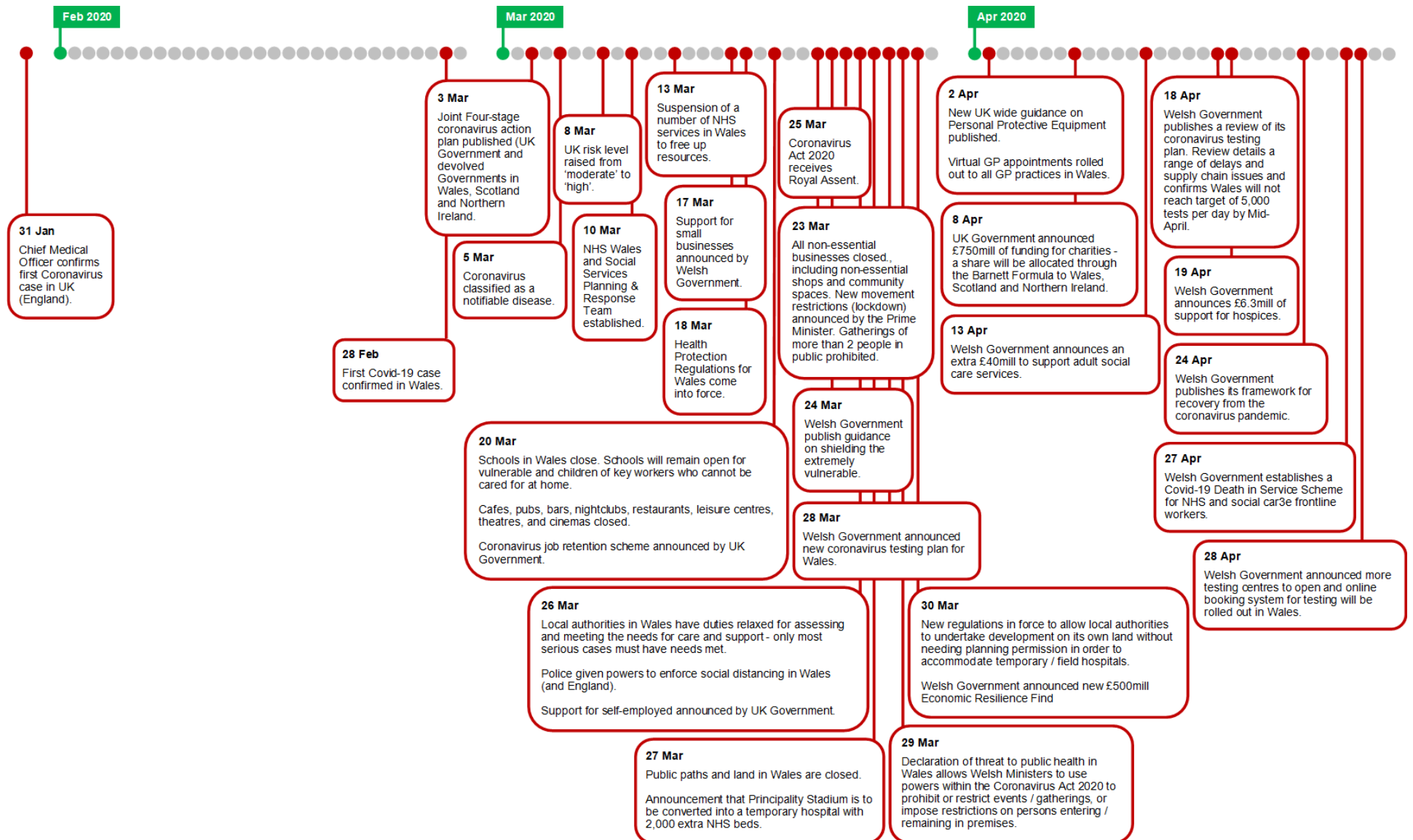


Figure 5: Timeline of key events in the Welsh Government's response to COVID-19, 31st January to 7th August 2020 (Senedd Research, 2020)

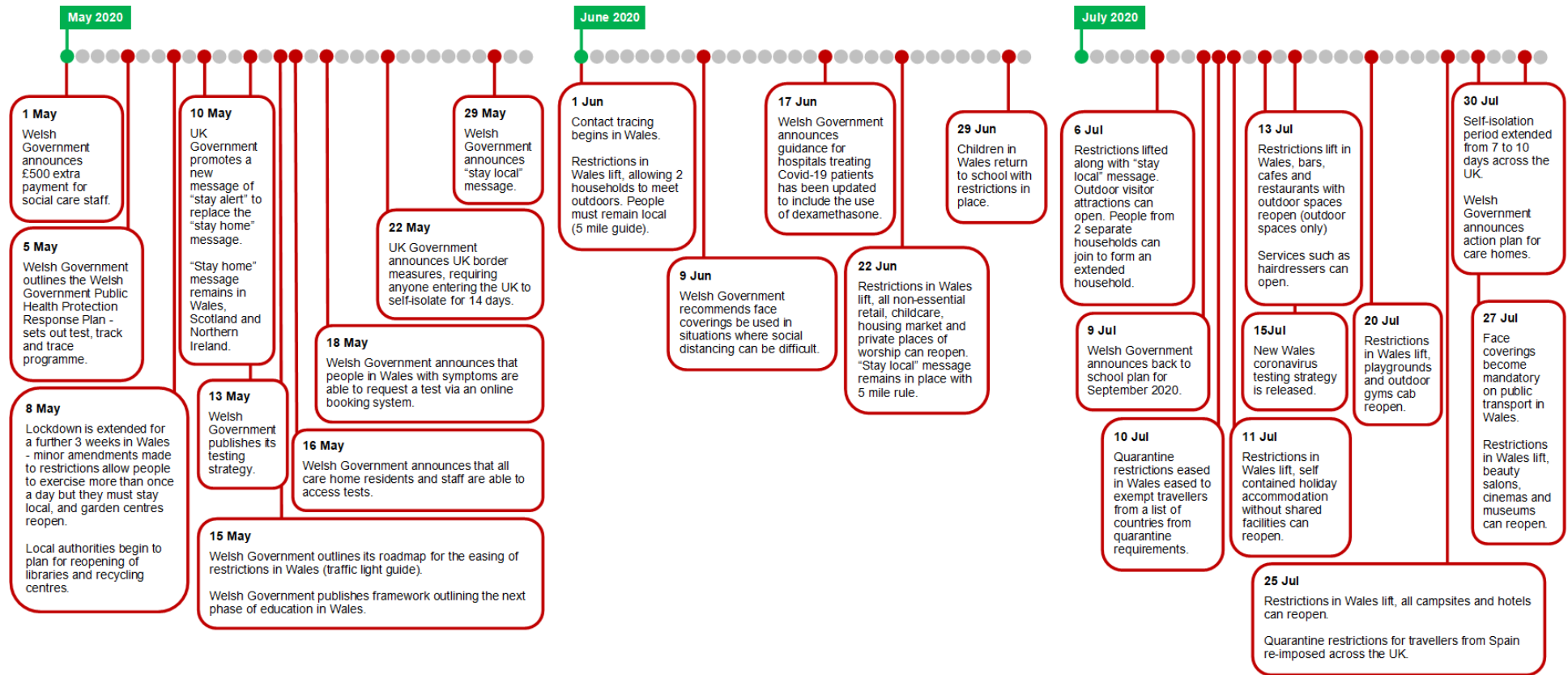


Figure 5 (continued): Timeline of key events in the Welsh Government's response to COVID-19, 31st January to 7th August 2020 (Senedd Research, 2020)

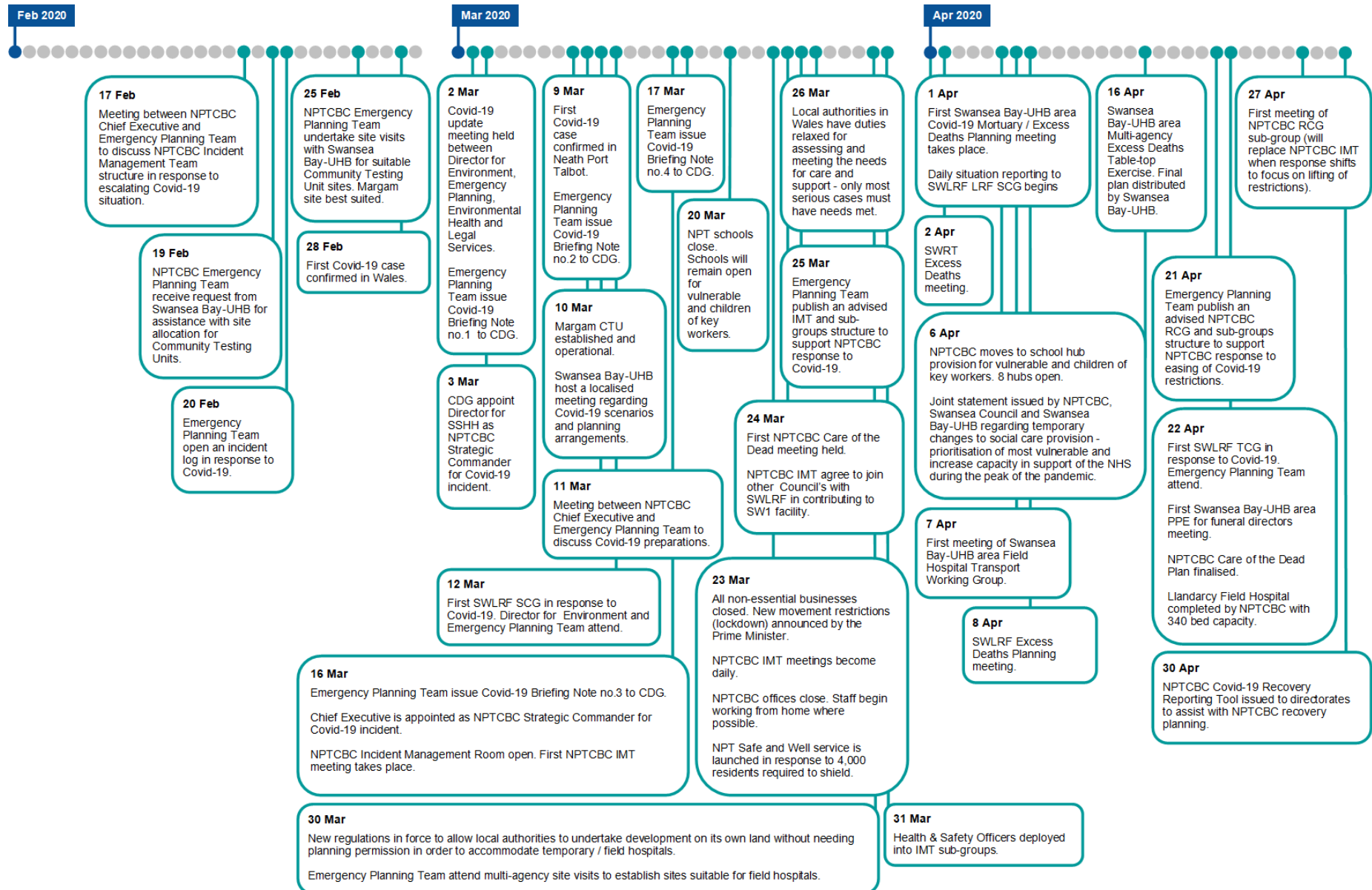
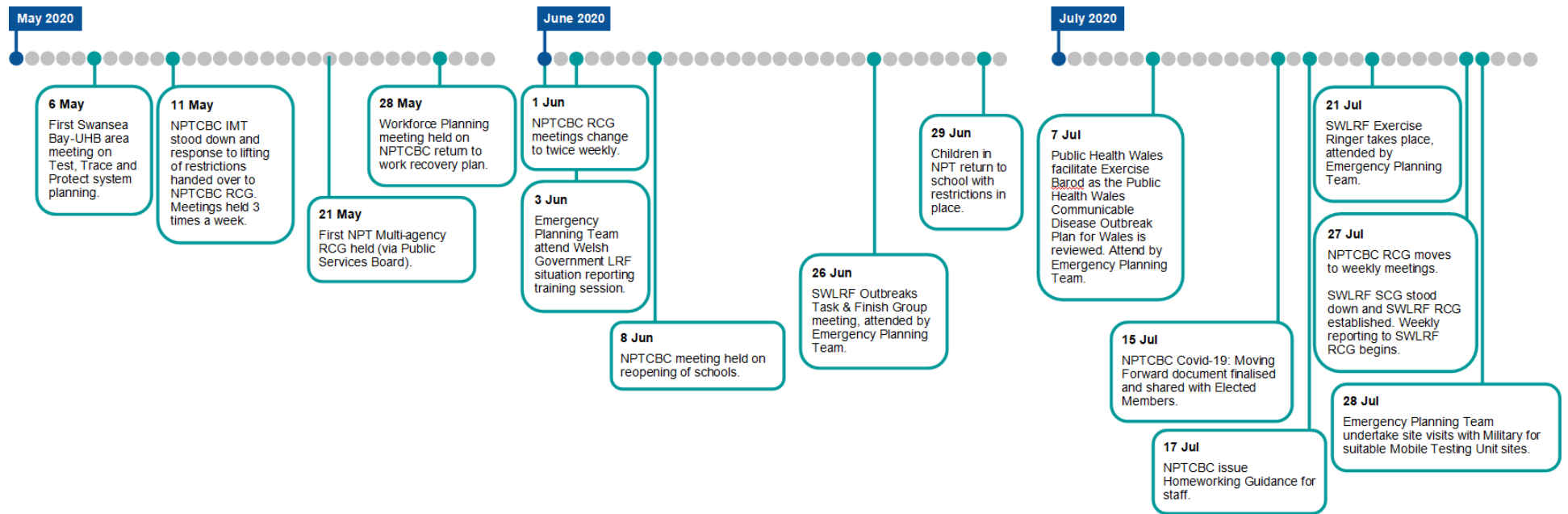


Figure 6: Timeline of key events in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council response to COVID-19, 1st February to 31st July 2020 (abbreviations can be found on page 15)



Abbreviations:

CDG	Corporate Directors Group	RCG	Recovery Coordination Group
CTU	Community Testing Unit	SCG	Strategic Coordination Group
IMR	Incident Management Room	SWLRF	South Wales Local Resilience Forum
IMT	Incident Management Team	SWRT	South Wales Local Resilience Team
NPT	Neath Port Talbot	TCG	Tactical Coordination Group
NPTCBC	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	UHB	University Health Board

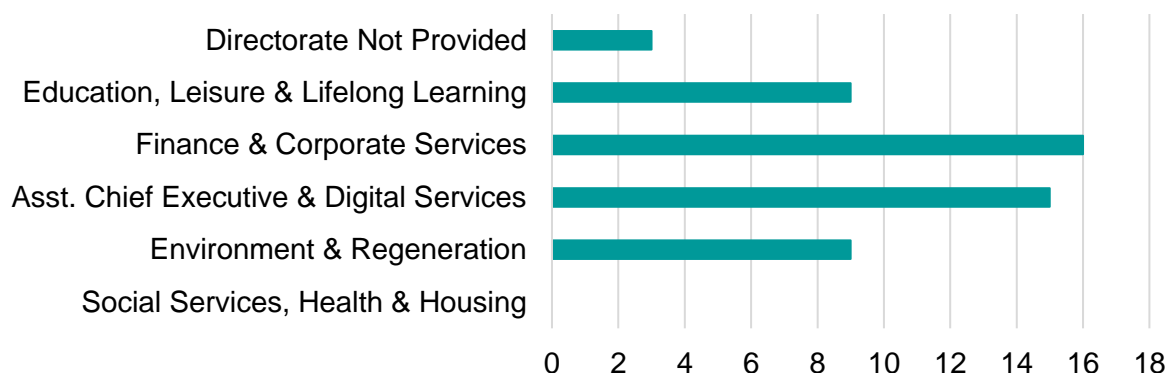
Figure 6 (continued): Timeline of key events in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council response to COVID-19, 1st February to 31st July 2020

3. Incident Debrief

3.1. Operational Level Incident Debrief

The debrief survey issued to Council Officers involved in the operational level of the response to Covid-19 received 52 responses. It should be noted that all directorates participated in this debrief, except for the Social Services Health and Housing directorate. The table below shows the breakdown of responses per directorate:

Table 1: Breakdown of operational survey responses per NPTCBC directorate.



All persons were informed of the ethics of the debrief process. For ease of cross referencing comments, observations and recommendations, all responders were given a number which also provides anonymity to participants. Participants of the operational debrief survey were asked to share their views of the Council's response to Covid-19 via the following questions:

1. What went well during the Covid-19 incident?
2. What did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
3. How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

All responses from NPTCBC Officers involved in the operational level of response to Covid-19 can be found on pages 14 - 30. In summary, NPTCBC Officers involved with the operational level of the response to Covid-19 felt there was an improved team atmosphere across the local authority, and levels of communication were good or had improved. Staff also felt that the ability to work from home was beneficial throughout the incident for reasons such as improved collaboration with other Council Services and that services suffered minimal disruption during the prolonged nature of the incident. On the other hand, NPTCBC Officers involved with the operational level of the response to Covid-19 felt there was poor communication during aspects of the response, which caused issues such as poor communication from the Government, duplication of work and confusion over roles and responsibilities. Officers felt that they struggled with workloads and work-life balance, with caused mental health and well-being issues such as stress and a loss of time with their families during a stressful period. Additionally, Officers felt that ICT provision was poor, with poor connections and equipment being the main issue. All

recommendations have been recorded in [section 3.1.3](#) and are reflected within the NPTCBC Covid-19 Incident Forward Action Plan.

