



EDUCATION, SKILLS & WELLBEING CABINET BOARD

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EDUCATION SKILLS AND WELLBEING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2023**

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

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

Webcasting/Hybrid Meetings:

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

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Chairpersons Announcement/s
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 3 - 6*)
5. Forward Work Programme 2023/24 (*Pages 7 - 8*)
6. Public Question Time
Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services, democratic.services@npt.gov.uk no later than two working days prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10 minute period.

For Decision

7. Standing Advisory Panel (*Pages 9 - 16*)

For Information

8. Youth Service Update (*Pages 17 - 36*)
9. Transport Personal Travel Budget Update (*Pages 37 - 66*)
10. Welsh Public Libraries Standards Annual Report 2023/24 (*Pages 67 - 88*)
11. Urgent Items
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Regulation 5(4)(b) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 (as amended).
12. Access to Meetings - Exclusion of the Public
To resolve to exclude the public for the following items pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
13. Royal National Lifeboat Institute (*Pages 89 - 280*)

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

26th January 2024

Education, Skills & Wellbeing Cabinet Board Members:

Councillors. J.Hurley, N.Jenkins and C.Phillips

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

23 NOVEMBER 2023

EDUCATION, SKILLS & WELLBEING CABINET BOARD

Cabinet Members:

Councillors: J.Hurley (Chair), N.Jenkins and C.Phillips

Officers in Attendance:

J.Burge, R.Crowhurst, I.Guy, S.McCluskie, C.Millis, A.Spooner-Cleverly, C. Morris, P. Chivers, H. Lewis, C. Saunders, D. Evans, K. Windsor-Brown and S. Griffiths.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor J. Hurley be appointed as Chairperson for the meeting.

2. **CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENT/S**

Councillor Hurley welcomed all to the meeting.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on the 28th September 2023, were approved as a true and accurate record.

5. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

Decision:

That the forward work programme for 2023 2024 be noted.

6. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

7. **CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES (LIBRARIES, LEISURE CENTRES ETC.)**

Decision:

That as per appendix 1 and 2 of the circulated report the opening times for Christmas and New Year 2023, for Libraries, theatres, community centres, Margam County Park, Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools be approved.

Implementation of Decision:

That the decision be implemented following the three day call in period, which ends at 9.00am, on, Monday, 27th November 2023.

Consultation:

There was no requirement to undertake external consultation

8. **ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS - SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY (OUT FOR CONSULTATION)**

Decision:

That having due regard to appendix A of the circulated report pack, approval be granted to consult on the 2023/2026 Community Schools Admission Policy.

Implementation of Decision:

That the decision be implemented following the three-day call-in period, which ends at 9.00am, on, Monday, 27th November 2023.

Consultation:

That having due regard to the circulated report, consultation was carried out the following,

- The governing bodies of community schools
- The governing bodies of voluntary aided (i.e., faith) schools
- All neighbouring local authorities.

9. **INCREASED PLANNED PLACES BLAENHONDDAN PRIMARY SCHOOL - FINAL DETERMINATION**

Decision:

- That approval be granted to establish a specialist provision for primary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) at Blaenhonddan Primary School.
- That the provision be managed by the school under its school governance.
- That the provision be beneficial to pupils being taught by specialist staff and alleviate pressures on existing staff to address demand for pupils with more complex needs.

Implementation of Decision:

That the decision be implemented following the three-day call-in period, which ends at 9.00am, on, Monday, 27th November 2023.

Consultation:

Formal consultation has been undertaken in line with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, November 2018. Members were informed of the outcome to the consultation together with its recommendations on the 28th September at the ESW Cabinet Board.

10. **WESP**

Decision:

That the report be noted for information.

11. **EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS PROGRAMME**

Decision:

That the report be noted for information.

12. **QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 23/24 - EDUCATION DIRECTORATE**

Decision:

That the report be noted for monitoring.

13. **QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 23/24 - ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE**

Decision:

That the report be noted for monitoring.

14. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

CHAIRPERSON

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board
(Immediately following Scrutiny Committee starting at 2pm)

Meeting Date 2023	Agenda Item and Type
Page 7	Admission to Community Schools – School Admission Policy (back from consultation) – FOR DECISION
	Quarter 3 Performance 23/24 – Education Directorate – Monitoring
	Quarter 3 Performance Indicator 23/24 – Environment Directorate Environmental Health and Trading Standards – Monitoring
	Heritage Strategy (back from consultation) - Decision
	Adult Learning
	Directorate Improvement Plan
	Children and Young Peoples Plan and Early Years Strategy – Permission to consult – For decision
	Annual Pupil Performance 2023/2024

Meeting Date 2023	Agenda Item and Type
25 th April 2024	Annual School Term Dates – (back from consultation) – FOR DECISION
	Aberafan Seafront Strategy
	Children and Young Peoples Plan and Early Years Strategy
	School Based Counselling Services – information

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Education Cabinet Board Thursday 1st of February

Report of the Head of Education Development – Christopher Millis

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title. School Improvement Team – Constitution of Neath Port Talbot Standing Advisor Council for Religion values and Ethics (SACforRVE)

Purpose of the Report:

To provide members with information in order to make a decision on the approval of the constitution for NPT SACforRVE.

Executive Summary:

This report will provide information on why a constitution for SACforRVE needed and why Member approval is required.

Background:

This report provides Members with information on the SACforRVE

Current position

Religion, Values and Ethics remains locally determined within the Curriculum for Wales and the legislation around the curriculum. As such Neath Port Talbot Local Authority is required by law to constitute a SACforRVE in line with legislative requirement and develop a constitution to ensure that the SACforRVE functions in line with legislation and supports the LA. The constitution complies with the legislative changes for the formation of a SAC through ensuring the name change and the correct membership for the council (SAC) which includes full membership to individuals of non-religious philosophical convictions such as Humanism and Atheism. The constitution has been developed with the support of SAC members and Joanna Stevens (Principal Solicitor – Commercial and Governance, Legal Services Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council) to ensure correct legal requirements, consistency of language and compatibility with other relevant NPT documentation.

The content within the constitution refers to the function of the council (SAC) and its role in advising the LA on matters connected with the provision of the teaching and learning of Religion Values and Ethics (RVE) within the Curriculum for Wales and the Legacy Curriculum. Also, to advise the LEA on other matters that are within the scope of RVE including any complaints. Collective Worship also comes under the remit of SAC. There is a duty for SAC to produce an annual report in line with the guidance supplied by Welsh Government. Additionally, it contains terms of reference which includes detail on the composition and membership for the council (SAC) alongside explanations on the procedures of the council (SAC). Within the Annex there is a code of conduct guidance that all members are expected to adhere to.

Financial Impacts:

No implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

All schools are involved in this process

Workforce Impacts:

No implications

Legal Impacts:

No implications

Consultation:

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

Recommendations:

NPT Council to constitute a SAC and adopt the proposed constitution.

Implementation of Decision:

Once approved, the constitution is adopted and SACforRVE can operate with a constitution that is aligned with the legislation within the Curriculum for Wales.

The SACforRVE will require a space within the 'outside bodies' section of the NPT Council Website to house all relevant documentation i.e. The constitution, membership of SACforRVE, The Agreed Syllabus, The Annual Report, minutes and agenda's all meetings.

Appendices:

Appendix 1

Neath Port Talbot SACforRVE Constitution

Officer Contact:

Mike Daley – Lead Education Support Officer m.daley@npt.gov.uk

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

Rachel Samuel – Seconded Education Support Officer with responsibility for RVE r.samuel@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Constitution of Neath Port Talbot Standing Advisory Council (SAC) for Religion, values and ethics:

There shall be constituted by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council a Standing Advisory Council (SAC) for Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) (the Council) for its local area.

The function of the Council is to advise Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (the Local Education Authority (LEA/LA)) on such matters connected with the provision of teaching and learning, under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and Education Act 1996, either in respect of the mandatory elements of RVE, or the post-compulsory education in maintained schools of optional RVE which includes:

- methods of teaching
- the choice of teaching materials
- the provision of teacher training.

In addition, the Council may advise on any other matter the LEA may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit within the scope of its RVE functions and pursuant to its Terms of Reference below.

The LEA must provide local arrangements for dealing with complaints regarding the provision of RVE. The Council will therefore consider complaints, on the request of the LEA, about the provision of or lack of provision of RVE. The arrangement will give parents and others the opportunity to ensure the proper provision of RVE across all schools in Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

Terms of Reference:

1. To advise the LEA upon matters connected with collective worship in community schools, and county schools.
2. To advise the LEA upon matters connected with the provision of teaching and learning, under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, either in respect of the mandatory element of Religion, Values and Ethics (within the meaning of the Act), or under section 60 of that Act (post-compulsory education in maintained schools: Religion, Values and Ethics) as the authority may refer to SAC or as SAC may see fit.
3. To provide particular advice in respect of the above matters around methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers (section 391(2), Education Act 1996).

4. To carry out, in accordance with section 391(1A) (b) of the Education Act 1996, the functions conferred on SAC by section 394 of the same Act (determination of cases in which requirement for Christian Collective worship is not to apply).
5. Where the representative groups so demand (other than the group consisting of persons appointed to represent the local authority), to require the local authority, in accordance with section 391(3) of the Education Act 1996, to review and establish the RVE agreed syllabus via an agreed syllabus conference in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 31 to the same Act. In accordance with Welsh Government guidance, SAC should request a review of the RVE agreed syllabus at least once every 5 years.
6. To publish in each year a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by its representative groups in terms of requesting a review of the RVE agreed syllabus during the last preceding year (section 391(6)-(7), Education Act 1996). A copy of that report must be sent to the Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government.
7. At the request of the LEA, participate in the LEA's statutory complaints procedures in those instances where the complaints relate to RVE.
8. To handle legacy advisory functions formerly the responsibility of the Neath Port Talbot Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education ("SACRE"), relating to the RE syllabus for those school years in which the RVE agreed syllabus has not yet been implemented.

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Composition and Membership:

9. The Council shall comprise persons appointed by the LEA to represent the following 3 groups respectively:
 - a. Such Christian denominations, and other religions and denominations of such religious and non-religious philosophical convictions as, in the opinion of the LEA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious and non-religious traditions in the area.
 - b. Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the LEA, ought to be represented having regard to the circumstances of the area.
 - c. The LEA.
10. The Council may also include co-opted members, that is, persons co-opted as members of the Council by members of the Council who have not themselves been so co-opted.
11. The Council has agreed the following membership:
 - a. **Representatives from religious denominations and non-religious philosophical convictions.** This should not exceed two members from each group.
 To optimise the efficiency of the Council, membership is sought from a wide range of religious traditions and non-religious philosophical convictions, which could include but is **not restricted** to:
 - i. The Church in Wales
 - ii. The Roman Catholic Church
 - iii. Free Churches
 - iv. Bah'ai
 - v. Buddhism
 - vi. Hinduism
 - vii. Islam
 - viii. Judaism
 - ix. Sikhism
 - x. Humanism
 - xi. Atheism

- b. **Teacher representatives.** This should not exceed two members from each group.
- The relevant statutory provision gives discretion to the authority to determine which associations are to represent teachers and will therefore include.
 - Places from a range of teacher associations could include but is **not restricted** to members of:
 - i. UCAC
 - ii. NEU
 - iii. NASUWT
 - iv. NAHT
 - v. ASCL
 - vi. Chair of LLAN

c. **The Local Authority**

A total of 6 members representing the local authority, and also the:

- i. Director of Education
- ii. RVE Support Officer
- iii. Clerk to the Council (the SAC Admin and Org Officer)

12. Co-opted members (with no voting rights)

- Individuals who have an interest in RVE and collective worship and can assist the Council in its functions. Council members will vote as to whether accept the individuals' request to become a Co-opted member.

13. Membership of the Council is subject to the condition that the LEA has taken all reasonable steps to assure itself that the persons appointed are representative, as the case may be, of the denominations or associations in question. The LEA on the advice of the RVE Support Officer will have the final decision as to membership of the Council.
14. Members representing associations of teachers must include teachers or teachers in charge of RVE.
15. Individuals may be removed from the Council if they cease to be representative of the denomination, association or of the Authority they were appointed to represent.
16. Any member of the Council may at any time resign his or her office.
17. Members of the Council will remain on the Council until they are no longer representatives of their organisations on the Council or in the event of failure to attend three consecutive meetings. An individual's membership of the Council will be reviewed by the LA every three years or in the event of the LA determining that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct (and the LA's decision regarding membership of the Council shall be final).
18. The RVE Support Officer will be able to claim travelling expenses when completing work for the Council, this can include traveling for WASACRE and NAPfRVE meeting as well as delivering training to community schools and county schools.
19. Teacher members of the Council will be entitled to claim teaching cover costs for attending meetings or representing the council at WASACRE meetings.
20. Members shall adhere to the Member's Code of Conduct (found at Annex A) (for the avoidance of doubt, Members who are elected members of the LA shall continue to comply with their LA Code of Conduct).

Procedures:

21. The Council shall meet not less than once in each academic term. Meetings will be called by the RVE Support Officer and the Chairperson of the Council. The schedule of meetings will be

set in the first meeting of the academic year or in a year when there is an ordinary election of the LA councillors, the first meeting held after the election (the Annual General Meeting). Public notice of the time and date of meetings shall be given not less than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting, agenda and papers will be distributed electronically prior to the meetings.

22. Meetings and meeting papers are open to members of the public unless confidential or other sensitive information is to be disclosed.
23. The Council shall annually elect from its membership a chairperson and vice chairperson at the Annual General Meeting. The chairperson and vice chairperson in any one year shall not be drawn from the same representative group. An outgoing chairperson may be re-appointed.
24. On any matter to be decided by the Council only the representative groups on the Council shall be entitled to vote, and each member group will have a single vote. Prior to any voting procedures each member group will be permitted time to discuss and decide their agreed decision on the matter under consideration. Matters to be decided by the Council will be determined by a unanimous vote.
25. Co-opted members are not entitled to vote.
26. The agenda for each meeting shall be determined by the chairperson and vice chairperson in consultation with the Clerk to the Council, Director of Education Representative and the RVE Support Officer. Any voting member of the Council shall be entitled to propose items for an agenda. Proposed agenda items shall be shared with the Clerk to Council not less than 7 working days prior to the meeting.
27. In the case of any member not being able to attend a Council meeting, a substitute may be nominated by the body which that person represents, provided that the substitute meets the eligibility criteria and the Education Directorate of the LEA and the Clerk to the Council is notified not less than 7 working days in advance of the meeting.
28. A meeting of the Council will be deemed to be quorate if at least one member of each of the three representative groups is present.
29. The validity of proceedings of the Council shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of the Council or on the ground that a member of the Council appointed to represent any religion, denomination, philosophical conviction or associated does not at the time of the proceedings represent the religion, denomination, philosophical conviction or associations in question.
30. The representative groups on the Council, other than that representing the Local Authority, may call at any time, for a review of the agreed syllabus current in the Authority. At such time, an Agreed Syllabus Conference shall be constituted and convened.
31. The Council shall consider its annual report at the first meeting to be held in each academic year. Upon the Council's ratification of the report, it shall proceed to publication.
32. The Clerk to the Council shall arrange for copies of the annual report to be sent to all community schools and county schools within the Authority, to WASACRE, to Welsh Government, the National Library and to such other individuals and institutions as the LEA sees fit.
33. The Council is a member of WASACRE (the Welsh Association of SACREs). It shall nominate up to four members, including the RVE Support Officer, to represent the Council at WASACRE meetings.
34. The RVE Support Officer is also a member of NAPfRVE (National advisor panel for RVE) and is expected to attend these meetings.

35. The Council shall review this constitution on a four yearly basis. The review will be undertaken in partnership with the LA's Legal Services and the three member groups of the Council. All changes will need to be agreed to by the three member groups of the Council.
36. Complaints regarding the Council or its Members will be handled in accordance with the LA's complaints policy and procedures.

Annex A

Members Code of Conduct

Members must:

- Regularly attend the meetings of the Council and take part in the deliberations and work of the Council.
- Where attendance is difficult, endeavour to ensure a substitute member is nominated who can attend.
- Ensure apologies are submitted when attendance is not possible.
- Carry out their duties and responsibilities with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion.
- Participate in and review the work of the Council for the benefit of the whole community.
- Show respect and consideration for others and not use bullying behaviour or harass any person.
- State views and opinions honestly, whilst respecting and listening to each other's contributions.
- Respect the rights of other members to disagree with your point of view.
- Be nominated from a recognised professional body and / or faith and belief community and have the support of their nominating body behind them.
- Must not disclose confidential information or information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential nature, without the express consent of a person authorised to give such consent, or unless required is entitled by law to do so; or prevent any person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- Must not in your official capacity, or otherwise, use or attempt to use your position improperly to confer on or secure for yourself, or any other person, an advantage or create or avoid for yourself, or any other person, a disadvantage.

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH Port Talbot COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

01st February 2024

Report of the Head of Education Development

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title: Youth Service Update

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update on the Local Authority Youth Service.

Executive Summary:

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service provides Youth Work support to young people within Neath Port Talbot. This is carried out by 48 full time and over 60 part time staff using a range of provision.

The service is heavily dependent on external grants with over 75% of its funding coming in from a range of sources, this has led to a shift away from open access services to a more targeted youth work offer.

The Youth Service has continued to recover from the Covid 19 pandemic. During 22/23 the Youth Service supported 6,592 young

people aged 11-25 which was an increase of 1,310 young people from the 21/22 period.

All of the existing community based youth clubs have reopened and this year we have used the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to develop Youth Work activities in some areas where there was lack of provision. During 22/23 Youth Clubs engaged with 1,411 young people an increase of 494 on the previous year. These clubs provide young people with educational, social and recreational activities as well as giving young people access to youth work advice and support.

The more targeted youth work offer focuses on vulnerable young people and youth workers engage with these young people on a one to one basis and also using group work. Targeted youth work support is offered to Young Carers, LGBT+ young people, young people with speech, language and communication needs, caseload young people from Early Intervention Panel, young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), Young people who are struggling in schools, young people with emerging mental health issues such as loneliness and social isolation, young parents, care experienced young people, Electively Home Educated (EHE) young people and young people who are at risk of homelessness.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme has now fully reopened in Neath Port Talbot and this year we held our first Awards Presentation Evening since before the pandemic. This event was attended by approx. 650 guests with 280 young people receiving an award. Awards were handed out to young people. Young People achieved at all levels Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The youth service also offers young people relationship and sexuality education (RSE) and advice both within schools and in their communities. This is delivered through youth workers who are also trained in sexual health.

The Youth Council who provide opportunities for young people to have a say in matters and issues that impact on their lives have been very active during this year. The Youth Council has 42 members from a range of provisions and groups. The Youth Council also has a Youth Mayor, Deputy Youth Mayor, one member of the Welsh Youth Parliament and a member of the British Youth Parliament.

The Youth Service also coordinates the Food and Fun programme which is a free school-based education programme that provides food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children during the school summer holidays.

The Youth Service continues to develop and respond to new challenges. This year we have been developing community work in response to recovery from the pandemic and the results of the Lets Talk consultation. We have also been providing free community based youth clubs and warm spaces to young people to help with the cost of living crisis.

Background:

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service currently employs 48 full time staff and over 60 part time staff and we are currently recruiting volunteers to deliver a range of supportive and educational activities to young people aged 11-25. Please see the Youth Service Structure attached (Appendix 1).

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service sets out in its vision to encourage and enable young people to have fun, participate in all opportunities available to them and to gain the skills needed to become happy, confident and fulfilled adults and members of their communities. This is backed up by the service Mission Statement to deliver good quality learning, social and recreational opportunities and activities through highly motivated, well trained and enthusiastic youth workers in safe and friendly places accessible to all young people.

In recent years there has been a shift towards more targeted youth work across Wales and within Neath Port Talbot which has come from external funding sources. During 2021/22 grant funding equated to 75% of the Youth Service budget and this has increased again in the 23/24 financial year with the addition of the Shared Prosperity Grant.

Youth Service Provision

The Youth Service contact with young people dropped during the pandemic to 6% of 11-25 year olds (1,597 young people) for 2020/21. This increased during 2022/23 to 27% of 11-25 year olds (6,592 young people). This placed us as the Youth Service with 4th highest engagement numbers in Wales. The Youth Service continues to provide a mix of universal, targeted and specialist provision.

Youth Clubs

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service still delivers youth work to young people aged 11-18 via 12 community based youth clubs. These clubs are situated in Blaengwynfi, Bryn, Croeserw, Cymmer, Sandfields, Taibach, Bryncoch, Cimla, Crynant, Cwmllynfell, Glynneath and Seven Sisters. We have also recently opened up new external grant funded youth clubs in Neath, Cearwern and Trebanos. The Trebanos Youth Club is our first ever Welsh Language Youth Club. Opening times for local authority youth clubs can be seen in Appendix 2.

The new community based Youth Workers have developed a range of provisions including outreach and detached youth work in a range of areas and this team also provides activity days and community events in areas of need. This work is carried out in partnership with voluntary sector organisations and groups in particular the Boys and Girls Club of Wales.

Youth clubs plan, deliver and evaluate their work systematically, measure outcomes achieved with young people. Outcomes include accreditation programmes, Junior Leaderships Awards and

certification of achievements that provide recognition of young people's learning in relation to our curriculum framework. Young people are also offered an opportunity to engage in a number of trips and events throughout the year that not only celebrate their achievements but encourage new cultural learning.

Ongoing issues impacting on our community based youth clubs include staffing pressures due to recruitment issues, and our club staff have also told us that there is added pressure on staff who are now having to work with young people who present complex health issues although not exhaustive they include; self-harm, sexuality and relationships issues.

Targeted provision

Targeted provision is much more focused and can be aimed at specific groups of young people with particular needs such as young people who are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) or targeted due to certain characteristics such as young carers, LGBT or Speech and Language. This provision is funded through a variety of external sources including, Welsh Government Youth Support Grant, Children's Community Grant and the Shared Prosperity Fund. Each funding stream has its own requirements and is subject to change dependent on the direction of the funding provider.

Families First

Focuses on One to One Caseloads, Vulnerable Groups and Young Carers.

Youth workers focus on early intervention and prevention activities for young people. Caseloads are allocated via the Early Intervention and Prevention Panel. Vulnerable groups supported at present are the LGBT group, Speech, Language & Communication group and finally the Young Carers Club. Through Families First youth work interventions:

At the end of quarter 3 the families first youth worker have achieved the following: 89 (87% of those asked) Young people demonstrate an improvement in emotional/mental wellbeing, 83 (81%) Young people

report an improvement in own resilience, 88 (86%) young people have stated that their family relationships have improved and 66 (80%) families have reported an improvement in family resilience

Welsh Government Youth Support Grant

Focus on 3 main areas:

NEET young people aged 16-18;

Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing;

Youth Work support for at risk of Homelessness young people.

NEET Support

The NEET aspect of this grant has been provided to enable the authority to implement the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework along with employing The Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator post who oversees the development of systems and procedures to ensure young people are able to make an effective transition to post 16 employment, education and training. Working with schools, Careers Wales and post 16 education and training providers the co-ordinator focuses on early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET and re-engaging those that are NEET into employment, education and training.

The Keeping in Touch (KIT) team have helped identify tier one young people whose status is unknown to Careers Wales and move them into appropriate tiers. At the end of quarter 3 the KIT workers successfully moved 108 young people into a more appropriate Tier which equates to 79% - target is 70%

The team also helped NEET young people achieve successful outcomes. 30 young people received support this year with 25 young people achieving a successful outcome which equates to 83% - target is 60%

The 25 young people having a positive outcome includes outcomes such as entering employment, gaining a qualification or engaging with other services from a referral.

Some of these outcomes included 12 young people entered further learning, 2 young people entered paid employment and 6 entered work based learning.

A new remit for the KIT team this year was to provide support to Year 11 Electively Home Educated (EHE) young people to make a successful transition to a post 16 destination. The team supported 25 EHE young people into a positive destination.

Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing

The Welsh Government funded Youth Support Grant is aimed at the early identification and support of young people with emerging mental health, emotional or wellbeing issues and young people who are lonely and socially isolated.

The young parents group is thriving with 42 young parents being engaged with an average of 26 young parents attending on a regular basis. Sessions are delivered on a Tuesday afternoon and Friday morning. The young parent's group work with Flying Start and the NHS Perinatal Community Nurse who has a mental health remit. The group is very well received by its members who have built up very good support networks and have bonded and are now supporting each other beyond the group sessions. The parents now have built such a good relationship with the Youth Workers that they are more comfortable in asking for support, help and advice. This includes seeking support due to the cost of living crisis such as food bank items.

This team also support the following groups:

- Young Parents
- Young Carers
- LGBT young people
- Care experienced young people

Youth Work support for at risk of Homelessness young people

Welsh Government provide funding to support young people aged 14-18 who are at risk of homelessness through targeted youth work. This funding is used to support young people using a 2 strand approach:

- Strand 1 is awareness raising workshops for schools & youth groups developed in partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors and young people. This year 517 young people have taken part in the awareness raising sessions.
- Strand 2 is targeted bespoke support for young people identified as being at risk of homelessness. So far this year the Youth Workers have supported 24 young people who were at risk of homelessness.