3.1.1. Operational response staff view on what went well during the Covid-19 incident

What went well during the Covid-19 incident?	Identified by:	Comments:
Food Distribution Hub	1,11,26,30,34,43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This included the establishment, management, running and monitoring of the hub
Learning new skills	2,4	
Continued maintaining of services and delivering work whilst under pressure services under pressure	2,7,17,30,42,44	
Meeting new people	2,4,32	
A stronger and/or improved team atmosphere across the Council	1,2,4,9,12,13,14,15,16,18,19,22,25,28,30,34,35,40,43,44,45,46,48,51,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers reported an increase in team working, collaborating with other teams, and better support amongst colleagues Decisions could be made rapidly due to range of skills bought together. Teams able to work more efficiently due to improved team / cross service working. Daily team briefings, weekly meetings, one to one meetings etc. taken place in a number of services and more frequent than before. Increased joint working Communications and Marketing Teams worked well in a collaborative manner – made work more efficient.
Good / improved levels of communication	1,2,4,5,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16,18,19,22,25,28,29,34,36,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good communication with Senior Management and Cabinet Members through daily / weekly meetings.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communications between Officers and elected members • Clearly defining tasks to officers / services ensured efficiency • Responsiveness of social media communications to public enquiries • As a result of the emergency situation, social media messages did not need to be issued in Welsh so improved communications efficiency • Having joint / multi-agency communications in place
Staff worked extremely hard	2,17,35,40	
The sub-groups supporting the NPTCBC Incident Management Team	3,5,15,16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response sub-group meetings helped improve communication of information. • Having response sub-groups with mixed services improved response, efficiency and collaboration. • Decisions could be made rapidly due to range of skills brought together. • Teams able to work more efficiently due to improved team / cross service working
Multi-agency working / maintained multi-agency working	27,30,48,51	
NPTCBC Covid-19 debrief surveys	3	
Multi-agency debrief	3	
Having pre-existing plans in place beforehand to aid preparedness	5,37	

Daily meetings with Senior Management (Director level) and close links to the NPTCBC Incident Management Team	5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabled staff to have the most recent information in a timely manner
Ability to work from home	5,7,12,16,18,29,38,39,43,47,48,49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabled collaboration across services Limited disruption to services. Proved to be an effective way of working. Remote meetings have saved the need to travel. Getting majority of staff working remotely when previously no one did this. Ability to arrange meetings and solve problems virtually.
Records managed	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The situation enabled us to update records
Daily bulletins from Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided updates on latest announcements from Welsh Government
Mobilisation of staff to address the emergency	10,17,22,30,35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers stepped up a level to respond to the emergency Staff remained professional throughout
Staff redeployment	4,7,10,29,30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers from others of the Council stepped in to help
Support offered and provided by Emergency Planning and Health & Safety Teams	9	
Lots of volunteers across the Council and public for supporting temporary / new services	10,11,30,31,32,33,43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with public allowed identification of vulnerabilities that may have gone unnoticed.
Staff work rotas	13	
Improved working time flexibility	13,49	
Council support to residents	17,18,34,43	

ICT support	20,21,29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and support for ICT was excellent
Ability to migrate services to a remote set up quickly.	20,23,38,39	
Community organisations supporting communities	34	
Decision making	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick decisions / responses from both Senior Management and Managers allowed home working to happen efficiently.
Collaborative working with businesses	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses complying with relevant guidance. • Dissemination of information / advice (e.g. preventative measures) to businesses and care homes
Maintaining limited transport services for the public for vulnerable children / children of key workers	43	

3.1.2. Operational response staff view on what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident

What did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?	Identified by:	Comments:
Communication	1,5,7,8,12,16,17,21,24,26,29,30,39,41,42,44,45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between the different teams at the Food Distribution Hub was sometimes a challenge and caused confusion. • The difference in messages between UK and Welsh Governments made communications more difficult. The

		<p>frequency of changes to lockdown guidance has also proved quite challenging to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The information coming through from Welsh Government was on occasions conflicting or slow• Sign-off procedures were immediate during early phase of the pandemic, but as gradually returned to taking longer – provides a bottleneck due to the need for Welsh translations.• More consideration is needed for those who are digitally excluded and how we can communicate with them better (residents and staff raised this)• Timeliness of responses to the public around key updates and the co-ordination• Communication with management.• Lots of different messages and lack of instruction.• Initial confusion• A number of the roles overlapped with some uncertainty as to who was doing what• Roles of Council Services / Officers became confused and fragmented (e.g. enforcement)• Lack of communication with staff from managers in substantive role at the early stages of crisis - required to understand what staff concerns were about working from home (e.g. not enough work, space to work etc.)• Lack of clarity about what could be funded,• Duplication of information requested in the various returns
--	--	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of information could have been better with centralised intelligence and data collation – felt like we were working in silos • Confusion regarding what we should or shouldn't be doing • The public knew about the rates relief, grants etc. before the Council so were unable to fully prepare before the scheme went live. • Speed of onset of lockdown (not communicated well from Government)
Redeployment	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard joining a new service in the beginning due to the intensity of the situation
New employees	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult for new employees to learn new procedures, rules etc. - situation was made worse due to the amount of public applications for assistance
Delays in Welsh Government Shielding letters	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made it difficult to formulate a response in advance
Food Distribution Hub	1,11,22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many people were involved and different people being asked to cover the same role at different times. • Would have been more beneficial for Welsh Government to supply a budget to the Council rather than food boxes, as this would have been more efficient in both cost and deliveries. • Food Distribution Hub should have had more input in the database that was set up – data such as what has been distributed was held on a spreadsheet, when it surely could have been saved on the database too

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service and service users would probably have benefitted further if we had taken a little more time to plan the service. If the objectives and target recipients had been clearer initially, service delivery would have been easier and the evaluation of the service effectiveness would have been more straight-forward.
Working from home	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be difficult at times due to family life Video calling not always being good quality as connections would fluctuate
School Hubs	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents not picking up food bags for their children, as a result some school staff delivered the food bags to homes.
Management of workloads, work-life balance, mental health and well-being	15,23,28,31,45,46,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes became difficult to manage workloads As public sector employees we should (and did) rise to the task but all of this was happening at the same time as trying to adjust our home lives to lockdown too. This was a little stressful for a period of time. Work was not issued fairly. Some staff had a lot of time at home unable or unwilling to work due to child care, shielding or fear of the virus, or not being issued work etc. and other staff were issued or involved in work which kept them busy. For some staff the only time they had off during the Covid-19 incident was when they booked annual leave but for other staff they had days, weeks or months off work to spend quality time with their family as they were unwilling or unable to work as mentioned above.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long working days and weekends due to volume of work and pressure of time (e.g. time sensitive support to public, businesses, delivery of Covid-19 Regulations, enforcement etc.) • The authority taking away employee right to build and use flexi and then backtracking • Some of the calls were very hard to deal with. We spoke to people whose family members had died people, whose cancer had become terminal due to the lockdown
Service level pre-planning	8,18,20,48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No single point of contact for each service or lists of contacts provided to frontline services, made work less efficient and cause Heads of Services to respond to queries. • A lot of procedures had to be developed and implemented very quickly on a case by case basis. Service response felt very reactive in the early days of the lockdown. • Being unprepared for shutdown, in particular with regards to ensuring everyone was set-up for home working / laptops etc. • Training in advance would have better prepared us for the task
ICT provision	16,19,36,43,46,47,48,49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially ICT provision was poor • Although ICT were supportive, during the first few weeks of the lockdown it was very difficult communicating with members, trying to get them set up on Microsoft Teams, and to ensure they had the correct ICT equipment –

		<p>particularly when Council Officers were also trying to get used to using the new systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor ICT equipment • Slow services • Difficulties connecting to NPT servers. • Microsoft Teams on occasions has lost connection, with users being unable to reconnect • ICT used to work from home was not of the standard as that used in the office. • Being unprepared for shutdown, in particular with regards to ensuring everyone was set-up for home working / laptops etc. • Occasional problems with internet access.
Safe and Well Service	25,27,30,32,33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial interview at call centre focused primarily on food delivery and not the needs of referral and family. • Confusion as to remit of Safe and Well in the early stages was expected, but as employee this was challenging. Initially, Elected Members thought Safe and Well replaced the work of the Local Area Coordination Co-ordinators so they were asking things outside of the remit of Safe and Well. Also Safe and Well wasn't put in place as a financial support tool - some organisations referred people to us for financial support rather than health support • The success rate of calling volunteers was low and the demand for placing of the volunteers was also lower than expected

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time needed to implement Safe and Well • Capacity of some organisations to help - although the will was there • Not having the time to set up formal programme management methodologies - an appropriate methodology for use whilst responding in a crisis would have helped in particular in identifying and understanding the various roles / responsibilities involved in setting up and delivering a service of this size
Resourcing and procurement	35,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing advice around such items as chemicals, PPE etc. • Procurement of key items was a challenge at the start but this was country wide. NPTCBC used to have a designated store in Facilities but due to cutbacks this was given up and suppliers were tendered on delivering direct to site. The lack of any in-house stock did cause some issues. • Due to resource shortages, Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff were put under pressure to deliver response to Covid-19 Regulations and enforcement 7 days a week.
Decision making	36,45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow response to close the offices. • Speed of onset of lockdown (Government level)
Support / gratitude from Human Resources / Senior Management	23,37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPTCBCs Covid-19 FAQs for staff and managers felt very vague – it felt like all decisions were left in the hands of accountable managers, where Council wide policies should have been looked at from the very

		<p>beginning. Human Resources and/or Senior Management did not wish to be drawn on these matters, which resulted in different policies being adopted in different sections / departments / directorates (e.g. relating to flexi rules).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gratitude shown at all by Senior Management, just empty words. Large amounts of Council Officers have not been working at all, whilst still receiving full pay. A number of Council Services saw increased workloads with little thanks or reward (e.g. additional annual leave etc.)
Field hospitals	51,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intensity and speed was difficult to sustain but that was the nature of the project, and thankfully the term required was short. • There was no feedback to the team directly delivering the project from the response team • Instructions to proceed were slow and impacted on the delivery of the project. • There has been a detrimental impact on the existing users of the Llandarcy facility due to the conversion, and even after sports and gym facilities have been given the go-ahead to reconvene business, the Llandarcy set up will be a long way behind due to the reinstatement works required. • Definition and planning of the work required
Lack of awareness regarding the Incident Management Team	51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaware NPTCBC had an Incident Management Team

3.1.3. Operational response staff recommendations on how to improve NPTCBCs future response to emergencies

How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?	Identified by:	Comments:
Communication	1,3,7,12,16,30,37,38,41,51,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More communication across teams and departments • Remind staff involved in the response that communication is key and review communication frequently • Ensure the right people are involved (e.g. meetings, updates, information sharing etc.) • More joined up services and better information sharing between departments • Look at how staff can be made more aware of other Council Services and what those services do (a lot of staff don't realise what services are in the Council) • In addition to keeping the public up to date, ensure staff are kept up to date. • More consideration is needed for those who are digitally excluded and how we can communicate with them better (residents and staff raised this) • Communicate to staff what emergency plans have been implemented during an emergency response. • Communicate the role of the Council during an emergency as well as the role of groups such as the Incident Management Team • Provide feedback to staff involved in the response.
Team work	2,12,16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasise the importance of team work • Look for further opportunities to develop multi-disciplinary and corporate working • More joined up services

Working from home	2,13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing staff to work from home helps us feel appreciated and trusted • Being more prepared for more home working
Welsh language	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a communications plan in place for Welsh Language during emergencies so Welsh social media accounts don't get left behind
Participate in Emergency Planning exercises	5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be useful from a communications point of view • Enable services to be better prepared
Microsoft Teams	5,10,29,33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued use of Microsoft Teams as a part of the response to Covid-19 outbreaks and other emergencies • Ensure all services are available via Microsoft Teams • Speeds up the response
Staff planning / redeployment	1,8,11,25,26,30,32,43,50,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the amount of people involved in new services such as the Food Distribution Hub – keep the same people in post for the duration to avoid confusion • In anticipation of a second peak, consider early indication to Officers who may be required to perform a different role • Consider using the Officers who were redeployed in the same role as before if further response to future outbreaks is needed • Spent more time formalising roles and responsibilities at the beginning of an emergency where possible • Clearly define roles for individuals rather than have multiple people doing bits of the same role. • Offer training to Officers so that if they are required to be involved in future emergencies they can be redeployed more easily (e.g. phone call handling, manual handling etc).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider redeploying staff fully rather than having them split between their business as usual role and redeployed role. • Identify staff early who could be proactive in an emergency. • Skills mapping of staff • Procedures and policy to redeploy the correct staff at the correct time.
More guidance and training	8,30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider some training notes / guidance to help Officers understand what is expected to improve preparedness • Offer training to Officers so that if they are required to be involved in future emergencies they can be redeployed more easily.
Emergency preparedness	12,14,15,18,25,31,37,43,50,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the right people are involved (e.g. meetings, updates, information sharing etc.) • Use the previous response to Covid-19 to build the future response • Formalise the process of identifying the groups who will be brought together to form the response, as well as the roles that they would be allocated to • Identify a single person of contact (and deputy) per service and provide a list given to front line services to save time and perhaps free heads of service up from queries. • Consider setting up response roles based on service areas (e.g. one service take responsibility for Track and Trace) • Emphasis importance of emergency planning • Identify staff early who could be proactive in an emergency. • Skills mapping of staff

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures and policy to redeploy the correct staff at the correct time. • Set up formal programme management methodology for use whilst responding in a emergency would have helped, particularly in identifying and understanding the various roles / responsibilities involved in setting up and delivering a large new service (e.g. Safe and Well Service)
Business continuity	18,20,43,47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a single person of contact (and deputy) per service and provide a list given to front line services to save time and perhaps free heads of service up from queries. • Have a cohesive plan in place for a given set of circumstances • Identify staff early who could be proactive in an emergency. • Ensure services plan for full office closures / closures of all offices at the same time
Learning from the emergency	17,21,30,33,34,37,43,48,49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is learning from the Covid-19 emergency • Build on the lessons learnt • Carry out debrief sessions for Incident Management Team sub-groups to look at how the work done by those groups could have been improved • A lessons learnt workshop should be carried out as what is required on the frontline does not sometimes working with what is expected by the back office
Emergency response	12,19,22,24,25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the right people are involved (e.g. meetings, updates, information sharing etc.) • Prioritise most important tasks • Identify key leads for certain elements from the start • Have clear deliverables for different areas of the response

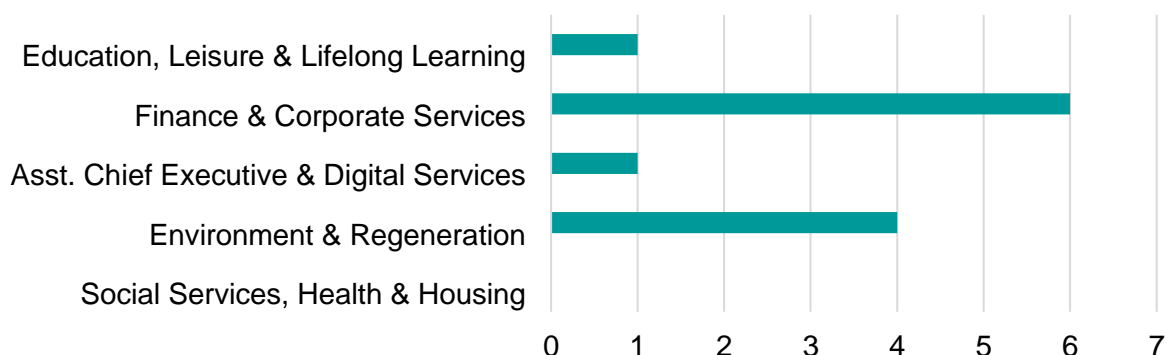
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the same people involved to ensure consistency where possible • Communications needs to be on agendas at the start of emergencies as communications staff can prevent issues becoming too big • Spent more time formalising roles and responsibilities at the beginning of an emergency where possible
Staff rewards	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward staff who worked hard through the incident – this will improve motivation, encourage staff to volunteer more during emergencies and encourage staff to go the extra mile in future emergencies
Integration of relevant services	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider integration of relevant services where teams worked well together as part of a multi-disciplinary team (e.g. Communications and Marketing)
Safe and Well Service	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More structured information to be taken during referral interview, to include; emergency contact number, specialist agency involvement, details of family members and their needs)
Supporting the public	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closer with communities and Elected Members to support community response in a coordinated way
Response timeframes	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time needed to implement projects such as Safe and Well, the field hospitals
Resources and procurement	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better resilience in stock levels of cleaning products, PPE etc.
ICT support and equipment	36,46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update ICT servers • Provide all staff with laptops to aid remote working • Make work paperless to limit the need to attend offices • Improved ICT facilities
Funding	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity early on regarding what additional costs will be funded by Welsh Government

Human Resources policies	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have policies in place regarding flexi, annual leave, childcare issues etc. in place ready for future emergencies – constant changes throughout Covid-19 incident put additional pressure on staff • Have policies in place for what managers should be doing with their staff such as homeworking, office access, rotas, team meetings, supervision, contactable hours (for staff and managers) • Be more clear early on when offices close and ensure staff do not attend the offices – the slow response to home working put staff at risk
Field hospital	51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early consideration to the reinstatement of the Llandarcy facility should have been done. Should be taken into account for future emergencies. • Plans for the reinstatement of the Llandarcy facility should go ahead and should be funded through Covid-19 funds, or a reimbursement option should be offered due to the lack of access for the users.

3.2. Tactical Level Incident Debrief

The debrief survey issued to Council Officers involved in the tactical level of the response to Covid-19 received 12 responses. It should be noted that all directorates participated in this debrief, except for the Social Services Health and Housing directorate. The table below shows the breakdown of responses per directorate:

Table 2: Breakdown of tactical survey responses per NPTCBC directorate.



All persons were informed of the ethics of the debrief process. Participants of the tactical debrief survey were asked to share their views of the Council's response to Covid-19 via the following questions:

1. What went well during the Covid-19 incident?
2. What did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
3. How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

3.2.1 What went well during the Covid-19 incident?

The Incident Management Team was established on 16th March 2020 on the advice of the Emergency Planning Team, as part of the Council's early response to Covid-19, and subsequently led to the quick establishment of relevant sub-groups, which led to new, temporary services such as NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub being set up quickly and efficiently in response to Covid-19. Tactical Officers felt the use of an Incident Management Team, and its early establishment, was beneficial in the Council's response to Covid-19, as it brought together corporate level management to oversee decision making, and enabled the establishment of relevant sub-groups based on advisory structures developed by the Emergency Planning Team, containing Council Officers who had the relevant knowledge to undertake the response. Tactical Officers felt that the setting up of the sub-group structure was important as it ensured the Council's response was organised, that the correct people were involved in the Council's response to Covid-19, and ensured Officers who were able to make decisions could do so at short notice without any barriers in place. Tactical Officers also felt that those involved in the sub-group structure, both at a tactical and operational level, showed great commitment throughout the response and in getting operational activities established and running (e.g. NPT Safe and Well, Food Distribution Hub, Field Hospital, School Hubs, Care of the Dead etc). Also noted by

Tactical Officers was the benefit of having access to the Emergency Planning Team for tactical level advice throughout the incident, as well as having the Emergency Planning Team attend the SWLRF Tactical Coordination Group and other relevant tactical level multi-agency groups to provide feedback, guidance and to coordinate the relevant actions placed on the Council. In support of the Incident Managements Team's response to Covid-19, the Emergency Planning Team also developed a number of tools, such as the NPTCBC Recovery Reporting Tool and the NPTCBC Traffic Light Tracking Tool, to aid the Council's response to Covid-19 and to plan for the recovery phase.

Tactical Offices noted the quick response by the Council to set up new services such as NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub, which helped to meet the needs of 1,300 residents across Neath Port Talbot who were required to shield from Covid-19 or self-isolate. It should be noted that services such as these were supported by staff who had been redeployed (e.g. redeployment of Community Transport Service). Officers who volunteered or were redeployed were highly supportive and enthusiastic, and worked well as a team. Debrief participants also noted how quickly the Council responded to the requirement to establish Llandarcy Field Hospital in 22 days. It was also noted that the production and auctioning of a detailed Care of the Dead Plan in collaboration with Crematorium Services went well.