Horizons post 16 support (SPF)

The Horizons Project is a Shared Prosperity Funded Programme that provides support for young people who need additional help to sustain their engagement on a reduced Jobs Growth Wales Plus programme of learning and provide NEET young people with opportunities to engage on an innovative six week role on roll off provision, with a focus on improving mental health, wellbeing and providing coping strategies, to move them closer to being able to access EET.

To date the Horizons Programme has engaged with 82 young people with 64 gaining a qualification, 66 having improved their life skills, 62 demonstrating a positive change of circumstance, skills, motivation or confidence, 62 stating that they now feel more confident about entering in EET and 63 stating that they now feel more positive about themselves.

The Horizons Programme also provides outreach enrichment activities for NEET young people who are socially isolated and who do not leave their homes. This includes supporting young people in their homes with the aim of helping develop the confidence and social skills to at some point leave the house and engage in activities to help them progress further. To date the team have engaged with 15 young people and achieved the following outcomes:

10 young people stated that they now have less barriers into employment and into skills provisions;

6 young people have engaged with a specialist service as a result of intervention;

12 young people have demonstrated a positive change of circumstance, skills, motivation or Confidence

11 young people now feel more confident about entering in EET

12 feel more positive about themselves and their wellbeing.

Youth Service Legacy Team

The Children's Community Grant (CCG) provides School based youth work support for young people aged 15-16 in year 11 of all secondary schools within Neath Port Talbot. The Legacy Youth Workers support young people identified by their schools, using the Vulnerability Assessment Profile and discussions both within and outside of the school environment. The Legacy team is targeted with supporting those young people to make a positive transition at the end of year 11 and to best support them into a positive Education, Employment or Training destination.

Year 11 destination statistics collated by Careers Wales indicate that the number young people transitioning from school into Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) has reduced steadily from 7.1% in 2009 to 2.2% in 2022. The latest information from Careers Wales shows Neath Port Talbot's figure of 2.2% was achieved last year 2022 (**See Appendix 3**). Legacy staff are still feeling the impact of the pandemic and poor attendance levels on school leavers and the increase in support they need to transition.

This still leaves us slightly above the Welsh average of 2.1% which is the closest we have ever been to this.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

The Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award Scheme has now successfully relaunched in Neath Port Talbot in all secondary schools with almost all having young people gaining the award. This year 358 young people have signed up for the award with 347 gaining the award at the following levels:

237 young people gained the award at Bronze Level,
109 young people at Silver Level and
1 young person at Gold Level.

The DofE presentation evening was very well received this year with over 650 guests in attendance and 280 young people being presented the award. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme Report was released in June 23 and for the 22-23 reporting period NPT was ranked 2nd best with the number of young people who achieved the award (306yp) and ranked Best in Wales for its completion rate of 55%.

Relationship and Sex Education [RSE]

The Youth Service make a significant contribution to the delivery of RSE within the local authority and support the lessons in the locally devised RSE Key Stage 3 pack. The pack enables Teachers, Youth and Nurse Practitioners to deliver RSE in secondary educational schools across NPT. The Youth Service manages the NPT RSE group which brings together all relevant partners involved in RSE reporting to the VAWDASV Leadership Group.

Relationships Advise Drop in Service [RADS]

The Youth Service also provide a free relationship and sexual health service to a number of our youth clubs, schools and colleges at convenient times for young people. This work is delivered by youth workers trained in the field of sexual health. RADS staff deal with a range of issues including; safe relationships, contraception,

pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted infections (STI's), LGBT and many other health issues. Additionally, they provide barrier contraception, pregnancy testing, advice and support to access secondary sexual health and other health service to address; substance misuse, eating disorders, smoking cessation, sexual exploiting, abusive relationships, self-esteem and mental health issues. The Youth Service provides a daily on-call emergency service for RADS.

Youth Council

The Youth Council is supported by the Youth Service who fund a dedicated worker, venue and travel costs to projects and events which include reward activities. The local authority cabinet members are also considered partners along with the young people resident in NPT.

There is a constant cycle of recruitment for the Youth Council due to young people moving on to college and university. The Youth Council is the representative voice of young people aged 11-25 in Neath Port Talbot and has been recognised as the first point of contact for youth engagement in decision making by the Local Service Board and County Councillors.

The members come from schools and a range of targeted groups (**See Appendix 4**). The Youth Council have representatives on the British Youth Council, a member of the Welsh Youth Parliament, Children's Commissioner Advisory Panel, and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Youth Health Board and also on the advisory group for ongoing health related projects. This work involves members attending meetings to feed in to national participation events and campaigns/promote youth council work locally to raise the profile of NPT Youth Service and local authority.

The Youth Council have recently developed and delivered a survey to capture what the most important issues are for young people. The Survey is called Change Starts With You and was delivered to all

schools, the local authority youth clubs, targeted groups and young people attending post 16 provisions. In total the Youth Council received 1,173 ballot papers and the top 3 results were 1st Racism (18.7%), 2nd Sexual Health (11.8%) and 3rd Bullying (11.3%). These issues will be the new focus for the youth council. It is worth noting that the cost of living was a very close 4th with 11.0% of the votes. See **Appendix 5** for full results

Youth Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Youth Service continues to support the elected Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor. Both act as the voice for all young people across the local authority and will shadow the Mayor of Neath Port Talbot. Elections for the new Deputy Youth Mayor will take place in February. The role of the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor has grown since its start and now has a full calendar of events and they are often called upon to showcase the voice of young people from NPT.

Food & Fun

Food and Fun is run each year by the Youth Service and gives children the chance to take part in various fun and physical activities, learn about food and nutrition, as well receiving a healthy breakfast and lunch. 15 Schools took part in the Food & Fun programme during the summer with 28 cohorts (each cohort is up to 40 young people). The Food and Fun scheme was able to provide a family meal each week within the school. The income received to deliver the food and fun totalled £313,127.

School staff are trained by the NHS Dietetics' Service to a level 2 standard in food and nutrition. To help deliver the activities that run throughout the day, the Schools and Youth Service teamed up with the WRU, Swansea University, NPT Pass, University of Wales Trinity St. David, and the Council's Play Team. Activities such as five-a-side football, arts and crafts, interactive lessons about nutrition, table tennis, archery were delivered as well as arranging family day trips.

This year the Food and Fun scheme funded food parcels to all young people that took part. The Youth Service and Youth Council packed over 16,500 items into bags for the primary schools. These parcels were delivered and very well received.

Gold Quality Mark

This year Neath Port Talbot Youth Service was successful in applying for the Gold Quality Mark in Youth Work. This is in recognition of the work that the service delivers to young people and to gain the Gold Award youth service must have gained the Bronze and Silvers Awards.

The Gold Award focuses on the strength of partnership working, the use of management information, the creative use of resources in meeting the needs of young people and how well the youth service recognises the achievements of young people, the impact of youth work and how this is celebrated.

Financial Impacts:

There are no implications linked to the report but Members should note that the Youth Service is now 76% externally funded through external grants all of which are currently either annual funding streams or are due to expire 31st March 2025 with SPF delivery stopping in December 2024.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications.

Workforce Impacts:

No implications.

Legal Impacts:

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

Funding streams associated with Neath Port Talbot Youth Services work is currently funded through external grants which currently expire on the 31st March 2025 and SPF delivery stopping in December 2024. There is ongoing work seeking extensions on the Communities First Legacy and a Shared Prosperity Fund bid to help sustain community youth work and post 16 youth work.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

This report is for monitoring only.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

This report is for monitoring only.

Implementation of Decision:

This report is for monitoring only.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Youth Service Structure

Appendix 2 – Youth Clubs Info

Appendix 3 – Destination figures

Appendix 4 – Youth Council Membership

Appendix 5 – Change Starts With You Results

List of Background Papers:

N/A

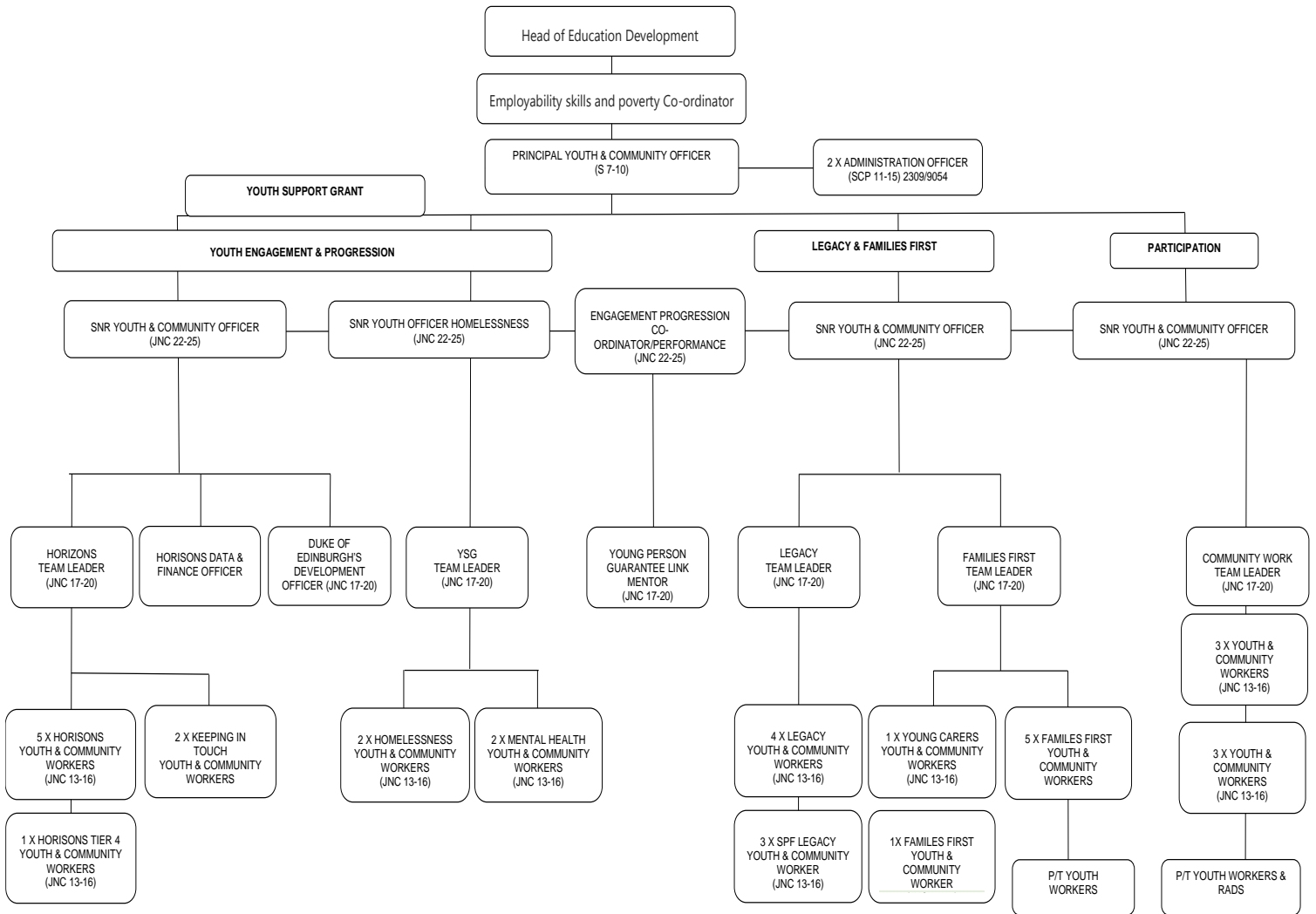
Officer Contact:

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Angeline Spooner-Cleverly, Employability, Skills and Poverty Co-ordinator, Telephone 01639 686044 e-mail a.spooner@npt.gov.uk

Jason Haeney, Principal Youth and Community Officer, e-mail j.haeney@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1 Youth Service Structure



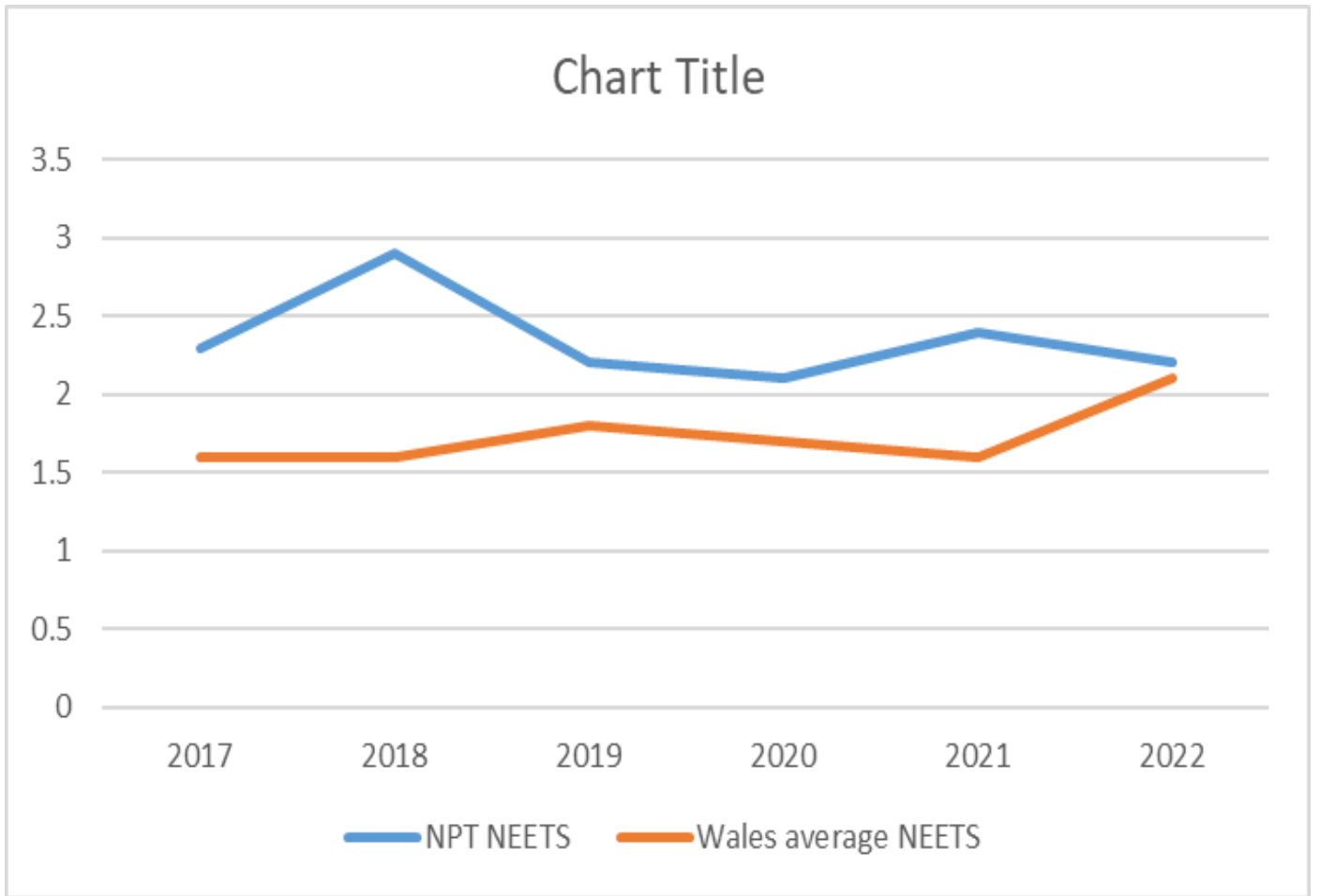
Appendix 2 Youth Clubs Information

Youth Clubs In Your Area

Youth Club	Location	Meeting Times
Cwmlynnell Youth Club	The Welfare Hall	Weds 6:30pm-8:30pm
Bryn Youth Club	The Community Centre	Fri 5:00pm - 8:00pm
Blaengwynfi Youth Club	The Library and Public Hall	Wed 5:45pm-7:45pm
Glynneath Youth Club	The Training Centre	Thurs 6:30pm-8:30pm
Trebanos Welsh Language Youth Club	The Community Hall	Thurs 6:30pm-8:30pm
Seven Sisters Youth Club	The Community Centre	Thurs 6:00pm-8:00pm
Brynoch Youth Club	The Community Centre	Thurs 7:00pm-9:00pm
Crynant Youth Club	The Community Centre	Tues 6:00pm-8:00pm Fri 6:00pm-8:00pm
Croesnew Youth Club	The Community Enterprise Centre	Mon 6:00pm-8:00pm
Maerdy Welsh Language Youth Club	Canolfâ Maerdy-Tairwaith	Tuesday 6:00pm-8:00pm
Caewern Youth Club	The Community Centre	Tues 6:30pm-8:30pm
Neath Drop In	The Tutor Centre	Weds 6:30pm-8:30pm
Cymmer Youth Club	Alan Valley Swimming Pool	Thurs 6:30pm-8:30pm
Sandfields Youth Club	Ygol Bae Baglan	Tue 7:00pm-9:00pm Thurs 7:00pm-9:00pm
Talbach Youth Club	The Community Education Centre	Tues 7:00pm-9:00pm Thurs 7:00pm-9:00pm
Cimla Youth Club	The Community Centre	Mon 6:00pm-8:00pm
Postcarder Hub	Ty'r Gwelyd Centre	Weds 4:00pm-6:00pm

For more information contact the Youth Service on 01639 763030

Appendix 3 NEET Destination Chart



Appendix 4 Youth Council Membership

Youth Council Members 2023		
Schools		
Bro Dur – 4 reps	Dwr Y Felin – 4 reps	YBB – 4 reps
M P	E H	K P
M G	R D	L M N
Vac	Vac	L G
Vac	Vac	Vac
Cwm Tawe – 4 reps	Cwm Brombil – 4 reps	Cefn Saeson – 4 reps
A P	J P	C A
P J	E W	G S
F M	Vac	J D
L T	Vac	M J
St Josephs – 4 reps	Llangatwg – 4 reps	Ystalyfera – 4 reps
A J	E H	A S
A L	E G	F D
G R	E D	Vac
S O	Vac	Vac
Groups		
Neath College – 4 reps	Young Carers – 2 reps	LGBTQ+ - 4 reps
M K	A V	W
Vac	E J	D F
Vac		C I
Vac		GSA
Speak and Language – 2 reps	Retained Members – 8 reps	6 Form – 4 reps
G H	B T	
M J	B C	
	O L	
Vulnerable Learners – 2 reps	I W	
J K	E S	
O J		

Appendix 5 Change Starts with You Results

Topic	Rank	Percentage
Racism	1	18.7%
Sex Health	2	11.8%
Bullying	3	11.3%
Cost of Living	4	11.0%
Child Poverty	5	9.6%
Mental Health	6	8.9%
Youth Homelessness	7	7.3%
Environment	8	6.6%
Waiting Times	9	6.1%
Substance Misuse	10	4.6%
Transport	11	3.6%

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

1st February 2024

Report of the Head of Support Services and Transformation

Rhiannon Crowhurst

Matter for: Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Subject: Information update following the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) as an additional home to school travel assistance offer

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update for Members following approval to introduce Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017.

Executive Summary

2. This report provides information to Members on the uptake of Personal Travel Budgets since their introduction at the start of the new academic year 2023/2024. Additionally, this report shows how Personal Travel Budgets are contributing to reducing pressures on the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Budget.

Background

3. Personal Travel Budgets have been introduced as an additional means of the Council meeting its duty to provide travel assistance to those who have an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017.
4. Personal Travel Budgets can be used for:
 - Purchasing a travel pass for public transport (so the child may be accompanied)
 - Paying a responsible person deemed to be appropriate by the parent/carer to help the child use public transport
 - Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to walk or cycle to school with the child
 - Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to drive the child to school
 - Paying for fuel
 - Paying for travel by taxi
 - Paying a childminder (e.g. to look after siblings)
 - To organise travel to separate home addresses where there is split custody

Personal Travel Budgets offer more choice for parents/carers to make arrangements according to their personal circumstances, and which meet the needs of their child. The list above provides examples of what the budget can be used for, however, usage is not limited to these as other examples include a respite carer being paid for taking additional responsibility for transporting a pupil to school following the end of their night-time respite care shift. Authorisation given for the budget to be put towards car repairs so that the parent continued to have a working vehicle available to them to transport their child to and from school.

Whilst offering flexibility for the parent/carer Personal Travel Budgets are also a cost-effective solution for the Council. However, to ensure effective use of public resources a Personal Travel Budget will not be offered if it is found to be more expensive than alternative travel assistance options.

Level of take-up of new Personal Travel Budgets

5. Between September 2023 and the 19th January 2024, 51 Personal Travel Budgets have been taken-up.
6. Personal Travel Budgets are offered where there is no alternative travel assistance available and to minimise the use of a single-occupancy contracted vehicle.
7. The current average cost of a single-occupancy contracted vehicle is £147 per day (£27,930 per annum) meaning the cost of 51 single-occupancy

vehicles equate to around £7,497 per day (£1.4 million per annum). This compares to the cost of 51 Personal Travel Budgets at £1,757 per day (£333,830 per annum).

8. The difference in cost between 51 Personal Travel Budgets and 51 single-occupancy contracted vehicles equates to £5,740 per day (£1m per annum).

Transfer of existing single-occupancy contracted vehicles to Personal Travel Budgets

9. As at the 19th January 2024 there are 37 pupils travelling in single-occupancy contracted vehicles, of these an initial 17 pupils have been identified as having the potential to be offered a Personal Travel Budget as an alternative offer to a single-occupancy contracted vehicle. The cost of the 17 single-occupancy vehicles amounts to an average £2,499 per day (£474,810 per annum). When compared with the cost of Personal Travel Budgets for these 17 pupils at £686 per day (£130,340 per annum), this equates to a potential saving of £344,470 per annum if the 17 pupils transferred over to Personal Travel Budgets.

Transfer of pre-existing mileage allowance claims over to Personal Travel Budgets

10. The Council already provided mileage reimbursement, however, Personal Travel Budgets offer further choice because of the available more flexible arrangements the parent/carer may wish to make.
11. Prior to Personal Travel Budgets being introduced in September 2023 some parents/carers were already receiving a mileage reimbursement. For the purposes of fairness these parents/carers are being transferred over to Personal Travel Budgets. As a result of the changeover 19 parents/carers are entitled to be offered a Personal Travel Budget.
12. The previous mileage allowance rates were £0.45p compared to the new Personal Travel Budget rates of £0.65p per mile and £10.00 per hour journey times. This means there will be an additional sum of £387 per day (£73,530 per annum) for the 2023/2024 budget.

Personal Travel Budgets are influencing operator prices

13. External environmental factors have influenced an increase in the cost of procuring home to school transport contract vehicles from operators, however, the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets has reduced the need to procure expensive single-occupancy contracted vehicles. With a smaller number of contracts available this may impact competition in the market place and as a consequence mean more favourably priced operator bids.

Financial Impact

14. Financial Information comparator for 2022/2023 - Home to School Travel costs

	2022/2023
Primary Education - In County	£1,042,274
Primary Education - Out of County	£87,939
Secondary Education - In County	£1,576,693
Secondary Education - Out of County	£274,164
Special Educational Needs - In County	£2,774,992
SEN – Maes Y Coed	£804,489
Middle Schools	£923,199
Special Educational Needs - Out of County	£169,689
Special Educational Needs Post 16 - In County	£462,825
Special Educational Needs Post 16 - Out of County	£18,336
Post 16 – In County	£1,012
Transport Delivery	£65,094
TOTAL COST	£8,200,705

**2023/2024 budget figures will be available following closure of the financial year in March 2024.*

Integrated Impact Assessment

15. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) as this report is for information purposes only. However an IIA was undertaken for the initial report introducing the PTB and this is attached as Appendix A .

Valleys Communities Impacts

16. The impact on Neath Port Talbot's valley communities is the same as all other areas of the County Borough. The Council's duty to offer travel assistance to all those with an entitlement is the same for all pupils across the whole of the county borough.

Workforce Impacts

17. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

18. Section 3 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 imposes a duty on local authorities to provide travel arrangements for learners of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable school and meet the relevant criteria. Travel arrangements made in accordance with section 3 may include the payment of the whole, but not part, of a child's transport expenses (section 3(4)). Section 1(2) of the Measure defines travel arrangements as including "the payment of the whole or any part of any person's reasonable travel expenses, and the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of transport"
19. The Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017 (the Policy) sets out how the Council will discharge its duty and the Council must comply with its Policy. The Policy sets out that travel provision may be provided by way of a parental allowance or the provision of the whole of reasonable travel expenses. The intended use of Personal Travel Budgets concerns the provision of transport and not the issue of eligibility and is in line with the Policy. Personal Travel Budgets are designed to reimburse parents/carers for the costs incurred in providing the home to school transport.
20. Personal Travel Budgets provide an additional means of fulfilling the Council's legal duty to provide travel arrangements for learners of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable school and meet the relevant criteria.