Throughout the incident, Tactical Officers felt that there was good communication at all levels throughout the Council, which enabled those involved in the Incident Management Team and the sub-group structure to understand their specific roles and to appreciate and target problem areas within the response. This helped to improve the interface with the public and between internal officers, frontline workers and volunteers. In relation to public communications, Tactical Officers felt that communications was good and that extending the working hours of the Communications Team supported the good level of public communications. The Mailroom has also been important in supporting public communications throughout the response to Covid-19, handling an increased amount in ingoing and outgoing mail as a result of NPT Safe and Well, whilst also recommencing a courier service to Elected Members to assist in participation of remote meetings, and by assisting other Council Services by operating a remote printing service which printed materials subsequently posted to the relevant Officers. There has also been good communication between NPTCBC and the Trade Unions via the use of remote meetings, which ensured regular information sharing as well as providing a forum for discussion and resolving an issues raised by the Trade Unions. There was also good work carried out by Democratic Services who quickly developed an online version of 'Urgency Action Protocol', set up regular contact with all Elected Members and supported the Council Leader in regular briefings with the Cabinet and Opposition Leader.

Many Tactical Officers agreed that the support provided by Digital Services enabled Council Services to quickly move to home working and limited overall Service disruption. This included supporting the Finance Teams with developing online application processes and databases, supporting Legal Teams with developing online processes for birth registration, virtual knowledge tests for drivers, taxi renewals, applications under the Licensing Act 2003 etc. and by supporting Human Resources

Teams with developing processes for workforce audits and staff redeployment planning. Microsoft Teams has also been of benefit in the view of Tactical Officers, as it has allowed Council Services to function relatively normally, and enabled Services to pull resources together more easily across the Council.

Tactical Officers noted the supported provided by Financial Services during the incident, stating that Financial Services supported Service Managers with making payments for Covid-19 related expenditure. Financial Services responsible throughout the incident for preparing monthly claims for reimbursement from Welsh Government, preparing projected estimates of additional costs and loss of income, ensuring staff and creditors were continued to be paid on time, and profiling instalment payments for Council Tax. Tactical Officers also praised the work of Financial Services for processing £8.8 million of relief to over 700 National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Accounts, for managing the payments of the £10,000 and £25,000 grants to eligible businesses and charities (as of 24th July 2020, £27.84 million has been paid out to 2,432 businesses and charities in Neath Port Talbot). The majority of the Internal Audit Team were redeployed to the Test, Trace and Protect Service from June 2020, but prior to this the team provided advice and guidance to other Council Services regarding new ways of working.

Tactical Officers agreed that the enforcement work carried out by the Council under the new powers provided under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) Wales 2020 was good, as Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers ensured buildings were made compliant to the regulations and ensured town centre mitigation was in place. It was also noted through the debrief responses that there was a consistent approach to enforcement and clarity was achieved across all of the Councils regulatory functions, as information relating to issues and complaints was shared and discussed across Enforcement Offices on a weekly basis. There was also ongoing support and advice provided by Legal Services in relation to enforcement issues as a result of relevant Covid-19 restrictions.

Legal Services also played an important role throughout the Council's response to Covid-19 by providing legal advice on enforcement issues under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) Wales 2020, and legal advice in respect of social service provision as changes were made by both the UK and Welsh Governments (adult social care and homelessness strategies), providing advice on redeployment matters and furloughing of staff, on school closures and reopening of schools, providing advice on closures of public rights of way, debt recovery, data protection and freedom of information requests, data sharing advice across other organisations (e.g. between NPTCBC and Public Health Wales etc.), advice on PPE sourcing and procuring, as well as liaising with Welsh Government regarding the approval of PPE suppliers, providing legal and transactional advice and assistance on emergency projects such as Llandarcy Field Hospital, and managing the cancellation of marriage / civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies. Whilst responding to Covid-19, Legal Services have also continued to provide services in regards to Council litigation, contentious issues, property transactions, complaints, land charge searches, taxi renewal applications, street trading licences, birth registrations, safeguarding surgeries between Legal Services and Social Services, continued processing of

safeguarding cases within statutory time frames, with Legal Services working to develop remote access systems in response to Covid-19 to ensure business as usual work, such as those noted, can continue. Legal Services have also been support Digital Services in ensuring compliance with data protection and information governance due to increased / new use of software and technology across the Council. As of 23rd July 2020, there has been extremely good compliance with data protection laws, with no breach reports being submitted to the Information Commissions Office.

Human Resources has been involved across areas of the Council's response to Covid-19 in relation to staffing issues. The Workforce Planning Group increased its meeting frequency and ensured participation of all directorates and Trade Unions, which enabled the Human Resources Teams to plan workforce strategies and ensured all directorates had a framework for providing workforce data. In addition to this, a Workplaces Group was also established, to ensure processes were in place for ensuring safe working practises for Council Officers who have worked throughout the incident, either from home or from Offices, and for Officers returning to workplaces. A Mental Health and Wellbeing Group was also established to develop mental health and wellbeing resources for employees. Much of the ongoing work to protect Council Officers was supported by the Health and Safety Team who provided health and safety advice and guidance, and who ensured processes where in place for carrying out Covid-19 related risk assessments. The Training and Development Team also focused on the delivery of training to support redeployment of staff and staff involved in frontline work, for services such as Social Services, NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub.

Tactical Officers also noted that continuing with 'business as usual' services went well, as services such as Household Refuse and Recycling, Highways and Buildings, Legal and Financial services and provision, Human Resources and Payroll, Community Safety work on Anti-Social Behaviour etc. were maintained throughout the incident.

Tactical Officers also felt that multi-agency working went well with agencies such as South Wales Police and Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

3.2.2 What did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?

Tactical Officers reported a number of issues via the debrief surveys. The first issue noted by Tactical Officers was that of Council Officer health and wellbeing. Many Officers were required to work extremely long hours throughout the response phase of the incident, with limited breaks or time off, and some Officers involved in the management side of the incident also worked through weekends and bank holidays. There was also issues due to the quick onset of office closures and the requirement for staff to work from home, with staff not having the appropriate DSE they normally have in the office, such as adjustable chairs, screens, arm rests etc.

Some Tactical Officers felt there were some challenges during the initial response phase to Covid-19, as partial redeployment of Officers resulted in a high changeover of Officers, which consequently resulted in communications issues. It was also felt that there were issues with staff being pulled out of their redeployed roles back into their

'business as usual' roles before the response phase had finished. Additionally, issues were raised with some Council Officers not being able to work from home initially, partially as a result of some Officers being on the shielding list, and others needing to provide support to dependents.

ICT issues were reported by a number of Tactical Officers, such as not all Council Officers being able to work from home as not all Officers had received laptops yet, which resulted in some Officers taking desktop computers home. It was also reported that some Officers were unable to work as they did not have Wi-Fi in their homes. Tactical Officers also felt that the ICT systems struggled initially with the sheer volume of Officers working from home, which resulted in frequent loss of connections, however this significantly improved as the incident progressed.

Many respondents felt there were issues with liaising with Welsh Government or with the level of communication from Welsh Government. Tactical Officers felt that the guidance coming from Welsh Government was often too late, unclear, and contradictory or did not contain enough information to support restrictions or changes to restrictions. In relation to legislation and policy, changes were being varied and amended on a regular basis with short notice as to the extent of the changes. Officers also reported issues with the late announcements by Welsh Government in relation to financial support and guidance on grants, including identifying eligibility to grants, delay in allowing grants to be paid to charities, what costs could be recovered, how to recover costs, will income loss be funded etc. Local authorities are also still waiting on clarity on from Welsh Government regarding what funding will be available to recover costs and support the ongoing response. It was also felt that the Council do not have sufficient resources to deal with the issues prolonged incidents such as Covid-19 bring about.

There were also issues reported in relation to NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub in relation to who had the authority to make the food order, and what level of budget was available from within existing resources to support the order. It was also unclear whether the Welsh Government would reimburse the Council for the food supplied to residents not on the Welsh Government shielded list. It was also raised that it was difficult to track the corporate database when establishing requirements for the food orders, and that the assessment criteria initially was not developed enough to field genuine requests for support – this improved as the assessment criteria developed.

Tactical Officers raised issues regarding the prioritisation of requests from front line services. There were some instances where a front line service would place a request, another service would provide support and then find out the support was no longer required after putting resources in place to deal with the request, which resulted in supporting services being substantially distracted from other response requirements.

Tactical Officers felt that working with multi-agency partners in some instances did not work well, as communications between agencies could be difficult. For example, Public Health Wales did not participate in the SWLRF Tactical or Strategic Coordination Groups, and did not act as the lead agency / agency with primacy over the incident, and communication with the local health board could be difficult at times

due to the varying levels of pressure and demand on the NHS. Tactical Officers also reported that although there were regional and/or national groups established to look at issues such as excess deaths and waste management which generally worked well, there appeared to be issues in regional communications and arriving at clear, consistent approaches, with some agencies appearing to have more knowledge than others and not sharing the information (notwithstanding the issues surrounding PPE). Issues were also raised with attempts to work with the voluntary sector, with concerns these issues will continue into the future.

Additionally, issues were raised at the tactical level regarding the situation reporting from the Council to SWLRF, and subsequently Welsh Government. It was raised that the Incident Management Team were not updating the situation report enough, which resulted in information, issues and BRAG ratings remaining the same for long periods of time, often unnecessarily. Tactical Officers also raised that some Council Officers did not appear to initially realise the significance of the incident, and that some officers were reluctant to take on the incident roles required of them based on their usual roles and responsibilities. There were also issues regarding Council Officers not understanding emergency planning terms and processes, and this could be improved with increased attendance at relevant training and exercises.

3.2.3 How can the local authority's response to emergency, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

Tactical Officers listed a number of recommendations for improvements to incident response, with one key recommendation to ensure ICT connectivity improves to support home working in the event of future lockdowns in relation to Covid-19. Alongside this, it was felt that the Council needs to ensure it has robust business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place for each Council Service, especially in respect of ICT.

Tactical Officers would like to see increased engagement with Welsh Government (and the UK Government) in order to have earlier notification of potential changes to legislation in relation to Covid-19, prior to decisions on such changes being made public. This recommendation should also apply to decisions around funding. It was also felt that the Government should look to improve its communication with other public bodies, and communication with the public to increase trust.

Another recommendation is to ensure any future responses to Covid-19 with a multi-agency setting should be coordinated between agencies, ensuring that a response is coordinated before it is communicated to any third parties involved in incident response. It was also felt that the joint policy currently in place between South Wales Police and other enforcement agencies should be kept to ensure a consistent approach. Additionally, any future response to Covid-19 should ensure the right agency leads the response. Further to this, it was felt that joint communications for the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service should be developed across partner agencies for enhanced capability.

In relation to emergency planning for future incidents, particularly in relation to Covid-19, it was felt that plans relating to human health incidents need to be reviewed and

that planning for a second response to Covid-19 should take priority, to ensure previous responses are captured in planning documents and ready to use where suitable, and dependent on future scenarios. Along with this, arrangements in relation to Humanitarian Assistance should be reviewed, and where applicable, emergency plans should be amended accordingly. It was also felt that early establishment of an Incident Management Team and any relevant sub-groups should be repeated in future incidents where early warning of an incident is available, as it is easier to stand down a response than attempting to catch up during a response to an incident.

In addition to the emergency planning for future incidents recommendations, a number of officers suggested relevant officers should participate in training and exercising relevant to their employment roles and responsibilities, with Directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Chief Executive undertaking strategic / gold officer training, and all Heads of Service being required to undertake tactical / silver officer training. This would ensure these Officers are familiar with LRF structure and processes involved in incident response. As well as this, all Council Officers should undertake basic awareness sessions in relation to emergency planning, and the Councils role during an emergency. To support this, all employment contracts should include a statement on the generic requirement of Council Officers to undertake activities, at a level commensurate with the skills and experience required by their role, to assist in ensuring the Council meets in legal duties under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004 by preparing for or responding to emergencies and incidents where required.

Tactical Officers raised that they would like to see the Council continue to be flexible and be able to redeploy staff and resources to meet priorities as they change during incidents, and that the use of redeployed staff should be based on skills, knowledge and training. It was raised that the Council does not have sufficient resources to deal with the issues prolonged incidents such as Covid-19 bring about, and that this needs reviewing. Tactical Officers would also like to see a focus placed on mental health and wellbeing as a key strategy to ensure the pace and endurance of key personnel involved in incidents, and for those involved to ensure they take frequent breaks, with future training designed to encourage this. Further to this, Tactical Officers recommended that the Council needs to look into the issue of multiple people in a vehicle / cab, and agree upon a consistent approach based on the latest understanding and experience gained recently - some did more than others to protect staff on the precautionary principle and have subsequently experienced different resource impacts leading to inconsistencies in services and positions, and some mitigation measures are difficult to 'row back' from once implemented. Some are also eager to make commitments of support measures without necessarily agreeing a position with regional colleagues and some relationships need to be developed.

During future responses to incidents, Tactical Officers stated that better document control and retention would be beneficial due to the volume of documentation being received across the Council, including new and amended versions of advice, guidance, policy and legislation. The recommendation is for thought to be given as to how information and documentation should be managed should an incident similar to Covid-19 occur in the future e.g. document storage via the Intranet, an incident Information Security Manager etc.

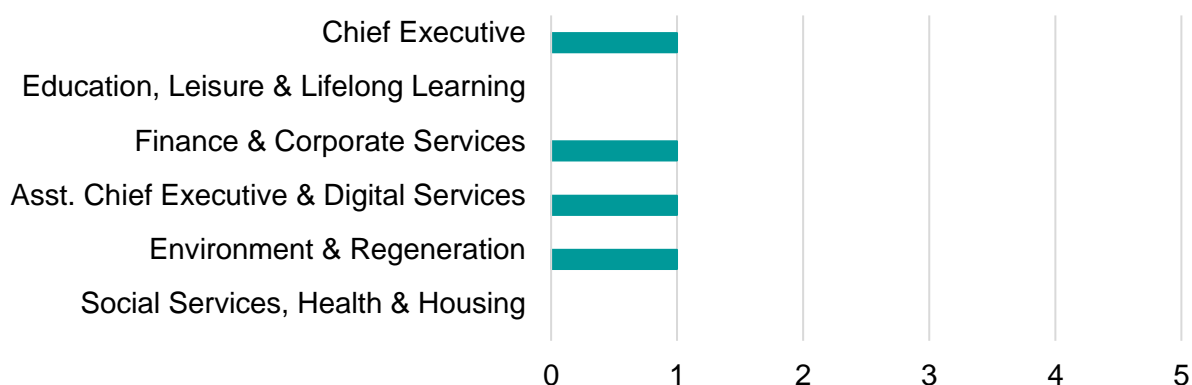
Tactical Officers recommended that more work be done in relation to public communications for residents who are digitally excluded. It was also recommended that the Council should build upon the community action which took place during the period of lockdown between March and May 2020, and look at how the Council can encourage communities to continue to support each other during future emergencies.

The final recommendation from Tactical Officers is around care of the dead arrangements. It is felt that care of the dead is a matter relating to health boards rather than for local authorities, and that if health boards took the lead responses would be quicker and more efficient. It was stressed that local authorities would still provide a supporting role in the matter, via provision of temporary vehicle adaptation etc. It was also felt that there needs to be a higher level approach to temporary storage of excess bodies, as existing approaches only cover regional efforts.

3.3. Strategic Level Incident Debrief

The debrief survey issued to Council Officers involved in the strategic level of the response to Covid-19 received 4 responses. The table below shows the breakdown of responses per directorate:

Table 3: Breakdown of tactical survey responses per NPTCBC directorate.



All persons were informed of the ethics of the debrief process. Participants of the strategic debrief survey were asked to share their views of the Council's response to Covid-19 via the following questions:

1. From an NPTCBC perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?
2. From an NPTCBC perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
3. How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?
4. From a multi-agency perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?
5. From a multi-agency perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
6. How can the multi-agency response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

3.3.1 From an NPTCBC perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?

Strategic Officers who took part in the debrief felt that Council Officers responded brilliantly to the incident, and that the partnership with the Trade Unions worked well. In general, it was felt that communication at all levels was good, including sharing of information with Elected Members and the Council Leader.

Strategic Officers felt that the early establishment of the Incident Management Team was beneficial as it ensured the Council had the right Officers responding at the right level, included in this was the appointment of the Chief Executive as the Chair of the Incident Management Team, given the nature and the scale of the incident. The frequent Incident Management Team Meetings were also considered to be helpful as they enabled sharing of information across the Directorates, and as a result the sharing of best practise and enabled consistent operating practises. It was also felt that Incident Management Team was useful in allowing for opportunities to express opinions in an open and non-judgemental forum, and allowed all attendees a chance to effectively contribute to the response as a collective. Tactical Officers also expressed that it was helpful including the Emergency Planning Team at the strategic level of the Councils response, as it enabled the Emergency Planning Team to be readily available for advice.

It was also reported in the Strategic Officer debrief that regular feedback was given by different directorates, but that it must be acknowledged that some Council Services were more open than others.

3.3.2 From an NPTCBC perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?

Strategic Officers reported that early in the response to Covid-19, initial coordination was an issue. It was also reported that it was difficult to run all decisions past Elected Members, especially as a lot of the decisions need quick responses due to the pace of the incident.

Strategic Officers also reported that communications could sometimes be an issue, especially as incident specific issues were being discussed outside of the Incident Management Team and the details were often not made available to all members of the Incident Management Team. It was also noted that Strategic Officers did not use the incident log on the [DRAGON 2 System](#), and that correspondence was often not sent to the [NPTCBC Incidents Inbox](#) which was set up to ensure all correspondence was stored in one place.

In relation to redeployment of staff, it was felt that Directorates wasted a lot of the time of the Workforce Planning Group, as Directorates would request additional staff and then remove the request. Strategic Officers also reported that homeworking was not necessarily appropriate for all Council Services or Officers, and that the Councils response to dealing with this has been slow.

Strategic Officers also felt that Officer health and wellbeing was an issue at times, due to the length of hours worked. Many Officers were required to work extremely long hours throughout the response phase of the incident, with limited breaks or time off.

3.3.3 How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

Strategic Officers recommend that internal communications needs improving, particularly around the sharing of workforce policies, increasing the use of the designated NPTCBC Incidents Inbox and increasing the use of the DRAGON 2 System for incident logging purposes amongst responding Council Officers.

As discussed in [section 3.3.2](#) it was felt that Directorates wasted a lot of the time of the Workforce Planning Group, as Directorates would request additional staff and then remove the request. This could be managed in the future by Directorates giving proper thought to redeployment requests and preparing them in advance of meetings with the Workforce Planning Group to avoid wasting time.

In addition, it was also felt by some Strategic Officers that emergency planning and resilience planning should be given more priority, and should become more of a corporate endeavour, with Officers provided training at a level commensurate with their roles and responsibilities, as discussed within the Tactical Officer debriefs.