Risk Management

21. The risks to be taken into consideration are:
 - The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel assistance to those pupils who are eligible to receive it
 - The Home to School Travel Assistance Budget is increasingly coming under pressure from increased costs

Consultation

22. There is no requirement for consultation.

Recommendation

23. That Members note the updated information provided in this report.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

24. No decision report is for information purposes only.

Implementation of Decision

25. This report is for information purposes only.

Appendix

A. Education Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board - 25th May 2023

List of Background Papers

NPTCBC Home to School Travel Policy 2017

The Education Act 1996

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014

The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

25th May 2023

Report of the Head of Support Services and Transformation

Rhiannon Crowhurst

Matter for: Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Subject: Introduction of a Personal Travel Budget to alleviate pressures on the Home to School Travel Assistance Budget and to offer more choice to parents/carers

Purpose of the Report

1. To outline the ongoing pressures on the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Budget (which are becoming increasingly difficult to manage within the existing budget), and the actions being taken to address this.
2. To obtain Member approval to introduce a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) as an additional means of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017, and that the Personal Travel Budget be available for use in the new academic year 2023/2024.

Executive Summary

3. This report sets out the ongoing pressures on the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Budget.

4. This report introduces the concept of a Personal Travel Budget as an additional means of the Council meeting its duty to provide travel assistance to those who have an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017. The Personal Travel Budget will continue to include the existing offer of a mileage allowance but will extend to also include:
 - Purchasing a travel pass for public transport (so the child may be accompanied)
 - Paying a responsible person deemed to be appropriate by the parent/carer to help the child use public transport
 - Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to walk or cycle to school with the child
 - Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to drive the child to school
 - Paying for fuel
 - Paying for travel by taxi
 - Paying a childminder (e.g. to look after siblings)
 - To organise travel to separate home addresses where there is split custody

By introducing a Personal Travel Budget to include these additional factors there is more choice for parents/carers to make arrangements according to their personal circumstances, and which meet the needs of their child. Following introduction, the initiative will be reviewed to monitor its relevance and suitability for service users, including the level of take-up.

Full details of the PTB can be found under Appendix A: Personal Travel Budget Information Sheet and Appendix B: Personal Travel Budget Contract

Background

5. The Council has a duty to provide free home to school travel assistance for all eligible children, which includes those living over the statutory walking distance, those that live on a route that has been classified as unsuitable, and those who are unable to walk any distance to school, even when accompanied because of an additional learning need or disability that affects the ability to walk a suitable route.
6. The Council's current Home to School Travel Policy 2017 reflects the duties and requirements that fall to the Council by virtue of the Education Act 1996; The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008; The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014; The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009; The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011: and the All Wales Travel Behaviour Code.
7. The Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Service is jointly managed by the Education and Environment Directorates. The Education Directorate

holds the budget and is responsible for the administrative elements including creating and applying the Council’s Home to School Travel Policy in line with Welsh Government legislative requirements, managing the Appeals Procedure and the Independent Travel Training Programme. The Environment Directorate is responsible for the operational elements including procuring transport operators, tendering contracts and managing routes.

- 8. As at April 2023, the Home to School Travel Assistance Service transports 4346 pupils per day. This includes 3710 mainstream pupils across 124 routes to mainstream school, and 636 pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) across 192 routes to specialist educational provision.

Factors impacting the Home to School Travel Assistance Service

- 9. The service has been impacted as a consequence of external environmental factors including the Covid 19 pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine, this has resulted in a number of complicating issues for the service including:

- (i) Shortage of transport operators bidding on home to school travel contracts –

Since the Covid 19 pandemic a number of transport operators have ceased trading, and those that are still operating have staff shortages in terms of available drivers and passenger assistants. The cause has been reported as employees moving to other professions e.g. couriers and haulage. During the most recent re-tendering exercise it was found that there was a lack of available transport operators, and as a result some routes were for a short period uncovered at the start of the new 2022/2023 academic year.

Number of transport operators Pre-Covid	60
Number of transport operators as at April 2023	58
Number of licenced taxi drivers in NPT Pre-Covid	340
Number of licenced taxi drivers in NPT as at April 2023	284

- (ii) Fuel cost increase –

The war in Ukraine has increased the price of fuel and consequently transport operators have increased their contract bids to cover the price rise. Additionally, some are no longer viewing home to school travel contracts as profitable so are choosing not to bid for contracts.

(iii) Increase in contract costs –

The retendering exercise in 2022 resulted in increased contract costs:

	Pre-Tender contract price (2022)	Post-Tender contract price (2023)	% increase*
ALN Transport	£1,854,636	£2,233,659	20% (£379,023)
Mainstream Transport	£1,860,290	£2,403,880	29% (£543,590)
Totals	£3,714,926	£4,637,539	£922,613

*based on an academic year which is 190 school days and on retendered routes only

Other additional costs to the 2022/2023 budget include:

Fuel supplement	£ 189,013
Annual indexation on existing contracts	£ 257,581
Refugee transportation from accommodation centres	£95,000
Welsh immersion centre opening	£5,000

(iv) Increased cross-border competition –

It is not only NPTCBC who are experiencing the adverse impact on Home to School Travel Assistance Services, as transport operator resources have decreased across the whole of Wales. This has created a climate of competition between bordering authorities as each one seeks to ensure sufficient numbers of transport operators to cover all routes. The effect is transport operators significantly increasing their contract prices because of the current conditions of supply and demand.

(v) Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transport –

Many children with ALN require specialist educational provision outside their catchment or nearest school. It is not always possible for all children to be accommodated in specialist provision within their own community, therefore, children often need to be transported some distance from their home address. Consequently, because of the distance travelled the transport operator bids are expensive, and the more cost effective option of multiple pupils travelling in a shared vehicle is not always possible.

(vi) Late applications –

- Applications for travel assistance must be submitted by 30th June each year, however, for the academic year 2022/2023 there were 200 late applications (submitted between July and the beginning of September) for mainstream transport, and 56 applications submitted during the same late period for ALN transport. Additionally, there were a number of application across both mainstream and ALN which were received after the first day of the new academic year. Late applications mean that some previously procured transport routes need to be re-tendered and consequently the contract price escalates.

Financial Impact

10. Financial Information 2022/2023 - Home to School Travel costs

2022-23 Financial Year	Actual Expenditure
Primary Education - In County	£1,042,274
Primary Education - Out of County	£87,939
Secondary Education - In County	£1,576,693
Secondary Education - Out of County	£274,164
Special Educational Needs - In County	£2,774,992
SEN – Maes Y Coed	£804,489
Middle Schools	£923,199
Special Educational Needs - Out of County	£169,689
Special Educational Needs Post 16 - In County	£462,825
Special Educational Needs Post 16 - Out of County	£18,336
Post 16 – In County	£1,012
Transport Delivery	£65,094
TOTAL COST	£8,200,705

11. Comparing costs over a 3 year period shows:

	Budget	Actual Spend	(Under)/Overspend	%
*2020/2021	£6,131,337	£5,697,529	(£433,808)	-8
2021/2022	£6,815,742	£6,780,050	(£35,692)	-0.5
2022/2023	£7,454,930	£8,200,705	£745,775	10

**comparison is not like for like as these costs relate to transport during the pandemic for 2020/2021 includes a 75% retainer to operators which is 25% less than usual annual budget*

12. Over the years the Home to School Travel Assistance Service across Education and Environment Directorate teams have successfully managed to minimise any overspend by means of transport route management and ensuring effective use of available resources. However, the opportunity to protect the budget from continuing pressures is becoming increasingly difficult, for the reasons set out above.
13. Ways of mitigating the impact on the Home to School Travel Assistance Service and the budget have been considered:
 - (i) an additional temporary post has been added to the Education Transport Team, this new post is Teaching Assistant Level 4 – Behaviour Support Travel Training. The post will intervene to support pupils who are required to be removed from home to school travel vehicles because of the pupil exhibiting challenging behaviour. Previously there has been an expectation that the only solution to manage the situation is for the pupil to travel in their own home to school vehicle. The cost of a single-occupancy vehicle is extremely high with a current average cost of £23,290 per annum. The new Behaviour Support Travel Trainer will work with the pupil, their family, school and other professionals to safeguard the pupil being able to continue to share transport vehicles with other pupils and thereby managing to prevent adding more financial pressure on the budget, particularly if new contracts are at inflated prices arising from supply and demand influences.
 - (ii) Promoting the Independent Travel Training Programme to provide the opportunity for pupils to gain an important life skill by becoming independent travellers and either walking a route to school/college or using a bus pass to access public transport as a means to get from home to school/college. If a pupil becomes a competent independent traveller they no longer require support from the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Service. It is hoped that additional promotion of the Independent Travel Training Programme will assist in a move towards greater independence for some secondary aged children with eligibility for free home to school travel assistance through increased take up of the programme.
 - (iii) Introducing a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) will enable parents/carers to have more choice and flexibility around travel arrangements that meet both their personal circumstances and the needs of their child. The Council already provides mileage reimbursement, however, the PTB takes this offer further as the PTB will be available for additional

arrangements the parent/carer may wish to make. Whilst offering flexibility for the parent/carer the PTB also is a cost-effective solution for the Council. Calculations for the level of cost-effectiveness will be dependent on the level of take-up for the PTB, however, the most impact will be seen in cases of a parent/carer taking up a PTB rather than the Council needing to procure a single occupancy vehicle. PTB's also have the opportunity to benefit the freeing up of seats on shared vehicles, in place of the Council being required to procure an additional vehicle on an existing route. To ensure effective use of public resources a PTB will not be offered if it is found to be more expensive than alternative travel assistance options.

The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets is not in the first instance intended to be a mechanism for reducing the cost of Home to School Transport. The initiative is primarily a means of ensuring the Council meets its statutory duty to provide travel assistance to those who have an entitlement. The focus is to provide pupils and their families with an alternative travel assistance offer which is capable of reducing barriers which inhibit pupils travelling to their place of education or training. However, there is the potential to make savings as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets provides for the opportunity to alleviate pressures in the marketplace, and this should inevitably lead to savings being made if the complications associated with the difficulties in procuring sufficient and cost effective transport contracts can be eased.

- (iv) Future options may include additional in-house transport fleet. Currently there are a few in-house vehicles which have been procured under Social Services that the Home to School Travel Assistance Service is able to make use of where there is opportunity to do so, however, there remains the difficulty of recruiting drivers and passenger assistants because of the shortages of this type of personnel across Wales.

Equality Impact Assessment

14. 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 relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.”

15. An Integrated Impact Assessment is provided at Appendix C

Valleys Communities Impacts

16. The impact on Neath Port Talbot’s valley communities will be the same as all other areas of the County Borough as the external environmental impacts are negatively impacting travel routes across the whole of the county borough.

Workforce Impacts

17. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

18. Section 3 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 imposes a duty on local authorities to provide transport arrangements for learners of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable school and meet the relevant criteria. Transport arrangements made in accordance with section 3 may include the payment of the whole, but not part, of a child’s transport expenses (section 3(4)). Under section 4, a local authority may make travel arrangements for children of compulsory school age who do not fall within the section 3 criteria. Section 1(2) of the Measure defines travel arrangements as including “the payment of the whole or any part of any person’s reasonable travel expenses, and the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of transport”
19. The Council’s Home to School Travel Policy 2017 (the Policy) sets out how the Council will discharge its duty and the Council must comply with its Policy. The Policy sets out that travel provision may be provided by way of a parental allowance or the provision of the whole of reasonable travel expenses. The intended use of personal travel budgets, as set out in this report, concerns the provision of transport and not the issue of eligibility and is in line with the Policy. The personal travel budgets are designed to reimburse parents/carers for the costs incurred in providing the home to school transport
20. The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules apply to the procurement of home to school transport contracts by the Council. The Council’s Home to School Travel Assistance Service is finding it increasingly difficult to procure sufficient cost effective home to school transport contracts, meaning there will be legal risk if the Council is not able

to fulfil its legal duty to provide free home to school travel assistance for those pupils who are eligible. The personal travel budgets will provide an alternative means of fulfilling the Council's legal duty for transport provision

Risk Management

21. The risks to be taken into consideration are:

- The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel assistance to those pupils who are eligible to receive it
- The Home to School Travel Assistance Budget is increasingly coming under pressure and there is a current overspend as at April 2023 in the sum of £745,775
- To manage both the financial pressures and increased demands on the service, alternative ways to discharge the Council's statutory duty must be considered, including the introduction of a Personal Travel Budget
- Other Welsh Local Authorities, including Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and Rhondda Cynon Taf have been making use of Personal Travel Budgets as part of their home to school travel assistance options for the past couple of years.

Consultation

22. There is no requirement for consultation.

Recommendation

23. That Members note the scale of the budget pressures together with the remedial actions taken through the combined efforts of the Education Transport Service and Environment Passenger Transport Section in order to contain overall budget costs.
24. Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that Members approve the introduction of a Personal Travel Budget as an additional means of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017, and that it be made available for use in the new academic year 2023/2024.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

25. The Education Transport Service together with Environment's Passenger Transport Section will continue to attempt to manage the budget pressures,

however, in order to do so alternative options must be made available, including a Personal Travel Budget.