3.3.4 From a multi-agency perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?

Strategic Officers who took part in the debrief felt that the joint response between NPTCBC, Swansea City Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board worked well. It was also reported that attendance at the SWLRF Strategic Coordination Group was helpful as the LRF cascaded all of the new regulations and guidance to LRF members, and helped to share examples of best practice, work on common problems etc. This enabled Council Officers who attended the SWLRF Strategic Coordination Group to gain a better understanding of the issues across the SWLRF area, and as such a better perspective on the wider area and bigger issues. It was also felt that the information sharing at the LRF level was good.

It was also reported in the Strategic Officer debrief that regular feedback was given by different external agencies, but that it must be acknowledged that some agencies were more open than others.

3.3.5 From a multi-agency perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?

Strategic Officers felt that SWLRF did not function as it should and requires a substantive overhaul, as its precise role and added value remains unclear. It was also reported that the establishment of the SWLRF response and the direction provided by SWLRF was unsatisfactory. It was also felt that SWLRF did not make much of a difference to the overall outcome of the incident, and that LRF level response plans in

relation to pandemics will need reviewing in light of the pressures and issues revealed throughout the response.

Respondents felt there were issues with liaising with Welsh Government or with the level of communication from Welsh Government. Strategic Officers felt that the guidance coming from Welsh Government was often too late, unclear, and contradictory or did not contain enough information to support restrictions or changes to restrictions.

It was reported during the Strategic Officer debrief that working with Swansea Bay University Health Board could be difficult at times, due to the frequency the health board change their position regarding the Temporary Field Hospitals, and their reluctance to take liability and responsibility for the Temporary Field Hospitals, as well as the lack of concern showed by the health board in relation to costs. Similar experiences also occurred with the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service in terms of Health Board staff being difficult to work with. The frequency of meetings at the strategic level also became an issue, as Strategic Officers felt that some meetings, particularly those relating to the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service were too frequent, with the number of meetings becoming unmanageable. It was also felt that supporting documents for these meetings were also issued either late the night before a meeting, or immediately prior to the meeting taking place, leaving little time to prepare adequately.

Strategic Officers also reported that there were issues with Public Health Wales as the organisation was only operating at a national, strategic level, with restricted links into SWLRF and to local authorities. It is acknowledged however that Public Health Wales has provided a consultant to feed into the Swansea Bay regional area regional 'Outbreak Escalation Plan'.

3.3.6 How can the multi-agency response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

Strategic Officers felt that there needs to be a review of the functionality of SWLRF, along with the involvement of Welsh Government and Public Health Wales during incidents.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the overall co-ordination and response to the Covid-19 incident was very good. However, there were a number of issues with the Council's response, such as issues around communications, ICT and staff redeployment. As a result, there are a number of recommendations that need to be considered across the Council and external partner agencies to ensure a more efficient and coordinated response in future incidents. All recommendations for improvements are recorded in [NPTCBC Covid-19 Incident Forward Action Plan](#).

5. NPTCBC Covid-19 Incident Forward Action Plan

All services: Upon resolving an issue / action / recommendation, [please update this Forward Action Team via Microsoft Teams](#), or alternatively inform NPTCBC's Emergency Planning Team via ept@npt.gov.uk so they can update this forward action plan. The progress of the forward action plan will be discussed during future Corporate Directors Group meetings and Resilience Co-ordinators Meetings.

ACTION:		OWNER:	DEADLINE:	PROGRESS DETAILS:	DATE RESOLVED:
1	Ensure communication is continued and encouraged across all teams and directorates, particularly during incidents and emergencies.	Corporate Directors Group			
2	Ensure the correct people are involved during emergencies, through the use of a pre-determined Incident Management Team and relevant sub-groups (via the NPTCBC Major Incident Plan)	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group		Development of this began in late 2019 / early 2020 via a new NPTCBC Major Incident Plan	
3	Look at how staff can be better informed about other Council Services and what those services to	Corporate Directors Group			
4	Regularly update staff on changes in relation to Covid-19, as well as updating the public	Corporate Directors Group		<p>Gov.notify is utilised to issue urgent updates to staff who have provided personal email addresses via the Employee Portal. Whilst the majority of employees can be contacted in this way, the 'reach' will improve on implementation of the I Trent HR Employee Database in April 2021.</p> <p>Employees communications are managed via the weekly HR Sway, the monthly In the Loop, regular updates on the internet (with signposting from the main page) and via email circulation to Heads of Service for dissemination to line managers and onwards to their teams.</p> <p>A wide range of resources have been developed since March 2020 and are available on the internet:</p> <p>General Covid update for staff: https://www.npt.gov.uk/staff</p> <p>Staff and line manager Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.npt.gov.uk/22499</p> <p>Test, Trace and Protect information for staff (how to get a test etc): https://www.npt.gov.uk/23776</p> <p>Homeworking resources (including DSE risk assessment): https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395</p> <p>Return to workplaces (including risk assessments): https://www.npt.gov.uk/23777</p> <p>Online training resources: https://www.npt.gov.uk/22632</p> <p>Staff health and wellbeing: https://www.npt.gov.uk/22793</p>	28/10/2020

5	Be more considerate towards those who are digitally excluded and look at how to engage and communicate with excluded persons better	Communications & Digital Services			
6	Communicate to staff what emergency plans have been implemented during an emergency response	Emergency Planning Team, Communications & Digital Services			
7	Communicate the role of the Council during an emergency to staff, as well as the roles and responsibilities of groups such as the Incident Management Team, and roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in an emergency. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Council-wide e-learning • Adding roles and responsibilities into employment contracts 	Emergency Planning Team, Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across the Council for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services). Information is also readily available within the Councils Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Policy .	
8	Provide feedback to staff involved in the response	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team			
9	Look for further opportunities to develop multi-disciplinary team and corporate working, encourage services to be more joined up.	Corporate Directors Group			
10	Develop a communications plan in the Welsh Language in readiness for future emergencies	Communications & Digital Services			
11	Develop exercises for Council Services involved in emergency response to enhance preparedness.	Emergency Planning Team			
12	Ensure all Council Services have access to Microsoft Teams, as this makes emergency response more efficient, as well as supporting the needs of all services.	Corporate Directors Group, Digital Services			
13	Ensure all ICT Servers are updated to limit issues with ICT connections.	Digital Services, Corporate Directors Group			
14	Provide all Council Officers with laptops to aid remote working and to assist with business continuity arrangements.	Corporate Directors Group, Digital Services			
15	Consider making all work paperless to limit the need to attend offices, to assist the Digital Strategy and to help lower Carbon Footprints in light of the Climate Emergency.	Corporate Directors Group, All services			
16	Identify Council Officers who could be redeployed to other Services during an emergency via the use of skills mapping to develop of a Volunteers / Redeployment Register	Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources, Emergency Planning Team		In March the Head of HR issued a Skills Audit questionnaire to employees to identify a) their availability for redeployment and b) their specific skills sets which we used to match against identified gaps in the front line. The ICT team built a database to support the issuing of the questionnaire and the receipt of responses – this was made available within a week of lock down. The work of the HR team was re-prioritised to support redeployment as a key priority to support the Council's response and the Learning Training & Development team supported the retraining of employees being redeployed to the frontline. Through this, we were able to redeploy approximately 300+ employees into critical areas such as the Safe & Well service and the Contact Tracing team.	28/10/2020

				A similar exercise has been carried out in September 2020 with shielding school employees who have been unable to return to school, but who could be available to undertake work from home.	
17	Offer training to Council Officers identified via recommendation 14 prior to emergencies, to enable redeployment to run more efficiently (e.g. phone call handling, manual handling etc.)	Training & Development Team, Human Resources		The Council's Learning, Training and Development team prioritised their service to deliver bespoke training to equip the front line. Examples include manual handling training to the volunteers in the Safe and Well Service, manual handling and medications training to front line redeployees to Home Care, telephone call handling to the Contact Tracing Team. Two employees from LT&D were based on site with the Safe and Well Team for a number of weeks and two employees from LT&D were based full-time with the Contact Tracing team for a couple of months.	28/10/2020
18	Ensure roles of staff involved in emergency response and redeployment are defined – this will also stop duplication of roles.	Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources, Emergency Planning Team		When the HR team is advised of a need for redeployees we do ask that the 'recruiting' line manager provides a job 'brief' (similar to a job description) so that redeployees are aware of what they are being asked to do. In line with recommendation 61 we will develop a 'Redeployment Request Form' to ensure that managers properly describe the duties and the skills required, along with any training that will need to be put in place. This will enable both HR and LT&D to determine whether or not the request can be met from within the Council's workforce.	TBC
19	Consider redeploying staff fully into another Service rather than splitting them between their usual Service and redeployed Service.	Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources		In the main employees were redeployed on a full time basis – we only redeployed employees on a part-time basis in circumstances where they were only able to fulfil part of their substantive post due to the Covid emergency and therefore had some capacity to offer support elsewhere. It is up to line managers whether or not they want to accept the redeployees who are available to them – part-time or otherwise.	28/10/2020
20	Review policies and procedures regarding staff redeployment, to ensure the correct staff are redeployed at the correct time.	Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources		We will develop a Redeployment Request form to enable managers to set out more clearly the specific skill sets they need (see response to recommendation 18). It should be noted however, that the ability to redeploy depends on the employees available for redeployment – if managers request a skill set that is not held amongst the available pool for redeployment, then consideration needs to be given to e.g. external recruitment, the use of agency staff, etc.	TBC
21	Offer training to all Council Officers so that if they are required to be involved in future emergencies they'll have a better understanding of the Council's role and responsibilities during an emergency, are able to be redeployed more easily and efficiently, and to enhance Officer preparedness and resilience.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across the Council for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services).	
22	Develop a future emergency response to Covid-19 based on the initial response	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group		Development of 'Guidance for the Re-escalation of the NPTCBC Covid-19 Response' is currently underway, awaiting provision of actions from relevant Covid-19 response groups.	
23	Ensure planning for a second response to Covid-19 is prioritised, to ensure previous responses are captured in planning documents and ready to use where suitable, and dependent on future scenarios	All Services, Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			

24	Ensure lessons learnt from the Covid-19 incident are implemented	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team			
25	Sub-groups linked to the Incident Management Team to consider carrying out debrief sessions amongst each sub-group to look how those sub-groups could improve future responses to Covid-19 (e.g. NPT Safe and Well have identified that referral interviews need to gather more structured information, such as emergency contact number, specialist agency involvement, details of family members and their needs)	Corporate Directors Group			
26	Consider holding Lessons Learnt Workshops to ensure those involved in the Covid-19 Incident Management Team understand what is required by frontline / Operational Officers.	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team			
27	Identify a single point of contact (SPOC) per Council Service and provide a list to all Services for ease of access and to improve efficiency regarding queries and requests (e.g. consider providing all Council Services with a generic email address)	Corporate Directors Group, All Services			
28	Have cohesive business continuity arrangements in place for a number of circumstances and scenarios	Corporate Directors Group, All Services			
29	Ensure communications are on the agenda for Councils Officers responding to emergencies	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team			
30	Consider rewarding staff for their work during emergencies such as Covid-19	Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources		For further discussion by Corporate Directors Group.	TBC
31	Consider how to work closer with communities and Elected Members to support the community response to an emergency in a more coordinated way.	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team, Electoral Services		Emergency Planning Team has developed an e-learning programme as well as guidance on emergency planning and response for Elected Members, as well as developing Community Resilience Plans to support communities and Elected Members during any emergency. Additionally, the Emergency Planning Team have developed a scheme for educating children and young people about emergencies and preparedness, and have developed a School Emergency Plan to ensure schools are better prepared for emergencies.	
32	Consider building better resilience in stock levels in relation to cleaning products, PPE etc.	Corporate Directors Group, Facilities			
33	Provide guidance internally on what additional costs can be funded by Welsh Government during an emergency.	Finance			
34	Have policies in place regarding flexi, annual leave, child care issues etc. and policies such as the Homeworking Policy and Return to the Workplace following Covid-19 Guidance are in place ready for future emergencies, and ensure these are communicated.	Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group		We have developed our arrangements for Home working https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395 and the Return to workplaces https://www.npt.gov.uk/23777 , available on the internet and communicated via the weekly HR Sway and In the Loop, as well as personal messages from the Chief Executive. These were developed in partnership with the trade unions and in consultation with the Workforce Planning Group and management teams across the Council. It is important though that these are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are relevant to the changing circumstances of the pandemic. Whilst these arrangements will no doubt help inform the 'new normal' as the Council eventually	Ongoing

				recovers from the pandemic, the Workforce Planning Group has begun a conversation around the Blended Workplace, and what the future could look like.	
35	Have policies in place for what managers should be doing with their staff such as: homeworking, office access, rotas, team meetings, supervision, contactable hours (for staff and managers)	Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group		Advice and guidance has been issued to line managers around managing remotely, and flexibly in the current circumstances. See https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395 and https://www.npt.gov.uk/22499 . These arrangements needs to be flexible to take account of individual circumstances, but also to enable managers to develop arrangements that fit with their specific business service needs.	28/10/2020
36	Be clear when communicating office closures and ensure Officers do not attend when an office has been declared as closed.	Corporate Directors Group, Communications & Digital Services		The Chief Executive issued a clear instruction on 23 rd March (the day of office closures) via Gov.Notify to employees' personal contacts, advising that the offices were closed. This will have reached approximately ¾ of the Council's employees. Implementation of the I Trent HR Employee Database in April 2021 will improve this reach.	28/10/2020
37	Consider and provide guidance on how reinstatement of facilities, such as Llandarcy Field Hospital, should be carried out (e.g. funding, reimbursements, use of other facilities, timescales etc.)	Corporate Directors Group			
38	Have cohesive business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place for ICT / Digital Services.	Digital Services, Corporate Directors Group			
39	Advise Welsh Government of the need for improved communication and engagement regarding earlier notification of potential changes to legislation, funding in relation to Covid-19, prior to decisions on such changes being made public.	Corporate Directors Group			
40	Ensure multi-agency responses are coordinated and agreed before being communicated to third parties involved in incident response.	All Services, Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
41	Consider keeping the joint policy currently in place between South Wales Police and other enforcement agencies to ensure a consistent approach to enforcement.	Corporate Directors Group			
42	Recommend to SWLRF that any future response to Covid-19 should be led by the right agency.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
43	Consider developing joint communications for the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service across partner agencies for enhanced capability.	Environmental Health, Corporate Directors Group			
44	Review plans relating to human health incidents	Emergency Planning Team			
45	Review of arrangements with voluntary organisations for humanitarian assistance e.g. British Red Cross (report to be written and be made available to Council services who respond to emergencies).	Emergency Planning Team		Due to be carried out as part of recommendations from the Storm Dennis Post Incident Report.	
46	Consider early activation of the Incident Management Team and relevant sub-groups if suitable e.g. if early warning of an incident is available.	Emergency Planning Team			
47	Consider making emergency and resilience planning a corporate endeavour with a higher priority within the organisation.	Corporate Directors Group			

48	Offer specific strategic (gold) training and exercises to all directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Chief Executive to enhance preparedness, ensure Officers are familiar with the LRF structure and processes involved in incident response.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services). Accredited All-Wales Gold Officer training is carried out by SWLRF on an annual basis – 2 Officers of this level have currently undertaken this training. Exercises are regularly undertaken at a multi-agency level, with the Emergency Planning Team planning both multi-agency and internal exercise for the future.	
49	Offer specific tactical (silver) training and exercises to all Heads of Service to enhance preparedness, ensure Officers are familiar with the LRF structure and processes involved in incident response.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services). Accredited All-Wales Silver Officer training is due to be carried out by SWLRF on an annual basis in the near future. Exercises are regularly undertaken at a multi-agency level, with the Emergency Planning Team planning both multi-agency and internal exercise for the future.	
50	Consider updating all employment contracts to include a statement on the generic requirement of Council Officers to undertake activities, at a level commensurate with the skills and experience required by their role, to assist in ensuring the Council meets in legal duties under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004 by preparing for or responding to emergencies and incidents where required (thus supporting response arrangements and requirements to undertake relevant training)	Emergency Planning Team, Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group		This statement is included within job descriptions 'any duties commensurate with the post' – the job description forms part of the contract of employment. No further action is required in relation to this recommendation.	28/10/2020
51	Consider reviewing whether existing resources are sufficient for incident response, particularly for prolonged incidents such as Covid-19.	Corporate Directors Group			
52	Consider placing a focus on mental health and wellbeing as a key strategy to ensure the pace and endurance of key personnel involved in incidents, and support the need for frequent breaks within relevant training.	Human Resources, Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group		The 'Well-being Series' a 4 week on line course was provided to the Corporate Management Team in July 2020, aimed at supporting the senior team to consider ways in which they can maximise their well-being. The senior team have been advised to take annual leave at regular intervals for rest and recuperation purposes. A range of other wellbeing and mental health resources are available on the internet, including signposting to a range of support networks: https://www.npt.gov.uk/22793 . These resources do need to be reviewed and updated, and this will be actioned by December 2020. In September 2020, the HR team supported the development of a network of Mental Health Champions, to raise awareness across the Council about mental health matters. Over 300 employees have attended and completed on line Mental Health 1 st Aid training since March 2020.	Ongoing
53	Review the issue of multiple people in a vehicle / cab, and agree upon a consistent approach based on the latest understanding and experience gained recently (e.g. some have done more than others, resulting in impacts on some services).	Human Resources, Health & Safety Team, Corporate Directors Group		This is ongoing and under review in partnership with trade unions.	Ongoing

54	Consider implementing better document control and retention during prolonged incidents, including giving more thought to how information and documentation should be managed should an incident similar to Covid-19 occur in the future e.g. document storage via the Intranet, an incident Information Security Manager etc.	Corporate Directors Group			
55	Discuss at LRF level who should take the primacy on care of the dead issues (health boards should be natural lead) and request at LRF level that there needs to be a higher level approach to temporary storage of excess bodies, as existing approaches only cover regional efforts.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
56	Review of the functionality of SWLRF during incidents.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group, SWLRF			
57	Review the involvement and functionality of Welsh Government during incidents.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group, SWLRF, Welsh Government			
58	Review the involvement and functionality of Public Health Wales during incidents.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group, SWLRF, Public Health Wales			
59	Ensure information and communications relating to incidents categorised under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004 are sent to the NPTCBC Incidents Inbox where appropriate (incidents@npt.gov.uk) as this will provide record of correspondence and key information, and this can then be available if requested for learning or litigation purposes.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
60	Ensure the DRAGON 2 System is used for incident logging by Council Officers responding to an incident categorised under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004, as this will ensure a record of actions and key information is logged and available if requested for learning or litigation purposes.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
61	Develop a redeployment request form for completion by Directors in the event of future redeployment of staff in response to an incident.	Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group		This will be actioned (see responses to recommendations 16 and 18 above).	TBC

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



Emergency Planning Team | Tîm Cynllunio ar gyfer Argyfwng

Human Resources | Adnoddau Dynol
Finance & Corporate Services | Cyllid a Gwasanaethau Gorfforaethol
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council | Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

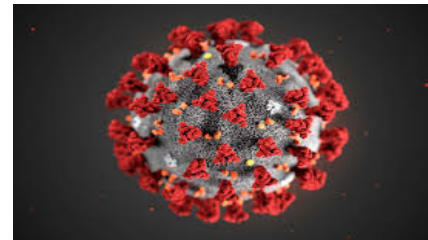
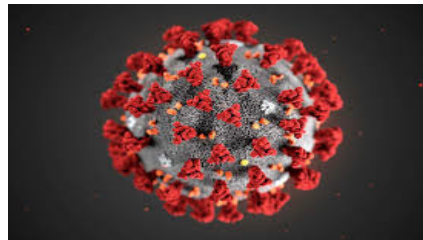
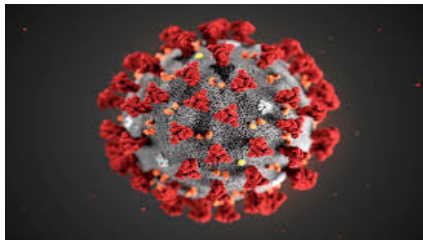
This page is intentionally left blank



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Swansea Bay COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plan

Page 127



Objectives:

At the end of this seminar, those attending should have an understanding of:

- 1) The purpose, aims and underlying principles of the Plan
- 2) The management and governance structure that has been established.
- 3) The framework for action – i.e. the seven areas identified for further action to achieve the aims of the plan including:
Surveillance; Management of Clusters, Incidents and Outbreaks;
Sampling and Testing; Prevention; Mitigation and Control;
Communication; Review and Monitoring
- 4) The levels of activity undertaken by the TTP teams (Regional and Local) across Neath Port Talbot and Swansea
- 5) The disease prevalence / surveillance providing a snapshot of confirmed Covid-19 cases.