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

Appendix A - Personal Travel Budget Information Sheet

Appendix B - Personal Travel Budget Contract

Appendix C - Integrated Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers

NPTCBC Home to School Travel Policy 2017

The Education Act 1996

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014

The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009

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Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

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

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

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 1	Debora Holder-Phillips	Education Transport Manager	April 2023

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Introduction of Personal Travel Budgets (PTB) as an additional form of home to school travel assistance offered by the Council
1a	Service Area: Home to School Travel Assistance Service – Education Transport
1b	Directorate: Education Leisure Lifelong Learning
1c	Summary of the initiative: The Home to School Travel Assistance Service (Education Transport) is seeking to introduce Personal Travel Budgets (PTB) as an additional form of travel assistance under the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy 2017. The Personal Travel Budget will offer families of those pupils who are entitled to home to school travel assistance more choice and flexibility in making their own arrangements for getting their child to school. The Personal Travel Budget extends the current offer of a mileage allowance to additional ways of spending a payment awarded under a Personal Travel Budget. Introducing Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance will also assist the Council to manage escalating costs against the Home to School Transport Budget and ensure that the Council meets its legal duty to provide travel assistance to all those who are found to have an entitlement
1d	Is this a ‘strategic decision’? Yes
1e	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Children, young people and their families who have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance provided by the Council

1f	When and how were people consulted? N/A
1g	What were the outcomes of the consultation? N/A

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

Financial data for 2022/2023 and home to school travel statistical information for 2022/2023
 NPTCBC Home to School Travel Policy 2017
 The Education Act 1996
 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008
 The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014
 The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009

Page 54

3. Equalities

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

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age			√	The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance will impact NPT pupils of all ages. Those with entitlement to home to school travel assistance may be offered a Personal Travel Budget if it was considered suitable to do so, and it was established to be the most cost effective solution for the Council when meeting its duty to provide travel assistance for a pupil who is deemed entitled. It is considered that the impact will be neutral as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets is an extension of the options of travel assistance available to the Council. The initiative is not age specific and Personal

			Travel Budgets could be offered to pupils of all ages who have an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.
Disability	√		<p>The Council's arrangements for home to school travel assistance includes pupils with additional learning needs and/or disability. The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would impact NPT pupils with additional learning need and/or disability as those with entitlement to home to school travel assistance may be offered a Personal Travel Budget if it was considered suitable to do so, and it was established to be the most cost effective solution for the Council meeting its duty to provide travel assistance for a pupil who was deemed entitled.</p> <p>The offer of a Personal Travel Budget allows families of pupils with an entitlement to home to school travel assistance, including those with an additional learning need and/or disability more choice and flexibility around making their own arrangements for getting their child to school which also meets the needs of the individual child and the family's circumstances.</p> <p>It is likely that the impact will be positive as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an extension of the options of travel assistance available to the Council, allows families of children with additional learning needs and/or disability to make their own travel arrangements which fit the family circumstances as well as the child's needs.</p>
Gender reassignment		√	<p>The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would impact all NPT pupils who have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance, including gender reassignment pupils.</p> <p>It is considered that the impact will be neutral as the Personal Travel Budget would be available to all pupils who have an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy including gender reassignment pupils.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would be available to all pupils who are deemed to have an entitlement, however, it is likely pupils accessing home to school travel assistance will be below the legal marriage age.
Pregnancy and maternity		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on pupils in this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel

			assistance would be available to all pupils including those in this group if it was deemed appropriate for such an offer to be made and that the travel arrangements made as a result of the Personal Travel Budget were safe and suitable for the pupil.
Race		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on pupils in this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would be available to all pupils including those in this group if it was deemed there was an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.
Religion or belief		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on pupils in this protected group as the Council's arrangements for home to school travel assistance includes travel assistance for those pupils attending Faith schools as well as pupils from all religions and beliefs attending non-Faith schools. The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would be available to all pupils including those in this group if it was deemed there was an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.
Sex		√	It is considered that the impact on this protected group will be neutral as the Council's arrangements for home to school travel assistance includes pupils of all gender. The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would impact NPT pupils of all gender as those with entitlement to home to school travel assistance may be offered a Personal Travel Budget if it was considered suitable to do so, and it was established to be the most cost effective solution for the Council meeting its duty to provide travel assistance for pupils deemed to have an entitlement.
Sexual orientation		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an extension of the travel assistance options available to the Council would be available to pupils whatsoever their sexual orientation who are deemed to have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance under the Council's Policy.

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

The initiative will improve positive impacts as it allows the Council to offer additional travel options in order to meet its duty to provide home to school travel assistance to all those with an entitlement, and it provided pupils and their families additional choice and flexibility around travel arrangements which meet both the family circumstances and the needs of the child.

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

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility around making travel arrangements which suit the needs of the family and the needs of the child. This provides opportunities to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	x			The opportunity to be awarded a Personal Travel Budget will be available to all the different groups of pupils who are deemed to have entitlement under the Council's Policy and where it is shown that a Personal Travel Budget is the most cost effective solution to be offered as a means of travel assistance. This therefore ensures equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils and so will have a positive impact.
To foster good relations between different groups	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility to make travel arrangements which suit the family circumstances and meet the needs of the child. This has the opportunity to have a positive impact on pupil attendance at school meaning the child is regularly learning alongside other pupils which provides the opportunity to build positive relationships with their peers and others in their community.

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

The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to improve positive outcomes as Personal Travel Budgets provide more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families in terms of arranging safe and suitable travel arrangements. This has the opportunity to improve equality of opportunities for pupils in terms of their school attendance and educational engagement in order to reach their full potential.

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice. This provides opportunities to have a positive impact on socio economic duty by offering more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families to make travel arrangements which suit the family circumstances and meet the needs of the child. This has the opportunity to have a positive impact on pupil attendance at school meaning positive outcomes for the child as they have opportunity to reach their full potential
Negative/Disadvantage	N/A
Neutral	N/A

Page 58

What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome

The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to reduce inequality of outcome as Personal Travel Budgets provide more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families in terms of arranging safe and suitable travel arrangements. This has the opportunity to have positive impact on pupils reaching their full potential.

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility to make travel arrangements which suit the family circumstances and meet the needs of the child. This has the opportunity to have a positive impact on pupil attendance at school meaning the child is regularly learning alongside which provides the opportunity to build positive relationships with their peers and others in their community.
Social Exclusion	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility around making travel arrangements which suit the needs of the family and the needs of the child. This provides opportunities to have a positive impact on social exclusion by ensuring the Council meets its duty to provide travel assistance to those pupils who have an entitlement and also provides opportunity to ensure travel arrangements meet the needs of the pupil to encourage regular attendance at school. Additionally, it offers opportunity to ensure travel arrangements meet the needs of the pupil so that they arrive at school by safe and suitable means which has a positive impact on their ability to learn.
Poverty	x			Although home to school travel assistance eligibility is not based on financial means testing, the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets allows the Council to be able to offer an additional form of travel assistance to ensure those that are entitled to home to school travel assistance are provided for. This provides opportunities to have a positive impact on poverty by ensuring the Council meets its duty to provide travel assistance to those pupils who have an entitlement. It also provides travel arrangements that meet the needs of the pupil which has the ability to encourage regular attendance at school, meaning pupils have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

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

The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to improve positive outcomes in terms of available travel assistance for the Council to offer which provides more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families. This has the opportunity to have positive impact on pupils reaching their full potential.

6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language	x			The Council’s Home to School Travel Policy includes travel assistance for those pupils accessing Welsh-medium education. Therefore the initiative should impact positively on people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language as it is intended that Personal Travel Budgets are an additional form of travel assistance available to pupils who have an entitlement under the Council’s Policy
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally	x			It is intended that Personal Travel Budgets will be an additional form of travel assistance that the Council is able to offer and it will be available to pupils who attend both Welsh-medium and English-medium schools

Page 60

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

Personal Travel Budgets will be available to pupils across all schools who meet the eligibility criteria. The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to improve positive outcomes in terms of available travel assistance for the Council to offer which provides more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families.

7. Biodiversity

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

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity				This initiative is intended to have a neutral impact on the resilience of ecosystems as the offer of Personal Travel Budgets will only be made when it is deemed that it is the most cost effective travel assistance solution. The initiative is not intended to increase the number of families transporting their own child to and from school as a Personal Travel Budget would not be considered if the option of a shared home to school vehicle is available. It is not intended the initiative will lead to increased numbers of families opting to take their child to school over the child travelling in a vehicle shared with others.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
Monitoring by the Home to School Travel Assistance Service will ensure Personal Travel Budgets are not offered if there is a shared home to school transport vehicle available.

8. Well-being of Future Generations

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

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	If the initiative goes ahead it will form part of the Council’s current Home to School Travel Policy 2017 and is likely to continue to be part of any new Home to School Travel Assistance Policy in the future.
ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	This initiative has the ability to offer pupils and their families more flexibility around the arrangements made for getting a child to school. The Personal Travel Budget also allows the Council to be able to offer additional forms of travel assistance in order to ensure it meets its duty to provide home to school travel assistance to those who are entitled as well as ensuring the best use of public resources.

<p>iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>Other Welsh Local Authorities already use Personal Travel Budgets as an option of travel assistance under their home to school travel arrangements, and this initiative was created following discussion with other Welsh authorities in relation to their schemes.</p> <p>The Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Service is jointly managed between Education Transport and Environment's Passenger Transport Section. The administration of Personal Travel Budgets would be a joint responsibility between both Education Transport and Passenger Transport.</p>
<p>iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017 ensures there is universal access for pupils from across the whole of the county borough to apply for home to school travel assistance. This initiative aims to provide opportunities for more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families in terms of travel arrangements that meet the family circumstances as well as pupil need.</p>
<p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	
<p>Council's well-being objectives</p>	<p>This initiative directly contributes to wellbeing objective 1 – 'to improve the wellbeing of children and young people' through ensuring they can access transport assistance to attend school where there is eligibility to do so. It also has opportunity to support wellbeing objective 2 – 'to improve the wellbeing of all adults who live in the county borough' and wellbeing objective 3 'to develop the local economy and environment so that the wellbeing of people can be improved', through the greater choice and flexibility this initiative offers eligible families.</p>
<p>Other public bodies objectives</p>	<p>This initiative has the opportunity to support the Public Services Board's wellbeing objectives.</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.

If the initiative goes ahead it will be monitored for suitability as an option of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017. Monitoring by the Home to School Travel Assistance Service will aid updating this Integrated Impact Assessment, and will identify any change on the impact in any of the categories evaluated as part of this Integrated Impact Assessment.

10. Assessment Conclusions

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

	Conclusion
Equalities	The initiative will have a positive impact across all protected groups. There is no risk of direct or indirect discrimination as the initiative is intended to enhance the type of travel assistance options available to be offered to those children who have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance
Socio Economic Disadvantage	The initiative does not alter the ability to access home to school travel assistance. All pupils across the county borough have the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met. The greater choice and flexibility that this initiative offers families could provide a positive impact on socio economic disadvantage.
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	The initiative does not alter the ability to access home to school travel assistance. All pupils across the county borough have the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met It is likely to improve positive outcomes in terms of available travel assistance for the Council to offer which provides more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families. This has the opportunity to have positive impact on pupils reaching their full potential.
Welsh	The initiative does not alter the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017 which enable pupils attending all categories of school, including Welsh-medium education the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met. This initiative should impact positively on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language as it is intended that Personal Travel Budgets are an additional form of travel assistance available to pupils who have an entitlement under the Council's Policy, including those who chose Welsh-medium education.
Biodiversity	This initiative is intended to have a neutral impact on biodiversity. Monitoring by the Home to School Travel Assistance Service will ensure Personal Travel Budgets are not offered if there is a shared home to school transport vehicle available.

Well-being of Future Generations	The initiative does not alter the ability to access home to school travel assistance. All pupils across the county borough have the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met. The initiative enhances the type of travel assistance options available and will create more choice and flexibility for families which fits with the family personal circumstances as well as meeting the needs of the child
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Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

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

Page 64

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

Introducing Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance under the Council’s Home to School Travel Policy 2017 will create more choice and flexibility for families which fits with the family personal circumstances as well as meeting the needs of the child.

This initiative increases the opportunity for positive impact on children from all protected groups. The introduction of a Personal Travel Budget has the opportunity to enhance the health and wellbeing of children as it allows for a more flexible approach for families to make arrangements for their child’s travel to school which meets the individual needs of the child.

Introducing Personal Travel Budgets as an additional option that the Council is able to offer will ensure the Council meets it duty to provide home to school travel assistance for those pupils who have an entitlement.