Page 128



Timeline

Coronavirus: action plan

A guide to what you can expect across the UK

Published 3 March 2020

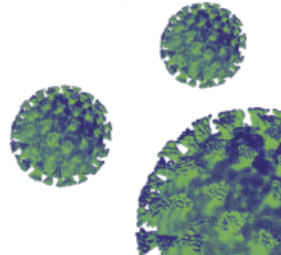


Page 129



Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic

A framework for recovery



Unlocking our society and economy:
continuing the conversation



May 2020

Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales



August 2020

1

The purpose, aims and underlying principles of the Plan



Local COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plans

Prepared by:

Health boards, local authorities and partner agencies

Purpose:

Prevention, early response and containment of clusters and incidents



Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan for Wales

Prepared by:

Public Health Wales and Welsh Government

Purpose:

Process for responding to outbreaks



Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales

Prepared by:

Welsh Government

Purpose:

Oversight and coordination, response to serious and major incidents



Swansea Bay Multi Agency Plan for Covid-19 Prevention and Response

The plan and associated actions are live documents and subject to modification in light of new information or evidence.

Latest draft version: 19.08.20

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to describe the approach to the prevention and response of Covid-19 in the Swansea Bay area in the context of a multi-agency approach. The aims are to prevent, control, respond and eliminate Covid-19 from Swansea Bay area, by reducing the spread of infection and minimising number of cases, the outcome being to protect our health & care system and save lives.

The plan assigns key areas of responsibility and actions at Swansea Bay regional level as well as the local level. In Appendix 1, Swansea Bay area incorporates the Swansea Bay University Health and City and County of Swansea Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council together with partners in the South Wales Local Resilience Fora.

Verifying the plan are the principles of:

- working as a system to co-ordinate activities across partner agencies
- early intervention to prevent and/or control outbreaks
- targeted surveillance and interventions at the high risk settings – care homes, educational settings, local communities, vulnerable population. Work with these settings to ensure effective management of outbreaks.
- utilising the skills and experience of existing teams – well resourced, robust information, effective training
- communicate well and share data and information
- reflect, learn and improve

The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales

(‘The Wales Outbreak Plan’)

Final Version

July 2020

Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales

August 2020



Principles:

- Caution - prevention is better than cure
- Proportionate - interventions should not be more restrictive than is needed
- Subsidiarity - decisions taken at the most appropriate level



2

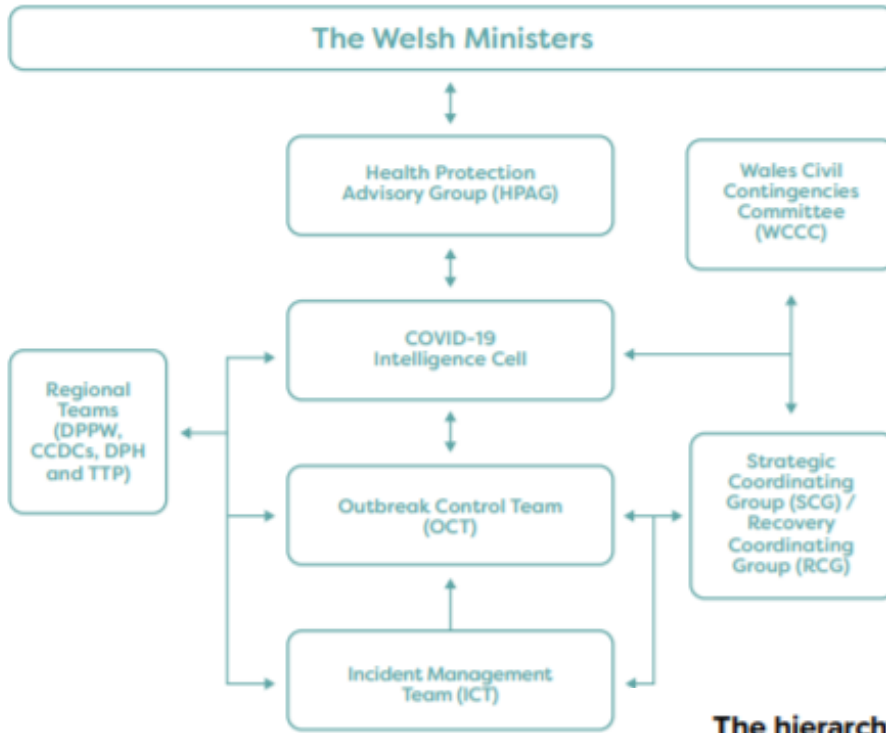
The management and governance structure that has been established (National and Regional)



Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales Governance

National

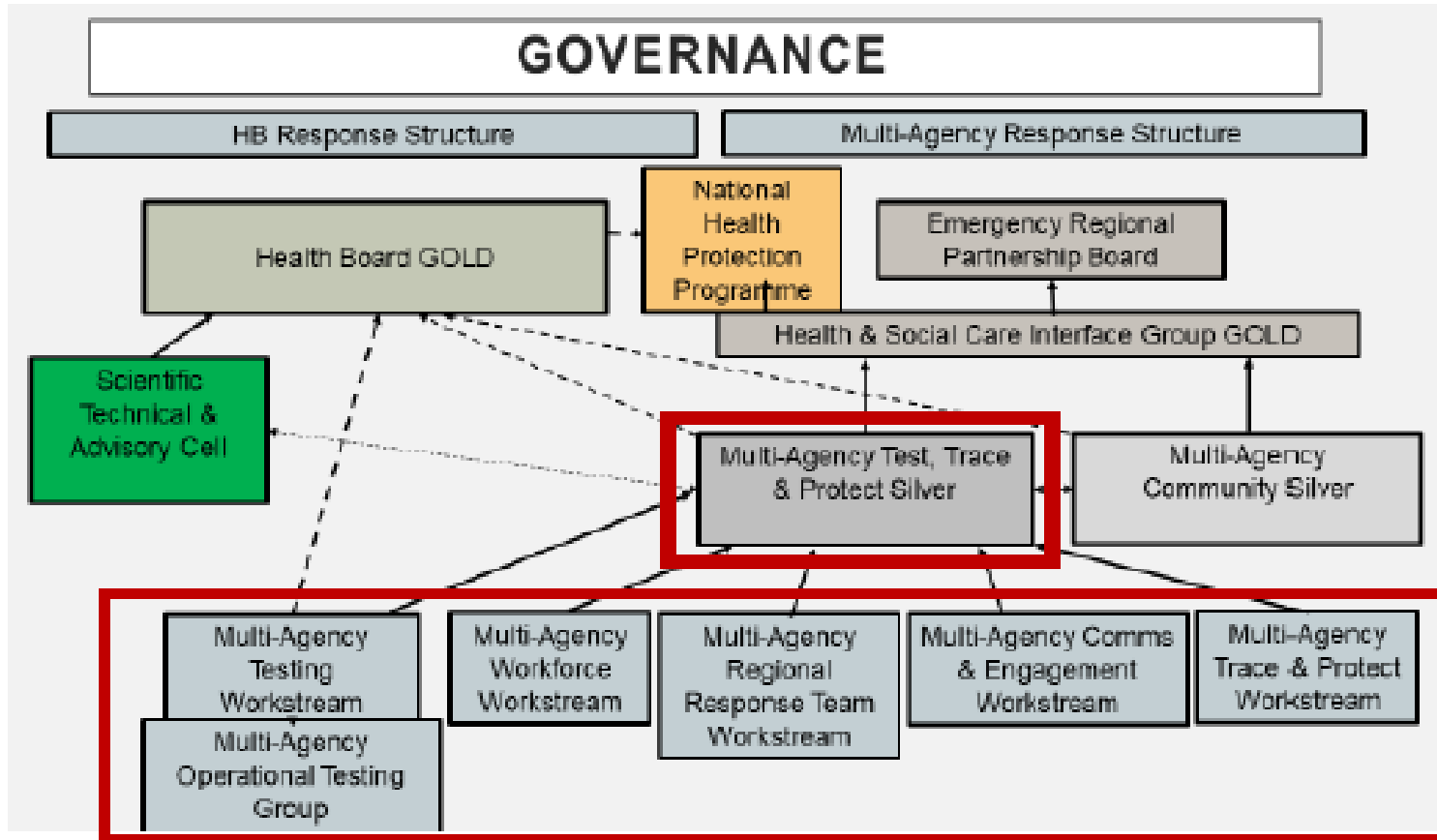
Page 134



The hierarchy of escalation can be set out as:



Regional



Page 135

3

The framework for action



Seven areas identified for further action to achieve the aims of the plan;

1. Surveillance
2. Management of Clusters, Incidents and Outbreaks
3. Sampling and Testing
4. Prevention
5. Mitigation and Control
6. Communication
7. Review and Monitoring.



Communications

NPTCBC Corporate Communications Team have been amplifying WG public health messages to make sure they are reaching further into our local communities

Page 138



Been providing specialist communications support where there have been incidents and clusters and now in the IMT set up

Using the data coming out of health surveillance to target communications and engagement with particular populations of people

Communications Cont.

- Distribution of a general public information leaflet to each household in the Region – with a purpose of reinforcing the primary health protection measures (hand washing, social distancing etc) but also to provide people with information about where the Authority will publish updates on the situation as we move through into the autumn-winter period
- Production of a considerable amount of collateral – videos, memes, etc targeting particular messages at particular groups
- Held sessions with trading standards and local business owners from BAME backgrounds to ensure there is a good understanding of how individuals can best protect themselves in occupations where they cannot socially distance (taxis, restaurants etc)
- Mapped all of the popular social media accounts across the area so we could ask local administrators of those groups to share important messages with the community – for example over the weekend we used this method to assist in communicating the local restrictions now imposed by WG in NPT



4

Activity Levels

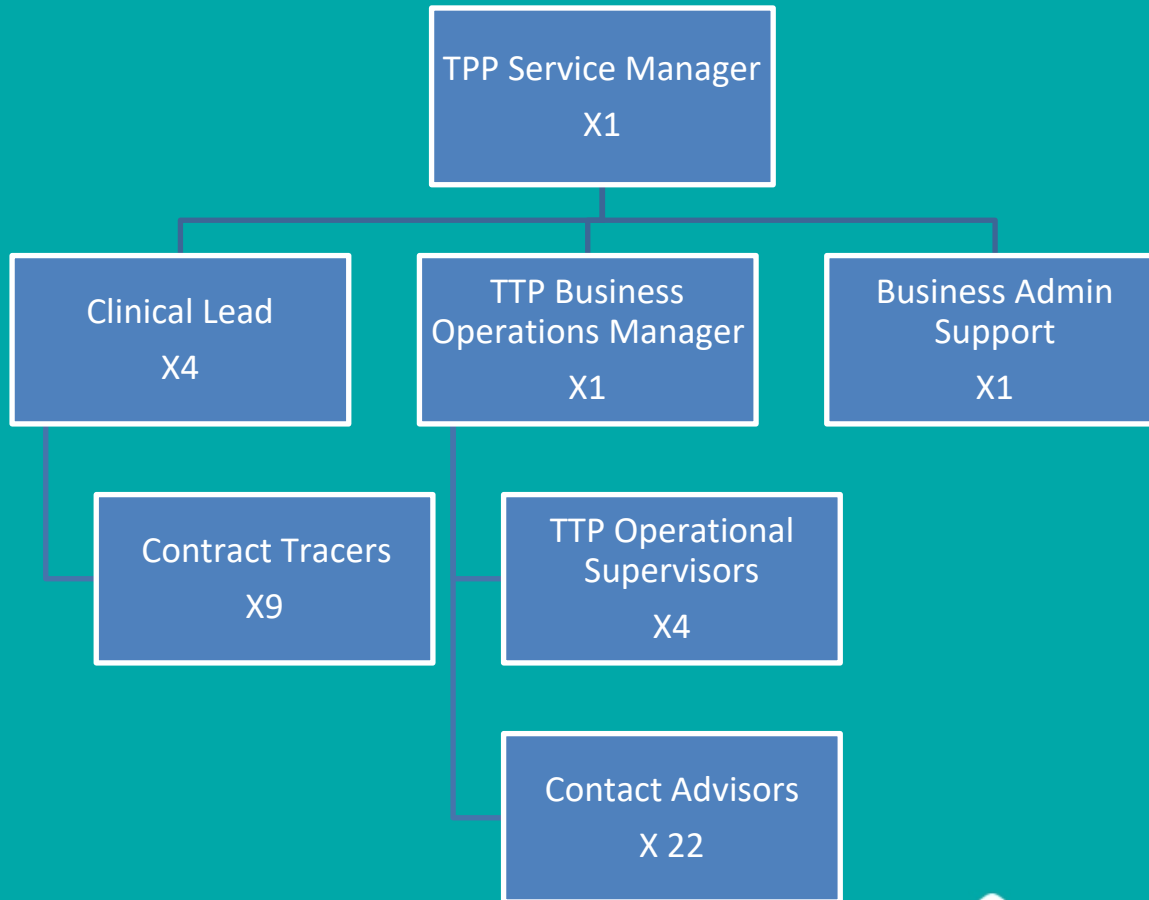
TTP Team

Neath Port Talbot



TTP

Local Operational Team



Current Activity (NPT)

182 Exposures
since Friday
(approx. 60 per day)

Summary

Dates that cases/contacts created

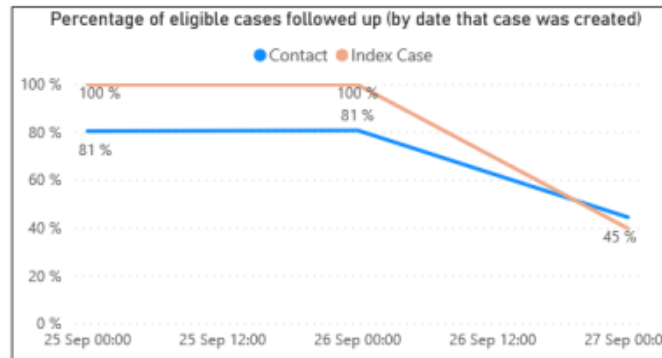
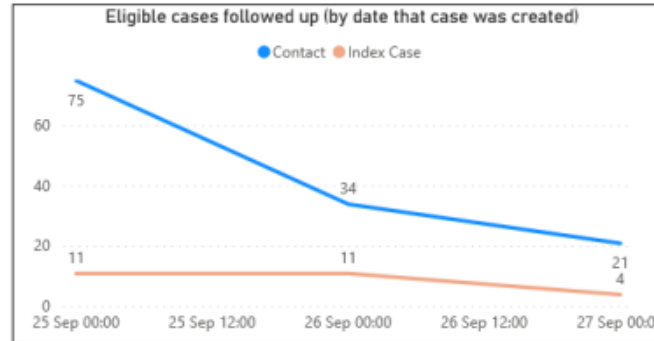
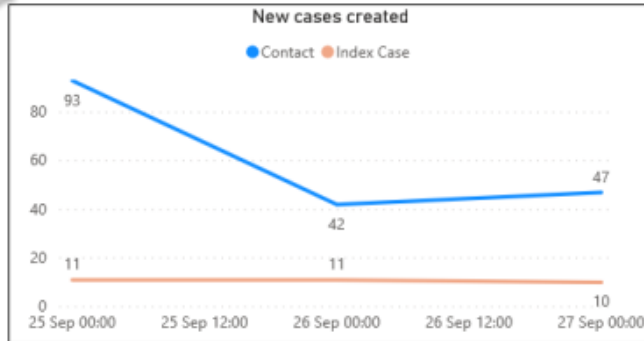
25/09/2020 28/09/2020

Data correct as at

28/09/2020 10:02:29

New Index cases identified	Index cases eligible for follow up	Eligible Index Cases followed up	% Eligible Index Cases followed up
32	32	26	81 %

New contacts generated	Contact cases eligible for follow up	Eligible contact cases followed up	% Eligible contact cases followed up
182	182	130	71 %



- Blaenau Gwent
- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Carmarthenshire
- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Isle of Anglesey
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Neath Port Talbot**
- Newport
- Outside Wales Local Auth...
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea
- The Vale of Glamorgan
- Torfaen
- Wrexham

32 Positive Cases since Friday (approx. 10 per day)

Snapshot Friday 25th to Monday 28th September
(as at 10:02am)

www.npt.gov.uk



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Current Activity (NPT)

Snapshot Friday 25th to
Monday 28th September (as
at 10:02am)

Local authority comparisons

Dates cases/contacts cre:

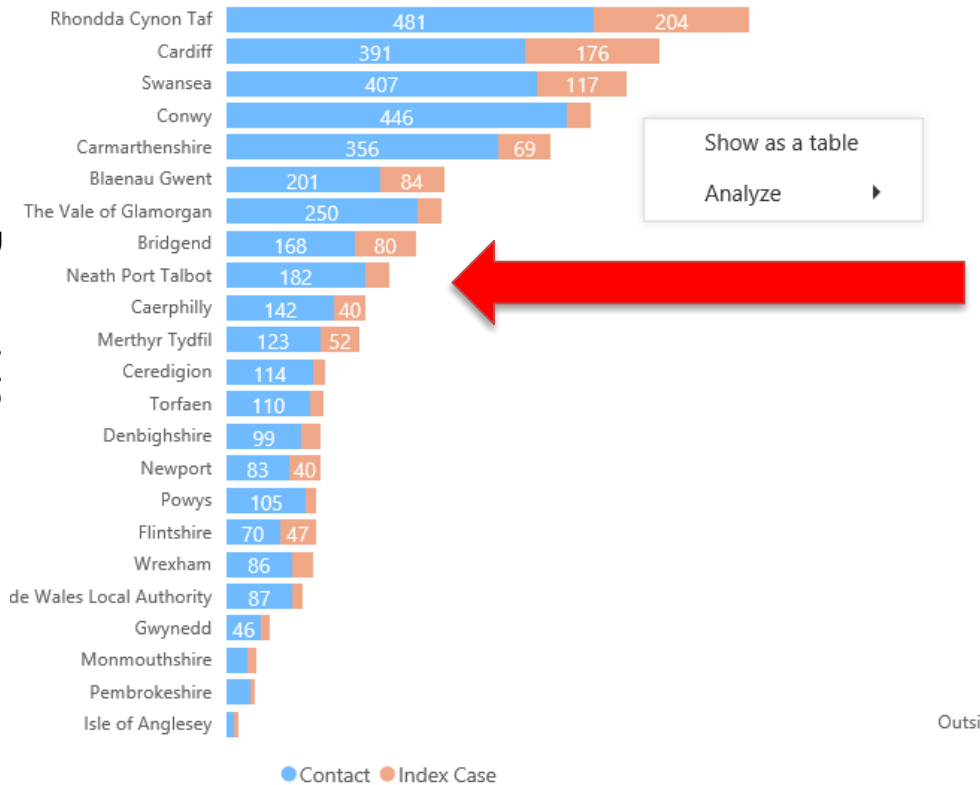
Case Created Date

25/09/2020

28/09/2020



Total of all cases and contacts identified



Show as a table

Analyze

Neath Port Talbot are
currently sitting at
9th Place
across Wales

Page 143



Activity – September 2020 (NPT)

Summary

Dates that cases/contacts created

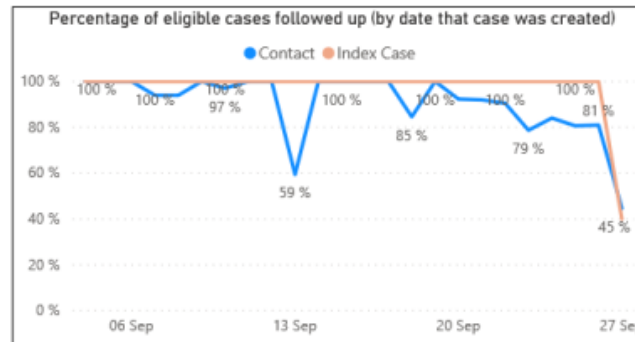
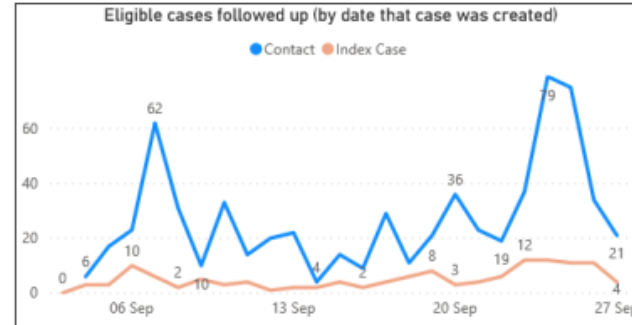
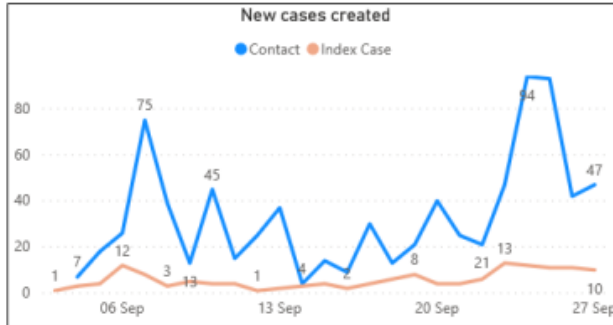
01/09/2020 28/09/2020

Data correct as at

28/09/2020 10:02:29

New Index cases identified	Index cases eligible for follow up	Eligible Index Cases followed up	% Eligible Index Cases followed up
139	128	122	95 %

New contacts generated	Contact cases eligible for follow up	Eligible contact cases followed up	% Eligible contact cases followed up
800	758	650	86 %



- Blaenau Gwent
- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Carmarthenshire
- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Isle of Anglesey
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Neath Port Talbot**
- Newport
- Outside Wales Local Auth...
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea
- The Vale of Glamorgan
- Torfaen
- Wrexham

Page 144

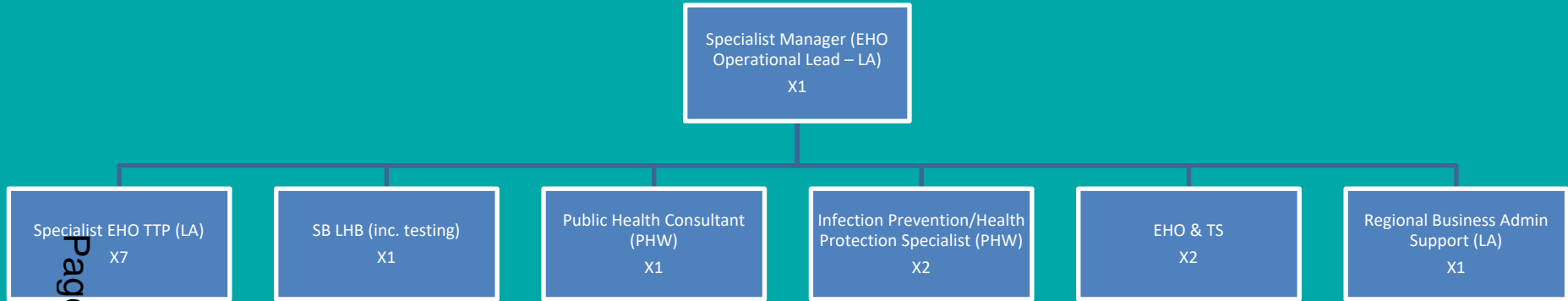
- **139 Positive Cases**
 - **800 Exposures**
- during the Snapshot Period

Snapshot 1st September to Monday 28th September
(as at 10:02am)



TTP

Regional Operational Team



Page 145



TTP Proactive/Preventative Approach

- Proactive engagement with Large Employers and the Hospitality Industry during July and August to explain the role of TTP, identify the Preventative Measures within the Workplace and obtaining workplace contacts:

Phase 1: July

382 larger businesses were identified within the area these included warehouses, engineering companies, factories and large food retailers.

251 Successfully Engaged.

Phase 2: August

255 restaurants, cafes and public houses were identified within the area. Remaining businesses who were unobtainable received written correspondence providing advice, information and suggested Preventative Measures for the Workplace.

153 Successfully Engaged.



TTP Proactive/Preventative Approach

Continued;

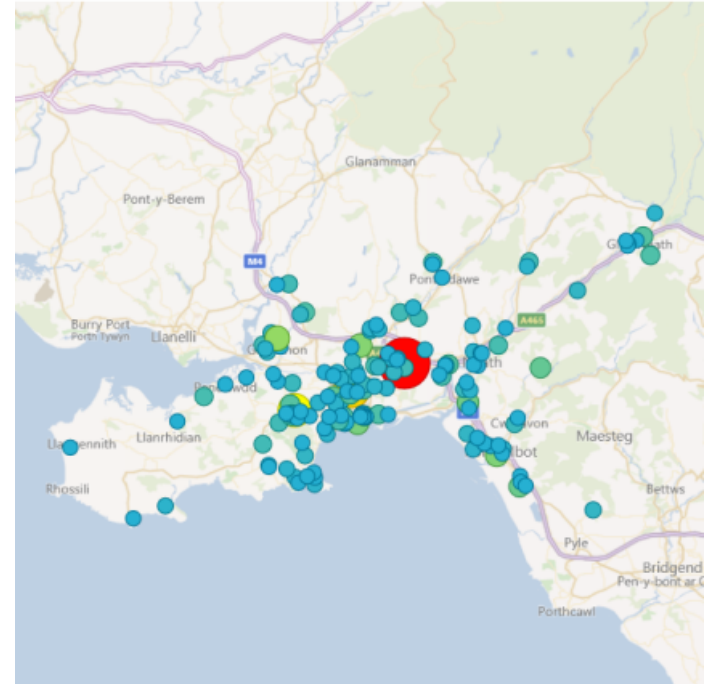
- Development of a Business Directory by IT to support TTP and ensure rapid communications to Businesses across the Borough in response to increase in cases
- TTP referrals to Enforcement Teams, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Licensing, HSE, Police etc



Covid-19 Clusters

- Contact Tracer identifies all 'Exposure' Locations during a Case's most Infectious Period
- Regional EHO's investigate each potential 'Exposure' with further Covid Controls in place, whereby Contacts are informed to self-isolate
- Is there more than 1 Case linked to the Exposure Location? (Cluster/incident)
- Cluster/Incident Management Team meetings undertaken where needed
- Referrals to Enforcement Teams ie. Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Licensing, HSE, Police, Commissioning Officers

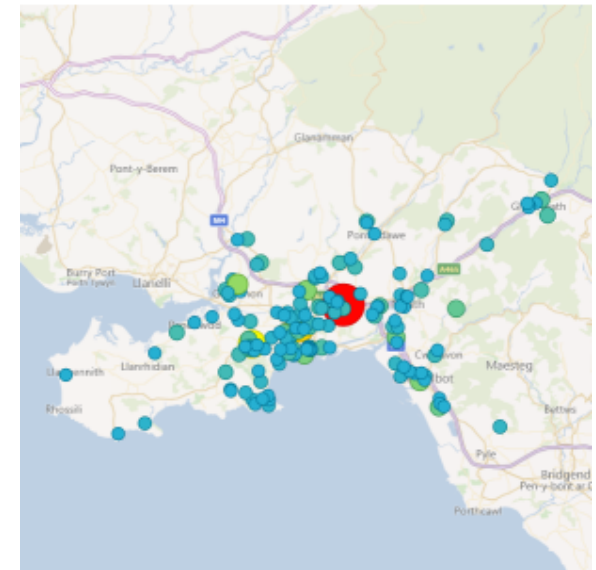
Page 148



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Covid-19 Clusters

Location Type	No. of cases
Engineering Company	5
Domiciliary Care Provider	7
Manufacturing Company	15 (2 separate clusters)
Mine	9
Amateur Boxing Club	3
Public House	2
GP Surgery (Staff)	6
Residential Care Setting – 4 Incidents	5
Schools – 8 reported cases this term	14
Further/Higher Education	1



Page 1 of 9



4

Activity Levels

TTP Team

Swansea



Current Activity (Swansea)

Summary

Dates that cases/contacts created

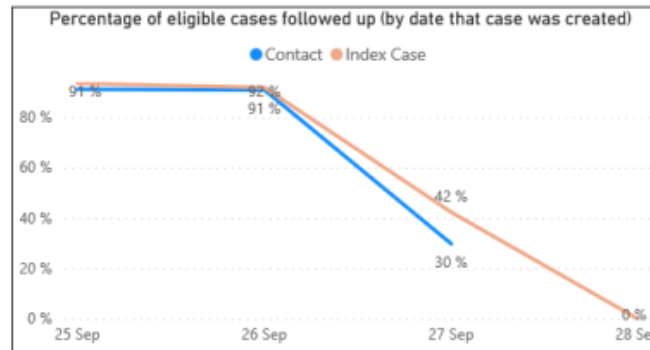
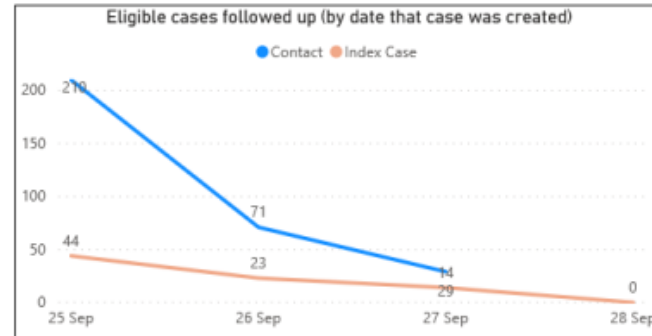
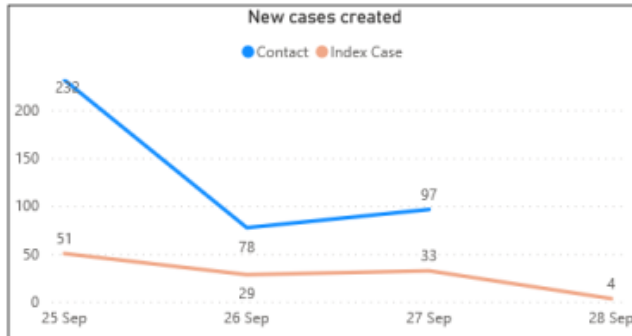
25/09/2020 28/09/2020

Data correct as at

28/09/2020 10:02:29

New Index cases identified	Index cases eligible for follow up	Eligible Index Cases followed up	% Eligible Index Cases followed up
117	109	81	74 %

New contacts generated	Contact cases eligible for follow up	Eligible contact cases followed up	% Eligible contact cases followed up
407	405	310	77 %



- Blaenau Gwent
- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Carmarthenshire
- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Isle of Anglesey
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Neath Port Talbot
- Newport
- Outside Wales Local Auth...
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea**
- The Vale of Glamorgan
- Torfaen
- Wrexham

- Page 15
- **117 Positive Cases** (approx. 39 per day)
 - **407 Exposures** (approx. 135 per day)

Snapshot Friday 25th to Monday 28th September
(as at 10:02am)

www.npt.gov.uk



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Current Activity (Swansea)

Local authority comparisons

Dates cases/contacts cre:

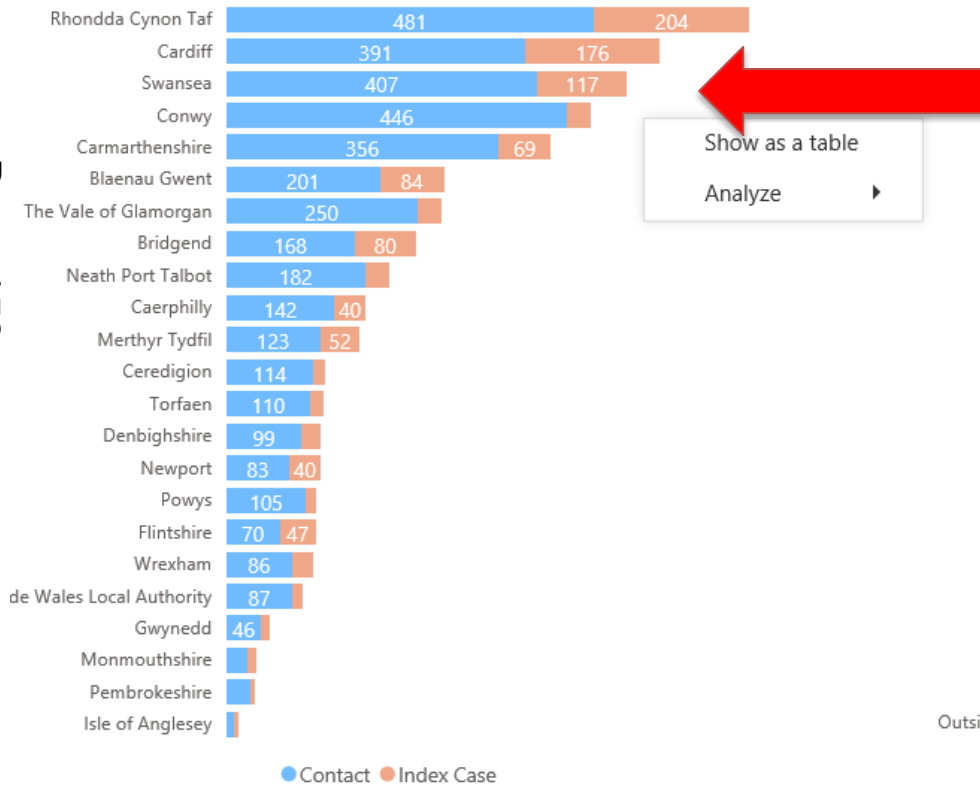
Case Created Date

25/09/2020

28/09/2020



Total of all cases and contacts identified



Show as a table

Analyze

Swansea are currently sitting at 3rd Place across Wales

Page 152

Snapshot Friday 25th to Monday 28th September (as at 10:02am)



Current Activity (Swansea Bay)

Summary

Dates that cases/contacts created

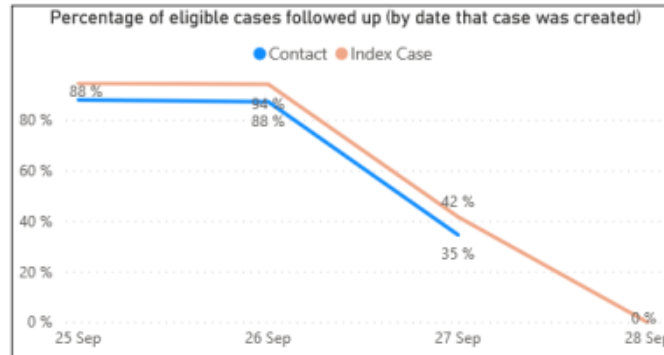
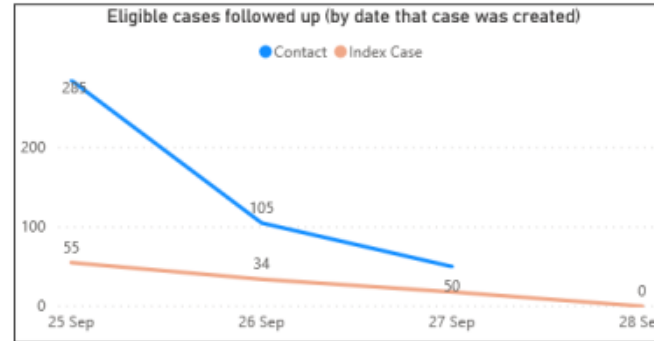
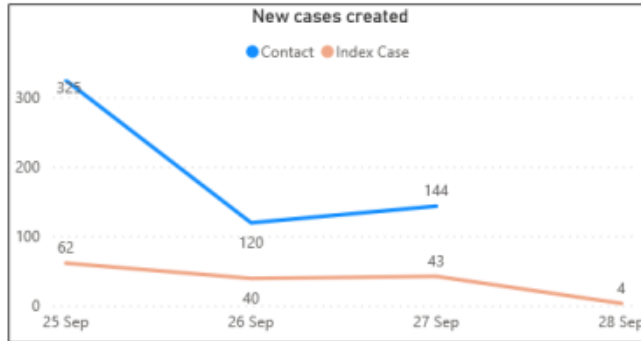
25/09/2020 28/09/2020

Data correct as at

28/09/2020 10:02:29

New Index cases identified	Index cases eligible for follow up	Eligible Index Cases followed up	% Eligible Index Cases followed up
149	141	107	76 %

New contacts generated	Contact cases eligible for follow up	Eligible contact cases followed up	% Eligible contact cases followed up
589	587	440	75 %



- Blaenau Gwent
- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Carmarthenshire
- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Isle of Anglesey
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Neath Port Talbot**
- Newport
- Outside Wales Local Auth...
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea**
- The Vale of Glamorgan
- Torfaen
- Wrexham

Page 153

- **149 Positive Cases** (approx. 49 per day)
- **589 Exposures** (approx. 196 per day)

Snapshot Friday 25th to Monday 28th September
(as at 10:02am)

www.npt.gov.uk



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

5

The disease prevalence / surveillance providing a snapshot of confirmed Covid-19 cases

Page 154



Summary



Summary of Covid-19 Testing Results over past 6 days (data for 22/09 not available)

	Swansea	NPT	Swansea	NPT	Swansea	NPT
	Cases per 100K per week		Positivity Rate		Case Numbers	
21/09	40.1	15.4	3.3%	1.3%	37	4
23/09	50.6	18.1	4.0%	1.6%	41	8
24/09	63.6	29.3	4.7%	2.4%	28	19
25/09	82.2	34.2	5.8%	2.8%	58	4
26/09	93.1	37.0	6.2%	2.9%	36	8
27/09	97.6	41.2	6.3%	3.2%		

Page 156

**Local Lockdown Commenced
Monday 28th September
18:00 hrs**



- The plan builds on existing skills and relationships within the Swansea Bay Region
- The key principles of the plan are:
 - Caution - prevention is better than cure
 - Proportionate - interventions should not be more restrictive than is needed
 - Subsidiarity - decisions taken at the most appropriate level (Local, Regional, National)
- The plan relies on effective co-ordination of activities across partner agencies in order to prevent, control and respond to COVID-19 in the Swansea Bay Region

This page is intentionally left blank

Inclusion Service Covid Recovery Report for Schools

1. Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education (Wales) Tribunal Act 2018 (ALNET)

Guidance, training and support for schools in relation to the conversion of Statements of Special Educational Needs to Individual Development Plans.