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?
Engagement with pupils and their families to monitor the take-up of the Personal Travel Budget	Home to School Travel Assistance Service (jointly via Education Transport and Passenger Transport)	End of one academic year	Take-up of the Personal Travel Budget will increase termly across the academic year
Engagement with pupils and their families to determine the suitability of the Personal Travel Budget in meeting the needs of service users	Home to School Travel Assistance Service (jointly via Education Transport and Passenger Transport)	End of one academic year	Pupils and their families will respond positively having identified the benefits of a Personal Travel Budget fitting their personal circumstances and meeting the needs of pupils including those with additional learning need and/or a disability

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Debora Holder-Phillips	Education Transport Manager	<i>D Holder-Phillips</i>	April 2023
Signed off by	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Head of Support Services and Transformation	<i>R.R. Crowhurst</i>	April 2023

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
EDUCATION SKILLS AND WELLBEING CABINET BOARD

1st February 2024

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE TOURISM HERITAGE AND CULTURE

MATTER FOR INFORMATION

WARDS AFFECTED: All

WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Purpose of Report

To provide an update to Members for the Library service - Annual Return to Welsh Government, Culture Division in respect of the authorities' library services performance against the current Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) Framework 6 and to note feedback, comments and recommendations in the recently issued (November 2023) Welsh Libraries Report 2022-2023.

Executive Summary

The current Welsh Public Library Standards (Framework 6) usually consists of 12 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators, 10 of which have set targets. Due to the impact of COVID which resulted in the disruption and closure of many libraries during the year 2020 – 21, the Annual Return required by Welsh Government to evaluate the library services performance against the WPLS was amended as it was impractical to report against the full framework for that year.

We are currently working to the extension of Framework 6 and therefore, for 2022-2023, the Annual return included a summary of provision against the 12 Core Entitlements, recorded the achievements against 16 Quality indicators, (10 of which have targets) a narrative report on the strategic direction of the service and an impact statement The Welsh government report is overwhelmingly positive for Neath Port Talbot with all the core entitlements fully met, highlighting the positive impact libraries have on our communities.

Page 68

Of the 10 quality indicators that have targets, 8 are met in full, one part met and one not met.

- Up to date reading material, spend per capita. This has never been met by Neath Port Talbot Council due to our book fund not being sufficient for this area. We do however have a good selection of new materials and continue to enhance and replenish our stock regularly. It is also worth noting that the cost of books is increasing.
- Staffing levels and qualifications. Again this is an unachievable standard where we would need to employ staff above and beyond our budget. All libraries are staffed well and proportionate to the service.

Background

1. The Annual Assessment Report from Welsh Government, which was published in November following the submission of the Annual Return in the previous July, provides a detailed response on the Authorities performance against the current standards framework.
2. As was the case for the 2021-2022 Report, for 2022-2023, a narrative statement was provided which shows the impact the service has on an individual group. This is provided in the form of an impact study.
3. Throughout 2022-2023 the Library Service has seen an increase in usage post pandemic with a wide range of activities and events showing high numbers of attendance.
4. Our Home Delivery Service and Mobile Library continued to thrive throughout 2022-2023 to deliver reading materials to our most vulnerable residents and providing social interaction and support to those who are isolated.
5. The Library Service has a large number of Adult and Children's reading groups which has been acknowledged in this report, providing increased literacy and well-being.
6. While our Libraries are still recovering from the pandemic, we have increased our Digital offer, providing access to electronic reading materials 24/7.
7. We have now resumed all our regular activities and collaboration with our local community groups.
8. Overall, Issue and Visitor figures are steadily increasing and staff are engaging and supporting members of the public with enquiries, including one to one assistance.
9. Finally, we opened a new Neath Library providing a modern and engaging facility for our users, along with a Makerspace area in Port Talbot Library providing a digital suite and creative space for craft groups.

Financial Impact Assessment

10. There is no financial impact as a result of the 2022-2023 Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Assessment Report (Appendix 1).

Valleys Communities Impact

11. There are no specific Valleys Communities Impacts arising from this report. It should be noted that whilst we recognise the invaluable contribution of volunteers at community managed libraries in Neath Port Talbot, a number of which are in valley communities, we are not able include them in our statutory return.

Integrated Impact Assessment

- Page 70
12. There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment at this stage.

Workforce Impact

13. There are no workforce implications as a result of the Welsh Public Library Standards Report.

Legal Impact

14. The Annual Return to Welsh Government ensures the Council complies with its statutory duty to provide a Public Library service as required under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

Risk Management

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

Consultation

16. There are no requirements for additional external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that Members note the contents of Annual Assessment Report 2022-2023 and Neath Port Talbot Library Service's Annual Return 2022-2023

Reasons for Proposed Decision

18. No decision required.

Implementation of Decision

19. No decision required.

Page 71

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Welsh Pubic Library Standards Annual Assessment Letter

Appendix 2 - Welsh public Library Standards Report 2022-2023

Appendix 3 – Neath Port Talbot Library Service Annual Return 2022-2023

Appendix 4 – Impact Statement

List of Background Papers

None

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

At: Karen Jones
Brif Weithredwyr
Castell-nedd Port Talbot
chief.executive@npt.gov.uk

9 Tachwedd 2023

Annwyl Karen Jones

Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus Cymru Adroddiad Blynyddol 2022/23

Mae Deddf Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus ac Amgueddfeydd 1964 yn nodi dyletswyddau statudol awdurdodau llyfrgelloedd cyhoeddus i "*ddarparu gwasanaeth llyfrgell cynhwysfawr ac effeithlon*" ac mae'n ei gwneud yn ddyletswydd ar Weinidogion Cymru "*i oruchwylio a hyrwyddo gwella*" gwasanaethau llyfrgelloedd cyhoeddus yng Nghymru. Yn unol â'r gofynion statudol hyn, mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi cwblhau ei hasesiad o Ffurflen Flynnyddol gwasanaeth llyfrgelloedd eich awdurdod ar gyfer 2022-23 ac mae'r adroddiad wedi'i atodi i'r llythyr hwn.

Yn ystod yr ymarfer adrodd blynyddol ar gyfer 2022-23 dychwelwyd at gasglu'r set lawn o ddata ar gyfer Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus Cymru. Ar gyfer 2022-23 mae pob gwasanaeth wedi:

- Crynhoi eu darpariaeth yn erbyn y 12 o hawliau craidd Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus Cymru.
- Cofnodi eu cyflawniadau yn erbyn yr 16 o ddangosyddion ansawdd Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus Cymru.
- Llunio adroddiad naratif ar gyfeiriad yn y dyfodol

Diwylliant, Llywodraeth Cymru
Culture Division, Welsh Government,
Rhodfa Padarn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UR.

Tel: 0300 062 2112
E-mail: Culture@gov.wales



Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn yr un iaith, ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- Darparu adroddiad naratif ar y cyd-destun strategol: sut mae'r gwasanaeth llyfrgelloedd yn cyfrannu at flaenoriaethau ehangach Llywodraeth Cymru a'r nodau strategol
- Darparu datganiad naratif gydag enghraifft o effaith y gwasanaeth ar unigolion neu grwpiau.

Yn eu ffurflenni blynyddol, adroddodd nifer o wasanaethau'r llyfrgell eu bod yn disgwyl toriadau i'w cyllideb yn y flwyddyn nesaf, a allai effeithio ar eu gallu i fodloni Hawliadau Craidd a Dangosyddion Ansawdd Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus Cymru. Er fy mod yn cydnabod bod awdurdodau yn gorfod gwneud penderfyniadau anodd, byddwn yn gofyn i unrhyw doriadau i gyllideb gwasanaethau llyfrgelloedd fod yn gymesur. Mae'n ddyletswydd statudol i ddarparu gwasanaeth llyfrgelloedd cyhoeddus "cynhwysfawr ac effeithlon," ac yng Nghymru sy'n cael ei ddiffinio gan Fframwaith Safonau Llyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus Cymru.

Rwy'n ddiolchgar am gefnogaeth eich gwasanaeth llyfrgelloedd wrth gyflwyno'r wybodaeth hon.

Os oes gennych unrhyw ymholiadau ynghylch yr adroddiad neu'r broses asesu, cysylltwch â Juanita Foster-Jones, e-bost: Juanita.foster-jones@llyw.cymru.

Yn gywir,



Ian Williams
Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr - Is-adran Ddiwylliant



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

To: Karen Jones
Chief Executive
Neath Port Talbot
chief.executive@npt.gov.uk

9 November 2023

Dear Karen Jones

Welsh Public Library Standards: Annual Return 2022-23

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 sets out the statutory duties of public library authorities to "*provide a comprehensive and efficient library service*" and makes it a duty of the Welsh Ministers "*to superintend and promote the improvement*" of public library services in Wales. In accordance with these statutory requirements the Welsh Government has completed its assessment of your authority's library service Annual Return for 2022-23 and the full report is attached to this letter.

The annual reporting exercise for 2022-23 saw a return to the collection of the full set of data for the WPLS. For 2022-23 each service:

- Summarised their provision against the 12 core entitlements of the WPLS
- Recorded their achievements against the 16 quality indicators of the WPLS
- Provided a narrative report on future direction
- Provided a narrative report on the strategic context: how the library service is contributing to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals
- Provided a narrative statement with an example of the impact of the service on individuals or groups.

Diwylliant, Llywodraeth Cymru
Culture Division, Welsh Government,
Rhodfa Padarn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UR.

Tel: 0300 062 2112
E-mail: Culture@gov.wales



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MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn yr un iaith, ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In their annual returns a number of library services reported that they are expecting cuts to their budget in the next year, which may impact on their ability to meet the WPLS Core Entitlements and Quality Indicators. Whilst I acknowledge that authorities are having to make difficult decisions, I would request that any budget cuts to library services are not disproportionate. It is a statutory duty to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” public library service, and in Wales that is defined by the WPLS Framework.

I am grateful for the support from your library service in submitting this information.

Should you have any queries concerning the report or the assessment process, please contact Juanita Foster-Jones, email: Juanita.foster-jones@gov.wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ian Williams'.

Ian Williams
Deputy Director – Culture Division

Welsh Public Library Standards Sixth Framework: Neath Port Talbot

Annual Assessment Report 2022/2023

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Neath Port Talbot's annual return, impact statements and narrative report submitted to the Culture Division of the Welsh Government.

1. Executive summary

Neath Port Talbot met all of the 12 core entitlements in full. Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Neath Port Talbot is achieving 8 in full and 1 in part. One is not met.

Neath Port Talbot libraries are clearly appreciated by members of the local community who rate them highly in terms of customer service and the difference they make to their lives. The service has strong partnerships with several local organisations and is dedicated to the provision of outreach, as well as library-based, services. Levels of attendance at training and events, as well as overall visits per capita, are recovering from the Covid period. Although the figure for virtual visits is not particularly high, the service's digital offer appears to be appreciated as e-issues are in the top quartile. The service is clearly making efforts to improve its Welsh language provision. However, there are concerns about the level of acquisitions, staffing levels and opening hours. In light of these concerns, the service's plan to focus on strengthening the service, in particular through staff training and developing partnerships, would appear to be a prudent one. However, it would be helpful to clearly link these plans to local and national priorities.

- The service is in the top quartile for percentage of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills; find helpful information for health and wellbeing; and made a difference to their lives, as well as the percentage of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out (Q11).
- User training opportunities are well-attended; attendance at both formal and informal training are in the top quartile of library authorities (Q15).
- Library events and activities are also well-attended; attendance at events per capita is in the top quartile of library services (Q16).
- The service is gradually recovering from the Covid pandemic and the figure for visits per capita is above the median (Q18).

2. Performance against the standards

The standards framework comprises of core entitlements, quality indicators with targets, quality indicators with benchmarks and impact measures. Section 2 summarises achievements against these areas. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is provided in Section 3.

2.1. Core entitlements

Neath Port Talbot reported meeting all 12 of the Core Entitlements in full through self-assessment, providing detailed and helpful commentary within the return on each area covered. The independent assessor agreed with the self-assessment.

2.2. Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which 10 have constituent targets. Of these, Neath Port Talbot is achieving 8 in full and 1 in part. One is not met.

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Support for individual development:		Met in full
a) ICT support	√	
b) Information literacy and skills training	√	
c) E-government support	√	
d) Reader development	√	
QI 4 (a) Support for health and well-being		Met in full
i) Book Prescription Wales scheme	√	
ii) Better with Books/Reading Well scheme	√	
iii) Designated health & well-being collection	√	
iv) Information about healthy lifestyles and behaviours	√	
v) Signposting to health & well-being services	√	
QI 6 all static service points offer events/activities for users with special requirements	√	Met in full
QI 7 Location of service points	√	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Not met
Acquisitions per capita	x	
<u>or</u> Materials spend per capita	x	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	√	
<u>or</u> Spend on Welsh per capita	-	
QI 11 Online access:		Met in full
a) i) Public access to Internet	√	
ii) Wi-Fi provision	√	
QI 12 Supply of requests		Met in full
a) % of requests satisfied within 7 days	√	
b) % of requests satisfied within 15 days	√	
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met
i) Staff per capita	x	
ii) Qualified staff per capita	x	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	√	
iv) CPD percentage	x	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	x	Not met

2.3. Impact measures

The framework includes three indicators aimed at assessing the impact of library use on people’s lives. These indicators do not have targets, and authorities were only required to carry out user surveys for QI1 once over the original three-year period of the framework (2017-20). The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are based on all authorities providing data in the 2022-23 return. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority. However, it is important to bear in mind that some authorities have conducted surveys since 2020, whilst others report survey data from before the Covid pandemic. Some responses therefore reflect the situation several years ago, whilst others may have been affected by disruption during the pandemic period. As a result, there are limitations on the extent to which these data might be considered comparable.

Neath Port Talbot completed its adult and children’s user survey in March 2023.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	97%	2/16	58%	90%	98%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	93%	=3/16	41%	86.5%	96%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	94%	13/17	82%	96%	100%

Authorities are also asked to provide an impact statement describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual or on a group of individuals during the year. Neath Port Talbot Libraries provided an impact statement concerning support provided to Ukrainian refugees who had been relocated to the area. This involved working alongside Local Area Coordinators to develop a programme of sessions and workshops. At Neath Port Talbot Library, coffee mornings provided a meeting place for refugees and a point of contact to get support from representatives of local authority departments. This also provided a ‘befriending’ opportunity with local residents resulting in a ‘sharing of cultures’. Refugees were invited to take part in library activities and join library groups. As a result, children have made new friends and gained confidence and this has provided more opportunity to socialise and feel connected within the community in a safe and welcoming space. One refugee commented: *“I find myself entirely happy being here. That’s my escape from my own reality.”*

2.4. Quality indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets but allow services to monitor and benchmark their performance over time, in comparison with other authorities. The following table summarises Neath Port Talbot’s position for 2022-23. Ranks are included out of 22, where 1 is the highest, and 22 the lowest scoring authority, unless stated otherwise. Indicators where fewer than 22 authorities supplied data are those where relevant data was not available from some authorities. Indicators ‘per capita’ are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	90%	1/16	24%	69.5%	90%
c) health and well-being	84%	2/16	35%	66.5%	94%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	98%	7/16	93%	97%	100%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	96%	3/16	80%	91%	99%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	99%	=2/17	92%	98%	100%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	90%	=5/16	65%	86%	99%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	98%	=5/17	94%	98%	100%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.7	=1/16	8.0	9.3	9.7
QI 5 User training					
a) attendances per capita	39	3/22	1	10.5	222
c) informal training per capita	415	2/19	5	131	424
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	357	2/22	13	165	559
QI 8 Library use					
a) visits per capita	2,503	5/21	781	2,106	4,814
b) virtual visits per capita	147	21/22	124	537.5	7,979
c) active borrowers per capita	113	9/22	43	106.5	167
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita	44	=15/22	13	53	864
QI 11 Online access					
a) Computers per 10,000	5.78	19/22	3.32	7.99	16.99
b) % of available time used by the public	14%	=5/19	7%	11%	77%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications ¹					
(v) a) total volunteers	1	-	0	8	256
b) volunteer hours	147	-	0	583.5	14,014
QI 14 Operational expenditure					
a) total expenditure per capita	£13,226	8/21	£6,726	£11,476	£27,330
b) % on staff,	62%	15/21	46%	64%	78%
% on information resources	9%	=16/21	5%	12%	21%
% on equipment and buildings	5%	8/21	1%	3%	29%
% on other operational costs;	23%	=4/21	1%	15%	35%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£0	=12/21	-£479	£145	£2,865
QI 15 Net cost per visit ²	£3.22	13/19	£0.41	£2.76	£6.22
QI 16 Opening hours ³					
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0%	=1/22	0%	0.05%	0.95%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	2.6%	19/20	0%	0%	3.74%

¹ Following discussion with the peer review group it was decided not to include rankings for volunteers as the implications of volunteer numbers are ambiguous.

² Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.

³ Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.

3. Analysis of performance

The core entitlements and quality indicators can be divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance under these areas.

3.1. Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Neath Port Talbot performs well with regard to Making a difference (QI1). In particular, the service is in the top quartile for percentage of adults who think that using the library has helped them to develop new skills; find helpful information for health and wellbeing; and made a difference to their lives, as well as the percentage of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out. The service is also above the median for all aspects of customer service, and is particularly strong in relation to the rating out of ten by users aged 16 and under.

The service notes that, whilst there are no library-based shared reading groups (QI4), there are 25 adult and children's reading groups, including Welsh language groups. In addition, there are regular sessions where library staff visit locations in communities (e.g. schools, playgroups, nursing homes) to read to audiences. Five libraries currently have regular event/activities in collaboration with Macmillan, Quit Smoking and HWYL - signposting and guidance for mental health. Numbers attending both formal and informal training are in the top quartile of library authorities (QI5). In delivering training, library staff work in partnership with external organisations such as Digital Communities Wales, Community 4 Work and Jobcentre Plus.

3.2. Access and use (QI 6-8)

Attendance at events per capita is in the top quartile of library services (QI6). The numbers attending events has risen substantially since Covid restrictions were lifted. The figure for visits per capita is above the median (QI8) and the service notes that whilst they remain lower than levels pre-2020, figures are improving. The number of active borrowers is above the median, as is the figure for adult book issues. Neath Port Talbot is below the median for virtual visits per capita. However, as is the case for many library services, the website is becoming less well used as more interaction now comes via social media channels and apps such as Borrowbox and Pori. There is evidence of strong digital engagement as the service is in the top quartile of library authorities for e-issues.

3.3. Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

Neath Port Talbot does not meet the target for acquisitions (QI9) and it is below the median for materials spend per capita. It is also below the median for the proportion of the budget spent on children's resources. However, the service notes an increase in Welsh language stock, almost doubling in Welsh language spend last year and continuing to meet the target expenditure this year (QI10). However, issues per capita Welsh speaker are below the median. Neath Port Talbot is in the bottom quartile of library authorities for PCs per capita, but above the median for percentage of available time PCs are used. The services notes that there are many more users bring their own devices to access library WiFi, and consequently less demand for traditional desktop PCs. Neath Port Talbot meets the target for supply of requests

(QI12).

3.4. Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Neath Port Talbot does not meet the targets for overall staffing levels or qualified staff. The operational manager is qualified, but the service is below the median for qualified staff per capita (QI13). The service notes that number of FTE staff has decreased slightly due to minor amendments to staff contracts and changes in working hours for some staff. In addition, Neath Port Talbot does not meet the target for proportion of staff time devoted to training. In the return, the continued challenges of managing staff time and sickness around Covid, as well as managing the closure and relocation of Neath Library, are listed as reasons for reduced levels of staff training. Despite opening hours increasing since 2018-19 as extra hours were added to Neath Library, Neath Port Talbot still does not meet the target for opening hours (QI16). However, it is worth noting that this excludes provision through community-managed libraries and there were no unplanned closures of static branches this year.

4. Strategic context

As part of the return, authorities are asked to report on how the library service is contributing to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. Neath Port Talbot notes that, in setting its strategic goals the library service takes its lead from the objectives set out in Neath Port Talbot's Corporate Plan, Recover, Reset, Renew (2022-2027), namely:

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

These wellbeing objectives reflect the need to respond to the pandemic and relate to the all-Wales goals, as set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Service has also delivered on national projects that have taken their lead from Welsh Government goals: Summer of Fun 2022 and Health and Wellbeing Campaign – Places to Connect. However, limited detail was provided indicating how library services specifically contribute to council and government priorities.

5. Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Neath Port Talbot refers to its post-pandemic Recovery Plan. Whilst the last four years the focus has been on large scale relocation and redevelopment projects, during the next year the aim will be on strengthening the service; continuing to develop staff through training; and engaging with partner organisations and users.

6. Conclusion

Neath Port Talbot libraries are clearly appreciated by members of the local community who rate them highly in terms of customer service and the difference they

make to their lives. The service has strong partnerships with several local organisations and is dedicated to the provision of outreach, as well as library-based, services. Levels of attendance at training and events, as well as overall visits per capita, are recovering from the Covid period. Although the figure for virtual visits is not particularly high, the service's digital offer appears to be appreciated as e-issues are in the top quartile. The service is clearly making efforts to improve its Welsh language provision. However, there are concerns about the level of acquisitions, staffing levels and opening hours. In light of these concerns, the service's plan to focus on strengthening the service, in particular through staff training and developing partnerships, would appear to be a prudent one. However, it would be helpful to clearly link these plans to local and national priorities.

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Annual return pro-forma: Year ending 31 March 2023

Guidance notes

The return is to be made over three worksheets, together with a Word document. Authorities should take note of the following:

The *Definitions and guidelines for data collection and reporting* document provides guidance for completing the return.

Where data are included in the annual public library actuals return to CIPFA, the same figure should be used for this return.

Only those cells where data are required can be selected; other areas of the return are shaded. The tab key can be used to move to the next available cell.

Culture and Sport reserve the right to request evidence of the information provided in the return to assist with the assessment process.

Context

This sheet requires some descriptive details for the authority, and contact details for the person to whom any queries should be addressed.

Core entitlements

This sheet deals with the 12 core entitlements for the public. Authorities should select their (self-assessed) level of compliance from the drop-down box, and provide further information in the space provided.

Quality indicators

This sheet covers the 16 public library standard quality indicators. For some indicators authorities are required to enter the raw data from which quantitative standards are derived; calculation will then take place automatically.

For those standards with quantitative targets, values are compared to the target set, and an indication given of whether or not that standard has been met. Space has been provided for comment; authorities failing to meet targets will be prompted to use this space to detail any mitigating circumstances, and plans for future improvement.

A comparative figure for the year ending 31 March 2022 should be provided for each annually reported PI.

Space is provided for authorities to comment on any decline in their performance over the previous year.

The most recent figures available should be given for those PIs which are required only once in the three year period, and the date of data collection given in the space provided.

Submission

When completed, the return should be submitted via email to Culture and Sport:

Culture@gov.wales

Closing date for receipt of returns:

Friday 23 June 2023

For more information please contact:

Juanita Foster-Jones

Juanita.Foster-Jones@gov.wales

0300 025 4836 (direct line)

0300 062 2112 (C&S main number)

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Welsh Public Library Standards 2022-23

Neath Port Talbot Libraries

Impact Statement

In May 2022 the Library Service set up the first of its many activities to support Ukrainian refugees who had been relocated to the local area. Library staff worked alongside Local Area Coordinators to devise a programme of sessions and workshops. Whilst support has been provided at all libraries this Impact Statement focusses on work carried out at Neath and Port Talbot Library.

In the first instance Community Coffee Mornings were set up with the aim of giving Ukrainian refugees a meeting place where, not only could they meet with representatives from different local authority departments and get support from our Local Area Coordinators, but they also gave opportunities for a 'befriending' between local residents and Ukrainian families who would give advice on things like shopping locally, or recommend places to go, things to do, invited them to local churches etc. A sharing of cultures developed with people sharing home-made local delicacies, music and stories.

Refugees were invited to take part in library activities and to join our groups. The children have made new friends through these and gained confidence. Many of the mums with young children also started attending the Song & Rhyme in the library on Friday morning before going to the coffee morning and this gave them and their little ones an opportunity to socialise with more people.

Olha Samsonenko

I am so much appreciate not just what you are doing not just for us Ukrainians but for true dedication to all the people. For your kindness, patience and encouragement. In my country we almost don't have libraries any longer. But as a real bookworm I find myself entirely happy being here. That's my escape from my own reality. I wish I could spend more time there. My best wishes to you and those supporting your library.

Daniel Garnell, Local Area Co-ordinator

I'm writing to you to praise how Port Talbot Library supported the Ukrainian Refugees who were hosted in Neath Port Talbot.

My role at the time was as one of a team of Local area Coordinators and we were tasked with settling in the refugees in our communities and helping them feel safe and connected with the community.

Port Talbot Library, were supportive from the start, hosting a free coffee morning for the refugees to have an opportunity to meet community members and also other displaced individuals.

It was a great resource that allowed for agencies to link in, identify need and provide locally based solutions.

We had a local gentleman attend to teach the Ukrainians English and to help us converse with them.

He did this with no financial recompense and just did it as it was the right thing to do.

The coffee morning was so important to our guests, that even when a few families were re homed in Cardiff, they still came to the coffee morning to stay connected, and one couple said that despite them living in Cardiff, Port Talbot would always be their welsh home.

The staff at the library were so kind and attentive in the way they cared for our guests and then encourage the coffee morning to naturally change into a community coffee morning.

I wish to express how grateful, our LAC team was to have this resource and how this event at the library was replicated on other wards in NPT.

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