We are obligated under Welsh Government implementation timeframes to ensure that pupils in mandated cohorts are moved from the Special Educational Needs (SEN) system to the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system over the course of this academic year. We have provided support to schools / ALNCOs in terms of interpreting guidance and understanding how to conduct the Person Centred Review (PCR) and Individual Development Plan (IDP) meetings. Partnership officers have contacted every family and school to explain the new processes and roles and responsibilities within new guidance. Training has been provided to every school and documentation has been developed and shared. It is difficult to monitor the impact at this stage as we are still in the implementation phase of conversion. To date, the Local Authority is on track with the conversion timescales. ALNCOs are ensuring that PCRs are held for pupils early in the academic year and the quality of the paperwork being returned is enabling the Local Authority to produce person centred IDPs with appropriate outcomes. Schools are supportively challenged where the quality of paperwork needs further development and any schools causing concern are highlighted for discussion with the Coordinator for Inclusion and Education Support Officers. To fully evaluate the outcome, this would be appropriate at the end of the academic year. Local Authority Inclusion Managers attend regular regional implementation groups as well as meetings with the Welsh Government Transformation Lead for the Additional Learning Needs and Education (Wales) Tribunal Act 2018 (ALNET) and are in the process of considering a Quality Assurance framework around IDPs. It will be key to collaborate with Education Support Officers regarding this work.

Online IDP platform

As per Welsh Government requirements, the Local Authority has commissioned the services of a software company to develop an online IDP platform. A designated 'IDP Systems and Process Officer' has been appointed within the Additional Learning Needs Support Service to lead this piece of work ensuring the specifications requirements provided by Welsh Government are met. All schools in Neath Port Talbot have accessed the training for this platform and there is ongoing support and advice. It is anticipated that the system will go live imminently for Local Authority professionals with a view to school's accessing the portal towards the end of the academic year.

2. Support for Emotional, Psychological, Mental Health and Wellbeing

(For further details please also refer to report shared at ESW on 8.12.2022)

Secondary School Based Counselling and Primary School Based Child Therapy Service

During the academic year 2019/2020 and throughout the pandemic, the School Based Counselling Service (SBCS) delivered 3654 sessions to 551 pupils across Neath Port Talbot. This was an increase of 49 pupils and 1065 sessions in comparison to the previous year (2018/2019). It is worth noting that this achievement was in stark contrast to the trend across Wales during 2019/2020 which showed a decrease in the number of Children and Young People (CYP) accessing SBCSs nationally. This was possible due to the pro-active response of Neath Port Talbot SBCS in initiating remote therapy for secondary school pupils, with no gap in provision.

The academic year 2020/2021 saw the reopening of schools to pupils, however attendance at school for a portion of the client group was sporadic for various reasons, including isolation requirements and social anxiety. For this reason, engagement reduced to 3009 sessions delivered to 480 pupils (447 for Years 6-13, 33 for Years 1-5). In order to reduce the likelihood of missed sessions, the team adopted contracting for remote therapy at the first session so that pupils could access therapy remotely if appropriate. Average waiting times during this year were 4 weeks for initial assessment and 5 weeks for commencement of counselling.

Young People CORE (YP-CORE) is an assessment tool used to monitor change, i.e. improvements in emotional wellbeing. Scores above 30 are deemed to be indicative of severe emotional distress whilst scores below 10 are within the normal range. During the year 2020/2021, average Young Peoples' scores reduced from 24 to 14 showing a significant improvement.

During the academic year 2021/2022 the service delivered counselling sessions to 436 pupils across primary and secondary schools (406 for Years 6-13, 30 for Years 1-5). This equates to 2616 sessions which is a reduction compared to the previous year. This is a direct result of recruitment and retention issues which we hope to overcome. The additional staff recruited to date will help to alleviate this issue. Average waiting times during this year were 3.66 weeks for initial assessment and 6.77 weeks for commencement of counselling. The service accepted 578 referrals (346 secondary, 90 primary) meaning that 142 referrals were carried over into the following academic year. Of those referrals 103 were assessed and signposted to other appropriate services for the summer holidays. During the year 2021-2022, average Young Peoples' scores reduced from 25.10 to 13.3 which again is a significant improvement.

The current average waiting times at the time of writing (22/11/2022) are 4.33 weeks for an initial assessment and 12 weeks for commencement of counselling in secondary schools. There is no waiting list for the Primary School Based Counselling Service at the present time.

Since the pandemic, the highest presenting issue for counselling is 'Anxiety'. Prior to the pandemic, the highest presenting issue was 'Family'. This is a trend which is consistent across Wales.

School Staff Wellbeing and Consultation Helpline

In recognition of the increased pressure on school staff during lockdown, the SBCS offered a wellbeing and support call back service for school staff. This service had two purposes:

1. To support the emotional wellbeing of school staff.
2. To provide consultation for staff who may be supporting CYP presenting with complex difficulties either at the hubs or in the community.

During 2019/2020 this service supported 11 staff over 16 sessions and during 2020/2021 supported 12 staff over 15 sessions.

School Staff Counselling Service

During 2020/2021 a School Staff Counselling service was created in order to further support staff in recognition of well documented low levels of school staff wellbeing. This service replaced the School Staff Wellbeing and Consultation Helpline.

Since its implementation, Neath Port Talbot has supported 26 members of staff over 165 sessions. Outcomes are extremely positive.

School Staff Supervision Pilot

The creation of a School Staff Supervision Pilot began in 2020, with one to one, monthly clinical supervision being provided for pastoral school staff in three secondary schools. This was in recognition of low staff wellbeing levels in the education sector and the link between this and pupil wellbeing. This work also recognised the formalisation of the responsibility of school staff in regards to emotional wellbeing as highlighted in The Together for Mental Health Plan, the 'Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being' (Welsh Government, 2021) and the Mental Health Measure Wales (2011) as well as the low levels of confidence of school staff with regards to work of this nature.

Supervision is able to address two issues in the education sector through supporting the wellbeing of staff and upskilling them in their pastoral role which has increased in complexity over time.

Supervision was provided by qualified counsellors and supervisors. This work was underpinned by academic research, the aim of which was to evaluate the efficacy of the pilot and is now being used to inform future work in this area. During 2020/2021, this service provided 142 supervision sessions to 34 members of school staff. During 2021/2022 51 school staff over 91 sessions benefitted from the service. Additionally, 2 primary schools received training in 'Peer Supervision Skills' and 10 staff received group supervision from the SBCS.

Feedback from the project has been positive and the service is currently reviewing more sustainable arrangements for supporting staff wellbeing in schools. Supervisees' report improvements in wellbeing with the average score on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale increasing from 51.8 to 54.9. The vast majority (81.8%) of supervisees showed elevations in levels of wellbeing, and 72.72 % demonstrated meaningful change of three points or more.

Primary Parent Support Service

During 2019-2020, throughout periods of lockdown, the SBCS created a Primary Parent Support Service. The aim of the service was to support parents in supporting the emotional wellbeing of their children. This was achieved through telephone support and parent-child/parent programmes which were delivered online. During 2019/2020, this service supported 28 parents over 42 sessions and during 2020/2021 9 parents over 9 sessions. During the academic year 2021/2022 the service supported 9 parents over 13 sessions. Parents reported that the service helped them in supporting their children throughout the pandemic.

Due to the creation of the School Based Child Therapy Service, there has been less of a need for this service although, it is still available to parents.

Emotional Health and Psychological Wellbeing Forums (EHPW)

Neath Port Talbot have established, in collaboration with the Child and Family Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and wider Inclusion Service staff, regular multi agency cluster forums to support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. The Emotional Health and Psychological Wellbeing (EHPW) forums are coordinated and chaired by the Educational Psychologist (EP) linked with the school cluster. These forums provide universal provision in the form of advice and consultation to schools and provide a reflective space for schools to discuss emotional health and wellbeing related issues. This might include discussions in relation to staffs' wider skills, knowledge and understanding of emotional health and wellbeing / mental health (i.e., discussions that have a professional development focus); classes or groups of pupils' individual pupils. The 'consultation team' will ordinarily consist of school-based counsellor (SBC), a wellbeing service (WBS) practitioner, an EP and a practitioner from CAMHS. Through this collaborative working, stronger links have been created between Health, Local Authority and schools, ensuring a holistic package of support is provided for children and young people, as well as upskilling staff to meet the needs of learners within the school setting. Where targeted support is required, this approach ensures that this is provided through the most effective and efficient means and in line with the 'No Wrong Door Approach' recommended by Welsh Government.

Assistant Educational Psychologist for Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

The Local Authority, through grant money, has recently successfully recruited and appointed an Assistant Educational Psychologist (AEP) with responsibility for working with students who present with Emotion Based School Avoidance (EBSA). The function of this role is to help reduce persistent absenteeism and re-engage CYP back into education.

Since the AEP has come into post, they have been working both directly and strategically to support CYP, families and schools facing EBSA. The role offers three levels of support, including empowering professionals, schools, individuals and their families.

As a result of this demand, the newly appointed AEP has taken on a consistent and ongoing caseload of approximately 10 children and young people who are persistently absent due to EBSA and requiring intensive support. This caseload is based on a priority of need and reviewed half-termly. As part of this caseload the AEP completes face-to-face work around unpicking the reasons for persistent absenteeism, putting support in place within school and or learning environments pertinent to specific need, and advising schools and parents on EBSA strategies. They also contribute

to Person Centred Reviews (PCRs), providing support to families, and introducing or beginning to facilitate transitions back into the learning environment. As part of this support, the AEP has also set up a referral pathway to their services and building and strengthening working relationships with a range of agencies who are involved with EBSA work including CAMHS in-reach, the wellbeing service, ASD advisory team, educational welfare service, school based counselling service and other inclusion service teams. More strategically, the AEP has begun raising awareness of EBSA needs across schools and the wider local authority, with leaflets being sent out detailing the support the AEP role provides and how it can be accessed.

Furthermore, the AEP has been creating an EBSA guidance and designing an accompanying toolkit for Schools and the Local Authority, with contributions from various key agencies (including safeguarding, Education Welfare Service and ASD Advisory Service). Alongside this, they have also been creating a guidance for families who are facing EBSA, with the aim to complete and release both guidance's during the spring term. Moving forward the AEP has set up an EBSA forum which will be attended by a number of agencies who have involvement or experience of EBSA. The aim of this forum is to provide schools with a space to discuss specific cases and receive appropriate support and advice from relevant agencies on a termly basis. The first meeting of which will be held in January. Raising awareness of EBSA and providing guidance to schools is set to continue, with an initial training day being provided in January (for 30-35 staff members). The aim of this work is to ensure early intervention and secure appropriate support in schools which will ultimately reduce rates of persistent absences. Training is also being set up for specialist intervention staff. By raising awareness with such staff, they will be able to provide specific EBSA support as part of their intervention, again contributing to early intervention and support for those who are persistently absent. The AEP will be continuing to provide parent/carer training both within schools and the wider community, with established links with school family liaison officers and CAMHS in-reach. To further support parents, the AEP has also begun to gather interest from families for an EBSA parent/carer coffee morning, which they are looking to begin in the latter half of the spring term. The aim of this coffee morning is to allow parents/carers to connect and support each other in their EBSA journeys, share best practice in addressing/supporting EBSA in the home and also gain an idea of their experiences to inform guidance and support.

Assistant Educational Psychologist for Electively Home Educated (EHE) Children

The Local Authority, through grant money, has recently successfully recruited and appointed an Assistant Educational Psychologist for children who are Electively Home Educated. This post holder will work closely with the Education Welfare Service and Additional Learning Support Service to ensure that the needs of all EHE CYP are catered for. Working alongside the EHE team, this post holder is supporting the well-being of families through signposting to support services, providing psychological advice, and offering relevant training and workshops to pupils and parents. Additionally, this post holder will be conducting multi-agency Annual Reviews with EHE pupils with ALN, offering specialised advice and support for families. Within this post, guidance for parents, schools and the Local Authority is currently being updated with respect to EHE. This will support understanding of the difficulties faced by the community, and will clearly outline the processes to EHE as well as how to access support services.

Motional

18 schools, including primary, secondary and a special school, across Neath Port Talbot are trialling a tool to inform and track support for pupils with behaviour, emotional and social development needs. Motional is a suite of evidence-based, easy-to-use tools designed to measure, positively impact, and report on emotional health across the whole school or setting. It supports access to healthy life and learning through improved emotional wellbeing, offers guidance, activities and resources for intervention work with individual pupils or whole classes, and data to provide a 'whole school' approach.

Initial reports from schools are positive with the tool being used in a variety of ways including one to one, nurture groups and whole classes. Secondary schools are however reporting that some of the interventions recommended are more primary focused. A review meeting will be held in January with schools and a representative from Motional to identify what works and what doesn't with the tool. Motional as a company are keen to work in collaboration with schools to improve the tool where needed.

3. Training for Schools

Throughout the pandemic and post Covid, the Wellbeing and Behaviour Service (WBS) have provided a comprehensive training offer in response to need, which includes, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD), Trauma Informed Approaches, Attachment Awareness, Forest School/Outdoor Learning, Restorative Approaches, Boxall, nurture, Relationship Based Play, developing skills workshops- wellbeing carousel (see below) This facilitates supporting school in supporting the emotional wellbeing of pupils.

The WBS has extensive experience and knowledge in relation to supporting CYP who have experienced trauma. As a result they have developed an innovative Trauma Informed Approach and Relational Health whole school training package. This has been a significant focus since the pandemic and following positive feedback from schools who have received the training, an increased number of new schools have signed up and received it since September. It is also to be rolled out to all primary and secondary schools in NPT. To date, 8 secondary schools and 4 primary schools have received the full days training.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) has been another training focus, all primary, secondary and specialist SEBD provisions all now have at least 1 member of staff who is an accredited youth mental health first aider. This means that the identification process, advice giving and signposting to the relevant support services, via the ALGEE model by the YMHFA, ensures that the CYP's mental health needs are met.

All Inclusion teams offer training, support and advice in relation to Inclusion and wellbeing of children and young people and collaborative and joint working practice is embedded. Inclusion teams offer joint training to ensure consistency and avoid duplication. High quality training for all school based staff is available throughout the academic year via the multi-agency Inclusion Service Training Menu. Feedback from training is positive. Strong support is provided for Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCos) with termly ALNCo training events held for both current and new

ALNCoS. Evaluations illustrated that nearly all participants (97.3%) rated the training as being at least 'good' with regards to the level to which stated objectives were met.

Due to the COVID pandemic it has become evident that there is a high level of need within the Early Years with regards to young children displaying emerging Social Communication and/or Speech Language & Communication difficulties, along with challenging behaviour. A bespoke and targeted package for Early Years practitioners in Nursery school settings has been arranged for Spring Term 2023 as part of a successful grant bid. This training will enable Nursery school settings to access a range of specialist training from Inclusion Service teams which will upskill staff and provide support for the settings. Training identified for all staff will include sensory needs, play and other identified areas of need e.g. Total Communication. This is to ensure that universal and targeted provision is embedded into all Nursery school settings.

Training has been extended to the Early Years Sector with both the Sensory and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) teams delivering training to early year's providers to ensure an understanding of sensory needs, the importance of early identification and emerging Social Communication difficulties. Evaluations illustrated that nearly all participants (97.8%) rated the training as being at least 'good' with regards to the extent the event/training stated aims and objectives were met.

4. Support for Transition

Key Worker posts for Children Looked After, Exclusions and Mover in.

Grant funding has been secured for the employment of the three key workers who started in August 2022. The role of the keyworkers is to support transition for complex managed moves, complex movers-in to the authority and children who are looked after (CLA). They support CYP in a person centred approach, with the aim of facilitating a successful reintegration to education. The workers plan and take part in thorough multi-agency meetings and transitional support. They also contribute to the formulation of school based and LA maintained IDP's by attending the PCR meetings as Local Authority Officers.

The posts are in place to meet the growing need for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to transition successfully into schools. NPT also has a significant number of in year transfers and movers into county.

The aim of these posts is to:

- To work in collaboration with the admissions service to identify movers in and in year transfers who require additional support, improving transition and engagement and reducing risk of exclusions.
- To communicate and liaise with all stakeholders to ensure necessary timescales are adhered to e.g. admission to school/provision, ALN assessment.
- Gather essential evidence/information to make good decisions regarding appropriate school placement/provision. This would include attending information exchange meetings, person centred reviews, home visits and completing PCP work with the child/young person.
- Support appropriate smooth transition planning with receiving schools. Support the child/young person during initial integration.
- Promote stability of learning. Be mindful of the holistic life picture of the child and promote the importance of safety.

- Support the identification for wider support for the family, linking in with Early Intervention education screening post.

Support for schools

Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Section	Support offered since Summer 2022	Impact – the “so what” question
ESO- Support visits (including PM)	Every school receives a support visit to ensure effective school improvement, discuss progress in learning and wellbeing, teaching, curriculum, care, support and guidance and leadership. Support for all schools is negotiated	Each school has a support plan for the coming year. Support to either jointly evaluate in the school or validate existing evaluations is agreed. As a result, we identify strengths, next steps in improvement and causes for concern. As a result, the school improvement service knows its schools very well. This can often be very detailed to the extent for example of knowing the phonological awareness of individual pupils, the quality of teaching and leadership. Support is purposeful and progress is timely.
ESO- Bespoke follow-up supporting self-evaluation	Every school negotiates a level of support appropriate to the school’s needs and circumstances. Support can include evaluation activities, specific training for teachers and school staff	The range of support is extensive and ranges from supporting the school to introduce new approaches to teaching mathematics or reading, to individual support for school leaders and NQTs alike. Support can be at an individual, whole school or even cluster level. Subject leaders at secondary, leadership at all levels and an increasing level of support for pedagogy in line with curriculum reform.
ESO/Inclusion – Support around schools with covid catch up	Following support visits and particularly in remote areas with high levels of deprivation, schools facing particular challenges following the pandemic have required a collective response from the LA. This is the school improvement team and inclusion team working together with the school to meet the increased level of challenge facing some schools.	In a very few schools this approach has been highly effective in adding capacity to schools in the past 18 months. Often staff absence (covid related) added to issues around deprivation have resulted in significant deficits in skills particularly reading and pupils social skills (i.e. the ability to collaborate, take turns, participate, engage etc.). The Inclusion team and School improvement team have planned their support collectively so as to support the school in a measured and timely manner. As a result, the pupils are making sound progress and the isolation is no longer such an issue as covid recedes.
ESO – Curriculum support	Significant levels of support particularly around the mandatory elements, progression, assessing and the conceptual elements of the statements of what matter.	Every NPT school engages in workshops, discussions and training regarding the CfW. Every school has access to the programme of support both at individual school and cluster level. The NPT school improvement team meet regularly with WG colleagues (including several visits to NPT to share ideas and progress). As a result, every school that began the CfW in Sept. 22 has a curriculum statement, an ever-evolving vision, a deepening understanding of progression, assessing and how curriculum design can develop the concepts within the statements of what matter.

ESO – Progression	This key driver in the CfW is seen as an essential mandatory element to bring about change in NPT schools.	The individual school sessions, the national conversations and the cluster sessions have been imperative in developing and evolving a shared understanding of progression. These meetings have been extremely well attended and the discussions and discourse have been key to bringing about the change of mindset required to realise a purpose led curriculum. The conversations are ongoing.
ESO assessing (Camau)	A suite of workshops to help schools and settings develop skills in the crucial area of using assessment to support progression	The workshops help practitioners improve understanding of assessment and progression and the important relationships between them. Ultimately, they are designed to help develop assessment approaches which take progression in learning forward, rather than prove current learning. All schools are participating in these workshops.
ESO (Leadership support) - Andrew	A well-established and successful leadership pathway which captures both national and local pathways is shared annually with all schools.	As a result of this programme NPT has progressed from having 50% of schools in follow-up in 2017 to only one school currently being in follow-up. Support for leadership from Induction to aspiring headteachers, departmental leads (via network meetings), a coaching and mentoring programme that has been delivered to over 100 NPT leaders, support for self-evaluation, individual support for colleagues applying for leadership roles, co-visits on support visits in other schools, headteacher network meetings etc. All have an impact on the quality of discussion, practice, shared understanding and pupil progress.
Page 68 ESO – (Leadership support) Geoff Cresswell	A long-established relationship with a colleague. Geoff supports small groups of school leaders.	Geoff Cresswell has worked with over 20 headteachers and acting headteachers over the past 5 years. The programme of support looking at their wellbeing, their disposition and their leadership style and approach. The sessions work in small groups followed by individual visits where effective self-evaluation is modelled and developed. As a result, the quality of self-evaluation has improved as well as headteacher wellbeing.
ESO – Professional learning workshops	A series of newsletters, workshops and programmes for PL now exist in a WG approved plan for the national and local offer.	The workshops provide a focus on what is available for all schools and engagement is encouraged and supported. We are committed to a range of current and new measures and approaches to support our leaders. We engage with the National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales and develop the professional learning offer especially the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). The Schools as Learning Organisations (SLOs) and Professional Standards Frameworks will continue to be developed and add value to leadership in our schools, especially in the areas of collaboration and school self-improvement. We will encourage school leaders to be lead enquirers in their learning communities as part of our National Approach to Educational Research and Enquiry. We will encourage them to be as concerned to address their own professional learning needs, through INSET, the dedicated funding for professional learning and higher qualifications as they are about their staff. We will focus a significant part of the national approach to coaching and mentoring on leaders, specifically headteachers new to the role, and will direct support to ensure high levels of sharing of professional and leadership practice through the digital resources available on Hwb.

ESO – NPEP	This programme is supporting a growing network of schools to develop a range of enquiry skills by leading enquiries in their own setting to explore professional learning requirements for the new curriculum. Resources developed by schools participating in the project are available on Hwb.	This programme is supported by UWTSD and is proving very successful as groups of schools are collaborating in order to carry out purposeful enquiry driven PL. This programme offers an opportunity for schools not previously involved in the national NPEP programme to explore ways of integrating critical thinking and research methods into their practice through supported collaborative enquiry. The programme involves 3 networks of 5 schools, each supported by at least one experienced NPEP school currently engaged with the National programme.
ESO – Let's think	Programme to develop and improve pupils thinking processes. The programme will support teachers to develop pedagogical practice through class talk and a culture that promotes learning.	The programme is a combination of training and coaching and involves 18 teachers from 9 schools. It is in collaboration with Swansea university. The programme is collaborative and is supported by specialist expertise. Its focus is on student aspirations and is designed to be sustainable. The schools participating are exploring evidence from trying new things to connect practice to theory.
ESO – Cardiff University	Collaborative Enquiry for Professional Learning Programme – With Cardiff university	Facilitated by Cardiff University and led by Prof Emma-Jane Milton and Dr Alex Morgan this is a yearlong programme working with 24 participants – two from each educational setting. The programme is working towards the following aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • privilege a learner orientation to leadership practice and professional learning; • develop and embed understandings of supporting an 'enquiry stance' in educational and leadership practice; • explore ways of working to support collaborative enquiry for meaningful professional learning in your educational context; and • provide opportunities to think deeply and critically about support for professional learning practices in your own context.
ESO – Llan curriculum	This is a half termly meeting with a representative group of headteachers	The meetings are negotiated between the Chair of Llan and the school improvement team. The emphasis is on curriculum reform, the support agenda around reform and self-evaluation.
ESO – National network facilitation	Members of the NPT school improvement team regularly act as facilitators in National Network meetings	This involves preparatory meetings with colleagues from WG and the region. Involvement ensures that key guidance, policy and practice is shared and understood by all.
ESO – Pedagogy support	The NPT pedagogy programme is a three-year programme aimed at supporting the evolution of pedagogy in the context of curriculum reform.	This is at the early stage of development. An initial pilot group of 16 and a subsequent trial group are in place. We are currently looking to appoint an ESO to manage this programme and second four teachers to act as pedagogy support officers to work alongside participants. The aim is to evolve pedagogy particularly around the development and progress of the integral skills.

ESO – Cluster workshops	In line with WG expectations the school improvement team with the agreement of school leaders facilitate half termly cluster meetings.	The initial meetings were around a shared understanding of progression. This has been key in shaping a culture of change and development in NPT schools. The meetings are currently focussing on the Camau l’r dyfodol workshops. The 6 workshops are organised as 3 pairs, each pair addressing a theme of central importance to assessment and curriculum design within Curriculum for Wales.
ESO – Taith project	Funding has been secured to visit relevant educational systems around the world	Initial plans have identified visits for ESOs to Australia, Flanders the USA and Ireland to look at issues including curriculum design, the development of bilingualism and pedagogical principles.
ESO – Subject networks	Half-termly subject network leader meetings are facilitated and organised by ESOs	A range of issues are on the agenda including CfW, progression, assessing for the future, qualifications, approaches to pedagogy and sharing good practice. A result there is an increasing shared understanding of progression, the mandatory elements of the CfW and approaches to pedagogy in the CfW.
Page 170 ESO – Joint inset	There is an increasing desire for shared inset days. This is often designed and facilitated by the NPT school improvement team.	A number of examples this term includes half of the secondary schools (two others were unable to attend due to their involvement in other clusters e.g. faith and Welsh medium clusters) in NPT joining together to work online and in person on issues around curriculum reform, qualifications, progression etc. The training, preparation and organisation is led by ESOs. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and has resulted in greater networking and sharing of resources and ideas. Also, the Llangatwg cluster worked together so that all staff (Leaders, teachers and TAs) alongside colleagues from Estyn and WG to look at developing a shared understanding of progress and a suggested approach to concept planning. This was hugely successful and is being followed up in each individual school. A similar approach is being carried out with the Ystalyfera cluster in December.
ESO – Agreed syllabus for RVE	A new part time ESO has been appointed and as Chair of WASACRE and SACRE.	A new Agreed Syllabus has been developed and schools would be supported in writing a Policy via a model policy. The new agreed syllabus is awaiting political approval in January.
ESO – RSE policy and guidance	A model policy has been written and will be shared with all schools	The model policy will be shared and its content will ultimately be determined by the outcome of the judicial review. Once guidance is received from WG we intend to proceed.

ESO – Governor support	A programme of governor training is planned each year and delivered by ESOs	Governing bodies play a fundamental role as the first line of the accountability for their schools and communities providing the necessary challenge and support for headteachers to lead their schools effectively. As such, we will ensure the local offer for professional learning includes resources for school governors. As a result of governor training many governors have a sound understanding of school development planning, effective self-evaluation and the CfW amongst other things.
ESO – Appointments support	ESO's and senior leaders attend all senior appointments in the LA	As a result, senior leaders can advise all senior appointments in NPT schools.
ESO – Cross LA working	ESO's work with colleagues across local authorities and regional partnerships	As a result of existing relationships and national networks, NPT school improvement officers regularly liaise with colleagues across Wales. For example, as members of the National Academy for Educational leadership, Talk Pedagogy, National network meetings, University programmes including Camau and informal discussions that occur following such meetings. NPT officers have worked with colleagues in the following LAs and also in some cases schools, Cardiff, Newport, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Pembroke, Ceredigion, Conwy, Bridgend and Powys. These meetings have included topics such as concept design, progression, support for schools, metacognition and pedagogy. These collaborations help to nurture distinction, shape understanding and ensure that NPT schools are involved in all areas of reform.
Welsh language support – Welsh and English medium	Curriculum and Teacher development supports all schools in both sectors to develop standards in Welsh, the Siarter Iaith and an increasing sense of Cynefin	A small team supports all NPT primary schools with a wide range of resources. Regular visits and a comprehensive training programme support all schools to make progress in national priorities around the Criw Cymraeg, Siarter Iaith and ensuring that all schools are supported to develop a sense of cynefin. The training programme for Welsh medium schools is developing oracy skills using 'Block Play' and the 'Drilio Disglair' programme. Also, the need to develop higher order thinking skills pupils' literacy skills using the 'Talk for Writing' strategies to support oracy, reading and writing. The initial evaluations are very positive.
TDO support - RWI	AN increasing number of NPT schools following the pandemic have reevaluated how literacy is taught and have opted for Read Write Inc. as an approach.	Read Write Inc Phonics is a proven synthetic phonics programme that ensures early success in reading, writing and spelling. It includes Speed Sound Cards, Word Cards, Ditty Photocopy Masters, Ditty Books, Storybooks, Non-fiction, Interactive Stories and Writing books. NPT staff in conjunction with Read Write Inc. staff are supporting schools to implement this programme and as a result we are already seeing an impact on pupils' reading skills.

TDO support – White Rose Maths	Many NPT schools following the pandemic have reevaluated how mathematics is taught and have opted for White Rose Maths as an approach.	The NPT teacher development officer has supported many schools with bespoke training so that there is a shared approach to teaching mathematics which supports pupils to move from the concrete, to the pictorial and on to the abstract. As a result, many teachers are reporting that the professional development is improving their understanding of how to teach mathematics effectively and as a result the early monitoring of standards is demonstrating an increasing depth to pupils’ understanding and enjoyment of mathematics.
TDO support – Thinking skills	A comprehensive programme of support to develop thinking skills and metacognition is well established and developed in NPT schools	The NPT school improvement team has supported nearly all schools with a series of training sessions which promotes the development of metacognition in NPT schools. Each session is followed by an evaluation and report on progress. The programme has resulted in a high number of skills using the strategies effectively and pupils enjoying the activities and being able to demonstrate the ability to transfer thinking across their learning and experiences.
TDO support - Induction	A comprehensive and detailed programme of support is provided for all NQTs by the TDO with responsibility for induction	This programme, endorsed by WG is well received and covers a wide range of support officers from school improvement and inclusion. The use of Professional Learning Passports has been adopted for the pedagogy project and encourages and directs reflection.
Community of schools	The development of a comprehensive programme of support to assist schools in becoming Community Focussed.	This programme has been developed as a result of the work undertaken in partnership with The Child Action Poverty Group – Cost of the School Day Project. In depth analysis of project outcomes has shown the importance of engaging with parents to effectively support pupils as they engage in learning. CPAG has disseminated their finding to all schools, through a workshop to school leaders on the impact of poverty and identifying barriers to supporting vulnerable families. They have also provided webinars to all staff on findings of the project. NPT have also engaged in a formal partnership Save the Children, who have developed and piloted a training programme on understanding poverty and promoting parental engagement. This training is being delivered through a ‘cluster model’, to all schools within the Llangatwg Cluster.
TDO Support Digital learning	The TDO offers a wide range of digital learning support	Many pupils’ digital skills are developing meaningfully across Neath-Port Talbot. Most of our younger pupils use technology appropriately to communicate information and support their learning, for example photographing their work or using a word processing application to write a story. Many are able to use digital tools to represent data in graphs such as block or bar charts. Most pupils can use a programmable toy to navigate along a given path, for example to find treasure on a map. A majority of younger pupils are able to classify objects using a branching database. Nearly all older pupils are able to communicate effectively using a wide range of tools in order to support their learning. The introduction to distance learning provision in recent years has resulted in nearly all pupils being able to produce, interact and collaborate with their peers and

		teachers through various online platforms, however, pupils' data and computational thinking skills have developed less progressively during this time.
Early years support	Early Years ESO offers a comprehensive range of professional learning with a focus upon enabling learning, early years pedagogy, curriculum development and assessing learners' progression.	<p>Early Years ESO has delivered professional learning for headteachers, 3-7 lead teachers and nursery staff. The professional learning focused upon enabling learning, early years pedagogy, including raising awareness of the WG foundation phase modules, and changes to on-entry assessment. As a result, ESO visits demonstrate that schools are well informed regarding the approach to pedagogy in the early years and changes to on-entry assessment. Most nursery teachers attended training in the summer term that focused upon enabling learning, on-entry assessment and the 'Curriculum for the Funded Non-Maintained Nursery'. As a result, feedback from training noted that teachers felt better informed and professional learning is further developing their understanding of early years pedagogy. ESO has provided bespoke support for early years staff in schools that has been brokered by ESO colleagues. Next steps:</p> <p>*Early Years ESO has put together a working party made up of nursery teachers, headteachers and early years childcare practitioners to look at best practice in relation to on-entry assessment and transition. This work will commence in January 2023.</p> <p>* WG foundation phase modules will be delivered from Spring term 2023.</p>
SEREN Support	Detailed local programme for both Academy and Foundation Learners and Seren Lead in NPT is also the national lead for Seren Foundation	<p>On average 1000 learners are part of the Seren network in NPT from years 8-11. All schools participate in a variety of activities to support the brightest learners in schools. Foundation events are helping to develop students' confidence in speaking and their ability to think critically. Competitions such as the year 9 Seren debate competition have seen improvements in the confidence of our students when presenting, but also in their ability to respond to arguments and develop the necessary 'speed' of reaction of their critical thinking skills. In year 10 there is a detailed series of masterclasses at AS level that students can access that has resulted in smoother transition to sixth form and more clear awareness of the demands of AS studies. At academy level (year 12) programmes to support learners who want to apply for medicine or Oxbridge have resulted in more applications and a broader awareness by students of the choices that are available to them. The number of students in Academy is now at its highest level, with more of our students achieving automatic eligibility for Seren by gaining 6 A*s. The students are also benefitting from meeting students from other hubs e.g. our Academy year 12 and 13 participate in visits to Oxford and London with other hubs, while all academy students have the opportunity to apply for national summer schools e.g. the Jesus College Oxford summer school. The year 9 pupils are also benefitting from improving their debate skills, not only with a competition in NPT but also the chance to compete against the Swansea and Carmarthen/Ceredigion/Pembrokeshire Hub. The links that have been built with HEI's in Wales has also benefitted students across our sixth forms and not just those on Seren. There has been an increased collaboration between school and college sixth forms because of the Seren programme.</p>

Junior Apprenticeship Support	All schools with a secondary provision can apply for places on the programme. This is supported by coordinators in NPTC Group, the 14-19 Manager for NPT and a Junior Apprenticeship Link teachers group.	The programme is available for students that are not engaging in mainstream education and it is felt that they could cope with the college environment and a more vocational pathway. These students are taught in smaller groups and have both academic and well-being support for the 2 years on the course. Student success on the course has resulted in a number of students making a successful transition to post 16 courses. Other students have also earned places on apprenticeship programmes (with Construction students the most likely to follow this path).
14-19 support	Support is available for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of curriculum and qualifications through the Curriculum Group. - Post 16 Planning support - Collaborative Provision with both NPTC Group of Colleges and NPT Skills and Training - Welsh Baccaulaureate network group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Curriculum group is a long established part of the 14-19 support. This gives an opportunity for curriculum leads to meet and discuss the issues and challenges they face, as well as the opportunity to share best practice. Modelling of curriculums in schools and sharing of information regarding qualifications delivered has allowed for more parity of offer for all students in NPT. This has also allowed the development of a programme of vocational courses that are offered either through NPTC Group of colleges or NPT Skills and Training. This group is also overseeing the current review of collaborative provision to ensure that the vocational courses offered best meet the needs of all students. - The post-16 planning cycle in NPT is well established and ensures that planning for sixth form provision is robust within NPT. Pupil tracking is also an essential element within this programme and continues to allow sixth forms to offer programmes of study that meet the needs of students. - The Welsh Baccaulaureate network group continues to meet on a regular basis. Alongside consideration of the changes made to the qualification over the last 3 years and how best to deliver the new qualification the group is also an essential platform for discussion on the new Advanced baccaulaureate qualification and how schools can best prepare for this.

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

(All starting 2pm unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Contact Officer
2022		
7 th July	Training Session	
15 th Sept		
27 th Oct		
24 th November		
8 th Dec	Post COVID update (verbal)	Rhiannon Crowhurst/Hayley Lervy/Chris Millis
2023		
25 th Jan	Post COVID update	Rhiannon Crowhurst/Hayley Lervy/Chris Millis
	Consultation on 23/24 Budget Proposals.	Huw/ Nicole
16 th March	Cost of Living Support in Schools	Rhiannon Crowhurst/Hayley Lervy/Chris Millis
13 th April	Support for Wellbeing	Hayley Lervy
25 th May	Tourism Strategy Update	Head of Leisure

Items to be scheduled and discussed with officers:

Regional Arrangements for ALN – Rhiannon Crowhurst

This page is intentionally left blank